

PARENTS' MEDIA LITERACY IN SELECTIONS CHANNEL YOUTUBE KINDERFLIX IN INDONESIA: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF DIGITAL FAMILY COMMUNICATION IN 2024-2025

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Abstract

This study explores parents' media literacy in selecting the Kinderflix YouTube channel as an educational medium for young children in Indonesia. The rapid growth of digital platforms has made YouTube a central element in children's daily routines, raising questions about how parents act as digital gatekeepers. Employing a qualitative case study within a constructivist paradigm, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, digital documentation, and thematic analysis. Findings reveal that parents demonstrated active involvement through three layers of mediation: previewing videos, co-viewing, and playlist creation. These practices ensured safe, age-appropriate, and value-based exposure while balancing parental authority with child autonomy. Parents applied diverse strategies such as manual search, peer recommendations, blocking features, and reflective dialogue with children. Criteria for educational value extended beyond cognitive learning to include moral, emotional, and social dimensions, reflecting broader family values and cultural norms. Parental negotiations, community engagement, and children's active responses further shaped digital family communication. The study concludes that parental media literacy is a reflective and communicative process that integrates technical skills, moral considerations, and interactive dialogue. Practical implications highlight the need for strengthening digital parenting programs and fostering critical literacy skills to support safer, more meaningful digital engagement for families.

Keywords: Parental media literacy; Kinderflix; digital family communication; YouTube; early childhood education

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has profoundly transformed the ways in which individuals and families interact with media. Access to smart devices such as smartphones, tablets, and smart televisions is no longer limited to adults but has become an integral part of children's daily lives from an early age. In Indonesia, YouTube has emerged as one of the primary platforms for both entertainment and learning, making it a central component of family media routines (Arnot, 2018). With its audiovisual appeal and ease of access, YouTube provides a wide range of content, from educational to purely entertaining. One channel particularly popular among Indonesian parents is Kinderflix, which offers educational materials in Indonesian, including children's songs, moral stories, and introductions to basic concepts. Its simple, child-friendly language and engaging presentation make Kinderflix widely regarded as suitable for toddlers.

However, easy access to digital media does not necessarily ensure critical content selection. This is where parental media literacy becomes essential. Media literacy extends beyond technical proficiency; it includes the ability to access, evaluate, and determine the appropriateness of content consumed by children (Christian, 2019). Thus, the selection of educational programs such as Kinderflix should not be a mere practical choice, but rather a reflective process informed by parents' media literacy skills.

The role of parents extends beyond that of mere device providers; they also function as digital gatekeepers, determining the extent to which children can access appropriate content. A report by Data Box (2024) indicated that 29% of young children in Indonesia were introduced to gadgets directly by their parents, with YouTube being one of the most frequently accessed platforms. This finding highlights that initial decisions regarding digital content rest with parents, who are expected to evaluate and select material based on children's age, family values, and educational goals (Darni, 2024). YouTube channels such as Kinderflix are particularly popular because they provide light educational programming in Indonesian, using simple language that is easily understood by children. Nevertheless, this parental responsibility remains a challenge. Daneels and Vanwynsberghe (2017) found that many parents lack a comprehensive understanding of digital media structures and impacts, often relying on popularity or algorithmic recommendations rather than critical evaluation. This concern is reinforced by Turen and Kahraman (2025), who reported that most Indonesian parents have yet to develop adequate media literacy skills and remain passive in content selection. Such gaps highlight a disconnect between the availability of educational

content like Kinderflix and parents' readiness to critically assess it. Supporting this, APJII data (2023) revealed that 64.5% of young children actively use the internet through personal or family devices, while a UNICEF (2022) survey confirmed that many parents still lack sufficient knowledge to select and monitor their children's digital content, including YouTube (Nudin et al., 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, Jenkins (2006), in his concept of New Media Literacy, emphasizes four key dimensions: access, analysis, evaluation, and creation. In the context of channel selection, parents act as digital gatekeepers, determining which types of content are appropriate for children. Their role extends beyond providing access; parents must also filter information and assess the suitability of content based on children's developmental needs and age. This literacy is inherently reflective, shaped by family values, personal preferences, and an awareness of the rapidly evolving digital environment. Thus, selecting educational channels such as Kinderflix should be understood as a reflective process guided by both media literacy skills and family values.

From the perspective of Digital Family Communication, content selection is not merely an individual choice but part of broader family communication practices. Lee et al. (2015) highlight that family interactions within the digital ecosystem involve negotiating values and norms, making the selection of channels like Kinderflix an integral component of parenting in the digital era.

Although Kinderflix provides educational content, limited research in Indonesia has examined parents' media literacy practices in selecting such platforms for early childhood. Most prior studies have focused on media effects on children or parental supervision during viewing, while the content selection process the first step in media exposure remains underexplored. Yet, this initial stage is crucial, as it shapes the type of media exposure influencing children's future behavior and mindset. Accordingly, this research is both relevant and urgent, aiming to explore how parents evaluate, consider, and decide on suitable educational YouTube channels, and how these practices reflect the dynamics of digital family communication in contemporary contexts.

METHOD

This research adopts a constructivist paradigm, which emphasizes the subjective understanding of individuals within specific social and cultural contexts. Such an approach is particularly appropriate for exploring how parents construct meaning around digital media content and apply media literacy in selecting Kinderflix YouTube channels for young children within the dynamics of digital family communication.

A qualitative constructivist approach was employed, using a case study design. Yin (2018) argues that case studies are suitable for investigating contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined. Case studies are designed to address the "how" and "why" questions of complex social processes (Yin, 2018, pp. 15–17). Accordingly, this research was structured as a single case study with an embedded unit of analysis, consisting of parents from diverse social and cultural backgrounds.

The method adopted was an exploratory case study, as recommended by Yin (2018), to investigate understudied phenomena and explore processes in real-world contexts. This design enabled an in-depth understanding of parents' media literacy practices in selecting Kinderflix as an educational and entertainment medium for toddlers. Key characteristics of the case study method include intensive exploration of a specific unit, a focus on socio-cultural context, and the use of multiple data sources for triangulation. In this study, the case units examined were the media literacy experiences of individual parents, serving as the primary research subjects. The stages of the case study method, according to Creswell (2018) and Yin (2016), include:

1. Case identification. Parents' media literacy practices in selecting and accompanying children watching Kinderflix.
2. Participant selection. Using purposive sampling techniques based on specified criteria.
3. Data collection. Through online interviews, non-participatory digital observation, and digital documentation.
4. Data analysis. Using thematic techniques with the Miles & Huberman (1994) approach: data reduction, data presentation, and concluding.
5. Reporting results. Narratively presenting findings to fully represent participants' experiences.

Fieldwork was conducted online to accommodate participant needs and ensure ease of access. All communication, data collection, and clarification processes were conducted through digital platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, and Google Drive.

Data Collection Techniques

a. In-depth Interview

Interviews were conducted semi-structured online using Zoom, Google Meet, or WhatsApp Call. Interview questions were designed open-ended to explore parents' narratives and reflections on the Kinderflix content selection process, dimensions of media literacy (access, evaluation, interpretation), and digital family communication practices. Each session lasted 30 minutes, was recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis. The semi-structured approach provides flexibility in the information-gathering process without losing the primary focus of the research.

b. Digital Documentation

Documentation data will be collected in the form of screenshots, YouTube viewing history, daily reflective notes, and photos of family activities when accessing digital content. These documents are used to support primary data.

In this study, non-participatory observation was not used because the main focus of the research was on the cognitive processes and considerations of parents in choosing the Kinderflix YouTube channel. In-depth data was obtained through in-depth interviews and digital documentation, which were sufficient to support data triangulation. In addition, ethical considerations about the child's privacy is the reason for does not involve direct observation of family interactions in private spaces.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach (thematic analysis) in accordance with the steps proposed by Braun & Clarke (2022), namely:

1. Familiarization with the data through re-reading interview transcripts and documentation to fully understand the content and context.
2. Initial coding. Data was openly coded based on emerging patterns or themes, such as “content monitoring,” “active content selection,” or “educational narrative.”
3. Theme search. Codes were classified into broader themes, such as “media literacy practices,” “parent-child interactions,” or “values in family communication.”
4. Theme review. The initial themes that have been formed are reviewed against the data to ensure that they adequately represent the existing patterns. This process involves double-checking whether the data within each theme forms a coherent whole and whether the themes have clear boundaries.
5. Naming and defining themes. Once the themes are deemed valid, each theme is given a name and a clear definition to accurately and consistently represent its meaning.
6. Narrative development of analysis results. The analysis results are compiled into a meaningful, interpretive narrative that illustrates the dynamics of family communication in a digital context and relates them to the theory and objectives of the study.



Figure 1. Steps of Thematic Analysis

Source: (Scenario, 2023)

Braun & Clarke (2022) emphasize that thematic analysis is not merely a technical activity, but rather an interpretive process that demands the researcher's reflective involvement with the data (Braun V. &., 2022).

The analysis is carried out iteratively and reflectively, and is linked to theory New Media Literacy and Digital Family Communication. In addition, a pattern-matching process will be carried out as suggested by Yin (2018, pp. 136–138), namely matching the pattern of findings with the theoretical framework to strengthen internal validity.

RESULT

1. Parents' Media Literacy Practices in Selecting Kinderflix Channels

a. How to Find and Select Content

Based on research findings, most parents do not rely solely on YouTube's algorithm, but actively search for Kinderflix content manually. For example, Participants 1 and 2 used keywords such as “Kinderflix” in the YouTube Kids search bar to ensure relevant content appears. This demonstrates an awareness that the algorithm does not always display appropriate content. Participant 5 even used more specific searches, for example, “Kinderflix baby” or “Kinderflix isn't like that”, to suit the child's educational needs and family values.



Figure 2. Screenshot of Kinderflix Participant 5's YouTube Watch History

In addition to independent searches, some participants relied on recommendations from social networks. Participants 3 and 4, for example, learned about Kinderflix through the parenting community at work or through social media platforms like Instagram. Participants 6 and 8 also mentioned recommendations from friends or parenting blogs as sources of reference. Thus, content discovery practices can be divided into two broad patterns: search-based and peer-based. This demonstrates that parents' media literacy involves both technical and social strategies, combining algorithms with interpersonal judgment.



Figure 3. Screenshot of Kinderflix Participant 9's YouTube Watch History

Findings from Participants 9–16 show that searches for Kinderflix content do not rely solely on YouTube's

algorithm, but are more often conducted through manual searches and community recommendations. Participant 9, for example, said "I always look at the title and try to watch it for about a minute first, then give it to my child, "as a form of self-verification before trusting the algorithm. This demonstrates a growing awareness of digital literacy from the initial stage of access, with parents acting as the first filter.



Figure 4. Screenshot of Participant 16's Kinderflix Recommendation Chat History

Furthermore, social networks and interpersonal recommendations also play a significant role. Participant 10 discovered Kinderflix through a mothers' community on Instagram, while Participants 12 and 14 learned about it from early childhood education teacher friends and parenting Facebook groups. Participant 16 even stated, "I learned about Kinderflix from my friend, and she highly recommended it," which confirms the role of social networks as a credible reference source. This pattern shows that access to educational content is peer-driven, not only platform-driven.

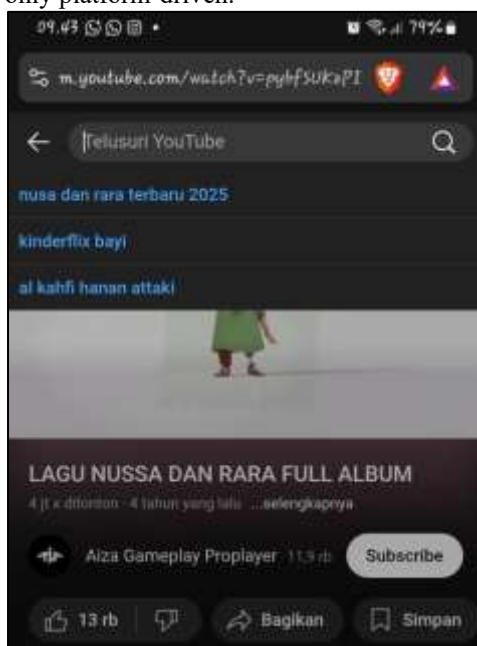


Figure 5. Screenshot of Kinderflix Participant 13's YouTube Watch History

Some participants also combined manual searches with YouTube Kids' technical features. For example, participant 13 typed "Kinderflix baby" in the search bar. Thus, it can be concluded that parents conduct selective, verification-based searches and are enriched by community recommendations. This strategy demonstrates that media literacy develops earlier than simply supervising children while they watch.

This finding aligns with research by Khiyaroh (2024), which found that parents often use parenting social media as a primary reference when selecting digital content for their children. This study confirms that peer recommendation is an important factor in the process of selecting children's media (Khiyaroh, 2024). Dewi et al. (2024) in their study showed that platform algorithms like YouTube Kids are often unreliable, so active parental involvement in content verification is crucial (Dewi, 2024).

b. Active Role of Parents

Parents in this study consistently demonstrated active involvement in mediating their children's engagement with Kinderflix. The first layer of involvement was video previewing prior to granting access. Some parents watched the initial 30 seconds to assess safety, while others viewed entire videos before adding them to playlists. This practice illustrates deliberate content filtering to prevent exposure to inappropriate material.

The second layer was co-viewing, in which parents watched alongside their children. Co-viewing functioned not only as supervision but also as an interactive process, linking video content to real-life examples and fostering dialogue. For instance, parents highlighted household objects related to the video or used viewing moments to reinforce family values, thereby strengthening both learning and emotional bonds.

The third layer involved playlist creation, which guided viewing habits and reduced reliance on algorithmic recommendations. Parents curated short, age-appropriate videos, sometimes involving children in naming channels or selecting clips, while retaining final control.

Together, previewing, co-viewing, and playlist use constituted a threefold strategy of active mediation. These practices ensured safe, relevant, and educational media exposure while balancing parental authority with child autonomy. Ultimately, parents acted as digital gatekeepers, shaping not only what their children consumed but also how they interpreted and learned from it.

c. Media Literacy Strategy

Parents applied diverse strategies to ensure Kinderflix content was safe and educational. Two dominant practices emerged: critical comparison and avoidance of inappropriate content. Parents compared Kinderflix with channels like Cocomelon, Pinkfong, or Upin-Ipin, concluding Kinderflix was calmer, clearer in language, and better aligned with Indonesian values. This comparison reflected a critical attitude toward assessing suitability and developmental needs.

Avoidance strategies included using blocking, reporting, and restricted mode to filter out unsuitable videos. Some parents also engaged children directly, teaching them to say, “Stop” when uncomfortable. Others explained why content was discontinued, turning restrictions into learning opportunities.

Additional strategies addressed technical quality, such as rejecting loud music, limiting video length to 3–5 minutes, and managing tempo to match children’s attention spans. Together, these practices reveal proactive and preventive media literacy, where parents balance technical controls with educational dialogue, cultivating children’s critical awareness and safe digital habits.

Table 1 Parents' Media Literacy Practices in Selecting Kinderflix Channels

Participants	How to Find & Select Content	Active Role (Preview, Co-viewing, Playlist)	Media Literacy Strategy
1	Manual search for the keyword “Kinderflix”	Quick preview of especially new videos	–
2	Manual search	Short previews; co-viewing while relating video content to the environment; creating playlists	Use the block/restricted mode feature to avoid inappropriate content.
3	Office community recommendations	Special playlist so that children don't open things carelessly	–
4	Community recommendations (Instagram/friends)	Selective playlist	Teach children to say “stop” if they are uncomfortable.
5	Specific manual search (“Kinderflix baby/sis nisa”)	30 second preview as quick curation	Stop the inappropriate video & give an explanation to the child
6	Recommendations from friends/parenting blogs	–	Compared to other channels; Kinderflix's rating is calmer than Baby Shark's.
7	–	Playlists are arranged according to ideal duration (3–5 minutes)	–
8	Friend/parenting blog recommendations	–	Use the technical block/report feature
9	Manual search + title verification (watch 1 minute first)	–	–
10	Recommendations for mothers' communities on Instagram	Custom playlist; limit duration to 5–7 minutes	–
11	–	Full co-viewing; splitting a long video into two sessions	Compare to Upin-Ipin (Kinderflix is softer); use ad blocker feature
12	PAUD teacher recommendations / Facebook	Preview at least 30 seconds + read comments; remove irrelevant videos from playlist	–
13	Manual search for specific keywords (“Kinderflix baby”)	Full preview of each new video before it enters the playlist	Avoid content with loud music
14	PAUD teacher recommendations / Facebook	Custom playlists; involve children in selecting videos, parents still filter	–
15	–	–	Compare to BabyBus/Pinkfong (Kinderflix is lighter &

			less exciting)
16	Recommended WhatsApp groups for PAUD mothers	Co-viewing becomes an afternoon routine; remove inappropriate videos from playlists	Preventive technical control (permanent deletion)

These results align with Wibowo's (2024) research, which specifically analyzed Kinderflix content. The study found that Kinderflix was perceived as more appropriate to local values and culture than global channels like Cocomelon or Pinkfong, due to its simpler language and clearer moral content (Wibowo, 2024). Rasmussen (2016) also emphasized that the practice of comparing content is a form of critical literacy for parents in assessing media quality (Kristiawan, 2013). This reinforces the research finding that parents need to combine technical strategies, preventative measures, and educational dialogue with their children to avoid inappropriate content.

2. Parental Considerations in Assessing the Suitability and Educational Value of Content

a. Definition of Educational Content

Parents in this study defined educational content as multidimensional, going beyond cognitive learning to include moral, emotional, and social development. Many emphasized the value of learning while playing through songs, stories, and simple concepts (Participant 1). Others highlighted content that teaches moral messages and social skills, such as empathy, politeness, and cooperation (Participant 2; Participant 3). Several parents considered actionable content important, where digital lessons connect with daily practices, such as hygiene routines or drawing activities (Participant 7). Interactive elements were also viewed as key indicators, with parents noting that children's questions, dialogue, or imitation reflect deeper learning (Participant 8; Participant 12). These findings align with Nikken and Schols (2015), who argue that parents often define educational value through both cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes. Similarly, Soraya (2025) highlights that empathy, manners, and social skills are central aspects of digital education, reinforcing parents' holistic perspective.

b. Criteria Used

Parents applied combined technical and moral criteria when assessing Kinderflix content. Language clarity and simplicity were central; long or fast-paced narratives were rejected because toddlers struggled to follow (Participant 1; Participant 10). Visual quality and pacing also mattered—parents preferred calm visuals and moderate tempo to avoid overstimulation (Participant 9; Participant 14). Moral values such as manners, empathy, and discipline were consistent benchmarks, with many parents rejecting content containing violence, insults, or slapstick humor (Participant 13; Participant 15). Repetition was valued for aiding memory and vocabulary retention, while short video durations (3–5 minutes) suited children's attention spans (Participant 5; Participant 7). Friendly, consistent characters delivering positive messages were also preferred. These findings align with Kirkorian et al. (2008), who stress language and visual clarity as essential for children's comprehension, and Rosalina (2022), who emphasizes repetition's role in strengthening moral and linguistic learning.

c. Consideration of Family Values and Social Norms

Family values and social norms served as primary filters in parents' content selection. Some applied a zero-tolerance approach, immediately blocking or reporting videos that contradicted religious or moral principles (Participant 2; Participant 10). Others adopted a more flexible stance, saving content for later if it seemed too advanced (Participant 3). Religious considerations were especially strong, with parents preferring Islamic or locally contextualized content aligned with everyday life (Participant 1; Participant 14). Beyond religion, politeness, empathy, and non-violence were emphasized, leading to rejection of content with slapstick humor, insults, or consumerist themes (Participant 8; Participant 13). Social environments also influenced decisions; some parents exchanged views in school WhatsApp groups or parenting communities (Participant 12). These practices align with Livingstone and Helsper (2008), who describe, "moral filtering" in parental mediation, and with Soraya (2025), who highlights the role of cultural and religious norms in shaping digital parenting strategies.

d. Response to Inappropriate Content

Parents responded firmly when encountering inappropriate content, though strategies varied. The most common response was to stop, block, or report videos using YouTube's technical features (Participant 1; Participant 11). Some subscribed to YouTube Premium to minimize ads. Others combined these actions with reflective dialogue, explaining to children why certain videos were discontinued to foster critical awareness (Participant 5; Participant 7). Parents also monitored children's post-viewing reactions—such as tantrums, passivity, or reduced communication—as indicators of negative influence, leading them to remove or delete content permanently (Participant 6; Participant 16). This proactive approach reflects both technical control and value-based mediation, positioning parents as active curators of digital space. These findings align with Santoso (2014), who emphasized critical dialogue as part of parental mediation, and Wright et al. (2001), who noted that evaluating children's behavioral responses is a sign of high reflective media literacy (Latifah, 2014).

Table 2 Parents' Considerations in Assessing the Suitability and Educational Value of Content

Participants	Definition of Educational Content	Content Suitability Criteria	Family/Social Value Considerations	Response to Inappropriate Content
1	Learn while playing (songs, stories, simple concepts)	Simple language, avoid long/fast narratives	Prefer Islamic content, compromise playlist with husband	Use the not interested feature, report, block comments, YouTube Premium
2	Moral messages/social	Simple audio-visual,	Zero tolerance:	Stop, replace, or report

	skills (helping, recognizing emotions)	music is not noisy	block/report inappropriate content	
3	Emotional, manners (empathy, sharing, respect)	Morals: manners, discipline	Flexible: save content to watch later	Save to watch later
4	Emphasizing manners and discipline	Visuals are not fast, music is not loud	Moral filter (manners, discipline)	No details mentioned
5	Not focused on definition, more on duration	Ideal duration 3–4 minutes	Not specifically mentioned	Stop the video + invite children to dialogue
6	Not emphasizing definition, more on technicalities	Personal notes to mark content	Personal notes as a filter	Remove content if negative effects occur
7	Content as a bridge to real activities	Repetition supports internalization	Not explicitly stated	Reflective discussion with children
8	Active interaction of children (asking, imitating)	Friendly characters, avoid slapstick	Rejecting slapstick humor, consumerist style	Observe the child's expression/behavior, remove it if it is negative.
9	Positive behavior (politeness, helping each other)	Simple visuals, avoid overactivity	Religious values as the main filter	Evaluation through behavioral changes (tantrums)
10	Clarity of language, narrator's intonation	Clear, simple language	Family values as a standard	Block/delete inappropriate content
11	Simple language, easy for children to understand	Easy to understand language	Family values as the main filter	Block channels, customize recommendations
12	Encourage children to ask questions/have a dialogue	Encourage child interaction	Use WA groups to discuss norms	Child's reaction as an indicator
13	Not emphasizing definition, more on rejecting negative content	Reject violence, insults, adult jokes	Reject content that does not conform to norms of good manners	Remove/report content
14	Educational = children actively ask questions back	Simple visuals, vocabulary repetition, local content	Choose local (contextual) content	Observe the child's reactions as evaluation signals.
15	Empathy, morals, social skills	Values of empathy, politeness	Emphasize courtesy, empathy	Remove/report inappropriate content
16	Education = empathy, togetherness, communication	Avoid harsh language, violence	Religion, empathy, communication as a filter	Evaluate if the child is passive/less communicative

Parents' firm and reflective responses to inappropriate content as described by respondents are in line with research Santoso (2014) which emphasizes that parental mediation is not only in the form of technical control (blocking, reporting), but also critical dialogue with children (Santoso, 2014). In addition, research Wright et al. (2001) emphasized that post-viewing evaluation, such as observing changes in children's behavior, is one indicator of high reflective media literacy among parents (Latifah, 2014).

3. The Dynamics of Digital Family Communication in Content Selection

a. Parent-Child Discussion Before/After Watching

Parents frequently engaged children in discussions before or after viewing Kinderflix videos, turning screen time into opportunities for reflection. After watching, many asked simple questions such as identifying favorite characters or retelling stories, which encouraged memory and communication (Participant 1; Participant 12). Others linked content to real-life activities, like practicing hygiene after a cleanliness video (Participant 4; Participant 9). Some initiated dialogue beforehand, preparing children to recognize positive or negative behaviors in characters (Participant 7). These conversations not only clarified moral messages but also bridged digital content with daily experiences. Discussions reinforced literacy, critical thinking, and value transmission within families. This practice reflects active mediation, where parents guide interpretation rather than relying solely on restrictions. Findings support Secundaputeri (2016), who showed that reflective dialogue enhances comprehension, and Oktavia (2025), who highlighted parental discussions as vital in strengthening children's critical thinking about digital media.

b. Activity Co-viewing and Active Mediation

Co-viewing was a consistent practice among parents, often integrated into daily routines such as bedtime or afternoon bonding (Participant 6; Participant 13). Far from passive accompaniment, co-viewing enabled active mediation, where parents explained video content, connected it to real-life objects, or extended lessons through creative activities like drawing or role-play (Participant 5; Participant 14). Some used Kinderflix songs to

encourage hygiene practices, while others turned videos into discussion topics at the dinner table (Participant 11; Participant 15). This approach transformed screen time into opportunities for value transmission, creativity, and family togetherness, reinforcing both educational and emotional functions. Co-viewing also became an intergenerational activity when grandparents joined, strengthening family bonds. These findings align with Albarra (2024), who noted co-viewing enhances emotional attachment and moral internalization, and Secundaputeri (2016), who emphasized that active co-viewing with dialogue and interaction is more effective for children's media literacy than passive supervision.

c. Children's Reactions When Watching

Children's responses to Kinderflix content showed active engagement rather than passive viewing. Many imitated songs, voices, or character movements, integrating them into play and creativity (Participant 3; Participant 9). Others retold stories or asked questions, demonstrating memory skills and deeper cognitive processing (Participant 7; Participant 14). Some children linked video content to daily life, such as drawing characters or practicing behaviors like cleanliness (Participant 6; Participant 9). Rewatching favorite clips was also common, reinforcing vocabulary and moral lessons (Participant 13). These reactions indicate that digital media became part of children's social and imaginative interactions, sometimes treating characters as "new friends" (Participant 11). Such findings align with Linebarger and Walker (2005), who emphasized that educational media supports language and communication through imitation and retelling, and Abnan & Depalina (2025), who showed children often reinterpret media creatively, including role-playing and artistic expression.

d. The Role of Parents

Parental roles in managing Kinderflix content varied, often shaped by negotiations between mothers and fathers. In many families, mothers acted as primary content curators, selecting playlists and filtering videos (Participant 3; Participant 7). Fathers frequently focused on screen-time regulation, enforcing consistent duration limits (Participant 6; Participant 10). Some families alternated responsibilities or discussed final selections together, reflecting collective digital parenting (Participant 8; Participant 12). Differences in strictness often led to compromises, such as agreeing on 30 minutes of daily viewing (Participant 16). In certain households, fathers also played a dominant role, particularly when working from home (Participant 15). These findings demonstrate that content curation is not an individual task but a negotiated process within families, influenced by values, routines, and resources. They align with Alamsyah (2024), who found parental negotiations, and Mutiasari et al. (2024) shape media literacy, who noted gender-based differences in media parenting styles.

e. Relationship with the Digital Parenting Community

Participation in digital parenting communities significantly enhanced parents' media literacy. Many joined WhatsApp, Facebook, or Telegram groups, exchanging playlists, recommendations, and concerns about children's digital habits (Participant 1; Participant 12). Others engaged in parenting blogs, webinars, or international forums like Reddit, reflecting diverse learning styles—from active participation to passive observation (Participant 5; Participant 8; Participant 13). Fathers were also increasingly visible, with some joining groups like "Digital Dad Indonesia," showing a shift toward shared responsibility in digital parenting (Participant 11; Participant 15). Extended family networks, such as grandparents, were sometimes included by sharing video links, reinforcing continuity of values across generations (Participant 14).

Table 3 Dynamics of Digital Family Communication in Content Selection

Participants	Before/After Watching Discussion	Co-viewing & Active Mediation Activities	Child's Reaction	The Role of Parents	Digital Parenting Community Engagement
1	Ask your child about their favorite character after watching.	Brush your teeth after watching a hygiene song	Imitate songs, characters, expressions	Mothers are more active in choosing content	Active in FB groups Digitally Savvy Parents
2	Not specific, more like a duration rule	Not mentioned in detail	Not mentioned	Father is more lenient, mother is strict → compromise	Join the parenting Telegram group
3	Reflective questions to train memory	Not mentioned in detail	Children sing and dance after watching	Mom chooses the playlist, dad monitors via WA	Not mentioned
4	Discussion before watching: moral values (naughty characters, good-bad)	Co-viewing routine before bed	Real practice: wash your hands after watching	Mothers are more dominant in curation	Join the parenting WhatsApp group
5	Post-viewing reflective questions	Combine letter videos with flashcards	Use the show as a learning material	Not mentioned	Search for online reviews without joining the discussion
6	Not mentioned	Co-viewing as special mother-child time	Children draw characters from videos	Husband is stricter about duration, mother	Active in WhatsApp groups

				is more flexible	
7	Discussion before watching (moral values of naughty characters)	Afternoon co-viewing, watching with the kids	Children retell the contents of the video	Main content curator mother	PAUD teacher community for reference
8	Post-watching discussion (asking back about the content)	Replication of scenes with toys	Child asks about a particular scene	Husband and wife alternate content selection	Join international forums (Reddit)
9	Discussion related to daily practices (throwing out trash)	Not mentioned in detail	Imitating the character's voice, singing back songs	Not mentioned	Active in the FB parenting community
10	Not mentioned	Co-viewing while playing pretend	Children actively ask questions and comment	Mom wants firm boundaries, dad is more permissive → compromise	Not mentioned
11	Not mentioned	Explain the moral message, record the child's expression	Children consider video characters as "new friends"	Not mentioned in detail	Join the Telegram group "Parenting Caring Fathers"
12	Discussion: ask children to name their favorite characters.	Routine co-viewing before bathing	Child asks while drawing	Shared roles, despite different video choices	Actively share playlists on school WA
13	Not mentioned	Co-viewing after naptime, sometimes with grandparents	Child asks to replay video for memorization	Mom chooses playlist, discusses with husband	Join the parenting webinar
14	Discussion: connect the video content with the fairy tale	Use the show to draw/role play	Children ask back, connect with real activities	Not mentioned in detail	Share the link with grandparents
15	Post-viewing reflective discussion	Use content as a discussion topic at the dinner table.	Record your child's expressions when imitating the characters.	Fathers predominantly choose content (WFH)	CommunityDigital Dad Indonesia
16	Post-watching discussion: ask about the story	Not specifically mentioned	Children actively retell stories	Maximum screen time compromise of 30 minutes	Not mentioned

Parental involvement in digital parenting communities aligns with research by Sugitanata (2024), who found that social media is an important resource for parents seeking information and recommendations related to digital parenting (Sugitanata, 2024). Research by Nurmahfudhah & Widyasari (2025) also confirms that online communities provide both emotional and practical support for parents, including in selecting educational content for children (Nurmahfudhah, 2025). This reinforces the point that parental participation in digital communities, both active and passive, is an increasingly relevant media literacy strategy in the digital parenting era.

DISCUSSIONS

1. Parental Media Literacy and Content Selection Practices

This study shows that parents' media literacy in selecting Kinderflix reflects Jenkins' (2006) New Media Literacies—access, analysis, evaluation, and creation. Parents actively searched for content via keywords or community recommendations rather than relying solely on algorithms (Participant 5; Jenkins, 2006). They analyzed titles, previews, and comments to ensure suitability (Participant 9), and evaluated content based on morality, age-appropriateness, and children's reactions (Participant 12). Some even used content creatively, encouraging drawing or role-play (Participant 6). However, the quality of literacy varied, often influenced by education and socioeconomic status, as Nikken and Oprea (2018) observed. Parents also confronted challenges from YouTube's algorithm, which prioritizes engagement over educational value (Burroughs, 2017). To address this, they applied playlists, blocking, and reflective dialogue, ensuring safe and meaningful viewing. Thus, content selection was not passive consumption but a curated process, balancing technical skills, family values, and children's developmental needs.

2. Educational Value and Age-Appropriateness from a Parental Perspective

Parents in this study defined educational value broadly, emphasizing not only cognitive learning (letters, numbers, and colors) but also moral, emotional, and social aspects (Participant 2; Participant 9). They valued content that

promoted empathy, politeness, and cooperation, while also connecting digital lessons to real-life practices such as hygiene or storytelling (Participant 4; Participant 7). Interactive content that encouraged questioning, imitation, or dialogue was considered particularly effective in fostering engagement (Participant 12; Participant 14). These perspectives reflect Livingstone's (2008) view of parental curation, where media is filtered through family values and social norms. However, critical discussions were often limited to surface-level messages, rarely addressing deeper biases or stereotypes, consistent with Honkomp-Wilkens et al. (2024). Still, reflective evaluations such as observing children's behavior after viewing helped parents judge appropriateness. Overall, educational value was interpreted as a multidimensional construct, balancing entertainment, learning, and moral development (Nikken & Schols, 2015; Soraya, 2025).

3. Digital Family Communication in Content Selection

Content selection in families was shaped by dialogue, co-viewing, and negotiation. Parents often discussed videos with children before or after viewing, using questions to reinforce memory, clarify morals, and connect content to daily life (Participant 1; Participant 9). Co-viewing was common, not only as supervision but as interactive mediation, where parents explained lessons, linked objects, or extended learning through play and drawing (Participant 5; Participant 14). Negotiations also occurred between parents: mothers often curated content, while fathers focused on screen-time limits, leading to compromises on duration or playlist rules (Participant 6; Participant 16). These practices reflect Lee's (2015) view that digital families use media as a space for negotiating values and Livingstone & Helsper's (2008) concept of active and restrictive mediation. Combining discussion, co-viewing, and rules allowed parents to balance safety, learning, and family values, transforming media use into a shared communicative process.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights parents as digital gatekeepers in selecting Kinderflix, applying media literacy through access, analysis, evaluation, and creation (Jenkins, 2006). Strategies included previews, co-viewing, playlists, and blocking to ensure safe, age-appropriate, and value-based content (Burroughs, 2017). Educational value was viewed as multidimensional, covering cognitive, moral, and social aspects (Nikken & Schols, 2015; Soraya, 2025). Family discussions, active mediation, and parental negotiations transformed viewing into opportunities for learning and value transmission (Lee, 2015; Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). Thus, content selection was not passive but a reflective, communicative process, reinforcing both education and family cohesion in the digital era.

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