

Parental communication patterns in digital parenting: A phenomenological study on smartphone usage education in rural Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The increasing use of mobile phones among children in rural areas not only raises issues of control but also calls for a redefinition of the role of parental communication in digital parenting. However, existing studies tend to position communication patterns as static categories, thus failing to explain how these patterns are constructed and interpreted within the everyday practices of family life. This study aims to examine parental communication patterns as a social process that shapes children's understanding and digital behavior. This research employs a qualitative approach using a phenomenological method conducted in Tandam Hilir I Village, Dusun VIII, Hamparan Perak District, Deli Serdang Regency. Informants were selected purposively, and data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The findings reveal that democratic communication patterns function not merely as communication strategies but as mechanisms for negotiating values between parents and children in mobile phone use. This pattern enables the development of children's reflective awareness through continuous dialogic processes. In contrast, authoritarian patterns reproduce power relations that position children as objects of control, thereby limiting the internalization of values. Meanwhile, permissive patterns reflect weak regulatory structures, resulting in the absence of boundaries in technology use practices. This study emphasizes that communication patterns in digital parenting should be understood as contextual processes of meaning construction rather than merely behavioral typologies. Therefore, the effectiveness of digital parenting is determined by parents' ability to create dialogic, reflective interactions grounded in the socio-cultural context of family life.

Keywords: *parenting; communication; parents; children; phenomenology; rural*

ABSTRAK

Peningkatan penggunaan telepon seluler pada anak di wilayah pedesaan tidak hanya menghadirkan persoalan kontrol, tetapi juga menuntut pemaknaan ulang peran komunikasi orang tua dalam pengasuhan digital. Namun, kajian yang ada masih cenderung memosisikan pola komunikasi sebagai kategori statis, sehingga belum mampu menjelaskan bagaimana pola tersebut dikonstruksi dan dimaknai dalam praktik keseharian keluarga. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pola komunikasi orang tua sebagai proses sosial yang membentuk pemahaman dan perilaku digital anak. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode fenomenologi di Desa Tandam Hilir I Dusun VIII, Kecamatan Hamparan Perak, Kabupaten Deli Serdang. Informan dipilih secara purposive, dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi, serta dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pola komunikasi demokratis tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai strategi komunikasi, tetapi sebagai mekanisme negosiasi nilai antara orang tua dan anak dalam penggunaan telepon seluler. Pola ini memungkinkan terbentuknya kesadaran reflektif anak melalui proses dialog yang berkelanjutan. Sebaliknya, pola

	<p>otoriter mereproduksi relasi kuasa yang menempatkan anak sebagai objek kontrol, sehingga membatasi proses internalisasi nilai. Sementara itu, pola permisif mencerminkan lemahnya struktur regulasi yang berdampak pada absennya batasan dalam praktik penggunaan teknologi. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa pola komunikasi dalam pengasuhan digital perlu dipahami sebagai proses konstruksi makna yang kontekstual, bukan sekadar tipologi perilaku. Dengan demikian, efektivitas pengasuhan digital ditentukan oleh kemampuan orang tua dalam menciptakan ruang interaksi yang dialogis, reflektif, dan berakar pada konteks sosial-budaya keluarga.</p>
	<p>Kata kunci: pengasuhan; komunikasi; orang tua; anak; fenomenologi; pedesaan</p>
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INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology is no longer merely an indicator of modernization, but has reshaped the structure of social relations in contemporary society (Sipiläinen *et al.*, 2026). The presence of the internet enables communication processes to occur instantly without the constraints of space and time, thereby shifting patterns of social interaction that were previously based on face-to-face encounters (Adriati, Zuhkrina and Yarah, 2024). This transformation not only affects the economic and educational sectors, but also reproduces the ways individuals build relationships, including within the institution of the family (Erokhina, 2026).

Digital technology is not neutral; rather, it carries new values, norms, and logics of interaction (García and Ramos, 2026). The younger generation has become the most active group in adopting these changes due to their proximity to technology. Mobile phones, as the primary devices for internet access, have evolved from communication tools into mediums of everyday life (Jannah and Zulfan, 2025). The use of digital technology needs to be understood as a socially meaningful practice, not merely a technical activity (Rohima, Sheila and Ramadani, 2025).

The level of mobile phone usage in Indonesia shows a very high intensity and continues to increase significantly. The Digital 2025 Global Overview Report by We Are Social notes that 98.7% of Indonesians access the internet via mobile phones. This figure places Indonesia among the countries with the highest mobile device penetration in the world. This condition indicates that mobile phones have become an integral part of social life. Their use is no longer limited to adults, but has expanded to children and adolescents (Riduan and Aminudin, 2025). This phenomenon reflects a shift toward more inclusive patterns of technology consumption (Evgin, Karabulut and Deniz, 2026).

However, this high level of usage also introduces new issues related to control, digital literacy, and power relations within families.

The use of mobile phones among adolescents, particularly high school students, has not only increased quantitatively but has also undergone a transformation in function (Adella, 2025). Mobile phones now serve as media for entertainment, social interaction, and even the construction of digital identity (Hanifa *et al.*, 2025). The high intensity of use produces complex impacts, cognitively, socially, and psychologically (Rawanita and Mardhiah, 2024). Several studies indicate that mobile phone use affects learning concentration and the quality of social interaction (Susilowati, Kumala and Amalia, 2025). Several studies indicate that mobile phone use affects learning concentration and the quality of social interaction (Syafri, 2025). The risk of mental health issues has also become a concern in digital media studies (Fikma, 2025). However, framing this phenomenon solely within a “positive and negative impacts” perspective tends to oversimplify the complexity of children’s digital practices (Aslam, Fatimah and Bahfirti, 2026).

In this context, the family does not merely function as an agent of control, but as a space for the production of meaning in technology use (Laumert, 2025). Parents no longer simply impose rules, but are involved in processes of negotiating values with their children (Damayanti, Asfar and Jama, 2024). Communication becomes the primary medium in shaping children’s understanding of digital technology. The interactions that occur are not one-way, but dialogical and dynamic (Siskawati and Munawaroh, 2026). Family communication patterns determine how values, norms, and boundaries are constructed (Ramelan, Mastuinda and Saragih, 2025). Family communication must be understood as a complex social process (Şengül and Salik, 2026). In this regard, digital parenting is not only about supervision, but also about relationships, meaning, and power (Wulandari and Lannasari, 2025).

Studies of family communication often refer to the Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT) developed by Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (Agung, 2024). This theory divides family communication into two main dimensions: conversation orientation and conformity orientation. The first dimension emphasizes openness in discussion, while the second emphasizes uniformity of values (Muttaqin and Arifin, 2024). However, in many studies, FCPT is often used descriptively as a tool for classifying communication patterns. This approach tends to overlook the dynamics of power and the negotiation of meaning within families (Fadillah and Wulandari, 2024). In fact, in the digital context, family communication undergoes more complex transformations (Dohms, Ziegler and Paschke, 2026). Therefore, a reinterpretation of the relevance of FCPT in the contemporary context is necessary.

The combination of dimensions in FCPT produces communication patterns such as authoritarian, democratic, and permissive (Rizaldi and Fatimah, 2024). The authoritarian pattern positions parents as the center of control, while the democratic pattern opens space for dialogue (Andre et al., 2024). The permissive pattern grants freedom with minimal supervision. However, this classification is insufficient to explain how these patterns are practiced in everyday life (McLaughlin, Bunting and Connolly, 2026). In the digital context, communication patterns not only reflect parenting styles but also power relations and authority structures within the family (Khodijah, 2024). It is important to view communication patterns as dynamic social practices. This approach allows for a deeper analysis of family interactions (Empula and Tumanggor, 2024).

Parental communication patterns play an important role in shaping children's behavior, especially in mobile phone use (Prokupek et al., 2026). Communication patterns are forms of interaction used by parents to convey values, rules, and messages to their children (Mainaki and Mayasari, 2024). Authoritarian communication patterns tend to limit space for dialogue and emphasize obedience. Democratic patterns provide opportunities for children to participate in the communication process. Meanwhile, permissive patterns grant freedom without clear boundaries (Puspitasari, 2024). These differences influence how children respond to the rules given. The impact can be seen in children's behavior across various aspects of life, including the use of digital technology.

A number of studies show that family communication plays a significant role in shaping children's behavior in using digital devices. Permissive communication patterns are often associated with low

levels of control, allowing children greater freedom in using mobile phones (Trager et al., 2025). Conversely, authoritarian communication patterns can create psychological pressure on children (Manfaatin and Aulia, 2024). Other studies indicate that family communication influences the intensity of children's gadget use (Cahyani and Azizah, 2024). Livingstone and Helsper in Ramadhani (2024) emphasize the importance of parental mediation in internet use. However, most studies still focus on linear relationships between communication patterns and children's behavior. This approach tends to overlook the dimensions of digital culture and children's subjective experiences. In addition, children are often positioned as passive objects in the communication process. This indicates the presence of epistemological bias in family communication studies. Therefore, a more reflective and critical approach is needed.

Another limitation in previous studies is the dominance of urban contexts as research locations. In fact, family communication practices in rural areas have distinct social and cultural characteristics. These differences include values, norms, and patterns of interaction within families. The lack of research in rural areas results in limited understanding of local contexts. Furthermore, digital transformation in rural areas does not always follow the same patterns as in urban settings. This indicates a significant research gap. Therefore, contextual research becomes highly important.

Based on this analysis, the research gap in this study lies in three main aspects. First, the lack of studies that view communication patterns as processes of meaning construction. Second, the limited research that critically examines FCPT in the digital context. Third, the scarcity of studies focusing on rural contexts. These gaps indicate the need for a more analytical and contextual approach. Thus, this study seeks to address these shortcomings. A phenomenological approach is chosen to explore the subjective experiences of families.

Based on this background, this study formulates the following research questions: (1) how are parental communication patterns constructed in digital parenting practices? (2) how are the meanings of communication negotiated between parents and children? (3) how does the rural socio-cultural context influence these communication practices? These questions emphasize aspects of process, meaning, and context. Therefore, this study is not merely descriptive, but seeks to provide a deeper understanding. This approach is expected to address the limitations of previous research.

This study provides a theoretical contribution by repositioning FCPT as a framework for critical analysis.

FCPT is no longer understood as a static typology, but as a tool for examining power relations and the negotiation of meaning. In addition, this study also contributes methodologically through the use of a phenomenological approach. This approach enables an in-depth exploration of families' subjective experiences. Contextually, this study enriches family communication research in rural areas. Thus, this study offers a comprehensive contribution. This strengthens its position within the academic literature.

The research location is in Tandam Hilir I Village, Dusun VIII, Hamparan Perak District, Deli Serdang Regency. This area has distinctive social dynamics with intensive family interactions. The use of mobile phones in this area shows a significant increase. This condition creates a relevant space for examining family communication. The rural social environment provides a different context compared to urban areas. This allows for more contextual exploration. Therefore, the research location was selected purposively.

Overall, this study aims to analyze parental communication patterns in digital parenting more deeply. The focus is not only on classifying patterns, but also on the meaning and practice of communication. This study also considers children's perspectives as active subjects. Thus, the analysis becomes more comprehensive. The results of the study are expected to provide both academic and practical contributions. In addition, this study is also relevant in addressing the challenges of the digital era. With this approach, the study is expected to offer a more critical and contextual understanding

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with an interpretative phenomenological (Heideggerian) design to understand the meaning of parents lived experiences in educating children on mobile phone use. This approach does not only focus on the description of experiences, but also on the process of interpreting meanings constructed within social and cultural contexts (Creswell, 2016; Sugiyono, 2022). Family communication experiences are understood as the result of interactions between individuals, power relations, and values that develop within the social environment. The phenomenological process is carried out through stages of bracketing (*epoché*), phenomenological reduction, and interpretation of essential meanings. The study begins with the identification of the phenomenon of mobile phone use among children, then focuses on parental communication practices in digital parenting. The main instrument is a semi-structured interview

guide designed to explore experiences, meanings, and the dynamics of family interactions. Sample questions include how parents establish rules, respond to violations, and interpret communication with their children in the use of technology.

Table 1. Informant Identity (Source: Researcher, 2026)

No	Informant Name	Age	Education	Occupation
1	Yesi	32 year	Senior High School	Housewife
2	Sugiana	45 year	Junior High School	Domestic Worker
3	Rubiyah	45 year	Senior High School	Housewife
4	Rini Ramadhani	38 year	Senior High School	Housewife
5	Nurainah	50 year	Senior High School	Housewife

The study was conducted in Tandam Hilir I Village, Dusun VIII, Hamparan Perak District, Deli Serdang Regency from February to April 2026. This location was selected purposively because it represents a rural context with a significant increase in mobile phone usage. The sampling technique used purposive sampling with the following criteria (Thomas, 2022): parents who have children under 18 years old, children who are high school students, actively involved in educating mobile phone use, residing in the research location, and willing to become informants. Based on these criteria, five main informants were obtained. This number was maintained based on the principle of data saturation, namely when the data obtained has shown repetition of themes and no longer produces new meanings. The homogeneous characteristics of the informants (Table 1), namely women (mothers), reflect the social reality that mothers have a dominant role in daily parenting in rural contexts. However, this study acknowledges the limitation of perspective due to not involving fathers and children, thus potentially producing a single-sided narrative.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation (Sugiyono and Lestari, 2021). Interviews were conducted semi-structurally with a duration of 60–90 minutes to explore experiences and meanings of communication in depth. Observation was used to understand real interaction practices between parents and children in mobile phone use. Documentation in the form of field notes and interview recordings was used to strengthen the data. Data validity was maintained through method triangulation, member checking, and audit trail documentation. In addition, the researcher applied reflexivity by positioning themselves as an

outsider who maintains critical distance from the data. The bracketing process was carried out to suspend initial assumptions, while a reflexive journal was used to identify potential bias during the research process.

Data analysis was conducted by integrating the phenomenological approach and the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014). The stages of analysis include data condensation through transcription and coding processes, phenomenological reduction to identify the essence of experience, data presentation in the form of interpretative themes, and conclusion drawing through repeated verification. The analysis does not stop at classifying communication patterns, but is directed toward interpreting experiences and the underlying social relations. Thus, the data is not merely a narrative of experience, but is interpreted as a construction of meaning within the family's socio-cultural context. This approach allows the study to reveal communication dynamics as a process of negotiating values and power relations. The results of the analysis are expected to provide a deeper understanding of digital parenting practices. With this framework, the study is not only descriptive, but also analytical and interpretative.

RESULTS

The findings of this study indicate that there are three parental communication patterns in children's mobile phone use: democratic, authoritarian, and permissive. These three patterns emerge in the daily communication practices carried out by the informants. These communication patterns are reflected in educational activities, rule-setting, as well as guidance and supervision. Variations in communication patterns can be seen in the ways messages are conveyed and in the interactions between parents and children. In addition, differences are also evident in the level of children's involvement in communication. The data were obtained from in-depth interviews with informants. All information provided reflects direct experiences in everyday life.

In the process of educating children about mobile phone use, democratic communication patterns are evident through the gradual delivery of messages. Parents use simple language that is easy for children to understand. Informant 1 stated, *"I explain it slowly, while also giving examples. I say that phones can be used, but there must be limits."* Informant 2 stated, *"I just explain it slowly, saying that using a phone is okay, but don't overdo it."* Informant 5 also stated, *"I often just talk to them and explain it nicely."* These statements indicate that communication takes place in the form of everyday conversations. In

addition, messages are delivered without pressure. The educational process occurs repeatedly in daily life.

Besides delivering messages, communication is also carried out through two-way interactions between parents and children. Informant 1 stated, *"I often ask questions so I know what they are doing."* Informant 2 said, *"I like to ask questions so they can be open with me."* Informant 5 also stated, *"So I know what they're doing and they can be open with me."* This interaction shows a process of question and answer in family communication. Parents not only convey messages, but also receive information from their children. Communication takes place in an informal atmosphere. This interaction occurs in daily activities and communication happens continuously.

In the educational process, parents also convey information about the benefits and impacts of mobile phone use. Informant 1 stated, *"Phones are good for learning, but too much can make you lazy."* Informant 2 said, *"Phones can be used for learning, but too much is not good."* Informant 5 expressed a similar statement. The information provided covers both sides of mobile phone use. The delivery is simple and based on daily experiences. Parents do not use technical terms in their explanations. Information is conveyed in the form of advice and explanation. Children gain an understanding of mobile phone use.

In permissive communication patterns, the education provided tends to be limited. Informant 3 stated, *"I just say that using a phone means you should know your limits."* This statement shows that communication is only in the form of brief advice. There is no detailed explanation in the delivery of messages. Communication interaction is also not carried out intensively. Parents do not actively discuss mobile phone use with their children. In addition, there is no continuous repetition of messages. Communication occurs at a low frequency. This indicates limited parental involvement in the educational process.

In authoritarian communication patterns, communication focuses on delivering rules. Informant 4 stated, *"I emphasize rules more."* The informant also stated that communication is not often carried out in the form of discussion. This statement shows that communication is one-way. Children receive messages without reciprocal interaction. The delivery is direct and firm. Parents act as the party who determines the rules. Communication does not involve a question-and-answer process. Communication interaction becomes limited.

In setting rules for mobile phone use, democratic communication patterns are demonstrated through the involvement of children in the decision-making process.

Informant 1 stated, “Usually I invite them to talk first, so we reach an agreement together.” Informant 2 said, “Usually I talk with them first, so we both agree.” Informant 5 also said, “Usually I invite them to talk first, so we both agree.” These statements indicate that there is a communication process before rules are established. Rules are not directly determined by parents. The communication process takes the form of conversation. Children are involved in discussions related to the rules. Thus, there is interaction in rule-setting.

The rules conveyed relate to the allocation of time for mobile phone use. Informant 1 stated, “You can’t use the phone continuously, there is time for studying and resting.” Informant 2 said, “You can’t keep using the phone, there is time for studying and helping out.” Informant 5 stated, “Don’t keep using the phone, you have to remember to study too.” The delivery of rules is done directly to the child. In addition, the rules are related to daily activities. In authoritarian communication patterns, rules are set without involving the child. Informant 4 stated, “I set the rules, the child just follows.” Meanwhile, in permissive patterns, rules are not conveyed firmly, as stated by Informant 3, “There aren’t really strict rules, just reminders.”

In guiding and supervising mobile phone use, democratic communication patterns are shown through supervision that is not carried out continuously. Informant 1 stated, “Not all the time, but occasionally I check and ask them.” Informant 2 said, “Not all the time, but sometimes I check or ask.” Informant 5 stated, “More like talking with them, and occasionally I check.” In addition, when violations occur, parents respond with warnings. Informant 1 stated, “I warn them first, I ask why.” Informant 5 said, “I warn them first, then talk with them again.” In authoritarian patterns, supervision is carried out strictly, as stated by Informant 4, “I often check their phone.” Meanwhile, in permissive patterns, supervision is minimal, as stated by Informant 3, “I don’t supervise much, I just trust them.” In addition, this study also shows that although conducted in a rural area, parents have begun to apply more open communication patterns in addressing children’s use of digital technology.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that parental communication patterns in digital parenting are not only related to how messages are delivered, but also to how the meaning of mobile phone use is constructed within family interactions. These results answer the research question that parental communication plays a role in shaping children’s understanding, compliance, and practices of mobile phone use. According to Bennett

(2026) the democratic communication patterns found in this study indicate the presence of dialogic space between parents and children. In this context, communication functions not only as a means of conveying information, but also as an interaction process that builds shared understanding. Conversely, according to Pacifico (2026) and Bayar (2026), authoritarian and permissive patterns show different forms of communication in building these relationships. Authoritarian patterns position communication as an instrument of control, while permissive patterns indicate minimal communication intervention. Thus, these findings confirm that variations in communication patterns produce different forms of interaction in digital parenting.

When related to the Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT), these findings show that the dimensions of conversation orientation and conformity orientation are not only categorical, but also contextual (Sandra, 2026). In practice, democratic communication not only reflects openness, but also demonstrates a process of negotiating meaning between parents and children. This indicates that FCPT should be understood as a dynamic framework that captures social interactions within families (Asrifan, Syahrudin and Sunra, 2026). These findings suggest that family communication in the digital context cannot be reduced to static typologies. In addition, the communication patterns that emerge are not always singular, but can change depending on the situation. Thus, FCPT in this context undergoes an expansion of meaning as an analytical tool. These findings provide a theoretical contribution by enriching the understanding of family communication dynamics in the digital era.

Compared to previous studies, these findings show both similarities and significant differences. Several previous studies state that democratic communication patterns have a positive impact on children’s behavior in using technology. The findings of this study confirm this, but also show that communication effectiveness is not only determined by the type of pattern, but by the quality of interaction that occurs. In addition, this study finds that communication within families does not always occur linearly between patterns and behavior. This differs from studies that tend to view communication relationships as simple cause-and-effect relationships (Lu et al., 2026). This study also shows that social context, particularly rural areas, influences family communication practices. Thus, the results of this study extend previous findings by adding a contextual dimension to the analysis of family communication.

Furthermore, the findings of this study show that communication in digital parenting is also related to power relations within the family. In democratic patterns, according to Janssen (2025) and Mustikasari (2025) communication allows children to participate in decision-making processes. Conversely, authoritarian patterns show parental dominance in determining rules and controlling children's behavior. Meanwhile, permissive patterns indicate weak control structures within the family. This shows that communication not only functions as an interaction process, but also as a mechanism for regulating social relations. Thus, digital parenting can be understood as a social practice involving negotiation between control and freedom. These findings enrich family communication studies by incorporating the dimension of power relations into the analysis.

The implications of this study can be viewed from theoretical, practical, and policy perspectives. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of FCPT as a more contextual analytical framework in the digital era. Practically, the results of this study highlight the importance of dialogic communication in guiding children's use of technology. Parents not only act as controllers, but also as facilitators in children's digital learning processes. From a policy perspective, these findings can serve as a basis for developing family-based digital literacy programs. Such programs need to consider the social and cultural context of communities, especially in rural areas. In addition, policy interventions need to involve parents as key actors in digital parenting. Thus, the implications of this study are not limited to the academic domain, but also extend to social practice.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered in interpreting the results. The limited number of informants results in a narrower range of experiences. In addition, all informants are mothers, so the perspectives of fathers and children are not represented in this study. This has the potential to create bias in understanding family communication dynamics comprehensively. This study was also conducted in a single rural area, so the results cannot be widely generalized. Furthermore, the data obtained are narrative in nature, based on informants' experiences. Nevertheless, this study still provides an in-depth depiction of family communication practices. These limitations are an important part of research reflection.

Based on these findings and limitations, future research is recommended to develop more comprehensive studies. Future research can involve children's perspectives as active subjects in family communication. In addition, it is important to include

the role of fathers to obtain a more balanced view. Comparative studies between rural and urban areas are also needed to examine differences in social contexts. Interdisciplinary approaches such as digital sociology and cultural studies can enrich the analysis. Longitudinal research can also be conducted to observe changes in communication patterns over time. Thus, future studies can provide broader understanding. Overall, this study confirms that family communication plays an important role in shaping contextual and dynamic digital parenting practices.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that parental communication patterns in digital parenting do not merely function as mechanisms for delivering rules, but as social processes that shape the construction of meaning regarding technology use within the family. These findings emphasize that democratic communication is significant not only because of its openness, but also because of its ability to create dialogic spaces that enable the negotiation of values between parents and children. In this context, mobile phone use is no longer positioned as an object that must be strictly controlled, but as a medium of interaction that fosters children's reflective awareness. In contrast, authoritarian and permissive patterns demonstrate limitations in building such meaning-making processes, either due to the dominance of control or the weakness of regulation. Conceptually, this study contributes to the development of Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT) by positioning it as a dynamic framework that not only classifies communication patterns, but also explains the negotiation of meaning and power relations within the family. Thus, this study adds the perspective that family communication in the digital era should be understood as a contextual, relational, and continuously evolving practice. This contribution strengthens the position of family communication studies in addressing the complexities of parenting in the technological era.

This study has global relevance as it demonstrates that the challenges of digital parenting are not homogeneous, but are influenced by social and cultural contexts, including in rural communities that have often received limited attention in the literature. This highlights that dialogic and contextual communication approaches are key in responding to the penetration of technology among children across different regions. Nevertheless, this study has limitations in terms of the number of informants, the dominance of maternal perspectives, and the absence of children's perspectives as active subjects in family communication. Therefore,

future research needs to develop more inclusive, comparative, and interdisciplinary approaches to enrich the analysis. Longitudinal studies are also necessary to observe the dynamics of changes in family communication alongside technological developments. Thus, this study not only provides empirical contributions, but also opens avenues for the development of family communication studies in broader digital contexts. Overall, this study affirms that family communication is the primary foundation in shaping reflective, adaptive, and socio-culturally grounded digital parenting practices.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The first author, Novia Elisa, was responsible for the overall research process, including conceptualizing the study, designing the research methodology, collecting and analyzing data, and drafting the manuscript. The second author, Lies Utami Efni Safitri, contributed by supervising the research process, providing critical revisions to the manuscript, and ensuring the theoretical and methodological rigor of the study. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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INFORMED CONSENT

The authors have obtained informed consent from all participants involved in this study prior to data collection. All participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants, including the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Participation was entirely voluntary, and confidentiality as well as anonymity of the participants were strictly maintained throughout the research process. Any data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. The research was conducted independently without any financial, commercial, or personal relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest. The authors also confirm that there has been no undue influence from any external parties in the design, execution, interpretation, or reporting of this study.

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