

The Implementation of Family Communication Patterns Based on the Revised Family Communication Patterns Theory in Simpang Sungai Duren Village, Muaro Jambi Regency

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Abstract: Family communication is a fundamental element in building healthy and functional interpersonal relationships among family members. This research aims to analyze the implementation of the Revised Family Communication Patterns Theory (RFCPT) in family communication patterns in Simpang Sungai Duren Village, Jambi Luar Kota District, Muaro Jambi Regency. The RFCPT theory examines communication patterns based on two main dimensions, namely conversation orientation and conformity orientation, which form four family types: consensual, pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques in the form of in-depth interviews and observations of six families with varied social backgrounds. The results show that most families have a high conversation orientation, especially in families with a better level of education, which allows for open and participatory communication. However, families with a closed, one-way communication pattern and minimal emotional involvement were still found, especially in families with a high conformity orientation. Inhibiting factors for communication include limited time together, differences in gender roles, and strong patriarchal cultural values. Digital communication media like WhatsApp are starting to be used to support long-distance communication, but they are not yet fully utilized to strengthen emotional closeness within the family. This research affirms the importance of building balanced and supportive communication patterns to create harmonious family relationships that are adaptive to modern changes, especially in rural areas.

Keywords: Conversation Orientation, Conformity Orientation, Family Communication, RFCPT

Abstrak: Komunikasi keluarga merupakan elemen mendasar dalam membangun hubungan interpersonal yang sehat dan fungsional antar anggota keluarga. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi Revised Family Communication Patterns Theory (RFCPT) dalam pola komunikasi keluarga di Desa Simpang Sungai Duren, Kecamatan Jambi Luar Kota, Kabupaten Muaro Jambi. Teori RFCPT menelaah pola komunikasi berdasarkan dua dimensi utama, yaitu orientasi percakapan dan orientasi konformitas, yang membentuk empat tipe keluarga: konsensual, pluralistik, protektif, dan laissez-faire. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara mendalam dan observasi terhadap enam keluarga dengan latar belakang sosial yang beragam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar keluarga memiliki orientasi percakapan yang tinggi, terutama pada keluarga dengan tingkat pendidikan yang lebih baik, sehingga memungkinkan komunikasi terbuka dan partisipatif. Namun, masih ditemukan keluarga dengan pola komunikasi tertutup, satu arah, dan minim keterlibatan emosional, khususnya pada keluarga dengan orientasi konformitas yang tinggi. Faktor penghambat komunikasi meliputi keterbatasan waktu bersama,

perbedaan peran gender, dan nilai budaya patriarkal yang kuat. Media komunikasi digital seperti WhatsApp mulai digunakan untuk mendukung komunikasi jarak jauh, tetapi belum sepenuhnya dimanfaatkan untuk mempererat kedekatan emosional dalam keluarga. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya membangun pola komunikasi yang seimbang dan suportif untuk menciptakan hubungan keluarga yang harmonis serta adaptif terhadap perubahan modern, khususnya di wilayah pedesaan.

Kata Kunci: Komunikasi Keluarga, Orientasi Percakapan, Orientasi Konformitas, RFCPT.

A. Introduction

The family is the smallest social unit that plays a significant role in shaping a person's character, values, and behavior.¹ Within the family, basic values such as responsibility, affection, honesty, and ways of interacting are first learned and internalized. Therefore, communication in the family is not just a tool for conveying messages, but also serves as a process of identity formation and social learning that lasts a lifetime.² Family communication acts as an emotional and structural link between family members, as well as a means of managing internal dynamics such as decision-making, conflict resolution, and the formation of norms.³

In the context of a society that continues to experience social and cultural changes, the challenge of establishing effective communication within the family is becoming increasingly complex. Lifestyle changes, work busyness, the influence of digital media, and generational differences often create communication gaps between parents and children. Healthy communication is not only about conveying messages, but also involves aspects such as openness in expressing opinions, the ability to listen empathetically, respect for differences, and constructive conflict management.⁴

In Simpang Sungai Duren Village, this challenge becomes even more pronounced as traditional family structures intersect with modern ways of interaction. Families are navigating between preserving long-held cultural values such as respect for elders and obedience and adapting to the growing influence of digital communication. Many parents, especially fathers, still hold dominant roles in decision-making, while mothers act as emotional mediators who maintain family harmony. Yet among younger, more educated families, there is a noticeable shift toward dialogic and participatory communication.⁵ This reflects what Fitzpatrick and Ritchie describe in the Revised Family Communication Patterns Theory (RFCPT) as a *conversation orientation*, which values open dialogue and emotional sharing over rigid conformity.⁶

Digital communication tools such as WhatsApp and Facebook have also started to redefine family interaction. These platforms allow family members especially those who live apart to stay emotionally connected through texts, photos, and voice notes. However, such mediated communication cannot fully replace face to face encounters that carry deeper emotional resonance. As Segrin and Flora note, digital interaction often lacks the nonverbal cues that sustain

¹ Chris Segrin and Jeanne Flora, *Family Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018), 3.

² Patricia Noller and Judith A. Feeney, *Close Relationships: Functions, Forms and Processes* (Hove: Psychology Press, 2006), 12.

³ Stephen W. Littlejohn, Karen A. Foss, and John G. Oetzel, *Theories of Human Communication*, 11th ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2017), 25.

⁴ Segrin and Flora, *Family Communication*, 45.

⁵ Ascan F. Koerner and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, "Family Communication Patterns Theory: A Social Cognitive Approach," in *Engaging Theories in Interpersonal Communication*, ed. Leslie A. Baxter and Dawn O. Braithwaite (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2008), 50–65.

⁶ Mary Anne Fitzpatrick and L. Ritchie, "Communication Schemata within the Family: Multiple Perspectives on Family Interaction," *Human Communication Research* 15, no. 1 (1988): 21–41.

empathy and intimacy.⁷ Hence, rural families must learn to integrate technology without eroding the warmth of direct communication

This phenomenon is also reflected in family life in Simpang Sungai Duren Village, Jambi Luar Kota District, Muaro Jambi Regency. This village shows a diversity of family communication patterns that reflect the meeting between strong local cultural values and the influence of modernization. Some families tend to maintain traditional communication patterns that are hierarchical and one-way, where parents dominate conversations and decisions without much involving the children. This is still reinforced by patriarchal cultural values that position the father as the center of authority.⁸ However, on the other hand, there are also families who are starting to adopt more open and participatory communication patterns, especially among young families with higher levels of education and exposure to information technology.

To understand the dynamics of family communication in a more in-depth and structured way, a theoretical approach is essential. One of the most relevant approaches is the Revised Family Communication Patterns Theory (RFCPT) developed by Fitzpatrick and Ritchie.⁹ RFCPT provides a strong conceptual framework for analyzing how families form their internal communication structures and how these structures influence the relationship patterns between family members.

B. Theoretical Review

The Revised Family Communication Patterns Theory (RFCPT), developed by Fitzpatrick and Ritchie, serves as the conceptual basis of this study. The theory explains how families shape their communication patterns through two main tendencies that influence the way they talk and make decisions.

The first tendency is conversation orientation, which refers to the extent to which families engage in discussion, exchange ideas, and create space for open dialogue. The second tendency is conformity orientation, which reflects the degree to which families emphasize obedience, uniformity of attitudes, and respect for parental authority. These two tendencies produce four family communication types, namely consensual, pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire, each representing a different way families organize relationships and everyday conversations.

In this research, RFCPT is used as a tool to understand how families in Simpang Sungai Duren Village communicate in their daily lives. Through this framework, the researcher is able to observe how cultural values, the division of roles between parents and children, and intergenerational dynamics shape the communication patterns that emerge. By positioning the field findings within the RFCPT framework, this study provides a clearer explanation of the variations in communication practices found in the rural context.

C. Methods

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive method. The choice of this methodology is based on the necessity to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of the complexity of family communication patterns within the specific social and cultural context of Simpang Sungai Duren Village. The qualitative approach allows researchers to interpret how family members subjectively construct and experience their daily interactions.

The primary data source for this study is six families residing in Simpang Sungai Duren Village, Jambi Luar Kota District, Muaro Jambi Regency. The selection of respondents was conducted using a purposive sampling technique. These six families were intentionally chosen based on variations in social, economic, and educational backgrounds, aimed at ensuring diversity in perspectives and communication patterns that could be analyzed.

⁷ Chris Segrin and Jeanne Flora, *Family Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018).

⁸ Jack M. McLeod and Steven H. Chaffee, "The Construction of Social Reality," in *The Social Influence Processes*, ed. J. Tedeschi (Chicago: Aldine, 1974), 54.

⁹ Mary Anne Fitzpatrick and L. Ritchie, "Communication Schemata within the Family: Multiple Perspectives on Family Interaction," *Human Communication Research* 15, no. 1 (1988): 23.

Data collection was carried out through two main, complementary techniques. First, In-depth Interviews were conducted with key family members (parents and children) to elicit verbal information regarding interaction dynamics, decision-making processes, conflict resolution, and their views on family communication. Second, Direct Observation was utilized to document non-verbal interactions, natural communication rhythms, and the situational context that shapes communication in the household on a daily basis.

The collected data were subsequently processed using a thematic analysis technique. This analytical process was conceptually framed by the Revised Family Communication Patterns Theory (RFCPT), developed by Fitzpatrick and Ritchie. The RFCPT framework was used to classify the interaction data found in the field into four categories of family communication patterns consensual, pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire.

D. Results and Discussion

1. Family Communication in Daily Life

The results of interviews and observations of six families in Simpang Sungai Duren Village show that the communication patterns formed are greatly influenced by daily situations, gender roles, and the structure of relationships between family members. Communication in the family takes various forms: from direct conversations when gathering at home, communication through digital media such as mobile phones, to symbolic non-verbal interactions such as gestures and facial expressions. Generally, relaxed times such as after dinner or when relaxing in the family room are the main moments for interpersonal communication. The mother has an important role as the initiator of conversation, especially in matters related to the child's daily life, such as education, health, and social relationships. The mother's role in family communication tends to be more expressive and empathetic, which indicates that emotionally, the mother is the main binder of interpersonal relationships at home.¹⁰

On the other hand, the father tends to take the position of authority and final decision-maker, especially in matters of finance, house rules, and behavior guidance.¹¹ Fathers are generally not very active in daily conversations except in formal situations such as giving advice or conveying important decisions. This difference illustrates a vertical communication structure, although in some families, this role is starting to change towards a more egalitarian pattern along with increasing education and openness to information.¹²

The research also discovered that the communication rhythm within each household reflects their economic and educational background. Families in which both parents work tend to experience time constraints that limit their daily interactions. However, they often replace this limitation by communicating through instant messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, maintaining emotional presence even when physically distant.¹³ This adaptation shows that communication in modern rural families is not solely dependent on physical proximity but on emotional availability and mutual trust.

Most of the families encountered showed a tendency for a warm and open communication pattern, where children have room to express their opinions. This is usually found in families with a middle to high educational background. However, there are also families who show a tendency to be closed and have minimal discussion, especially when discussing personal problems or issues that are considered sensitive. In such families, communication is one-way, and the dominance of parents (especially the father) in conversations causes children to be passive and reluctant to express their views openly. Inhibiting Factors In Family Communication.¹⁴

¹⁰ Patricia Noller and Judith A. Feeney, *Close Relationships*, 45.

¹¹ Segrin and Flora, *Family Communication*, 82.

¹² Littlejohn, Foss, and Oetzel, *Theories of Human Communication*, 156.

¹³ Chris Segrin and Jeanne Flora, *Family Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018).

¹⁴ Segrin and Flora, *Family Communication*, 91.

This finding aligns with Koerner and Fitzpatrick's classification, where families with high conformity orientation emphasize respect, obedience, and control, while those with high conversation orientation promote openness and discussion.¹⁵ These orientations influence not only how messages are delivered but also how emotions are managed within families. Children raised in high conversation-oriented environments often demonstrate better emotional regulation, empathy, and social adaptability compared to those raised under authoritarian systems.¹⁶

2. Inhibiting Factors In Family Communication

Communication in the family does not always run smoothly. This research identified several inhibiting factors that influence the quality of interpersonal communication between family members. First, the busyness of parents, especially in working and managing household affairs, makes time for talking together very limited.¹⁷ This causes a decrease in the frequency of quality communication, especially that which is emotional and reflective.

Second, the imbalance of roles in communication is a significant barrier. In some cases, only one party is active (usually the parents), while the children are more passive. When the dominance of communication does not give room for the child's opinion, the interaction becomes unbalanced and hinders the development of the child's own communication skills.¹⁸

Third, the local culture that still places the father as the center of family authority also has an impact on the formation of an authoritarian communication pattern.¹⁹ In a culture that emphasizes respect without question for parents, discussion or differences of opinion are often considered a form of rebellion, not participation.

The patriarchal values embedded in local society make many children hesitate to speak their minds. Adolescents, especially daughters, tend to avoid direct confrontation, fearing that their opinions may be interpreted as disrespect.²⁰ This dynamic reflects what Noller and Feeney describe as "relational silence," where avoidance of conflict becomes a strategy to preserve harmony, yet over time may create emotional distance within the family.²¹

Fourth, although access to communication technology such as mobile phones is available, communication media have not been optimally utilized to build emotional closeness²². The media is only used as a tool for exchanging practical information, not as a means of building a more psychologically and effectively profound relationship.

In addition, gender expectations often shape communication roles. Mothers are expected to be nurturing and emotionally expressive, while fathers are seen as authoritative and rational.²³ These roles, while culturally endorsed, may limit flexibility and mutual empathy. As modernization increases, younger families begin to challenge these divisions by sharing both emotional and managerial responsibilities, indicating a gradual cultural transformation.

¹⁵ Ascan F. Koerner and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, "Family Communication Patterns Theory: A Social Cognitive Approach," in *Engaging Theories in Interpersonal Communication*, ed. Leslie A. Baxter and Dawn O. Braithwaite (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2008), 50–65.

¹⁶ Mary Anne Fitzpatrick and L. Ritchie, "Communication Schemata within the Family," *Human Communication Research* 15, no. 1 (1988): 21–41.

¹⁷ Noller and Feeney, *Close Relationships*, 67.

¹⁸ Segrin and Flora, *Family Communication*, 102.

¹⁹ McLeod and Chaffee, "The Construction of Social Reality," 54.

²⁰ Eka Oktaviana Putri, field interview, Simpang Sungai Duren, 2024.

²¹ Patricia Noller and Judith Feeney, *Close Relationships: Functions, Forms and Processes* (Hove: Psychology Press, 2006).

²² Segrin and Flora, *Family Communication*, 135.

²³ Stephen W. Littlejohn, Karen A. Foss, and John G. Oetzel, *Theories of Human Communication*, 11th ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2017).

3. Classification of Communication Patterns Based on RFCPT

Using the RFCPT approach, the six families in this study were classified into four main patterns:

- a) Consensual Families: Show open communication but still emphasize agreement and family values that must be maintained. Open discussions are held, but the final decision still refers to family norms.²⁴
- b) Pluralistic Families: Have a high conversation orientation and low conformity. Children are free to express their opinions and are often involved in decision-making. These families generally have warm and egalitarian relationships.²⁵
- c) Protective Families: Communication tends to be one-way. Parents set rules and decisions without giving much room for dialogue. Children are more likely to accept without asking many questions.²⁶
- d) Laissez-faire Families: Low in both conversation and conformity orientation. Family members rarely interact in depth. Each is busy with personal activities and has minimal emotional involvement.²⁷

In practice, these four family types were not found in a rigid or isolated form but rather as fluid orientations that overlap depending on context and situation. For example, several families demonstrated a combination of consensual and pluralistic patterns encouraging discussion among members but maintaining collective decision making that prioritizes family harmony. This hybrid model reflects the adaptive nature of Jambi's rural families, where traditional respect for elders coexists with the younger generation's growing assertiveness in communication.²⁸

In consensual families, openness is balanced with deference. Children are allowed to share opinions, but only insofar as they do not contradict core family principles. This indicates that the function of communication is not merely informational but also normative serving to reproduce values across generations.²⁹ Such families usually exhibit strong cohesion, emotional intimacy, and a collective sense of identity. However, excessive emphasis on harmony can sometimes suppress honest disagreement, leading to what Fitzpatrick and Ritchie describe as "surface consensus."

The pluralistic families observed in this study typically belong to households where both parents possess higher education levels or professional occupations. These families often value mutual respect and independent thinking, allowing children to take part in daily decision-making from school matters to household responsibilities. This openness cultivates confidence, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving ability among children.³⁰ The interaction pattern mirrors Fitzpatrick's concept of conversation orientation, which emphasizes that meaning is co-constructed rather than imposed.³¹

Interestingly, protective families were found to be the most prevalent in the village, especially among those with traditional occupations such as farming or trading. These families maintain strict hierarchy, where the father is considered the central authority and the final decision-maker. Communication mainly functions as a top-down directive. Although such systems

²⁴ Fitzpatrick and Ritchie, "Communication Schemata," 23.

²⁵ Koerner and Fitzpatrick, "Family Communication Patterns Theory," 56.

²⁶ Fitzpatrick and Ritchie, "Communication Schemata," 29.

²⁷ Koerner and Fitzpatrick, "Family Communication Patterns Theory," 60.

²⁸ Ascan F. Koerner and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, "Family Communication Patterns Theory: A Social Cognitive Approach," in *Engaging Theories in Interpersonal Communication*, ed. Leslie A. Baxter and Dawn O. Braithwaite (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2008), 50–65.

²⁹ Mary Anne Fitzpatrick and L. Ritchie, "Communication Schemata within the Family: Multiple Perspectives on Family Interaction," *Human Communication Research* 15, no. 1 (1988): 21–41.

³⁰ Chris Segrin and Jeanne Flora, *Family Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018).

³¹ Stephen W. Littlejohn, Karen A. Foss, and John G. Oetzel, *Theories of Human Communication*, 11th ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2017).

preserve respect and discipline, they limit emotional expressiveness and spontaneous dialogue.³² Many children in this type of household confessed during interviews that they rarely discussed personal issues with their fathers but were more comfortable confiding in their mothers. This reflects the gendered division of emotional labor still embedded in local culture.

As for *laissez-faire* families, they were relatively rare but found in families where parents were extremely busy or emotionally distant. Members of this type often coexist in the same household without meaningful interaction. Conversations are limited to instrumental matters such as chores or finances. The absence of regular family time and shared activities leads to minimal cohesion and weak emotional bonds. According to Segrin and Flora, such communication patterns can contribute to feelings of isolation and detachment within the family system.³³

Another noteworthy finding is the transitional nature of some families that move between types over time. For instance, a family may begin as protective when children are young but evolve toward a consensual or pluralistic style as children mature and parents gain exposure to modern communication norms. This shows that RFCPT classifications are not fixed labels but dynamic indicators of relational development.³⁴

From a sociocultural perspective, these communication types also correspond with the moral teachings embedded in Jambi's local wisdom. Values such as *tenggang rasa* (mutual respect) and *musyawarah mufakat* (deliberation and consensus) resonate strongly with the consensual pattern, where open dialogue occurs within the boundaries of shared ethics.³⁵ In contrast, protective patterns echo hierarchical traditions rooted in adat Melayu Jambi, where authority and seniority command respect. The persistence of these values illustrates how cultural frameworks continue to shape interpersonal interaction even in the face of modernization.

Finally, the analysis of communication patterns through RFCPT underscores the importance of flexibility. Families that successfully integrate conversation and conformity orientations demonstrate higher resilience in dealing with conflict, financial pressure, or generational differences.³⁶ As Fitzpatrick and Koerner assert, "healthy families do not eliminate differences they manage them constructively".³⁷ Therefore, understanding these classifications not as static categories but as adaptive processes provides a more realistic portrayal of family life in rural Indonesia.

In addition, the classification of communication patterns through RFCPT can also serve as a foundation for understanding broader social transformations in rural Indonesia. In Simpang Sungai Duren Village, communication style is not only a reflection of personality or education level but also a mirror of the changing social structure itself. The transition from an agricultural-based to a more diversified economy has encouraged families to adopt more adaptive and flexible forms of interaction. For instance, children who receive education in urban schools tend to bring new perspectives home, introducing vocabulary and reasoning styles that differ from traditional norms. These exchanges gradually reshape intergenerational communication dynamics, bridging the gap between conventional respect and modern expression.³⁸

Moreover, the findings demonstrate that gender plays a pivotal role in shaping family communication orientation. In many Jambi families, mothers act as the "emotional translators," converting tension into understanding through empathetic dialogue. Fathers, meanwhile, often embody the "structural voice," providing boundaries and direction. When these roles operate in

³² Eka Oktaviana Putri, field interview, Simpang Sungai Duren, 2024.

³³ Segrin and Flora, *Family Communication*, 2nd ed.

³⁴ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2018).

³⁵ Patricia Noller and Judith Feeney, *Close Relationships: Functions, Forms and Processes* (Hove: Psychology Press, 2006).

³⁶ Koerner and Fitzpatrick, *Family Communication Patterns Theory*.

³⁷ Fitzpatrick and Ritchie, *Human Communication Research*, 1988.

³⁸ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2018).

balance, the family system achieves both emotional security and behavioral discipline.³⁹ However, when either role dominates excessively, communication imbalance occurs leading to either emotional dependency or authoritarian rigidity. Such observations are consistent with Segrin and Flora's assertion that gendered emotional labor influences family satisfaction more significantly than socioeconomic status.⁴⁰

The adaptability of communication also depends on the presence of what Fitzpatrick terms *relational schema* a set of internalized expectations that guide how family members interpret and respond to one another.⁴¹ In families with high relational schema awareness, misunderstandings are less likely to escalate into conflict because members have developed implicit strategies for repair and empathy. For instance, several respondents in this study reported using humor or storytelling to diffuse tension during disagreements. This supports Koerner's claim that "conversation-oriented families are inherently resilient because they normalize dialogue even amid disagreement."⁴²

Finally, from a theoretical standpoint, this research reaffirms that RFCPT remains highly relevant for analyzing family communication in non Western contexts. While the theory originated in Western societies, its flexibility allows adaptation to collectivist cultures like Indonesia. The balance between *conversation* and *conformity* is not a binary opposition but a continuous negotiation shaped by cultural, economic, and technological change.⁴³ This insight opens opportunities for future research to integrate local wisdom and intercultural perspectives into the development of communication theory, emphasizing that every family no matter how small or traditional is part of a broader dialogue between culture and modernity.⁴⁴

The classification analysis also revealed that educational level is closely tied to openness in communication. Families with college-educated parents were generally categorized as pluralistic or consensual, while those with lower education levels often fit protective or laissez-faire types.⁴⁵ Occupational factors also played a role: families in professional or entrepreneurial fields tended to maintain continuous dialogue to coordinate daily responsibilities, whereas those in agricultural or labor sectors practiced more structured, top-down communication.⁴⁶

These findings show that family communication patterns are highly influenced by educational background, occupation, cultural values, and previous communication experiences within the family.

4. Communication Media in The Family

Along with the rapid development of information technology, some families in Simpang Sungai Duren Village have started to use digital platforms such as WhatsApp as a means of communication, especially when family members are in different places.⁴⁷ Services such as text messages, voice calls, and family chat groups are used to convey information about daily activities, agendas, and even reminder messages.

³⁹ Patricia Noller and Judith Feeney, *Close Relationships: Functions, Forms and Processes* (Hove: Psychology Press, 2006).

⁴⁰ Chris Segrin and Jeanne Flora, *Family Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018).

⁴¹ Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, *Between Husbands and Wives: Communication in Marriage* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1988).

⁴² Ascan F. Koerner, "Theoretical Developments in Family Communication," *Journal of Family Communication* 6, no. 1 (2006): 7–12.

⁴³ Stephen W. Littlejohn, Karen A. Foss, and John G. Oetzel, *Theories of Human Communication*, 11th ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2017).

⁴⁴ Fitzpatrick and Ritchie, *Human Communication Research*, 1988

⁴⁵ Fitzpatrick and Ritchie, *Human Communication Research*, 1988.

⁴⁶ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2018).

⁴⁷ Segrin and Flora, *Family Communication*, 142.

Although this media is effective in facilitating the delivery of practical information, its use has not been fully utilized to establish emotional closeness⁴⁸. More personal and in-depth interactions are still more often carried out directly, indicating that face-to-face communication is still seen as the most effective way to convey feelings, warmth, and emotional support.

However, some families have developed creative ways to use digital media to strengthen bonds for example, sharing motivational messages, sending voice prayers, or exchanging photos of family activities. These symbolic gestures foster a sense of presence even in physical absence.⁴⁹ As Segrin and Flora explain, mediated affection can sustain intimacy when combined with consistent interpersonal engagement. Thus, the interplay between online and offline communication has become an essential strategy for maintaining emotional continuity in modern family life.⁵⁰

In addition, there is also a tendency in some families to use social media such as Facebook and TikTok as a means of entertainment together. However, not all families use it as a medium for active interaction. In more open families, digital media are sometimes used to share stories, photos of activities, or give light comments to each other, which indirectly helps to strengthen the relationships between family members.

The study also found that older generations especially grandparents tend to rely on traditional media such as direct conversation, religious gatherings, or neighborhood visits. Their limited digital literacy means that they depend on younger family members to mediate communication with distant relatives. In this sense, children and grandchildren play a new communicative role as “digital translators” who help bridge generational gaps.⁵¹ This transformation shows how technology reshapes family structures: not only by changing how people interact but also by redefining who holds communicative power within the household.

Lastly, even though the adoption of media technology offers many benefits, it also raises the risk of emotional detachment if overused. Several respondents admitted that family members often sat together while everyone was busy with their own phones. Such habits reduce the quality of interpersonal engagement and weaken empathy. Therefore, balancing digital and physical presence is crucial. Families who consciously schedule “offline time,” such as shared meals or evening talks, are able to maintain deeper emotional bonds and minimize misunderstandings.⁵²

Overall, the integration of digital media into family life in Simpang Sungai Duren Village illustrates the complex role of technology, which can both strengthen and divide family relationships. When used with awareness, empathy, and mutual respect, digital media can serve as an essential means of maintaining emotional warmth, continuity in communication, and cultural connection across generations. For instance, children who have moved away for work or study can stay in touch with their parents through video calls or messaging, preserving a sense of family closeness despite physical distance. On the other hand, without clear boundaries and mindful usage, technology may create emotional distance, as family members may feel more comfortable interacting through screens rather than face-to-face. Therefore, families need to view communication media as an extension of love, care, and responsibility, rather than a substitute for physical presence. The ability to balance warm, in-person interactions with digital communication represents the next stage of family adaptation, allowing them to remain close and harmonious in an increasingly connected and digital world.⁵³

⁴⁸ Noller and Feeney, *Close Relationships*, 70.

⁴⁹ Segrin and Flora, *Family Communication*, 2nd ed.

⁵⁰ Littlejohn, Foss, and Oetzel, *Theories of Human Communication*, 11th ed.

⁵¹ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2018).

⁵² Segrin and Flora, *Family Communication*, 2nd ed.

⁵³ Chris Segrin and Jeanne Flora, *Family Communication*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2018).

E. Conclusion

This research concludes that family communication patterns in Simpang Sungai Duren Village are significantly influenced by both conversation and conformity orientations. Families with high conversation orientation foster open and supportive interactions, while high conformity orientation tends to limit children's participation. The findings highlight the importance of fostering balanced communication patterns and optimizing both direct and digital media to strengthen family relationships.

This research highlights that family communication today is no longer confined to the home but extends to digital space. The ability of families to combine traditional values such as respect, affection, and mutual care with modern media literacy becomes the key to maintaining cohesion. The study also reinforces the importance of dialogic communication as the foundation for emotional resilience, enabling family members to remain connected despite distance or generational differences.⁵⁴ In this sense, communication is not only an act of speaking and listening but also an ongoing cultural practice that preserves the moral heartbeat of the community.

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