A Descriptive Study Of Long Distance Family Communication By Whatsapp at PPM RJ Bandung

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Abstract

Human communication begins with family communication. Because the family is the most significant group in a community, such communication is crucial for the well-being of society, and family contact is essential to a child's existence. When youngsters leave their hometown to further their education, they feel estranged from their relatives. However, the advent of social media platforms such as WhatsApp allows parents and children to communicate. The goal of this study was to find out how PPM RJ Bandung students and parents connect via WhatsApp and what hurdles they encountered. This study employed quantitative methods and a descriptive research design. Questionnaires were distributed to 104 respondents to collect research data. The census sample technique was employed in this study on students at PPM RJ Bandung 2023. Primary data were gathered using questionnaires, while secondary data were obtained through previous research, books, and the internet. Descriptive data analysis was employed as a data analysis technique. This value demonstrates that communication through WhatsApp is situated in two categories: advantages and disadvantages. Each category is characterized by specific indicators, such as Easy to Use, Exchange Information, Share Stories and Photos, Difficult Expressing Emotions, Limitation to Building Interpersonal, and Signal. The data revealed that the portrayal of long-distance family communication using WhatsApp at PPM RJ Bandung with this one variable falls into the "good category" with a percentage of 77.1%.

Keywords-long-distance family communication by WhatsApp

Abstrak

Komunikasi manusia dimulai dengan komunikasi keluarga. Karena keluarga adalah kelompok yang paling signifikan dalam suatu komunitas, komunikasi semacam itu sangat penting untuk kesejahteraan masyarakat, dan kontak keluarga sangat penting untuk keberadaan seorang anak. Ketika anak-anak muda meninggalkan kampung halamannya untuk melanjutkan pendidikan, mereka merasa terasing dari kerabatnya. Namun, munculnya platform media sosial seperti WhatsApp memungkinkan orang tua dan anak berkomunikasi. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana siswa dan orang tua siswa PPM RJ Bandung terhubung melalui WhatsApp dan kendala apa yang mereka temui. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dan desain penelitian deskriptif. Kuesioner dibagikan kepada 104 responden untuk mengumpulkan data penelitian. Teknik sampel sensus digunakan dalam penelitian ini pada siswa di PPM RJ Bandung tahun 2023. Data primer dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan kuesioner, sedangkan data sekunder diperoleh melalui penelitian sebelumnya, buku, dan internet. Analisis data deskriptif digunakan sebagai teknik analisis data. Nilai ini menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi melalui WhatsApp terletak pada dua kategori: kelebihan dan kekurangan. Setiap kategori ditandai dengan indikator tertentu, seperti Mudah Digunakan, Bertukar Informasi, Berbagi Cerita dan Foto, Sulit Mengekspresikan Emosi, Batasan Membangun Interpersonal, dan Sinyal. Dari data tersebut terungkap bahwa gambaran komunikasi keluarga jarak jauh menggunakan WhatsApp di PPM RJ Bandung dengan variabel yang satu ini masuk dalam kategori "baik" dengan persentase sebesar 77,1%.

Kata Kunci-komunikasi keluarga jarak jauh melalui WhatsApp

I. INTRODUCTION

Interacting with other people to communicate information such as ideas and thoughts in order to understand each other is what communication entails. Human communication begins with communication among families (Wahyudi & Kurniadi, 2022). Communication is necessary in a family to ensure that each member feels a sense of mutual

dependency. Because family is the core group in a community, such communication is essential for society's well-being. Family communication is an important factor in child's life. Family communication is supposed to influence a child's academic performance (Latar, 2021). Families provide the most extensive and meaningful relationship, particularly when it comes to raising and nurturing children. A nuclear family consists of a father, a mother, and one or more children (Berger & Carlson, 2020).

As children get older, their communication styles change (Paujiah et al., 2022). Some choose to leave their hometown in order to better their education, which is a common reason for young adults who go to attend a favourite university or experience independent life (Al Qadri, 2020). As a result, many children are physically separated from their parents and live far away. However, because of the rapid development of information technology, which has resulted in improved communication, this separation is no longer a major concern in today's world. Parents and children can still communicate with each other via social media, especially with the growth of social media on the internet (Najmudin et al., 2023).

The communication paradigm inside families has undergone quick and major changes in the period of the Industry 4.0 revolution. Even if children and parents are not in the same place, they can communicate effortlessly (Saleh et al., 2020). Social media today has a significant impact on society. It serves as a means of communication, facilitating interaction among people. Humans are social beings that communicate through various means of interaction, and media plays an important role in this process (Faisal, 2020). The advancement of information technology, particularly social media, has transformed face-to-face interactions into online interactions. Through virtual interactions, people now have more efficient and alternative ways to communicate (Zis et al., 2021).

People can readily contact others through social media and online interaction. Individuals or groups can communicate more easily through social media. To facilitate these contacts, several social media programs such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Line are available (St Syahrah et al., 2020). According to an academic survey Dewi et al., (2022), WhatsApp is the most preferred instant messaging social media app among parents for interacting with their children who are studying away from home.
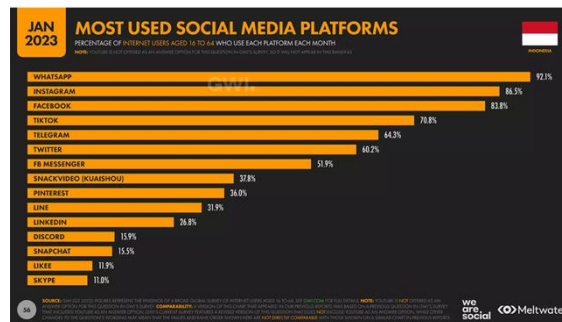

Figure 1.1 Bar Chart of Social Media users in Indonesia
Source: tekno.compas.com

According to a survey of PPM RJ Bandung students, the majority of students use social media platforms like WhatsApp to solve distance-related problems. Tekno.com also presents data from We Are Social in January 2023, which shows that the 'Most Used Social Media Platforms' reach more than 92% of people via the WhatsApp platform. This proves that they communicate via WhatsApp.

Furthermore, choosing WhatsApp as the research focus was not only about who uses the application but also about describing how Roudhotul Jannah students Islamic boarding school use WhatsApp to communicate with their families in distant locations.

As a result, researchers conducted a presurvey activity to boost self-confidence in the subject of my research at PPM RJ Bandung on May 11, 2023. The researcher conducted a pre-survey of 104 people (the total population is 104 students), and the 104 individuals reported that all of them use WhatsApp as a communication tool to connect with their families, particularly their parents. According to the statistics reported in the questionnaire survey, PPM RJ Bandung students used WhatsApp as their main communication medium.

Figure 1. 2 Pre-Survey Report "a Descriptive Long Distance Family Communication by WhatsApp at PPM RJ Bandung"
Source: Processed by author

Several studies, however, have found that communication problems within families separated by distance, such as between parents and college students living away from home, often encounter problems (Faradian, 2019). For example, a study by Sari and Fitri (2018) found that even when faced with constraints that impede family communication, college students who are separated from their parents by distance still communicate remotely. There are always obstacles that college students living away from home and their parents confront during communication, such as unstable signals, distance, hectic schedules, and differing opinions (Anggraeni, 2021). Furthermore, college students who live away from home run into changes in their communication behaviour with their parents. This is owing to their increasingly active college and organizational activities, which make communication with their parents difficult and infrequent (Uci, 2023). All subjects experience changes in communication, such as in intensity, style, and topics, with their parents. These changes can lead to conflicts in the relationship between college students and their parents.

Because of the prevalence of that matter, family communication has become an important topic to study, particularly among students who study abroad and use social media as a communication tool. It may be stated that communication problems in families with children who live far away bring benefits in the area of communication science, particularly in family communication in the digital era anytime and everywhere (Haleem et al., 2022). Parents and children who live far apart can communicate whenever they want, especially with the media, which not only produces sound but also video. Students who live far away are no longer required to return home on a regular basis. Video calls allow students and their parents to communicate directly (Tarigan, 2018). This phenomenon is an engaging part to be studied, particularly in terms of family communication between parents and students living far away through the use of social media. The above explanation of the tendency of the impact of social media (disadvantages) on family connections has been researched. As a result, the description of "a Descriptive Study of Long Distance Family Communication by WhatsApp at PPM RJ Bandung"(an Islamic Boarding School for College Students) will be discussed in this study. The researcher intends to present an overview of college students' communication experiences with their parents via the WhatsApp application. In 2023, the data will be obtained from the questionnaire responses of PPM RJ Bandung students.

A. Problem Identification

Several issues can be recognised based on the problem outlined above:
1. How do PPM RJ Bandung students communicate with their parents through WhatsApp, especially in long-distance situations?
2. What are the obstacles that arise in the communication between PPM RJ Bandung students and their parents when using WhatsApp?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW
A. Family Communication

Turner & West (2017) emphasize Family communication is an essential element in establishing and maintaining healthy relationships among family members. Through communication, family members can understand each other, convey needs and expectations, resolve conflicts, and foster trust. Effective communication within the family can also enhance the quality of relationships, strengthen family bonds, and create a warm and supportive environment. Turner & West (2017) also stated that the significance of communication within the family lies in ensuring that each family

member feels heard, respected, and actively engaged in the family's life. Good communication also aids in problem-solving, prevents conflicts, and fosters a positive climate within the family.

Communication within the family can take place through various channels, such as face-to-face conversations, telephone calls, text messages, emails, or social media. Additionally, nonverbal communication, such as eye contact, body language, touch, and facial expressions, plays a crucial role in conveying messages and expressing emotions within the family (Allan et al., n.d.).

B. Social Media

Social media is a digital communication platform that enables users to interact and share content with others online. One of the popular social media platforms for long-distance family communication is WhatsApp. WhatsApp is an instant messaging application that allows users to send text messages, images, videos, voice calls, and video calls for free over an internet connection. This application has become a crucial communication tool for families separated by geographic distance, facilitating real-time interaction and information exchange among family members in different locations (Kaplan & Mazurek, 2018).

The use of WhatsApp in long-distance family communication provides several advantages. Firstly, its user-friendly interface makes it an ideal choice for various age groups, including older generations who may have limited technological experience. Secondly, WhatsApp enables swift and efficient exchange of information, allowing families to stay connected and stay updated about distant family members.

1. WhatsApp

In the current era of social media, there are various communication options available for families, and one of them is WhatsApp(Jabbar et al., 2021). Based on the findings of the research conducted at PPM RJ Bandung in 2023, it was revealed that WhatsApp is widely used as a communication tool, especially among participants' parents. A pre-survey was conducted with 104 individuals, all of whom reported using WhatsApp to connect with their families. The statistics obtained from the questionnaire survey indicated that WhatsApp was the primary communication medium among students at PPM RJ Bandung.

WhatsApp is a popular messaging application that allows users to send text messages, make voice and video calls, and share various types of media, such as photos, videos, and documents. It is available on mobile devices and also offers a web-based version for desktop users. The user-friendly interface, cross-platform compatibility, and end-to-end encryption are some of the reasons behind its widespread popularity, as they ensure secure communication between users (Obar & Wildman, 2015).

C. Long Distance Family Communication

Long-distance family communication refers to the interaction and exchange of messages between family members who are physically separated by geographical distance and cannot regularly interact face-to-face. Long-distance family communication has several specific characteristics. First, it occurs through long-distance channels and utilizes technology as the primary medium for message exchange. Second, this communication often happens on a scheduled basis or through initiatives that limit the availability of family members who want to maintain connectivity. Although long-distance family communication can help maintain family bonds and fulfil communication needs, there are also challenges to be faced (Belus et al., 2019; Holtzman et al., 2021)

1. Advantages of WhatsApp for Long-Distance Family Communication

WhatsApp, as a popular instant messaging application, offers several benefits for long-distance family communication. It provides an easy-to-use platform that facilitates communication, information sharing, and the exchange of stories and photos, bridging the geographical gap between family members. The following advantages are associated with using WhatsApp for long-distance family communication (Kaban, 2021):
   a. Easy to Use/User-Friendly Interface
   b. Efficient Information Exchange
   c. Visual and Narrative Sharing

2. Disadvantages of WhatsApp for Long-Distance Family Communication

Long-distance family communication by WhatsApp refers to easy-to-use, information exchange and sharing activity between family members who live far apart from each other. While there are several advantages to maintaining connections across distances, there are also several disadvantages associated with long-distance family communication (Kaban, 2021):
   a. Difficulty in Expressing Emotions

b.　Signal
　　c.　Limitations to building Interpersonal
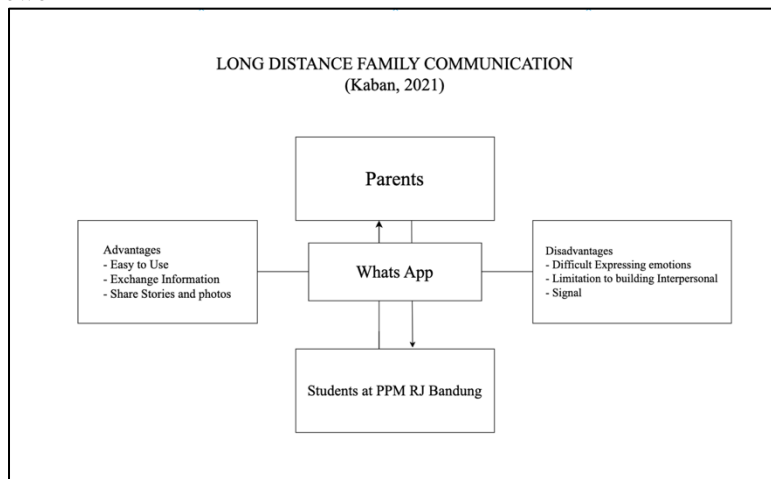
3.　Theoretical Framework

Figure 2.1. Theoretical Framework
Source: Processed by author

III.　RESERCH METHODOLOGY

This study is quantitative research with a descriptive analysis research design to provide an overview of the communication experience of college students with their parents through social media, especially via WhatsApp at PPM RJ Bandung. The research uses a cross-sectional, approach to gather data at a specific point in time (Cummings, 2018).

One variable (single variable) is used in this study, which is "Long Distance Family Communication by WhatsApp," referred to as variable X. Based on Nawawi (1996: 58), in Alwiansyah (2023), defines a single variable as one that exclusively expresses a variable to be discussed. Furthermore, a single variable, according to Hadari Nawawi, is a set of phenomena having numerous features or conditions inside them that work to dominate a specific situation condition or problem without being connected to others.

This study utilizes a census sampling technique at PPM RJ Bandung 2023. Census research type that employs a questionnaire and includes all students enrolled in PPM RJ Bandung as respondents. The population for this study includes all 104 students enrolled in PPM RJ Bandung in 2023.

Data Analysis Technique in this particular study, the researcher used a questionnaire consisting of which each question was accompanied by a choice of five answers, and the respondent had to choose one. After getting the results, assessment criteria category for each statement item were prepared.

IV.　RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
A.　Analysis Descriptive Result
1.　Analysis Descriptive of Variable Long Distance Family Communication by WhatsApp(X)

Table 4. 1 Respondents Respons Regarding Long Distance Family Communication By Whatsapp (X)

No Item	Variable	Dimension	Total Score	Percentage	Category
1-19	Long Distance Family Communication by WhatsApp(X)	Easy to Use Exchange Information Share Stories and photos	7613	77.1%	Good

Difficult Expressing emotions	
Limitation to building Interpersonal	
Signal	

Based on the data in table 4.1, the total score for all questions on each dimension of the variable X is 7613. Using the following calculations, the total number will be determined via a continuum line:
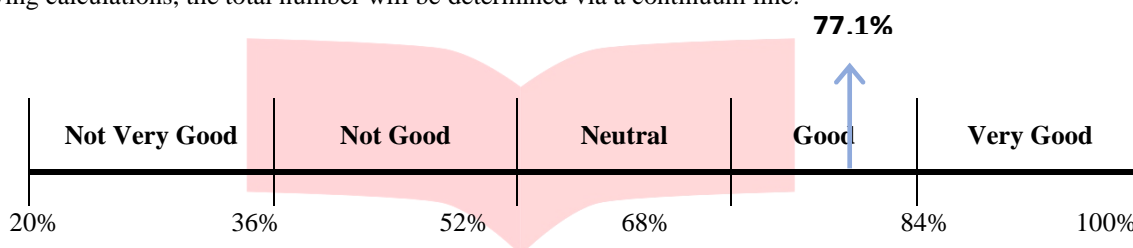

Figure 4.1. Continuum Line of Variable (X1)
Source: Processed by author

Based on figure 4.1, the overall percentage of each dimension is 77.1%. Based on the responses to PPM RJ Bandung questionnaires distributed to respondents, long-distance family communication via WhatsApp falls within the good category on the variable (X) of the continuum line. Based on the result above, the respondent believes WhatsApp is perceived positively and has a positive impact on family relationships in PPM RJ Bandung. Positively evaluated long-distance family communication is that regular interaction and proper technology usage can strengthen family bonds.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS
A. Conclusion

The response of PPM RJ Bandung respondents towards long-distance family communication by WhatsApp (X) is categorized as "good" with a percentage score of 77.1%. It is divided into two categories: advantages and disadvantages, based on the respondents who have close communication with their parents via WhatsApp. This can be proven by the high score of long-distance family communication by WhatsApp. namely, on the indicator: WhatsApp facilitates my daily communication and interaction with my parents.

The results of this study also indicate that communication in long-distance families has a positive impact on family relationships in PPM RJ Bandung. Even though they are separated by distance, families can still be emotionally connected and support each other better through WhatsApp.

Thus, this study concludes that regular interaction and use of technologies such as WhatsApp can strengthen long-distance family relationships. This illustrates that PPM RJ Bandung respondents have a positive view of the use of WhatsApp in communicating with their families, especially their parents.

B. Suggestion

Based on the research findings outlined above, the researchers would like to offer the following recommendations:
1. Suggestions for Further Research
   a. This research is expected to be a reference or basis for further research that explores long-distance family communication via WhatsApp and for those who wish to research Student Islamic Boarding Schools (PPM). Further studies can explore different aspects of communication between parents and students living away from home.

b. It is hoped that this research will pave the way for new and more extensive findings in the future. A suggestion for future research is to investigate the impact of technology, such as mobile phones and social media, on family interactions. Questions to explore could include how technology affects family intimacy, levels of conflict, or overall communication quality.

2. Suggestions for PPM RJ Bandung and Overseas Students
   a. Students who are planning to live away from home should prepare themselves to maintain intensive communication with their parents through various media. They should understand that communication is a two-way process. Additionally, they should support their parents in communication, actively listen to their feelings and stories, and demonstrate love and care to their parents as they would expect from them.
   b. It is advised for students at PPM RJ Bandung to enhance the sense of intimacy within their families, fostering stronger family bonds.

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