

Interaction Patterns Between Parents and Students From Away in the Digital Era

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The development of the digital era has changed family interactions, especially between students from out of town and their parents, due to differences in perception and limitations in the use of technology.

Objectives: This study aims to answer questions about the interaction patterns of parents and students living away from home in overcoming communication barriers in the digital era and what are the impacts of digital technology on interaction patterns between parents and students living away from home in the digital era.

Methods: This study uses qualitative research and a descriptive approach, by conducting in-depth interviews and case study analysis to gain insight into the interaction patterns of parents and students living away from home in the digital era.

Results: This study shows that although digital technology facilitates communication and barriers still exist, this study examines strategies to overcome barriers to interaction between parents and students living away from home in the digital era, namely by 1) regular communication schedules, 2) utilizing current technology, 3) establishing daily or weekly communication with parents and vice versa, 4) participating in virtual joint activities, 5) managing conflicts openly, 5) emotional support. The impact of the interaction patterns of parents and students living away from home has negative and positive impacts.

Conclusions: The positive impact of the interaction pattern of parents and students from out of town in the digital era is the ease of interaction, involvement in children's lives, joint learning and openly resolving conflicts. The negative impact in this study is the decline in the quality of face-to-face interactions, misunderstandings in interactions.

Keywords: interaction, out-of-town students, parents, impact, strategy

INTRODUCTION

The development of the digital era today has a significant impact on human life, especially in the family environment. The digital era encourages individuals to continue to develop and improve their quality in order to compete with others. This has resulted in the advancement of human civilization, where many individuals try to show their existence so as not to be left behind by others (1). One of the main impacts of the digital era is the use of gadgets as a means of nonverbal interaction. Such as eye contact and physical contact. Related to the development of the digital era in the family, it is not always negative for family dynamics. If technology in the digital era is used wisely, it can have a positive impact on the family environment. A quality family is a family that can create strong emotional bonds, support each other and respect each other between its members, a family like this will create a safe environment, full of love and support the development of each family member. In an era dominated by digital technology like today, a fundamental transformation occurs in the way humans interact.

Migrant students live an independent life in a new environment, often far from family and friends in their hometown. Migrant students face challenges, including long-distance communication barriers with their families. In the era of globalization and technological advancement, the phenomenon of families separated by distance, especially between parents and children of migrants, has become an inseparable part of modern life. The development of long-distance communication facilities provides opportunities to stay connected.

Many previous studies have discussed the relationship between parental attachment and migrant children with the results of the study, namely in the study the previous researcher found a significant relationship between parental

attachment and social interaction with independence in migrant students, important aspects in communication such as holding back anger and critical words and the difficulty of children expressing their needs because they are afraid of rejection by their parents (2). There is also a previous study with the conclusion that parental migration in the location of the previous study, namely Manyar Village, Sekaran District, is an activity of moving residence aimed at working or earning a living to support their families and the creative attitude of children can be seen from the low attitude and can be described by the habit of rarely communicating with their parents so that children never get advice directly from their parents, personal experiences, culture, etc.

OBJECTIVES

This study took the location of the study on students from out of town who are in the city of Makassar. Makassar City as a metropolitan center in South Sulawesi which is an educational destination for students from various regions. The phenomenon of out of town students in Makassar has become part of the dynamics of the city, bringing interesting social and cultural implications to observe. In today's digital era, the interaction between out of town students and their parents has undergone a significant transformation thanks to technological developments. Digital technology has undergone a significant transformation thanks to technological developments, digital technology has changed the way we communicate, share information and maintain long-distance relationships.

METHODS

This study uses qualitative research to detail the impact of digital technology on the interaction between parents and students from out-of-town, overcoming barriers in the interaction between parents and students from out-of-town. In-depth interview methods and content analysis are used for the out-of-town situation. Qualitative research is a scientific research method that aims to understand the subjective meaning and experiences of participants in real-life contexts. This method uses a descriptive approach and case studies in collecting and analyzing data and providing an understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Qualitative research is conducted by collecting data from relevant sources such as participants, documents, observations and then analyzing the data. Qualitative research can be applied in various disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, psychology and political science. In the tradition of applied research, this method is widely favored because its benefits are more widely understood and directly lead to policy action when compared to quantitative research. Other terms for qualitative research are naturalistic, post-positivistic, phenomenological, ethnographic, case study, humanistic research.

Creswell defines qualitative research methods as an approach or exploration to explore and understand a symptom (3). To examine the central symptom, researchers use interview research instruments, namely by researchers collecting information from respondents through verbal interaction. Previously, researchers prepared a list of structured questions related to the research. Then in asking questions, they were submitted online via Google Form. Researchers interviewed research respondents or participants by asking fairly broad general questions. Information from participants was then collected. This information is usually in the form of words or texts that will later be analyzed, then the results of the analysis will be in the form of depictions or descriptions. This research was conducted in one month, namely December 2024-January 2025, targeting students from out of town and their parents as sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The impact of digital technology on interaction patterns between parents and students from out of town in the digital era is an interesting phenomenon to study, especially in the context of sociology, which is the reason why researchers took this study. In recent years, the advancement of the digital era and the way of interacting has changed the way individuals interact and communicate, including in family relationships (4). Out of town students who often leave home to continue their education outside their home area face their own challenges in maintaining relationships with their parents. Digital technology, through various tools for interaction, has become the main tool in maintaining emotional bonds and effective communication between the two parties.

1. Social and family context in the digital age

In the digital era, social interactions have changed significantly. Social media, instant messaging applications, and other communication technologies have changed the way individuals communicate and interact in the context of families in Makassar where many students travel to study, this shift in interaction

patterns is very important to understand. In a family system, the basic function of the family is to create environmental conditions that are suitable for family members so that the physical, psychological, social and mental aspects of all family members can develop (5). In this case, if a family wants to achieve the status of a quality family in the digital era, they must carry out the functions that exist in a family. The function of the family must be used as a foothold and guidance for each family in order to realize a prosperous and quality family. The function of the family must be well understood by each family or couple who will have a family so that they can store and carry out each of these functions well (6).

In the digital era, many values in society have shifted. For example, in the current digital era where women used to only be housewives and take care of housework when they were married. However, today, the education attained by women is getting higher, so many of them then choose to work or enter the public sector. So that there are many shifts and exchanges of roles and functions in the family, such as both parents working and the child being cared for by their grandmother and grandfather or even a household assistant, this results in the failure to convey the family functions that should be provided by the family because the family is the first place for the child's education, because in it there are socialization activities and interactions between children and parents.

In this digital era, the rapid development of digital technology in recent years has influenced many aspects of human life, including interactions between family members (7). This researcher conducted observations and interviews with several students from out of town in Makassar as data collection which was then analyzed to find out how the information provided by informants regarding the impact of digital technology on the interaction patterns of parents and out of town students in the digital era. The interview was conducted in December 2024, and the research results were obtained through in-depth interviews with informants as a form of data search and direct involvement in the field which the researcher then analyzed.

2. Changes in interaction patterns

The results of the study showed a significant shift in the pattern of interaction between parents and students from out-of-town in Makassar. Conventional communication tools such as letters and landlines have now been almost completely replaced by primary communication such as video calls via WhatsApp and social media such as Facebook and Instagram (8,9).

- Increased intensity of interaction: digital technology allows for more frequent and instant interaction. Parents and students can communicate anytime and anywhere without being hampered by distance and time. This is different from the pre-digital era where interaction was limited to certain times and less frequent.
- Variations in forms of interaction: interactions carried out in the digital era can now be done more intensely and diversely, topics of conversation between parents and students from out of town are also broader. Not only discussing important things such as lectures and finances but out of town students and parents can discuss everyday things, gossip and even just share moments.

3. The impact of interaction patterns on the interaction between parents and students from other regions

This change in interaction patterns has a significant impact on the dynamics of the relationship between parents and students from other regions (10,11).

a. Strengthening emotional bonds

One of the significant impacts of digital technology on the relationship between parents and students living away from home in Makassar is the strengthening of emotional bonds. Before the advent of the digital era, limitations in interaction often gave rise to deep longing and worry, late letters or infrequent phone calls made the distance feel even further. However, in this digital era, physical distance seems to shrink thanks to the ease and speed of communication. Instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Line, Telegram allow daily interactions that were previously difficult to imagine. Just exchanging short messages, sharing photos of campus activities or sending cute stickers can be a way to keep the fire of togetherness burning, not only exchanging information but the digital era also facilitates deeper emotional expressions. Video calls, for example, allow parents and students living away from home to see each other face to face, see facial expressions and hear voice intonation.

Moments like these are invaluable, especially when students are facing difficulties or celebrating success. Support and congratulations delivered directly via video call feel more personal and touching as if they were in the same room. Sharing important moments such as birthdays, graduations or even just having dinner together virtually also strengthens emotional bonds and creates shared memories despite the distance. In addition, family chat groups on instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp also play an important role in maintaining warm relationships. In family groups, all family members can interact, share information, and support each other. Students who live away from home not only communicate with

their parents but also siblings, grandparents, and other family members. This creates a sense of togetherness and strengthens family identity, even though each member is in a different place.

b. Reducing feelings of longing and worry

The digital era helps reduce the longing and worry felt by both parents and students. Easy and fast interaction allows them to give each other news and monitor each other's condition.

c. Changes in parental supervision patterns

Digital technology has also brought significant changes in the pattern of parental supervision of students living away from home in Makassar. In the past, parental supervision was limited to information provided by children through letters or telephone. In the digital era like today with the existence of social media and instant messaging applications, parents can monitor their children's activities in more detail. The story feature on Instagram or status on WhatsApp allows parents to see what their children do every day and who they hang out with and where they are. This change has two sides, the first is that parents feel calmer because they can monitor their children's condition and activities. Worry is reduced because they can see that their children are doing well and doing positive activities. On the other hand, overly intense supervision through digital media can trigger conflict between parents and students living away from home. Students may feel that their privacy is being violated and feel untrusted. They feel like they are being watched and judged by their parents even in small things. Therefore, it is important for parents to be wise in using technology to supervise their children. Excessive supervision can actually damage trust and create emotional distance. Instead, parents need to build open and honest communication with their children, give them trust and respect their privacy. Digital technology should be used as a tool to maintain communication and provide support, not to control and limit children's freedom.

d. Potential for social isolation

Reliance on digital communication with family can reduce students' social interactions with peers in their remote environment and remote students tend to focus more on online interactions than building social relationships in the real world.

e. Formation of virtual communication

Virtual interactions facilitated by digital technology are more than just exchanging text messages or making voice calls. The various features and platforms available allow for more interactive and meaningful interactions. Video calls, for example, allow for virtual face-to-face interactions that are close to face-to-face interactions. Parents can see their child's facial expressions and vice versa. This is important for understanding the emotions and messages conveyed. In addition to video calls, social media also plays an important role in facilitating virtual communication. Sharing photos and videos on Instagram or Facebook allows parents to see their child's activities and living environment. The comment and like features also allow for more interactive and personal interactions. Parents can provide support, praise or simply provide funny comments in response to their child's posts. Family chat groups are also important virtual spaces for maintaining communication and togetherness.

Family chat groups are also important virtual spaces for maintaining communication and togetherness. In this group, family members can share information, exchange ideas, and support each other. This group can also be a place to plan family activities, even though they are separated by distance. For example, planning a vacation together, discussing family problems or simply sharing recipes. However, it is important to remember that virtual interactions have limitations. The lack of nonverbal context in text messages or the limited physical interaction in video calls can lead to misunderstandings. Therefore, it is important for parents and students to consume messages clearly and openly, and avoid unfounded assumptions.

Digital technology has brought significant changes in the pattern of interaction between parents and students from out-of-town in Makassar. This technology strengthens emotional bonds through more intense and diverse communication, changes parental supervision patterns, and facilitates more interactive virtual communication. However, it is important to use technology wisely and in balance and maintain open and honest communication so that family relationships remain harmonious and meaningful.

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