



PATTERNS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MIGRANT STUDENTS FROM PALEMBANG IN RW 04 KAYU JATI WITH PARENTS ON *WHATSAPP* MEDIA

Alda Sriwah Yuni¹, RR Roosita Cindrakasih
Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika
(Naskah diterima: 1 Juni 2026, disetujui 31 Juni 2026)

Abstract

Communication between migrant students and their parents plays an important role in maintaining family relationships despite geographical distance. WhatsApp is one of the most widely used communication media because it provides various features, such as text messaging, voice messaging, voice calls, and video calls. The use of WhatsApp helps migrant students and their parents stay connected in their daily lives. This study aims to identify the interpersonal communication patterns of migrant students from Palembang living in RW 04 Kayu Jati with their parents through WhatsApp, to understand the forms of interaction used, and to identify the obstacles encountered in the communication process. This study employed a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through interviews, observation, documentation, and triangulation. The findings indicate that communication between migrant students and their parents is carried out regularly, openly, and supportively. This communication is used to exchange information, maintain emotional closeness, and provide moral support. The obstacles identified include internet network disruptions, delays in responding to messages, and misunderstandings in interpreting message content. However, these obstacles do not reduce the intensity of the communication.

Keywords: *interpersonal communication, migrant students, parents, WhatsApp*

Abstrak

Komunikasi antara mahasiswa perantau dan orang tua menjadi bagian penting dalam menjaga hubungan keluarga meskipun terpisah oleh jarak. WhatsApp merupakan salah satu media komunikasi yang banyak digunakan karena menyediakan berbagai fitur, seperti pesan teks, pesan suara, panggilan suara, dan panggilan video. Penggunaan WhatsApp membantu mahasiswa perantau dan orang tua untuk tetap berkomunikasi dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pola komunikasi interpersonal mahasiswa perantau asal Palembang di RW 04 Kayu Jati dengan orang tua melalui WhatsApp, memahami bentuk interaksi yang digunakan, serta mengidentifikasi hambatan yang dihadapi dalam komunikasi tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara, observasi, dokumentasi, dan triangulasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi antara mahasiswa perantau dan orang tua berlangsung secara rutin, terbuka, dan saling mendukung. Komunikasi tersebut digunakan untuk bertukar informasi, menjaga kedekatan emosional, serta memberikan dukungan moral. Hambatan yang ditemukan meliputi gangguan jaringan internet, keterlambatan dalam

membalas pesan, dan kesalahpahaman dalam memahami isi pesan. Namun, hambatan tersebut tidak mengurangi intensitas komunikasi yang terjalin.

Kata Kunci: Komunikasi Interpersonal, Mahasiswa Perantau, Orang Tua, Whatsapp.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has made it easier for individuals to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships (Lukman, 2022). This phenomenon is increasingly seen in the lives of migrant students who have to leave their family environment to continue their education in other areas. This condition often causes emotional impacts such as longing, loneliness, and the need for social support from family, especially parents (Fajarlie, 2023). Therefore, communication is the main means of maintaining emotional closeness and maintaining family relationships even though they are separated by distance. In practice, migrant students use digital communication media to stay connected with their families. One of the most widely used media is *WhatsApp*. This application provides various features such as text messages, voice calls, *video calls*, *voice notes*, as well as sending documents and other media that support effective long-distance communication (Asari et al., 2023). This convenience makes *WhatsApp* the main means of daily interaction between students and parents, both to exchange information, provide news, and build emotional closeness.

Communication through digital media not only serves as a conveyance of information, but also as a form of maintaining interpersonal relationships. Communication quality, such as openness, empathy, and intensity of interaction, play an important role in maintaining the harmony of relationships between migrant students and parents in the midst of limited distance (Hanim, 2025). Thus, interpersonal communication can still be established effectively even though it is not done face-to-face. The development of the use of *WhatsApp* as the main communication medium in Indonesia shows a very high adoption rate in people's daily lives. Based on *the Digital 2026 We Are Social* report, WhatsApp is the most widely used application by internet users in Indonesia with a usage rate of 90.8% every month (We Are Social, 2026). The high number shows that WhatsApp does not only function as a simple communication medium, but has become an important part of social activities, including in maintaining relationships between migrant students and parents. In the context of migrant students from Palembang in RW 04 Kayu Jati, the use of WhatsApp is the main means of maintaining emotional closeness even though they are separated by a considerable

geographical distance (Yuni, 2026). However, the use of WhatsApp in interpersonal communication is also inseparable from various limitations. The absence of direct nonverbal communication such as facial expressions, voice intonation, and body language can lead to potential misunderstandings in message delivery (Asari et al., 2023). In addition, differences in the way of communication between generations of parents and students, as well as delays in responding to messages, often affect the quality of interactions that are built. Nevertheless, communication can still be effective if it is supported by openness, empathy, and consistency of interaction between the two parties (Hanim, 2025). Therefore, this study is important to understand how these interpersonal communication patterns are formed in the context of intensive use of WhatsApp between migrant students and parents (Sari & Julistia, 2023).

II. THEORETICAL STUDIES

Komunikasi Interpersonal

Interpersonal communication is the process of exchanging messages between two or more people that allows for direct or indirect feedback. According to DeVito (2016), effective interpersonal communication is characterized by five main aspects, namely openness, empathy, supportiveness, positivity, and equality. These five aspects are the basis for building harmonious relationships and maintaining the quality of interaction between individuals. In the context of communication between migrant students and their parents through digital media, these aspects remain a reference in maintaining the quality of relationships even though they are not carried out face-to-face (Hanim, 2025).

Pola Komunikasi Keluarga

Communication patterns in the family are a form of interaction that occurs between family members in conveying messages, feelings, and information. Family communication not only includes the exchange of information, but also involves emotional elements, attention, and social support (Agustina, 2023). In the context of the modern family, communication does not only take place in person, but also through digital media such as WhatsApp which allows interaction to be maintained even when separated from each other. This shows that family communication patterns have adapted along with the development of communication technology.

Mahasiswa Perantau

Migrant students are individuals who leave their home areas to study elsewhere so they have to adapt to a new environment and live life independently. This condition causes students to not be able to meet their parents in person for a long time, so communication is an important

factor in maintaining family relationships (Sari & Julistia, 2023). In such a situation, long-distance communication not only serves as a conveyor of information, but also as a means of meeting emotional needs between students and parents.

WhatsApp sebagai Media Komunikasi

WhatsApp is an internet-based instant messaging application that provides various communication features such as text messages, voice calls, video calls, voice notes, and sending photos and documents. These features allow long-distance communication to take place effectively and flexibly (Asari et al., 2023). In the context of this research, WhatsApp is the main medium used by migrant students and parents to maintain interpersonal relationships, both in the form of informative and emotional communication.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to deeply understand the interpersonal communication patterns of migrant students from Palembang with parents through WhatsApp. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand social phenomena based on the subject's direct experience (Sugiyono, 2023). Qualitative research methods are based on scientific principles that are rational, empirical, and systematic in data collection to achieve certain research goals (Sugiyono, 2023). This research was carried out in RW 04 Kayu Jati, Rawamangun, East Jakarta, with a focus on migrant students from Palembang who actively use WhatsApp as a medium of communication with parents. The selection of informants was carried out using the purposive sampling technique, which is the selection of informants based on certain criteria that are relevant to the purpose of the research. Data is collected through interviews, observations, documentation, and triangulation to obtain credible and in-depth data. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Sugiyono, 2023).

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

WhatsApp as a Communication Media for Migrant Students with Parents

As a result of in-depth interviews with the three informants, WhatsApp became the main communication medium used by migrant students from Palembang to maintain relationships with their parents while undergoing education in Jakarta. The use of WhatsApp is not only limited to the daily exchange of information, but also a means to express feelings, gain support, and maintain emotional closeness even though separated by distance. Each informant has different feature preferences according to their needs and comfort in

communicating. Informant 1, Naufal, revealed that the most frequently used features are text messages and voice calls because they are considered effective for conveying information and discussing more serious matters. "The media I use most often are WhatsApp chats and calls. If I only give news, it's usually through chat, but if there's something I want to talk about more seriously, I choose to call you." Unlike Naufal, Informant 2, Dhiny, prefers to use voice notes because he is considered able to convey his feelings more clearly than text messages. For him, communication through voice gives a more personal impression so that it facilitates the process of conveying messages to parents. "The media I use most often are voice notes and chat. I'm more comfortable using voice notes because it feels clearer and easier to convey feelings than just typing a message." Meanwhile, Informant 3, Aldina, often uses the video call feature because it allows her to see the condition and expression of her parents directly. The presence of visual communication provides a feeling of closeness and helps reduce longing while abroad. "For daily communication, I most often use WhatsApp, especially video call and chat features. But I use video calls the most often because I feel closer to my parents." The findings of this study are in line with the theory of interpersonal communication put forward by DeVito (2016), who explains that interpersonal communication is a process of exchanging messages that allows direct feedback between individuals to build and maintain relationships. In the context of this study, the various features available on WhatsApp allow the interpersonal communication process to continue even though students and parents are in different locations. The findings are strengthened by the view of the triangulator, Dr. Juriana, M.Si., a psychologist, who emphasizes the importance of regular communication between migrant students and parents as a means of guidance and monitoring of children's development while away from the family. "Communication is very important. Communication is a bridge for migrant students to face various new experiences in different environments." Based on these findings, it can be understood that WhatsApp not only functions as a digital communication medium, but also as a space for interpersonal interaction that allows migrant students to continue to receive attention, direction, and support from parents. WhatsApp Contribute to maintaining the continuity of interpersonal relationships between migrant students and parents even though they are separated by distance.

Openness in Interpersonal Communication

The results of the study show that communication between migrant students and parents through WhatsApp is characterized by openness in conveying information about daily life.

This openness can be seen from the habit of informants giving news about lecture activities, health conditions, and experiences experienced while living abroad. Although the level of openness of each informant is different, all informants still try to maintain communication so that parents know their condition. Informant 1, Naufal, admitted that he often told his parents about his daily activities because he felt that it could provide peace of mind for families who were far away in their hometown. "I often tell my parents about my daily activities because they always ask me how I am doing. I feel that by giving my parents the news, it makes me feel calmer even though I am away from home." Unlike Naufal, Informant 2, Dhiny, does not always convey all the activities he undertakes. He chooses to share information that is considered important and needs to be known by parents. "I don't always tell my parents about all my daily activities. Usually I only convey important things or activities that they really need to know." Meanwhile, Informant 3, Aldina, showed a fairly high level of openness by routinely providing information about her activities and conditions while overseas. "I myself am quite open with my parents about my activities abroad, because I feel it is important for them to keep their situation known." The difference in the level of openness shows that each individual has a different way of managing the personal information conveyed to parents. However, all informants still maintain communication as a form of responsibility and concern for their families. This finding is in line with the concept of *openness* put forward by DeVito (2016), which is the willingness of individuals to disclose information about themselves honestly and proportionately to others. According to DeVito, openness does not mean revealing all aspects of life, but rather conveying relevant information according to the context of the relationship. The findings are strengthened by the view of the triangulator, Dr. Juriana, M.Si., a psychologist, who states that students' openness to parents is a form of natural mutual relationship because there is still an emotional attachment between the two. "It doesn't have to be in detail, but at least parents know the condition and development of their children during lectures. In addition, he also explained that not all problems must be conveyed to parents because every individual has a privacy space that needs to be respected. "As long as the problems faced can still be overcome independently and are not harmful, this is not something wrong. Thus, the openness found in this study shows that there is a communication relationship based on trust, responsibility, and emotional attachment between migrant students and parents. Emotional Support in Interpersonal Communication

The results of the study show that communication between migrant students and parents through WhatsApp not only functions as a means of exchanging information, but also

as a medium for providing emotional support. The form of support received by informants is in the form of attention, motivation, advice, and enthusiasm that helps them face various challenges while living overseas. Naufal revealed that parents' attention is shown through regular communication asking about their daily conditions and activities. "My parents usually show concern by regularly asking if I've eaten, how I'm doing in college, and if there's any difficulty I'm facing." The same thing was also felt by Dhiny who got motivation from his parents to stay focused on completing his education. "My parents often provide support and motivation during my travels. They always remind me to stay focused on my main goal of studying here. Meanwhile, Aldina felt emotional support through the advice and encouragement given by her parents when facing difficulties. "When I'm having a hard time, they usually calm me down and give me more encouragement."

This finding is in line with the concept of *supportiveness* put forward by DeVito (2016), namely the existence of attention, encouragement, and positive responses given to the interlocutor in interpersonal communication. This support makes students feel cared for even though they are separated by distance. The findings were corroborated by the triangulator, Dr. Juriana, M.Si., a psychologist, who stated:

"Emotional support in the form of motivation, enthusiasm, and attention that are non-material in nature has a very important role because it is a source of strength for overseas students." Thus, the emotional support provided by parents through WhatsApp plays an important role in helping migrant students maintain their motivation and psychological condition while living away from their families.

Communication Barriers in WhatsApp Use

Communication through WhatsApp is inseparable from various obstacles, such as an unstable internet network, delays in replying to messages, and misunderstandings in understanding the content of messages. Naufal revealed that the most common obstacles are related to network quality and message understanding. "Problems that often occur are usually due to unstable internet networks or sometimes misunderstanding the content of the messages sent." Dhiny also experienced similar obstacles, especially due to the busy number of lecture activities. "Obstacles that often occur are usually due to delays in replying to messages due to each other's busy schedules or unstable internet networks." Meanwhile, Aldina highlighted signal problems and differences in interpretation of the content of messages. "Usually the signal is bad or sometimes the message is poorly understood." This finding is in accordance with the concept of *noise* in DeVito's (2016) theory of interpersonal communication, which

explains that communication barriers can arise due to technical as well as semantic interference. These barriers have the potential to affect the effectiveness of message delivery in long-distance communication. This is reinforced by the statement of Dr. Juriana, M.Si., Psychologist: "Text messages are often unable to describe intonation or expression, so it is easy to give rise to different interpretations."

However, the obstacles that occur do not reduce the intensity of communication because students and parents still try to maintain relationships through regular communication. Interpersonal Communication Patterns Formed Based on the results of the study, the interpersonal communication pattern formed between migrant students from Palembang and parents through WhatsApp showed the characteristics of open and supportive communication. The three informants routinely provide news about their activities, health conditions, and experiences while overseas, while parents consistently provide attention, motivation, and emotional support. Naufal stated: "I often tell my parents about my daily activities because they always ask me how I am doing." Dhiny revealed: "Usually I only convey important things or activities that they really need to know." Meanwhile, Aldina said: "I am quite open with my parents about my activities abroad, because I feel it is important for them to know my situation." In line with DeVito's (2016) theory of interpersonal communication which places *openness* and *supportiveness* as the main characteristics of effective communication. The openness and support that exists shows that there is a relationship built on trust and emotional closeness. This finding is reinforced by the triangulator, Dr. Juriana, M.Si., Psychologist, who stated: "The presence of WhatsApp as a means of communication makes the relationship between migrant students and parents maintained even though they are separated by distance." Thus, the interpersonal communication pattern formed in this study is an open and supportive communication pattern, which allows the relationship between migrant students and parents to be maintained even though they are in different locations.

V.CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the pattern of interpersonal communication between migrant students from Palembang and their parents via WhatsApp takes place regularly and is effective in maintaining family relationships. Communication is carried out through various features, such as text messages, voice notes, voice calls, and video calls that allow for the exchange of information and the provision of emotional support on an ongoing basis. The communication pattern formed shows openness in sharing

information about daily life, health conditions, and academic activities. In addition, the attention, motivation, advice, and prayers given by parents through WhatsApp play an important role in maintaining emotional closeness between migrant students and parents despite being separated by geographical distance.

REFERENCE

- Agustina, A. P. (2023). *Perubahan Pola Komunikasi Keluarga di Era Digital*. 6(2), 73–80.
- Amelia, R. W. (2025). *MENINGKATKAN KINERJA KARYAWAN SINOHYDRO*. 3(1), 1136–1147.
- Anwar, E. F., Jasmin, S. M., Anjeli, S. P., & Anggaraini, S. (2023). *Analisis Komunikasi Interpersonal Antara Mahasiswa Perantauan dan Orangtua (Studi Kasus Mahasiswa Baru Jurusan Ilmu Komunikasi Fakultas Ilmu Sosial UINSU)*. 3, 8282–8291.
- Asari A., Syaifuddin E. R., Ningsi N., Maria S. H. D., Adhicandra I., Nuraini R., Baijuri A., Pamungkas A., Kusumah F. G., Yuhanda G. P., & Murti S. (2023). *Komunikasi Digital, STIKOM Yogyakarta, 2023*.
- Azizah, M., Mahardika, A. P., & Najwan, R. A. (2023). *Pola Komunikasi Antara Anak dan Orang Tua Untuk Menjalin Hubungan Jarak Jauh*. 188–197.
- DeVito, J. A. (2016). *The Interpersonal Communication Book* (14th Editi). Pearson Education Limited.
- Fajarlie, N. I. (2023). 6 Tips Jaga Komunikasi dengan Orang Tua bagi Mahasiswa Rantau. *KompasTV.Com*.
- Firdiyanti, A. A., Andriani, F., & Priyadi, C. (2025). *Komunikasi Interpersonal Anak Rantau Dengan Orang Tua Melalui Whatsapp Dalam Menjaga Kepercayaan*. 11(1), 143–155.
- Hanim, A. (2025, June 10). 5 Bentuk Perhatian untuk Obati Rindu Orangtua yang Ditinggal Merantau. *Sumut.Idntimes.Com*. <https://sumut.idntimes.com/news/sumatra-utara/5-bentuk-perhatian-untuk-obati-rindu-orangtua-yang-ditinggal-merantau-00-hz1ln-mkt85w>
- Lukman, R. (2022). Menahan Rindu Tuk Menimba Ilmu. *Kumparan.Com*.
- Sari, D. R., & Julistia, R. (2023). Penyesuaian Diri dan Kompetensi Sosial pada Mahasiswa Perantauan. *INSIGHT: Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi*, 1(1), 57–74.
- Sosial, I., & Hasanuddin, U. (2025). *POLA INTERAKSI ORANG TUA DAN MAHASISWA RANTAU*. 8(2), 905–914.
- Sugiyono. (2023). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D* (D. I. Sutopo (ed.); Edisi Kedu). Alfabeta.
- Umbaran, F., & Sihabudin. (2025). Komunikasi Interpersonal Jarak Jauh Mahasiswa Rantau Asal Kalimantan FISIP UNISRI dengan Orang Tua dalam Menjaga Hubungan Harmonis melalui WhatsApp. *Jurnak Solidaritas FISIP UNISRI*, X(X), 1–21.

1.