

## THE COMMUNICATION PATTERNS IN WHATSAPP GROUPS TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS (A CASE STUDY IN “GUYUB RUKUN” FAMILY WHATSAPP GROUP)

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### Abstract

*The presence of WhatsApp groups has significantly increased the effectiveness of communication, as the participation of family members helps to unite family relationships, ensuring that connections remain intact and communication flows smoothly. However, this application often presents its own challenges that can hinder effective communication. The purpose of this research is to explore the communication patterns within the Guyub Rukun family WhatsApp group and their effectiveness in strengthening family bonds. Utilizing a qualitative method and a case study approach, data were collected through participatory observation and in-depth interviews with five informants. This research employs two-way communication theory, distinguishing it from previous studies. The findings indicate that effective communication is crucial in family life, fostering interaction and strengthening ties. Messages shared in the WhatsApp group typically include family events and casual conversations, with prompt responses using emotions, stickers, voice notes, and gifts. While these communication patterns enhance effectiveness, there are areas that require improvement, particularly concerning honesty and openness among members. The study concludes that WhatsApp groups can serve as a valuable tool for family communication, facilitating closer relationships and meaningful exchanges, rather than merely sharing jokes. This research contributes to understanding the role of technology in enhancing family communication.*

**Keywords:** *Communication Patterns; WhatsApp Group; Communication Effectiveness*

### INTRODUCTION

Communication plays an important role in today's life, capable of influencing various aspects of interaction within society. The information and understanding transferred between two or more entities through specific communication channels is called communication (Littlejohn, 2018). Communication can be considered successful if both the sender and receiver are able to achieve an understanding of the message conveyed by the communicator, allowing the message's purpose to be fulfilled and communication to proceed effectively. Ferdiansyah (2021), explains that communication can occur based on the understanding of the message sent by

the communicator. In communication, there are also patterns that are used unintentionally.

Indirect communication patterns emerge naturally, allowing for the formation of other new patterns that are still similar. According to Effendy (2017), to facilitate logical and systematic thinking, the communication pattern is designed to illustrate the relationships between various elements of reality in communication activities. In other words, the communication pattern will briefly illustrate the communication process that utilizes elements such as the communicator, the communicant, and the media of transmission to generate feedback. Communication patterns consist of four types: primary communication, secondary communication, linear communication, and circular communication. This communication pattern can create new patterns in line with the advancement of technology.

Through the rapid development of information and communication technology, it has been able to give rise to modern and sophisticated new technologies, especially to support communication activities. With the presence of advanced internet technology, the communication process can be maximized to run quickly and easily, regardless of place and time, through the use of social media, which is the right medium for surfing the internet. Thus, there emerges an unlimited freedom for individuals to access social media as they wish. Active users of media especially social media, can play their roles in using and utilizing these platforms in the communication process. It's no wonder that the use of social media can create different communication patterns in the virtual world and the real world.

Social media is a type of website that, according to Nasrullah (2021), virtually allows people to interact, collaborate, share, communicate, and build social relationships. Socialization can be accessed not only through computer media but also through applications installed on personal devices such as smartphones, making it easier for users to access it anytime and anywhere when needed. Through social media, communication and all dissemination of information can run efficiently. According to information published on website [databoks.katadata.co.id](https://databoks.katadata.co.id), data on social media users in Indonesia taken in January 2024, shows that the most commonly used social media application among internet users in 2024 is WhatsApp, with 90.9% of users. The second position is Instagram with 85.3% of users, followed by Facebook in third place with 81.6% of users, TikTok in fourth place with 73.5% of users, and in fifth place, Telegram with 61.3% of its users (<https://databoks.katadata.co.id/>).

From the data, WhatsApp is a popular platform because it is the most widely used social media platform by Indonesians. This software is useful for facilitating communication for individuals, making the resulting communication more effective and efficient. WhatsApp is used for sending various types of content such as chatting or messaging, images, video or voice calls, emoticons or stickers, sharing locations, and soft document files. WhatsApp can be seen as another form of face-to-face communication, where the sending of messages can be represented by symbols like emoticons or stickers, as well as video calls. WhatsApp is a social platform that is often used for messaging and discussing online, both through individual chats and group discussions. WhatsApp groups provide a space for members to discuss, share information, or coordinate activities to achieve effective communication. According

to the information published on the official WhatsApp website (<https://www.whatsapp.com/>), the various features offered by WhatsApp facilitate communication, and these features are highly relevant in the context of family communication, where effective coordination and communication are essential for sharing current and real-time information whenever needed (Annur 2024).

With the presence of group WhatsApp applications, communication can be easily conducted by organizations, groups, or communities, including small family groups scattered in different locations. A large family can also be categorized as a community because it is formed from a collection of many families that have close personal and emotional connections to strengthen solidarity and support one another. Through, innovation in mass media the presence of WhatsApp group communication is considered to enhance the effectiveness of communication. The participation of family members who join the WhatsApp group can strengthen family bonds, ensuring that communication remains uninterrupted. Additionally, the inclusion of family members in the group can shorten the time needed to share information. Therefore, WhatsApp groups are deemed very effective as a means of communication and information dissemination among families. Through the message conveyed in the group, family members do not need to bother meeting in person.

However, although WhatsApp groups offer convenience and many benefits for communication, this application often has its own challenges that can hinder the process of effective communication. Various problems that can arise include miscommunication, information overload, and differences in understanding between the message sender and other members. These challenges can reduce the effectiveness of communication in WhatsApp groups and in interpersonal relationships within families, so several measures need to be taken to enhance the effectiveness of communication in WhatsApp groups.

As shown by the study by Yuwafik and Muhid (2020), there are three functions of WhatsApp groups as a tool for communicating with people within an organization. First, it saves time, space, and resources; second, it is easier to participate, understand, and receive messages; and third, there is greater satisfaction with the use of WhatsApp groups. Research Wilantara and Maharani (2022) shows that the use of WhatsApp groups helps class teachers and parents communicate, provide announcements, and share lesson materials. The research by Agustina (2024) states that digital technology can assist family communication, enable long-distance interactions, accelerate data sharing, and help monitor children.

Some of the research findings above serve as a reference for researchers, and researchers are interested in studying and identifying the communication patterns within the Guyub Rukun family WhatsApp Group. The difference between this research and previous studies lies in the use of theory, where this research employs two-way communication theory. Communication is bidirectional, meaning that the communicator and the communicant check and respond to each other's messages. In this type of two-way communication, the communicant not only receives messages from the communicator but also actively observes and responds to the

messages from the communicator. Bilateral communication is always active when viewed from how the communicator and the communicant interact (Walgito, 2018).

The communication pattern referred to here includes the timing, duration, and content or substance of the message. In addition, the novelty of this research lies in the use of a more specific and rarely used case study, namely communication within family WhatsApp groups, and establishing relevance to theories deemed applicable in this research (Marniati, 2021).

From the description above, the research problem formulation focuses on the analysis of "how communication patterns can enhance the effectiveness of communication within the Guyub Rukun family WhatsApp group." This analysis is based on the factors that serve as references for successful effective communication. The purpose of this research is to find effective communication methods used by members of the Guyub Rukun family group, and how these communication patterns can enhance the effectiveness of communication through WhatsApp groups.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The approach used in this research is a qualitative one that focuses on case studies. The subjects of this research are members of the Guyub Rukun family WhatsApp group. The research method used is a case study of the Guyub Rukun family group. This case study falls under qualitative research to explain in detail how effective communication can occur through techniques. From this case study research, the researcher aims not only to answer the question of what but also to explain further and comprehensively about the 5W+1H.

The subject of this research is the members of the Guyub Rukun family WhatsApp group, and the object of the research is the communication patterns in the Guyub Rukun WhatsApp group and the effectiveness of the communication. The data sources were obtained from primary and secondary data, as well as through participatory observation and in-depth interviews with 5 group members selected as representatives from diverse backgrounds. Out of the 27 members of the Guyub Rukun group, who are spread across various regions and have different ages and job backgrounds, the researcher selected 5 individuals as informants to represent this group for the interviews. The interview data informants are as follows: LY, 32 years old, female, housewife. TBS, 63 years old, female, retired civil servant. AAP, 22 years old, male, student. LIA, 45 years old, male, private employee. DH, 54 years old, male, entrepreneur.

The selection of informants comes from group members chosen based on criteria of activity in discussions and their contributions to the formation of the dynamics of the Guyub Rukun group. Not only that, the informants were chosen because they were deemed capable of explaining their experiences using their family WhatsApp group in detail, clearly, and accurately. It is important to ensure that the data obtained is relevant to the research objectives and can represent the variation in communicative experiences. The focus of the research is on how communication patterns within the Guyub Rukun group can influence the effectiveness of communication and involve the group members as research subjects through observation and qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data analysis

is chosen because it can uncover meanings within qualitative data, identify emerging communication patterns, and provide a deep understanding of communication patterns in the WhatsApp group to enhance communication effectiveness.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers used 5 informants to explore the effective communication patterns present in the Guyub Rukun family WhatsApp group. The 5 informants consist of 1 male student, 1 male private employee, 1 female housewife, 1 male entrepreneur, and 1 female retired civil servant.

In the interview conducted, the researcher asked the informant to describe how the effective communication patterns of the Guyub Rukun family WhatsApp group work. This pattern is divided into four themes: the benefits and purposes of WhatsApp group communication, family responses, types of family messages, and family communication methods. The researchers identified several thematic groups from the informants' statements as follows:

**Table 1.** Family WhatsApp Group Themes

Theme	Sub Theme
Benefits and Objectives of Using Family WhatsApp Groups	a. The use of WhatsApp group applications is very helpful in your family. b. How would you describe communication in the family WhatsApp group? c. The purpose of using WhatsApp groups in the family. d. The use of communication in WhatsApp groups enhances communication effectiveness within the family.
Family Response	a. The response of family members to communication or messages sent in the family WhatsApp group. b. Fast, slow, or ignored?
Types of Messages	a. Types of messages discussed b. Information about event planning, casual chats, or invitations.
Communication Patterns	a. Patterns in responding to messages in the family WhatsApp group b. Communication in the family WhatsApp group can enhance or be effective for communication c. Challenges or issues that frequently arise in communication in your family WhatsApp group d. The role of messages in your family WhatsApp group in family communication e. What needs to be improved to enhance the effectiveness of communication in the family WhatsApp group?

Looking at the data from the interviews, it seems difficult to categorize families based on a specific communication pattern orientation. Every family has

experienced various patterns in different ways and from different backgrounds. The researchers will elaborate on it in the following analysis:

### **Benefits and Objectives of using Family WhatsApp Groups**

In the theme of the benefits and objectives of using family WhatsApp groups, it is divided into 4 sub-themes, namely: First, the use of the WhatsApp group application is very useful in your family. Based on interviews with 5 informants, all (100%) informants stated that the WhatsApp group application is very useful in the family, or more precisely, in family communication. Communication can take place at any time, whether it's in the morning, afternoon, or evening. However, the results of interviews for family discussions are usually actively conducted on holidays, specifically on Saturdays or Sundays, during the afternoon from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. The average duration of a conversation typically lasts between 1 to 2 hours. Second, how you describe communication in the family WhatsApp group. According to 5 informants, 2 people said they would describe their communication or feelings through text messages, 1 person said they use stickers and emoticons, and people said they use voice notes (VN). Third, the purpose of using a WhatsApp group in the Guyub Rukun family is to foster communication among family members. All informants provided the same core answer: to ensure that any information or family events can be shared with all family members, even if they are out of town. In addition, one informant added their statement by saying that the use of family groups fosters closeness among family members, from the young to the old, but in a more effective way. This is supported by findings that in discussions or conversations on WhatsApp groups, communication between parents and the younger generation flows smoothly and effectively. Fourth, the use of communication in WhatsApp groups enhances the effectiveness of communication within families. Based on the interview results, it was found that the use of communication in WhatsApp groups can improve the effectiveness of communication in families. The way to do this is by having family discussions, making joint decisions within the family that can be facilitated through communication in a WhatsApp group, making it easier.

### **Family Response in WhatsApp Group**

Family response is divided into two sub-themes: the response of family members to the communication or messages sent in the family WhatsApp group and the family's feedback. The findings from the interviews regarding family responses to messages sent in the family WhatsApp group show that out of 5 informants, 4 expressed great happiness as it helps or facilitates communication, while 1 informant said it was just ordinary. In responding to messages in the family WhatsApp group, it was found that some respond quickly, some slowly, and there are even those who ignore the messages sent in the group.

### **Types of Messages**

The findings from the interviews with informants regarding the types of messages discussed in the family WhatsApp group revealed that 3 informants mentioned information about family events, such as gatherings, holding prayers or worship together, and even invitations to organize events like family recreation or what is known as family gatherings. Meanwhile, 2 informants mentioned casual chats, such

as jokes or playful banter, just to liven up the group. So that through this casual chat, members young and old can converse comfortably.

### **Communication Patterns**

Communication patterns are divided into 5 sub-themes, namely: First, the pattern of responding to messages in your family WhatsApp group. The findings from interviews with 5 informants indicate that there is a pattern in responding to messages in the family WhatsApp group, which includes gifts or giving presents, emoticons such as laughter, smiles, anger, responses with stickers, and some also reply with voice notes (VN). Second, communication in the family WhatsApp group can enhance or be effective for communication. Communication in the family WhatsApp group can improve the effectiveness of communication, such as in conducting voting, which is done by listing in the chat column of the WhatsApp discussion group for solving family problems, family gatherings, and discussions regarding family events. Third, challenges or problems that often arise in communication in family WhatsApp groups. Findings from 5 informants revealed that the issues experienced are due to signal problems and running out of data packages or quotas. In addition, there is also a lack of clear acceptance or understanding from the family in receiving the information conveyed through the group, so to address this, repeated explanations are made to ensure that the information can be clearly understood. Fourth, the role of messages in your family WhatsApp group in family communication. The special role taken by one family member in family communication, there is one family member who plays a special role in leading discussions and sometimes also initiating them. However, at times, all family members can start conversations in the family WhatsApp group with their respective topics. Is there a two-way communication established? The findings from interviews and observations indicate that there is a two-way communication established, both from those who have ideas for discussions and family members present in the group. Is there communication between older and younger members? The findings from the interviews reveal that there is effective communication between older and younger members, allowing for varied conversations. Fifth, what do you think needs to be improved to enhance the effectiveness of communication in the family WhatsApp group? The findings from the interviews indicate that almost all informants mentioned the need for improvements in the topics of conversation, timing of communication, openness, and honesty among the individuals in the group. If this is done, then effective communication will improve even more and communication will become even more efficient.

The benefits and purposes of using family WhatsApp groups include the advantages of utilizing the WhatsApp group application for family chats. The findings indicate that the use of WhatsApp groups is very helpful in family communication. This is because the existence of WhatsApp groups allows for communication among family members, even over long distances, and can be done at any time. This result aligns with Yoanita (2022) research that the existence of WhatsApp groups can enhance family communication. Therefore, communication is very important to maintain and preserve family relationships. Family is a blood bond, but it is no different from friendship if they rarely talk to each other. In fact, friendships can sometimes be closer than family relationships, even within a

household, if there is little communication and interaction. Families with a high conformity orientation believe that individual schedules should be coordinated among family members to maximize the time spent together. They also expect family members to prioritize their personal interests over the interests of the family (Agustina, 2024).

How to describe communication in a family WhatsApp group based on findings obtained on how to depict family communication in a WhatsApp group using text messages, emoticons, and voice notes (VN). Family dynamics are influenced by the communication and interactions that occur within the family and even the household. Families with a high conformity orientation believe that individual schedules should be coordinated among family members to maximize the time spent together. They also expect family members to prioritize the interests of the family over their personal interests, which is known as family communication. This is very important to establish a healthy and strong family relationship and includes various elements, such as verbal communication through spoken words and non-verbal communication (body language, gestures, and facial expressions) (Agustina, 2024). The purpose of using WhatsApp groups in families, as stated by all informants, is to foster communication among family members so that if there is any information or family event, all family members can be informed even if they are out of town. In addition, to foster closeness among family members, from the young to the old. This result aligns with Agustina (2024) research, which states that digital technology can aid family communication, facilitate long-distance interactions, enable quick information sharing, and help monitor children. However, it is important to remember that these changes have both positive and negative effects, so families must actively oversee how they use digital technology to ensure that effective and efficient communication can still occur across all ages in an increasingly broad social environment. In this era, family members can easily communicate anytime and anywhere through devices like mobile phones, tablets, or computers. This allows for more frequent, effective, and adaptive conversations (Wenerda, 2019).

The use of communication in WhatsApp groups enhances the effectiveness of communication within families. Interview results revealed that communication in WhatsApp groups can improve the effectiveness of family interactions. This is achieved through family discussions and decision-making, which can be conducted via communication in WhatsApp groups. This is because WhatsApp groups have a significant impact on family communication. In the increasingly limited interactions within the family environment, effective and efficient communication can still take place amidst busyness and distance barriers. In the past, family members could easily communicate anytime and anywhere through devices like mobile phones, tablets, or computers. This allowed for more frequent and effective conversations. Families can stay connected in real-time by using social media apps, video calls, and instant messaging (Ruffiah and Muhsin, 2019).

The family responses obtained from the findings indicate that family members are very happy and quite fond of the communication or messages in the family WhatsApp group. This is because communication and messages in the family WhatsApp group allow for open responses. Because the key to healthy

communication is, among other things, being open and honest. Family relationships tend to be more open and supportive, while unhealthy communication can lead to issues such as conflict, emotional distance, and more. The informant stated that the family's response to communication and messages in the family WhatsApp group is very open. This result aligns with the research Agustina (2024), that openness is necessary in communication. The family's response to the family WhatsApp group message is quick. The types of messages obtained from the interview findings with informants regarding the types of messages in family WhatsApp groups indicate that the messages usually discussed are about family events and information related to those events. A family event is an occasion attended by a limited number of guests, consisting of family members and relatives, aimed at strengthening the bonds between family members outside of daily routines. This event can strengthen emotional bonds, enhance a sense of belonging, and reduce conflicts among family members. This result aligns with Yoanita (2022), who states that family events are one of the topics or types of messages present in family communication. Thus, the communication process results in effective communication and a clear understanding of meaning. Information is very important for success and its usefulness in life. This includes accuracy, completeness, truthfulness, relevance, and timeliness (Pinardi and Darmawanti, 2023).

Among families, different communication patterns can be influenced by societal habits, principles, past experiences, and the unique traits of each family member. Positive and healthy family communication patterns foster understanding, support, and cooperation among individuals within the family. Effective communication helps build strong bonds, solve problems, and overcome challenges influenced by undesirable factors (Agustina, 2024).

The patterns in responding to messages in the family WhatsApp group, based on interviews with all informants, indicate that the response patterns include the use of GIFs, emoticons such as laughter, smiles, anger, replies with stickers, and some also respond using voice notes. (VN). WhatsApp is a messaging application that allows people to interact through text messages, phone calls, images, and video conversations. One of the advantages of using WhatsApp is that it doesn't require a lot of credit and only relies on an internet data package or WiFi. Not only that, but using WhatsApp also offers the benefits of time and place efficiency. Husna and Arief (2020) state that in certain situations, the purpose of using WhatsApp groups has shifted from a platform for sharing nonsense, jokes, and even the spread of hoaxes, which can make one member reluctant to communicate, to a forum for sharing nonsense, jokes, and even hoaxes that can prevent one member from communicating (Pinardi and Darmawanti, 2023).

Communication in the family WhatsApp group can enhance the effectiveness of communication, such as conducting voting through a list in the chat column for discussions on family problem-solving, family gatherings, and discussions regarding the execution of family events. To communicate effectively, not only is the exchange of information necessary, but there must also be an agreement between both parties. In terms of parent-child relationships, effective parents must communicate openly with their children to build a good relationship. According to this understanding, the family provides a way of communicating that includes

communication processes in which one family member sends a message and another family member receives it, which then results in an interaction of sending, receiving, and understanding messages mutually.

The challenges or problems that often arise in communication within family WhatsApp groups include findings that the main issues faced by family groups are signal interruptions and running out of data packages or internet quotas. In addition, the family's reception or understanding of the information conveyed in the chat column is unclear; however, this can be addressed by providing repeated explanations. In terms of the effectiveness of using WhatsApp as a family communication tool. Five informants stated that they use WhatsApp groups effectively for communication with family. One informant mentioned that WhatsApp is an effective medium because it facilitates users through available features such as voice call (VC), which allows them to communicate face-to-face as much as they want without worrying about high call costs (Ariyanti and Alfando, 2022).

In the sub-theme of the role of messages in your family WhatsApp group regarding family communication, the findings of this study indicate that there is one family member who holds a special role in leading and initiating discussions. However, sometimes all family members can start a conversation in the family WhatsApp group by bringing up their own topics. Based on the direction of communication, a two-way communication pattern is established, both from those who have the idea to hold a discussion and from family members. Based on the communication relationships established, there is effective communication between older and younger members. For instance, family communication in a family WhatsApp group among students living away from home involves interactions with older group members, which are then analyzed by examining the relationship between indicators and the questions posed. The WhatsApp application allows both young and old members to communicate with each other regularly, not just during important moments. When communicating through the WhatsApp application, students' parents always ask them about their activities, such as routines, news, or advice, and the informants actively collaborate to answer parents' questions regarding the relationship between parents and students, as well as younger members who are still in school.

Things that need to be improved to enhance the effectiveness of communication in the family WhatsApp group based on the findings of this study include attitudes of openness, honesty, timing, and the current situation. These results align with the research by Prasanti and Indriani (2017), which states that the effectiveness of communication can be improved through attitudes of openness and honesty. When parents and children communicate through the voice call (VC) feature on WhatsApp, an effective situation always involves giving positive criticism. When communication occurs through this feature, it is found that parents and children can accept guidance or advice and suggestions to engage in positive activities outside of parental supervision. Children also behave well in listening to their parents. This is a positive sentiment aimed at fostering good interactions between parents and children. With this distance bridged, children can communicate effectively with their parents, becoming good listeners and using

polite intonation, thereby generating a positive atmosphere in communication (Ariyanti and Alfando, 2022).

Among families, different communication patterns can be influenced by societal habits, principles, past experiences, and the unique traits of each family member. Through healthy and positive communication patterns, family members can understand each other, support one another, and collaborate effectively. Effective family communication patterns can help build strong relationships among family members, solve problems, and address emerging issues. Family communication patterns can change naturally and can be influenced by external factors. Communication is an important component in the family, involving relationships and interactions among family members. The structure of social power and the dynamics of social relationships are factors that influence family dynamics. Good communication is very important for building good relationships among family members.

## **CONCLUSION**

One important element in family life is communication. Communication that encompasses interactions and relationships among family members, thereby generating patterns of communication. The communication pattern that occurs in the family WhatsApp group has the goal of family communication itself, which is to establish communication among family members and enhance family closeness. The types of family messages and WhatsApp groups include family events and casual chats, resulting in quick responses from family members to messages sent through the family WhatsApp group. The communication pattern within the WhatsApp group involves the use of emoticons, stickers, voice notes, and GIFs. This group WhatsApp communication fosters a more harmonious and positive relationship within the family, both among older and younger members. However, the communication that took place in the WhatsApp group was not without issues, such as the family's lack of understanding of the information provided, signal problems, and internet data package limitations. Research shows that messages sent in family WhatsApp groups can enhance the effectiveness of family communication. However, there are aspects that need improvement in family communication using WhatsApp groups, namely the need to foster a sense of honesty and openness among family members who are part of the group. From the results and discussions presented, it can be concluded that the communication pattern as described above is a communication pattern that can enhance the effectiveness of communication in a WhatsApp group. The use of WhatsApp groups as a family communication medium is perceived to have positive benefits for the family, as members can directly experience these advantages.

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