The Influence of Parental and Child Interpersonal Communication Effectiveness on the Level of Social Media Detoxification in Sinjai Regency

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Abstract

The increasing dominance of social media in the lives of children in Sinjai Regency has shaped their mindsets, behaviours, and social interactions. This situation highlights the need for social media detoxification as an effort to maintain balanced technology use. This study examines the extent to which the effectiveness of interpersonal communication between parents and children influences social media detoxification among children in Sinjai Regency. The research employs a descriptive quantitative design, involving 253 families as respondents. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires and analysed using statistical procedures. The findings indicate a difference in perception regarding the effectiveness of interpersonal communication: parents rated it at 58%, while children rated it higher at 62%. Overall, the effectiveness of interpersonal communication is categorised as moderate. The level of social media detoxification among children also falls within the moderate category, with a score of 63%. Regression analysis reveals a significance value of p = 0.000 (p < 0.05) and an R^2 value of 0.133, confirming that interpersonal communication significantly influences children's social media detoxification, although its contribution is relatively small. These findings underscore the need for strengthening family communication, social support, and digital literacy to promote responsible and balanced social media usage among children.

Keywords: *Effectiveness of Interpersonal Communication" Parents; Children; Social Media; Detoxification.*

Introduction

The rapid development of digital communication is driven by the increasing demand for quick information access. This push for instant access has led to the birth of the internet as a modern communication technology. The internet is the result of the convergence of various previous technologies computers, television, radio, and telephones—integrated into one digital platform (Bungin, 2017). This change requires individuals to continually adapt. Alvin Toffler explains that the development of technology progresses through three waves of civilisation. In the context of the digital era, the internet-based technosphere enables limitless reproduction and distribution of content, forming a sociosphere characterised by excessive digital interaction. The flow of information increases rapidly, creating an infosphere that leads to the phenomenon of information overload, thus affecting individual perception. Ultimately, this condition impacts the psychosphere, resulting in changes in the way humans think and respond to their environment (Anugrah & Suciati, 2020).

Digital development has led to more efficient innovations, as the internet expands access to information, facilitates interaction, and accelerates work processes. However, these benefits also present new challenges, particularly as smartphones, which were initially merely communication tools, have transformed into primary needs (Fajar & Machmud, 2020). Social media is an application based on Web 2.0 technology that allows users to create and share user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media has undergone rapid transformation since its inception, far exceeding its original role as merely a communication tool. Supported by applications that enable instant connectivity,

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social media is now integral to nearly all daily activities and serves as a vital instrument in shaping new communication norms (Soliha, 2015)

The development of digital technology has prompted the emergence of various innovations that are increasingly efficient, as the internet expands access to information, facilitates interaction, and accelerates work processes. However, behind these benefits, new challenges have also arisen, particularly as smartphones, which initially functioned solely as communication devices, have transformed into essential necessities in daily life (Fajar & Machmud, 2020). Social media, as an application based on Web 2.0, allows users to create and share user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Since its inception, social media has undergone rapid development, far exceeding its original role as a mere communication tool. With the support of various applications that provide instant connectivity, social media is now embedded in nearly all daily activities and serves as a vital instrument in shaping new communication norms (Soliha, 2015).

On the positive side, social media provides significant benefits in the context of education and the development of younger generations. These platforms can enhance learning motivation and encourage positive intentions in the educational process (Alawiyah et al., 2023). Additionally, social media serves as a space for self-expression, allowing individuals to convey their thoughts and feelings more openly, thereby strengthening interpersonal relationships (Devi & Siswati, 2020). However, excessive use can also have negative impacts on the quality of communication between individuals. Interactions that occur through social media tend to be superficial and lack the emotional context that is an essential element of face to face communication (Arvito et al., 2025). The limitations of nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, body language, and vocal intonation can diminish social sensitivity and hinder the development of effective interpersonal communication skills, as authentic communication relies not only on verbal messages but also on the accompanying emotional context (Cahyono, 2018).

The habit of using social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and similar applications for extended periods can weaken face to face communication skills. The dominance of digital interaction often renders direct conversations less authentic and tends to be superficial (Salim et al., 2023). This phenomenon aligns with Neil Postman's concept of technopoly, which describes a condition in which society begins to revere technology to the extent that it dictates various aspects of life (Soliha, 2015). Goldberg adds that excessive use of social media is typically marked by increased tolerance for spending extended time on these platforms, the emergence of conflicts with daily activities, and the inability to control online time. The accumulation of such behaviours can diminish self-esteem, disrupt mental health, reduce productivity, and weaken the effectiveness of interpersonal communication (Chou & Hsiao, 2000).

This trend becomes even more relevant when linked to internet usage data in Indonesia. The We Are Social report indicates that the number of internet users has reached 212 million, with a penetration rate of 74.6%, while social media users total 143 million, or 50.2% of the population, as of January 2025 (Riyanto, 2025). This phenomenon is also evident at the regional level, particularly in Makassar City and Sinjai Regency. In Makassar, social media users account for 59% (Daniel, 2025), while in Sinjai, the internet usage rate reaches 78.2%, according to data from the Department of Communication, Informatics, Coding, and Statistics. Although specific data on social media usage in Sinjai is not yet available, the high internet penetration rate suggests significant community involvement in daily digital activities.

Concerns are increasing as this excessive usage occurs among vulnerable age groups, specifically children, who should be in environments that support their physical, cognitive, and emotional development. The high intensity of children's access is reflected in various internet usage purposes, as shown in the data from Databoks.
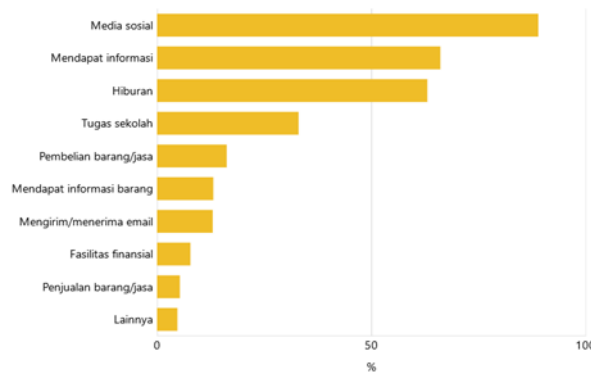
Images 1 Percentage of children aged 5 and above accessing the internet for various purposes
Source: Databoks

Based on the data, it appears that children access social media up to 90% of the time, search for information around 70%, and complete school assignments 35–40% of the time. The dominance of social media usage indicates that the internet primarily serves as a space for social interaction for children (Yonatan, 2024). Other data also shows that 86.5% of children spend an average of 4–5 hours per day accessing social media. Additionally, social media poses threats to children's psychological and moral well-being through exposure to negative content. The data reveals that 48% of children have experienced online bullying, 50.3% have been exposed to sexual content, and 2% have been threatened with sexual activities (Muamar, 2024). Such exposure creates serious emotional burdens and can disrupt the formation of children's identities and moral values.

In response to these dangers, a trend of social media detoxification has emerged. Conceptually, this practice is rooted in Media Resistance Theory (Syvertsen & Enli, 2020), which views it as a strategy to limit media influence rather than to cease its use entirely. Detoxification is carried out by reducing the intensity of usage in order to restore life balance (Scheppe & Seiffen, 2022) and to free individuals from the "digital poison" that undermines concentration, emotional health, and the quality of social relationships (Mhone, 2023).

Awareness of these negative impacts is also reflected globally. Indonesia even ranks highest in supporting restrictions on social media for children, with 87% in favour. This finding aligns with an IPSOS survey from 2025, which revealed that 87% of respondents supported limiting social media usage for children under the age of 14, while 11% disagreed (Haq, 2025). This high level of support indicates an increasing concern among the public regarding children's mental health and social development. A UNICEF survey also noted that 86.2% of parents have established internet usage rules, and 89.2% are aware of the potential dangers of the digital world (Muamar, 2024).

In the context of family, interpersonal communication becomes the primary foundation for helping children reduce their social media usage. This communication plays a crucial role in maintaining digital health balance (Hall & Liu, 2022) and allows the detoxification process to proceed more purposefully (Vanden Abeele, 2021). (Cangara, 2021) emphasises that interpersonal communication is a process of direct message exchange, which provides parents with the opportunity to instil values such as responsibility and self-control (Sari & Sari, 2023). Through effective communication, parents can clearly explain the reasons for social media restrictions to their children (Eichhorn, 2019). Parental role modelling in technology use is also essential (Puspitasari & Hakim, 2023), while face to face interactions strengthen children's communication skills, foster trust, and build emotional intimacy (Kusumo & Jatmika, 2020).

Preliminary surveys indicate that 72% of parents have engaged in intensive interpersonal communication, emphasising emotional closeness and open dialogue to guide their children. Meanwhile, 36% of parents tend to rely on technical approaches such as setting duration limits, which tend to yield only temporary results. These findings suggest a significant potential for interpersonal communication in the detoxification of children's social media usage, although its effectiveness still requires empirical testing. Therefore, this research is titled "The Influence of Parental and Child Interpersonal Communication Effectiveness on the Level of Social Media Detoxification in Sinjai Regency." This study aims to provide scientific evidence regarding the contribution of interpersonal communication in effectively and sustainably limiting children's social media usage.

Literature Review

The effectiveness of interpersonal communication, according to Supratiknya in (Abidin, 2022), refers to the extent to which the outcomes or consequences of a communication behaviour meet expectations. Furthermore, this effectiveness is significantly influenced by an individual's ability to convey messages clearly, create the desired impression, and influence others in alignment with the communicator's goals. Meanwhile, Hardjana, in (Suranto Aw, 2011), emphasises that interpersonal communication can only be considered effective if the message sent is received and understood as intended by the sender, and is then voluntarily acted upon by the receiver. Essentially, effective communication should also be capable of strengthening the quality of interpersonal relationships without barriers that disrupt the smooth flow of the interaction process.

In line with this, according to DeVito, effective interpersonal communication is characterised by openness, empathy, support, a positive attitude, and equality. In the context of social media detoxification, these five components are key to creating a communication environment conducive to the establishment of shared norms and rules. Therefore, effective communication facilitates the negotiation of meaning regarding healthy media use and aids in the internalisation of detoxification values within the child. This is supported by research from (Gentile & Walsh, 2002), which demonstrates that poor family communication quality is positively correlated with increased dependence on digital technology.

However, the influence of interpersonal communication on children's media behaviour does not occur automatically. The effectiveness of such communication is mediated by internal psychological processes that shape how messages are interpreted, understood, and transformed into behavioural decisions. Therefore, an understanding of cognitive learning theory is essential to explain the internal mechanisms through which interpersonal communication affects children's responses to social media use.

Cognitive learning theory emerged as a response to criticisms of the limitations of behaviourist theory, which overly emphasises the stimulus-response mechanism and reinforcement. Psychologists argue that the behaviourist approach oversimplifies the complexity of human learning processes and lacks a strong psychological foundation. From a cognitive perspective, human behaviour is understood as the result of more complex mental processes, rather than merely reactions to rewards or punishments (Wandani et al., 2023)

In the field of education, cognitive learning theory emphasises mental processes during learning rather than just the end results. Studies on cognitive development focus on how individuals construct understanding and ways of thinking through cognitive mechanisms. Jean Piaget is a central figure who made significant contributions through his concept of developmental stages known as genetic epistemology (Khiyarusoleh, 2016). Piaget emphasised that a child's learning should be aligned with the mental developmental stage they are experiencing. Children's thinking differs from that of adults and has distinct patterns at each developmental stage (Amir, 2015).

In addition to Piaget, other figures such as Dewey, Lawrence Kohlberg, Damon, Mosher, and Perry have also researched cognitive development in the context of (Sjarkawi, 2011). Additional contributions from Jerome Bruner, David Ausubel, Chr. Von Ehrenfels, Koffka, Kohler, and Wertheimer enrich cognitive theory (Mulyono Abdurrahman, 2003). Learning is understood as a complex activity that encompasses active learning, social interaction, and personal experience (Sutarto, 2017). Piaget explains that the formation of knowledge occurs through physical experiences and logical-mathematical experiences. Cognitive structures or schemas are formed through interaction with the environment, and content reflects the way individuals understand situations, with functions including assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration (Nurjan, 2016). This process is natural and evolves with age and experience, rather than being determined by genetic factors (Salkind, 2017). Piaget's stages of cognitive development include sensorimotor (0–2 years), preoperational (2–7 years), concrete operational (7–11 years), and formal operational (11 years and above) (Amir, 2015).

Within this cognitive framework, children's decisions regarding media use are shaped by their ability to perceive risks, evaluate consequences, and regulate behaviour.These cognitive processes form the basis for understanding resistance toward excessive media exposure and the emergence of conscious efforts to limit media consumption. Media resistance refers to the expression of dislike or rejection of mass and digital media. This is often associated with feelings of alienation resulting from

advancements in communication technology (Syvertsen & Enli, 2020). Social media has become the primary platform for human interaction (Woodstock, 2014). Media resistance can be manifested through restrictions on usage duration, content selection, slow media, media sabbath, media detox, media fasting, or unplugging (Rauch, 2011). These practices aim to reduce media distractions, enhance real social engagement, and maintain personal control (Arnd-Caddigan, 2015). Social media detox is a form of media resistance that focuses on the temporary cessation of platform use. The aim is to reduce digital engagement, enhance mental well-being, and strengthen real social interactions (Syvertsen & Enli, 2020). Interpersonal communication, including parental guidance, plays a crucial role in helping children use social media responsibly.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative descriptive approach to obtain measurable and generalisable insights into the influence of the effectiveness of interpersonal communication between parents and children on the level of social media detoxification among children aged 7–12 in Sinjai Regency. This approach emphasises the breadth of data and general patterns within the population, rather than an in-depth exploration of individual experiences (Kriyantono, 2022). The research was conducted in Sinjai Regency, specifically in North Sinjai and Sinjai Borong districts, selected for their representation of diverse social and demographic characteristics and for having a population aligned with the study's focus. The study spanned three months, from April to June 2025, encompassing instrument preparation, data collection, analysis, and result validation.

The population of this study comprises all units possessing characteristics relevant to the research focus and serving as sources of data (Sugiyono, 2018). Specifically, the population consists of parents who have children aged 7–12 years and reside in North Sinjai and Sinjai Borong districts. This age range was selected because it corresponds to the digital exploration phase, which plays a crucial role in shaping children's digital habits, including their awareness of social media detoxification. Population data for children in the two districts are presented in Table 1.

Tabel 1. Distribution of Parents with Children Aged 7-12 in Sinjai Regency

Districts in Sinjai Regency:	Parents with Children Aged 7-12
North Sinjai	3.076
Borong Sinjai	1.156
Total	4.232

Source**:** Sinjai Regency Government

The sample in this study serves as a representation of the population in order to provide a general overview of the conditions under investigation. Sampling was conducted to ensure that population characteristics were proportionally represented and that the data obtained were relevant and accurate ((Sudaryono, 2018). The sample was drawn from North Sinjai and Sinjai Borong districts, chosen for their social diversity and family characteristics, as well as accessibility and alignment with the research focus. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula, commonly applied in quantitative research for large populations, as follows:

$$S = \frac{3{,}841 \; X \; 4232 \; X \; . \; 0,5\,(1-0,5)}{(\,4232-1\,) \; x \; 0,025 + 3{,}841 \; x \; 0,5\,(\,1-0,5\,)}$$

$$S = \frac{3{,}841 \; X \; 4232 \; X \; 0,5 \; X \; 0,5}{(\,4231\,) \; x \; 0,0025 + 3{,}841 \; x \; O,25}$$

$$S = \frac{4063778}{1153775}$$

$$S = 352$$

With a total population of 4,232 individuals, a 95% confidence level, and a 5% margin of error, the formula yielded a sample size of 352 respondents. This study employed Multistage Random Sampling, a technique in which sampling is carried out progressively from larger units to smaller, more focused units. This method was chosen to ensure that the sample proportionally and accurately represents the conditions in both research districts (Kamalu et al., 2024).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analysed using quantitative statistical techniques with the assistance of SPSS version 25. Prior to hypothesis testing, the research instruments were subjected to validity and reliability testing to ensure accurate and consistent measurement of the variables. The results indicated that all items measuring parent–child interpersonal communication and children's social media detoxification were valid, with reliability coefficients exceeding the minimum acceptable threshold (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.60).

Before conducting regression analysis, classical assumption tests were performed, including tests of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity. The findings confirmed that the data met all assumptions required for simple linear regression.

Descriptive analysis was then employed to examine general trends in respondents' perceptions of parent–child interpersonal communication and children's social media detoxification. The results were categorised into low, moderate, and high levels based on respondents' mean scores. The classification of interpersonal communication effectiveness is presented in Table 2

Table 2. Assessment Categories for Interpersonal Communication Effectiveness

Interval	Assessment Category
25 – 50	Low
51 – 76	Moderate
77 – 100	High

Source: Primary Data 2025

while the classification of children's social media detoxification levels is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Assessment Categories for Children's Social Media Detoxification

Interval	Assessment Category
20 – 47	Low
48 – 75	Moderate
76 – 100	High

Source: Primary Data 2025

Subsequently, a simple linear regression analysis was performed to examine the effect of parental interpersonal communication effectiveness on the level of children's social media detoxification. This analysis aimed to determine whether the independent variable significantly influenced the dependent variable, as well as the direction and strength of the effect.

The independent variable, interpersonal communication between parents and children, was measured using indicators of openness, empathy, supportive attitudes, positive attitudes, and equality. Meanwhile, the dependent variable, children's level of social media detoxification, was measured using indicators of temporal excess, spatial excess, body and mind, and self-optimisation. These indicators supported the interpretation of both descriptive and regression analysis results, ensuring that the findings accurately reflected children's social media habits and the influence of parental interpersonal communication.

Result and Discussion

Based on the data analysis, it was found that parental–child interpersonal communication has a significant effect on the level of children's social media detoxification in Sinjai Regency. This is evidenced by the results of the simple linear regression analysis, which showed a significance value of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) in both the F-test and t-test, indicating that the regression model used is suitable for explaining the relationship between the variables. Accordingly, the hypothesis stating that the effectiveness of parental–child interpersonal communication influences the level of social media detoxification can be statistically accepted. The significant F-test result demonstrates that the

regression model as a whole has the capacity to predict the level of social media detoxification based on interpersonal communication effectiveness. Meanwhile, the t-test results also indicate that the interpersonal communication variable contributes significantly on an individual level to changes in the detoxification level.

The effectiveness of interpersonal communication between parents and children depends not only on the intention or frequency of interactions but also on the openness, empathy, support, positive attitudes, and equality established within their relationship. In Sinjai Regency, parental child interpersonal communication has been functional and well-integrated into daily activities. Children appear fairly accustomed to speaking and interacting with their parents, and vice versa. However, in terms of effectiveness, this communication generally falls within the moderate category.

These findings were obtained from separate assessments of the perceptions of both parties, treated as independent units of analysis. From the parents' perspective, the results indicate that 58% rated the effectiveness of interpersonal communication with their children within the 51–76% range, categorised as "moderate." This assessment reflects a reality in which interpersonal communication is functional and deemed adequate, yet it does not fully encompass the ideal dimensions such as deep emotional openness, responsive empathy, or participatory equality in dialogue. Meanwhile, the remaining 42% of parents rated communication outside the moderate category, falling into either the low or high categories. Those who rated it low typically experienced internal constraints such as limited time, work pressures, or a more authoritarian parenting style, resulting in suboptimal interactions with their children. Conversely, a small proportion of parents rated communication as high because they perceived routine interactions with their children as effective, although these may not fully accommodate the child's perspective holistically. From a scientific standpoint, these differences in perception indicate a variation in the effectiveness of family interpersonal communication, which in turn influences the effectiveness of children's social media detoxification.

From the children's perspective, the pattern is similar, albeit with slightly different proportions. As many as 62% of children rated communication with their parents within the 51–76% range, which research categorises as "moderate." This suggests that most children perceive communication as sufficiently functional for everyday routines, yet it does not entirely meet their expectations for open dialogue, empathy, and equality. The remaining 38% of children rated communication outside the moderate category. Children who rated it low often experienced interactions that were less open or overly rule-focused, leaving them with a sense of limited engagement. Meanwhile, children who rated communication high may have experienced more open and responsive interactions, for example through opportunities to express their opinions freely, whether directly or via digital media.

Comparing the perceptions of parents and children reveals a general alignment within the moderate category, but also highlights a perceptual gap affecting approximately 38–42% of families, indicating that nearly half of the sample still experience communication that is perceived as either less effective or overly controlled based on subjective evaluation. This finding underscores that, although interpersonal communication within families is generally functional, substantial scope for improvement remains. To better understand the sources of this perceptual gap and identify which aspects of communication contribute most to these differences, a comparative analysis of each interpersonal communication indicator between parents and children is presented in Table 4.
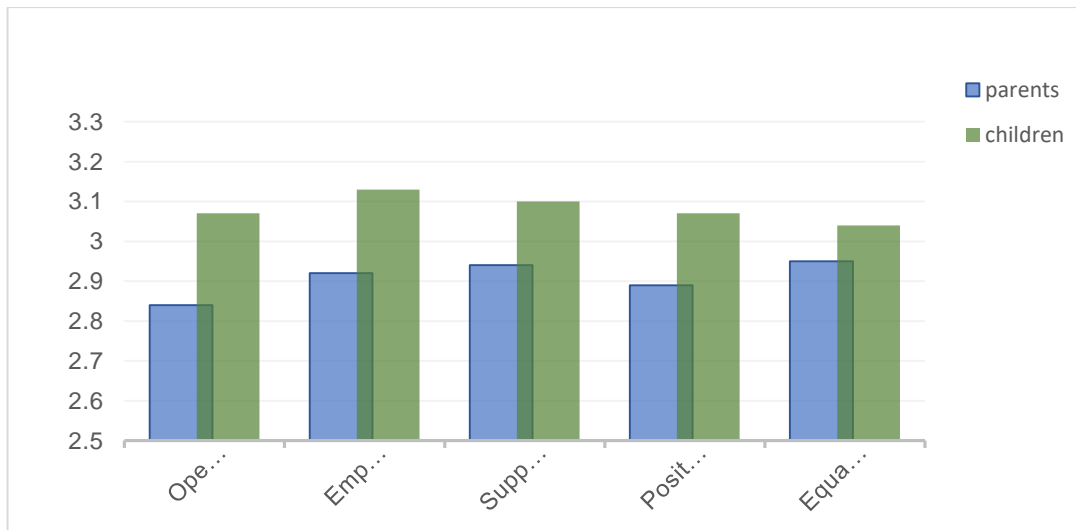
Table 4. Comparison of Interpersonal Communication Indicators: Parents vs Children in Sinjai Regency

Source: Primary Data 2025

The table above illustrates the differences in the average scores of children and parents across five indicators of interpersonal communication: openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitude, and equality. To further elucidate the underlying factors contributing to the observed variations in communication effectiveness, it is important to examine each key indicator individually. By analysing openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitude, and equality, we can gain a clearer understanding of the specific strengths and limitations in parent–child interactions, which in turn helps to explain their impact on the process of social media detoxification in children.

Openness. According to DeVito, openness is the willingness to be honest and share information (DeVito & DeVito, 2019)..In Sinjai, children scored higher in openness (3.10) compared to their parents (2.94). Children tend to be more forthcoming in expressing their opinions and feelings, both directly and digitally. Conversely, parents tend to exercise greater caution to avoid conflict, resulting in communication that is not always balanced. This difference in openness has important implications for children's social media behaviour. When children feel able to openly communicate with their parents, they are more likely to share their experiences, challenges, and concerns related to social media use. This openness creates opportunities for parents to provide guidance, support, and strategies for regulating screen time, which can facilitate more effective social media detoxification. Without such openness, children may hide their social media activities or struggle to self-regulate, reducing the effectiveness of any intervention.

Empathy refers to the ability to understand the experiences of others (Bahfiarti, 2020) Children also scored higher in empathy (3.07) than their parents (2.84), demonstrating a greater capacity to adopt the perspective of their interlocutors. Although parents generally have good intentions, they are often constrained by time limitations, work pressures, and lower confidence in understanding their children's feelings, sometimes leading them to avoid in-depth conversations. Empathetic communication, however, is crucial for fostering responsible social media use. When parents demonstrate empathy, children are more likely to feel understood and supported, which increases their willingness to follow guidance regarding limiting or detoxifying social media use. Conversely, limited parental empathy may reduce children's engagement in meaningful discussions about social media habits, thereby hindering effective behavioural self-regulation

Supportiveness. Supportiveness in interpersonal communication encompasses actions and responses that provide a sense of security and being heard (DeVito & DeVito, 2019). Children scored higher in supportiveness (3.04) compared to their parents (2.95). Parents typically express support through tangible actions, such as guidance or supervision, but the intensity of this support is often constrained by work commitments. Children, on the other hand, tend to provide support more quickly through digital media, for example by encouraging peers or sharing experiences. Differences in modes of expressing support may reduce mutual understanding of its meaning. In relation to social media detoxification, effective parental support can encourage children to follow advice on limiting social media

use, whereas less visible or inconsistent support may leave children feeling less motivated or less acknowledged in the process.

Positive Attitudes. Positive attitudes act as a bridge in communication, facilitating message acceptance and harmonious interaction (DeVito & DeVito, 2019). Children scored higher in positive attitudes (3.07) than their parents (2.89). Parents generally express positivity directly through acknowledgment or face-to-face interaction, whereas children often do so via social media. This difference in channels can create gaps in mutual understanding. Regarding social media detoxification, positive attitudes from parents, such as recognising or praising children's efforts to limit social media use, can enhance motivation and commitment. Conversely, a lack of positive reinforcement may reduce children's willingness to engage in detoxification behaviours.

Equality. Equality in interpersonal communication reflects the extent to which all parties have equal opportunities to express opinions and feel acknowledged (Zakira et al., 2024). Children scored higher in equality (3.13) compared to their parents (2.92). Parents tend to maintain communication patterns that emphasise obedience, whereas children expect more dialogic and open interactions influenced by their digital experiences. These paradigm differences may create gaps in understanding and engagement. In terms of social media detoxification, more equitable communication encourages children to feel heard and responsible for their decisions, including limiting social media use. Conversely, imbalances in communication equality may foster resistance or reduced participation in the detoxification process.

A detailed examination of the five interpersonal communication indicators reveals a unique configuration. The emerging pattern shows that children consistently perceive the quality of communication as higher than their parents do across all aspects: openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitudes, and equality. This perceptual gap suggests a lack of synchronization in the way both parties interpret and engage in daily communication, meaning that interactions have yet to fully produce an effective and mutually reinforcing relationship.

The root of this ineffectiveness can be traced to two main sources. First, there is a generational gap in expressing and interpreting elements of communication. Parents tend to rely on traditional channels and expressions, such as face to face interaction, tangible actions, and an emphasis on obedience, whereas children are more adaptive to rapid digital expressions and expect more equal dialogue. Second, structural barriers such as time constraints, work pressures, and parents' lack of confidence in managing the emotional dynamics of their children serve as internal obstacles to practising deeper empathy and openness.

Based on the patterns of perceptual differences and structural barriers identified, it can be concluded that improving the effectiveness of communication requires alignment in interaction across the five key indicators, rather than merely increasing the frequency of communication. When these elements operate in harmony openness reinforced by empathy, support conveyed through positive attitudes, and equality as the foundation of the relationship interpersonal communication moves beyond mere information exchange and develops into a vehicle for internalizing values. In this context, alongside enhancing learning motivation, children also become better able to understand the limits of social media use and to develop self-control over tendencies toward excessive use (Pasya, 2024).

This process aligns with Piaget's cognitive development theory. From his perspective, the way children process information determines how they understand the world, including interactions on social media. Children aged 7–12 are in the transitional stage from concrete operations to early formal operations, during which they begin to think more logically and are capable of understanding more abstract concepts. This process occurs through two crucial cognitive mechanisms: assimilation and accommodation.

Parental interpersonal communication shapes children's initial schemas regarding values, rules, and the proper use of social media. When children encounter complex digital experiences, they assimilate this new information into their existing schemas. For example, children learn to recognise forms of support or empathy in the digital world such as likes or caring comments and incorporate them into their understanding of the support and empathy taught by their parents. However, when new experiences on social media, which offer open, equal, and multi-perspective online interactions, do not fully align with the child's initial schema shaped by a more hierarchical and instructive family communication pattern, cognitive imbalance (disequilibrium) occurs. At this point, accommodation is required: the process of adjusting and expanding their understanding to encompass this new reality. In

other words, children continuously strive to accommodate their digital experiences without abandoning the core family values, a process that necessitates appropriate guidance.

Interpersonal communication also functions as a mechanism of influence, whereby individuals attempt to modify the attitudes and behaviours of others through the messages they convey (Roem, 2019). For instance, parents do not merely issue prohibitions or admonitions; they encourage children to adopt healthier patterns of social media use through explanations delivered with empathy, emotional support, and role-modelling. When this interpersonal influence occurs effectively and consistently, children are more likely to accept guidance and exhibit behavioural changes that align with the goals of social media detoxification.

This is where the challenge lies. In many contexts, including Sinjai Regency, parents often tend to maintain traditional communication patterns that emphasise obedience and one-way directives, stemming from life experience, cultural values, and a desire to protect. If rigid, these patterns can actually widen perceptual gaps and hinder children's healthy accommodation processes. The resulting imbalance affects not only the child but also the overall dynamics of family communication. Therefore, understanding these cognitive stages is crucial for parents. Such understanding enables them to adjust interpersonal communication more effectively not only by demonstrating positive attitudes and empathy but also by delivering messages appropriate to the child's developmental stage, providing constructive feedback, and, importantly, creating an equal and open dialogue space that allows the child's processes of assimilation and accommodation to proceed smoothly. In this way, parents act as sensitive guides, helping children achieve equilibration, a dynamic balance between existing understanding and new experiences.

Although the role of interpersonal communication within the family is clearly important, the quantitative findings provide a more proportional view of its impact on children's social media detoxification. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.133$) indicates that interpersonal communication accounts for only 13.3% of the variation in children's social media detoxification levels. In other words, while interpersonal communication has a significant effect, its statistical contribution is not dominant. As much as 86.7% of the variance is attributable to factors outside the research model. These factors may include the influence of peers, who serve as primary reference points for schooaged children, the characteristics of the educational environment, which may either encourage or increase digital exposure, and the ease of access to devices and internet connectivity. This situation underscores that social media detoxification is influenced by multiple dimensions, not solely by parent child interactions.

Therefore, since interpersonal communication explains only part of the variation in children's behaviour, a more comprehensive understanding requires an examination of children's overall level of social media detoxification. In this context, the overall level of children's social media detoxification in Sinjai Regency falls within the moderate category at 63%. This finding indicates that children have begun to develop a sufficient capacity to regulate their social media use, although this ability has not yet fully stabilised and remains at an early stage of adaptation. This condition reflects the emergence of an initial awareness among children of the importance of maintaining a balance between digital life and real-life social activities. Meanwhile, the remaining 37% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as children's personality characteristics, peer pressure, the intensity of digital media exposure, parenting patterns beyond interpersonal communication, as well as cultural and broader social environmental influences."

Based on the mean scores of each indicator, the temporal indicator recorded the lowest score (3.15), indicating that children continue to experience difficulties in regulating the duration of social media use. The body and mind indicator scored 3.16, reflecting an emerging awareness of the physical and psychological impacts of media use, although this awareness has not yet translated into consistent self-control. The spatial indicator achieved a mean score of 3.19, suggesting initial efforts by children to distinguish between digital and real social spaces, albeit constrained by habitual digital multitasking. Meanwhile, the self-optimisation indicator recorded the highest score (3.22), indicating children's potential to balance social media use with more productive activities.

Taken together, variations in achievement across the temporal, body and mind, spatial, and self-optimisation indicators indicate that children's social media detoxification in Sinjai Regency is developing gradually and unevenly across behavioural dimensions. Although children have demonstrated emerging awareness and adaptive efforts in regulating their social media use, these capacities have not yet been consistently internalised, particularly in relation to time regulation and the management of physical and psychological effects. This pattern of findings aligns with media resistance

theory, which conceptualises children as active agents capable of selectively controlling and interpreting media use rather than as passive recipients of media influence. However, as this capacity for resistance remains at an early developmental stage, reinforcement from the immediate social environment becomes essential.

In this context, effective interpersonal communication within the family functions as a foundational mechanism that strengthens children's social media detoxification. Communication characterised by openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitudes, and equality contributes differently to each indicator. Openness and equality facilitate participatory dialogue and negotiation regarding time regulation (temporal indicator). Empathy and positive parental attitudes assist children in understanding media limitations as efforts to safeguard physical and psychological wellbeing (body and mind indicator). Supportive and consistent communication strengthens children's ability to establish boundaries between digital and real-world social spaces (spatial indicator). Meanwhile, parental equality and support encourage self-regulation and more productive use of time (self-optimisation indicator).

Accordingly, effective interpersonal communication operates as a reinforcing mechanism of media resistance by helping children translate digital awareness into more balanced and proportionate patterns of social media use, even though this process continues to develop at an early adaptive stage

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that parental–child interpersonal communication has a statistically significant effect on children's social media detoxification, although its contribution is relatively limited. This suggests that interpersonal communication does not function as a single determining factor, but rather as a supportive mechanism that shapes the psychological and cognitive conditions under which children regulate their social media use. Consequently, the significance of interpersonal communication should be interpreted within the broader context of children's social and digital environments.

Interpersonal communication within families in Sinjai Regency is generally embedded in daily routines and can be considered functionally established. However, its effectiveness remains at a moderate level. This indicates a distinction between communication that occurs regularly and communication that is capable of fostering the internalisation of values. When communication is not consistently characterised by openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitudes, and equality, it is more likely to produce short-term compliance than sustained self-regulation in relation to social media use.

The presence of a perceptual gap between parents and children further clarifies this condition. While both groups broadly classify communication effectiveness as moderate, children tend to evaluate it more positively than parents. This suggests that children are relatively adaptive to existing communication patterns, whereas parents apply evaluative standards linked to responsibility and parental authority. Such divergence indicates that communication effectiveness is shaped not only by interaction frequency, but by shared meaning and aligned expectations, which have not yet been fully achieved within the family context.

These findings can be interpreted through Piaget's cognitive development theory, particularly the processes of assimilation and accommodation. School-aged children are in a transitional phase towards abstract thinking, during which they actively construct meaning from experience, including digital interactions. Family communication patterns that remain predominantly hierarchical may not fully align with children's experiences in digital environments that emphasise openness and reciprocity. As a result, children are required to reconcile differing communicative frameworks, which can limit the capacity of parental communication to guide behavioural regulation related to social media detoxification.

The relatively low explanatory power of interpersonal communication highlights that children's social media behaviour is influenced by multiple external factors, such as peer dynamics, educational environments, and access to digital technology. Nevertheless, this does not diminish the role of parental communication. Rather, interpersonal communication functions as a value-oriented and interpretative foundation that helps children make sense of their digital experiences. In line with media resistance theory, children are positioned as active agents who are developing the ability to negotiate, rather than passively absorb, media influence.

The moderate level of social media detoxification observed in this study reflects an emerging, yet unstable, capacity for media self-regulation. Children demonstrate early awareness and adaptive efforts, particularly in relation to self-optimisation; however, challenges remain in time regulation and in managing physical and psychological effects of media use. At this stage, effective interpersonal communication serves as a reinforcing mechanism that supports the transformation of awareness into consistent behaviour, primarily through dialogue rather than control.

The implications of these findings suggest that improving parental–child communication requires a shift from increasing interaction frequency to enhancing communication quality. Communication that emphasises openness, empathy, equality, and positive reinforcement is more likely to support children's cognitive equilibration, enabling them to balance family values with the realities of digital life. Through such communication, parents contribute to the gradual development of children's self-control and responsible media use.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the role of interpersonal communication in children's social media detoxification is developmental and contextual rather than deterministic. While it does not directly dictate behavioural outcomes, effective family communication creates the conditions necessary for children to develop awareness, self-regulation, and critical engagement with social media. Strengthening adaptive and dialogic communication within families therefore represents an important strategy for supporting children's ability to manage social media use in an increasingly complex digital environment.

Conclusion

This study shows that parental–child interpersonal communication has a statistically significant but limited effect on children's social media detoxification in Sinjai Regency. Although family communication is generally functional, its effectiveness remains moderate, indicating that regular interaction has not yet developed into a fully dialogic and developmentally responsive process capable of consistently fostering self-regulation. The findings support Piaget's cognitive development theory and media resistance theory, positioning children as active agents who gradually develop self-control in digital contexts with support from family communication. Overall, interpersonal communication functions as a supportive foundation rather than a primary determinant, highlighting the importance of improving communication quality through openness, empathy, support, positive attitudes, and equality to promote balanced and responsible social media use.

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