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Communication Patterns Between Parents And Children In Supervising Gadget Use From An Early Age

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Abstract

This study examines parent-child communication patterns in supervising gadget use among children aged 7–9 years in Sidoarjo Regency. A descriptive qualitative design was employed involving six parents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and documentation and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings reveal that parental supervision is predominantly characterized by open, dialogic, and two-way communication. Parents combine explanations, advice, negotiation, time restrictions, content control, and consequences to guide children's gadget use. Conversation orientation appears relatively dominant because children are generally allowed to express opinions, objections, and experiences, while conformity orientation remains visible through parental authority and rule enforcement. Active mediation, restrictive mediation, and co-use operate simultaneously and are adapted to family circumstances. Consistent communication and understandable explanations also support children's acceptance of digital boundaries and emerging self-regulation. However, peer influence, parental fatigue, and limited time can reduce supervisory consistency. Overall, effective gadget supervision depends on balancing parental authority with responsive communication, clear boundaries, and sustained involvement in children's digital activities. This balance promotes responsible technology use while preserving supportive family relationships overall.

Keywords: children, family communication, gadgets, parental mediation, parental supervision.



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has substantially transformed the everyday lives of children and families, particularly through the increasing accessibility of gadgets for communication, entertainment, and educational activities. Children are now introduced to digital devices at increasingly younger ages, making gadget use an inseparable part of their social and learning environments. Despite the benefits offered by digital technology, young children generally lack sufficient cognitive and emotional maturity to independently regulate the duration, content, and purpose of their gadget use (Aresti et al., 2023). Consequently, parental supervision becomes essential to ensure that children's interaction with digital technology remains appropriate to their developmental needs.

The urgency of parental supervision is reinforced by the emergence of children as digital natives who have been exposed to computers, videos, games, and internet-based technologies since early childhood (Mardina, 2011). This tendency is particularly evident among Generation Alpha, whose development occurs within a technological environment characterized by digital platforms, artificial intelligence, and increasingly personalized online content. Intensive exposure to gadgets without adequate guidance may create developmental risks, including reduced concentration, difficulties in social interaction, and emotional reactions when access to gadgets is restricted (Syifa et al., 2019). Excessive and poorly supervised gadget use may also negatively influence children's psychosocial development when digital stimulation replaces meaningful interaction with their social environment (Pradona & Qarni, 2023).

Gadgets, however, should not be positioned solely as a source of developmental problems because they can also provide educational and communicative benefits when used appropriately.

Digital devices may support learning activities, provide access to educational information, and enable children to communicate with parents when they require assistance or protection (Tasya Hidayatuladkia et al., 2021). The positive or negative consequences of gadget use therefore depend considerably on how parents accompany, regulate, and communicate with children during their interaction with digital media. Effective parental supervision should consequently balance children's opportunities to benefit from technology with appropriate restrictions designed to prevent excessive or inappropriate use.

Parental supervision of gadget use extends beyond determining screen-time duration or restricting access to particular digital content. The effectiveness of supervision is strongly associated with the communication process through which parents explain rules, provide guidance, and respond to children's questions or objections concerning gadget use (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). Restrictions communicated exclusively through commands and prohibitions may encourage compliance without enabling children to understand the reasons underlying parental decisions. In contrast, open and dialogic communication provides children with opportunities to express their perspectives and has been identified as a more constructive strategy for reducing excessive gadget use than restriction alone (Furodh et al., 2023).

The family constitutes the earliest interpersonal environment in which children develop communication skills, values, behavioral patterns, and an understanding of social boundaries. Parent-child communication therefore plays an important role in determining how children interpret and respond to rules established within the household, including those concerning gadget use. Effective interpersonal communication involves openness, feedback, supportive responses, and mutual understanding, all of which contribute to a positive relational climate between family members (DeVito, 2016; Firyal Grahita Monica & Teguh Dwi Putranto, 2025). In the context of digital parenting, such communication allows parents not only to exercise control but also to educate children about the benefits, risks, and responsibilities associated with digital technology.

The relevance of parent-child communication becomes increasingly important because excessive digital engagement can itself interfere with interaction within the family. High smartphone use among family members may reduce the quality of face-to-face communication, create phubbing behavior, and weaken emotional closeness between parents and children (Litha & Mediana Tobing, 2025). Limited parental communication has also been associated with difficulties in children's emotional regulation, decreased social interaction, and stronger emotional reactions when gadget use is restricted (Munna et al., 2021). These conditions indicate that successful gadget supervision depends not only on technical restrictions but also on parents' ability to maintain consistent, supportive, and meaningful communication with their children.

Family Communication Pattern Theory developed by Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002) provides an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding these communication processes through the dimensions of conversation orientation and conformity orientation. Conversation orientation reflects the degree to which family members are encouraged to communicate openly and participate in discussions, whereas conformity orientation emphasizes obedience, shared values, and acceptance of parental authority. Previous research indicates that open, democratic, and persuasive communication tends to facilitate children's understanding of gadget-use restrictions, while authoritarian or predominantly one-way communication may create resistance and reduce children's involvement in the rule-making process (Husnaeni, 2024; Ul Hikmah, 2024). The effectiveness of parental mediation therefore depends on how families combine open discussion with the authority required to establish consistent boundaries regarding children's digital activities.

Although previous studies have examined parental control, interpersonal communication, and communication styles in relation to children's gadget use, greater attention is still required to understand how conversation orientation and conformity orientation operate simultaneously within everyday parent-child interactions. Existing research has largely emphasized restrictions, parenting strategies, or the general effectiveness of interpersonal communication, while the negotiation between children's opportunities to express opinions and parents' authority to establish digital boundaries requires further exploration (Amala, 2021; Husnaeni, 2024; Ul Hikmah, 2024). Accordingly, this study focuses on communication patterns between parents and children in supervising gadget use among families with children aged 7–9 years in Sidoarjo Regency. The study aims to analyze how open communication, two-way interaction, explanations, advice, and discussions concerning gadget-

use rules reflect the interaction between conversation orientation and conformity orientation in parental supervision.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to obtain an in-depth understanding of parent–child communication patterns in supervising gadget use from an early age. The participants consisted of six parents of children aged 7–9 years residing in Sidoarjo Regency, who were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct experience in supervising and communicating with their children regarding gadget use. Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews and documentation, with interviews focusing on communication patterns, the formulation and delivery of gadget-use rules, parental explanations, and children's responses to supervision. The informants represented diverse occupational backgrounds, including four employed parents and two homemakers, while the children had generally begun using gadgets between the ages of four and six and primarily accessed devices belonging to their parents or older siblings.

Data collection was conducted through face-to-face interviews in the informants' homes in Sidoarjo Regency between May and July 2026, allowing the researcher to explore communication practices within the natural context of family interaction. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which comprises data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The analytical process focused on recurring patterns related to two-way communication, openness, the provision of explanations and advice, and discussions concerning gadget-use rules between parents and children. These categories were subsequently interpreted to identify how parental communication practices reflected the interaction between conversation orientation and conformity orientation in the supervision of children's gadget use.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Two-Way and Open Communication in Parent–Child Gadget Supervision

The findings indicate that two-way communication constitutes a prominent pattern in parental supervision of children's gadget use among the six participating families. Parents generally did not position children solely as passive recipients of instructions but provided opportunities for them to express preferences, objections, complaints, and experiences related to gadget use. Such interaction demonstrates the presence of immediate feedback, which is a central feature of interpersonal communication because meaning is jointly constructed through message exchange and response between communicators (DeVito, 2016). This finding is also consistent with Sumarni (2022), who emphasizes that supportive parent–child communication plays an important role in strengthening digital parenting practices and reducing the potential risks associated with children's intensive gadget use.

The dominance of two-way interaction suggests that parental supervision in these families operates through communication rather than through control alone. Parents use dialogue to communicate restrictions while simultaneously attempting to determine how children perceive and respond to those restrictions. This approach is important because children are more likely to understand behavioral expectations when parental messages are accompanied by explanations and opportunities to respond rather than delivered exclusively through commands (Husnaeni, 2024). Ul Hikmah (2024) similarly demonstrates that openness, empathy, supportiveness, and equality in interpersonal communication strengthen parents' ability to supervise children's gadget use without weakening the emotional quality of the parent–child relationship.

The communication practices reported by informants DA and RA provide clear illustrations of this dialogic tendency. DA allowed the child to express opinions and wishes and, when disagreement emerged, preferred listening and subsequent discussion rather than immediate reprimand, while RA sought a mutually acceptable middle ground when differences of opinion occurred. These practices indicate that disagreement was treated as part of the communication process rather than as a direct challenge to parental authority. Such an approach resembles the democratic communication pattern identified by Husnaeni (2024), in which children are given opportunities to communicate their views while parents continue to guide the eventual decision.

The findings nevertheless reveal that two-way communication was not implemented identically across all families. Informant RD, for example, tended to determine gadget-use rules before

communicating and explaining them to the child, indicating stronger parental control over the decision-making process. Although the child was not fully involved in formulating the initial rule, the parent's willingness to provide explanations preserved an element of interpersonal openness and distinguished the practice from purely authoritarian communication. This variation supports Koerner and Fitzpatrick's (2002) proposition that conversation orientation and conformity orientation may coexist within a family rather than functioning as mutually exclusive communication dimensions.

Open communication was also visible beyond conversations specifically concerned with gadget restrictions. Several parents provided regular opportunities for children to discuss everyday activities, feelings, wishes, problems, and experiences, particularly after school, during relaxed family interaction, or before bedtime. Such routine communication creates a relational environment in which conversations regarding gadget use become integrated into broader parent–child interaction instead of occurring only when a rule has been violated. This relational openness is important because positive interpersonal communication can strengthen family harmony and reduce relational tension by enabling family members to communicate their experiences directly and responsively (Firyal Grahita Monica & Teguh Dwi Putranto, 2025).

Table 1. Patterns of Parent–Child Communication in Gadget-Use Supervision

Informant	Dominant Communication Practice	Child's Involvement	Parental Response	Communication Interpretation
DA	Listening and joint discussion	Child is free to express opinions and wishes	Parent listens before discussing disagreement	Strong two-way and open communication
NA	Joint arrangement of daily activities and gadget-use time	Child participates in scheduling	Parent develops rules through shared arrangement	Dialogic communication with negotiated boundaries
NK	Gradual explanation and provision of understanding	Child is given explanations concerning inappropriate behavior	Parent explains rather than immediately reprimands	Educational and supportive communication
RD	Parent establishes rules before explaining them	Child has relatively limited involvement in initial decision-making	Parent communicates reasons after establishing rules	Greater conformity orientation with continued openness
SP	Freedom to communicate opinions, wishes, complaints, and experiences	Child has broad opportunity for self-expression	Parent responds using understandable explanations	High openness in interpersonal communication
RA	Discussion and search for a middle ground	Child participates when differences of opinion arise	Parent seeks a mutually acceptable solution	Negotiated and two-way communication

The data presented in Table 1 demonstrate that the six families share a general orientation toward communicative supervision, although the degree of children's participation differs across households. DA, NA, SP, and RA show relatively strong opportunities for children's involvement, while NK emphasizes explanatory communication and RD places greater emphasis on parental decision-making followed by clarification. These differences indicate that openness should not be understood as the absence of parental authority, because parents remain responsible for maintaining boundaries even when children are encouraged to speak. This interpretation is consistent with Family

Communication Pattern Theory, which conceptualizes family interaction through varying combinations of conversation and conformity orientations (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Morissan, 2013).

Another important finding concerns the use of advice and gradual explanation as instruments of supervision. Informant NK, in particular, preferred providing understanding when the child behaved inappropriately rather than immediately responding with anger, suggesting that communication was used as an educational mechanism rather than merely as a disciplinary response. Explanatory communication allows children to associate restrictions with understandable consequences and may facilitate the internalization of behavioral expectations instead of producing temporary obedience based on fear of punishment. Amala (2021) similarly found that open and persuasive parent–child communication facilitates the development of discipline and responsibility because children can understand the reasons underlying parental guidance.

The importance of explanation becomes especially visible when parents communicate rules concerning gadget duration, content, study time, and rest. Restrictions become more meaningful when parents communicate why particular limits are necessary, because children can then connect parental authority with concerns regarding health, learning, social interaction, or exposure to unsuitable digital content. Previous research indicates that communication-based strategies can be more constructive than restriction alone in reducing children's gadget-use duration and promoting cooperation (Furodh et al., 2023). This finding also corresponds with Livingstone and Helsper's (2008) concept of parental mediation, particularly active mediation, in which parents discuss digital media and its potential benefits and risks rather than depending exclusively on restrictive control.

The results further indicate that open communication may contribute to a more supportive emotional climate for implementing gadget-use rules. When children are accustomed to expressing disagreement and receiving parental responses, restrictions can become subjects of discussion instead of immediate sources of interpersonal conflict. Conversely, communication environments that provide limited opportunities for children's responses may increase the likelihood that rules are perceived primarily as external demands, particularly when parents emphasize obedience without sufficient explanation. This interpretation is consistent with Salsabilla et al. (2022), who found that family communication patterns are closely associated with the quality of parent–child conflict, and with Munna et al. (2021), who emphasize the importance of parental communication for children's emotional regulation.

The findings also have broader implications for family relationships in the digital environment because communication concerning gadgets cannot be separated from the overall quality of interaction between parents and children. Family communication serves not only to regulate children's device use but also to transmit values, establish behavioral expectations, and maintain emotional connectedness within everyday family life (Pratiwi et al., 2023). Consistent communication is particularly important because digital devices can themselves reduce opportunities for face-to-face interaction when family members become excessively focused on their individual screens, thereby increasing the possibility of phubbing and relational distance (Litha & Mediana Tobing, 2025). Parental supervision therefore requires parents to function not merely as rule enforcers but as communicative partners who maintain sufficient relational engagement to make those rules understandable and credible.

The findings demonstrate that parent–child gadget supervision in the participating families is characterized predominantly by open and two-way communication, although differences remain in the extent to which children participate in decision-making. Conversation orientation appears relatively strong because children are generally permitted to express opinions, while conformity orientation remains present through parental authority to establish and enforce boundaries. The coexistence of these orientations suggests that effective supervision does not require parents to relinquish authority but rather to communicate that authority through explanations, listening, negotiation, and responsive dialogue (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). This combination provides a conceptual foundation for understanding why communicative supervision can simultaneously preserve parental control and encourage children's participation in developing responsible patterns of gadget use.

Parental Mediation, Rule Enforcement, and the Effectiveness of Gadget-Use Supervision

The findings show that parental supervision of children's gadget use was implemented not only through verbal communication but also through a combination of rules, explanations, monitoring, and consequences. All six informants were able to provide reasons for limiting gadget use, particularly those related to eye health, potential addiction, learning concentration, and exposure to age-inappropriate content. The provision of reasons indicates that supervision was designed to promote children's understanding rather than merely secure immediate obedience. This finding is consistent with Aresti et al. (2023), who emphasize the importance of parental supervision in reducing children's vulnerability to problematic digital-media use.

Parental mediation was particularly evident in the way parents connected gadget-use restrictions with the potential consequences of excessive screen exposure. Parents attempted to explain that gadgets should not function exclusively as entertainment devices but could also be used for educational purposes and constructive communication. Such explanations are important because excessive and uncontrolled gadget use has been associated with difficulties in concentration, emotional responses when devices are withdrawn, and disturbances in children's psychosocial development (Syifa et al., 2019; Pradona & Qarni, 2023). The findings therefore suggest that parental communication performs a preventive function by helping children recognize the distinction between beneficial and potentially harmful patterns of gadget use.

The supervisory practices identified in the study can be interpreted through Parental Mediation Theory, which distinguishes active mediation, restrictive mediation, and co-use as major strategies for guiding children's digital-media engagement (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). Active mediation was evident when parents explained digital risks, discussed appropriate content, and responded to children's requests or questions regarding gadget use. Restrictive mediation appeared through time limits, content restrictions, application controls, and rules governing when devices could be used, while co-use occurred when parents accompanied children during digital activities. The simultaneous presence of these strategies indicates that parental supervision was multidimensional rather than dependent on a single form of digital control.

Active mediation appears particularly important because it transforms parental restriction into a learning process through which children can understand the rationale behind family rules. Tasya Hidayatuladkia et al. (2021) emphasize that parental involvement in controlling children's gadget use includes providing explanations, guidance, and direct supervision rather than relying exclusively on prohibition. Similarly, Pradevi (2020) found that parental accompaniment in children's gadget use is associated with the development of empathy, suggesting that supervision can contribute to broader socio-emotional development when it is relationally supportive. The present findings reinforce this perspective by demonstrating that explanation and advice were repeatedly used to connect digital boundaries with children's health, learning, rest, and social responsibilities.

Restrictive mediation was also consistently implemented across the participating families through boundaries concerning duration, timing, applications, and permitted content. Parents used mechanisms such as limiting daily access, determining specific periods for gadget use, activating child-oriented applications, and temporarily withdrawing devices when rules were violated. Such practices illustrate that openness in family communication did not eliminate parental authority but operated alongside clearly defined behavioral expectations. Mistiani et al. (2024) similarly argue that effective digital parenting requires a balanced approach because both excessively rigid restrictions and overly permissive practices may weaken children's capacity to develop responsible technology-use habits.

Table 2. Parental Mediation and Supervisory Practices in Children's Gadget Use

Mediation Dimension	Practices Identified in the Families	Supervisory Purpose	Communication Function	Expected Child Response
Active mediation	Explaining risks, benefits, effects, priorities, health learning and	Develop understanding of responsible gadget use	Dialogue, advice, and clarification	Understanding the rationale for restrictions

Restrictive mediation	appropriate content Limiting duration, determining usage schedules, restricting applications and content	Prevent excessive or inappropriate gadget use	Communicating explicit boundaries	Compliance with agreed or established rules
Co-use	Watching videos, using educational applications, or engaging with gadgets together	Enable direct observation and immediate guidance	Interaction during shared digital activities	Safer and more guided media engagement
Consequence-based supervision	Temporary withdrawal of gadgets, reduced screen time, or restrictions for several days	Reinforce established rules	Explaining the reason for consequences	Recognition of responsibility for rule violations
Negotiated supervision	Revising schedules or rules after children's objections or discussion	Balance parental control with children's participation	Negotiation and feedback	Greater acceptance and ownership of rules

The patterns summarized in Table 2 indicate that parental supervision combined communicative and behavioral mechanisms instead of separating conversation from regulation. Active mediation strengthened children's understanding, restrictive mediation established clear boundaries, and co-use allowed parents to observe children's digital activities in real time. The application of consequences further reinforced the consistency between what parents communicated and what they subsequently implemented when rules were violated. This integrated form of supervision supports Rahmawati and Nur's (2025) argument that digital parenting requires a balance between the opportunities provided by technology and the preservation of family values, responsibilities, and interpersonal relationships.

Consistency emerged as another central element determining the effectiveness of gadget-use supervision. Parents reported applying consequences such as withdrawing gadget access, reducing permitted usage time, or prohibiting device use for several days when children violated established rules, while explaining the reasons for those consequences. The combination of explanation and consistent enforcement suggests that sanctions were used as educational consequences rather than solely as punitive measures. Hasan et al. (2025) emphasize that effective digital parenting depends substantially on parents' ability to maintain consistent supervisory behavior, because technological control mechanisms cannot replace sustained parental involvement and behavioral modelling.

The findings also suggest that consistent communication and supervision may gradually facilitate children's self-regulation. Some informants reported that children had begun recognizing when their gadget-use period had ended and, in certain situations, returned the device without prolonged parental intervention. Such behavior can be interpreted as an early movement from externally imposed regulation toward internalized behavioral control, although the qualitative design of the study does not permit causal conclusions regarding this process. Ulya et al. (2022) similarly highlight the importance of intensive and supportive parental involvement in helping children develop discipline, emotional security, and adaptive behavioral patterns within everyday family activities.

Despite these positive tendencies, the effectiveness of parental mediation was challenged by contextual barriers, particularly peer influence and parental fatigue. Several parents reported that children requested additional gadget access after observing friends using devices, while work-related exhaustion sometimes reduced parents' consistency in enforcing previously established limits. These circumstances demonstrate that digital parenting occurs within a broader social environment in which children's behavior is influenced not only by family rules but also by peers and increasingly

normalized digital practices. The concept of digital natives developed in earlier discussions of children's technology engagement further illustrates how immersion in digital environments can make gadget use appear socially routine and difficult to separate from children's everyday experiences (Mardina, 2011).

Parental fatigue also reveals an important tension between ideal supervisory practices and the practical conditions of family life. Even when parents understand the importance of consistent communication, employment responsibilities and limited time may restrict opportunities for direct co-use or continuous monitoring. In such situations, families tended to rely more heavily on restrictive mediation supplemented by conversations before or after gadget use, indicating that mediation strategies were adapted to household circumstances rather than applied uniformly. Rusdiana Ika (2021) similarly notes that changes in human-computer interaction affect communication patterns within families, making parental adaptability increasingly important in maintaining meaningful interaction alongside technological use.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that effective gadget-use supervision emerges from the integration of active mediation, restrictive mediation, co-use, consistent consequences, and responsive communication. Communication functions as the connecting mechanism because restrictions become more understandable when explained, co-use becomes more educational when accompanied by dialogue, and consequences become more acceptable when their rationale is clearly communicated. The combination of communication and behavioral consistency may therefore provide children with both relational support and structured boundaries, rather than forcing parents to choose between openness and control. This finding reinforces the broader proposition that digital parenting is most effective when parental authority is exercised through sustained involvement, understandable rules, and communication practices that encourage children to develop increasingly responsible patterns of technology use.

Integration of Family Communication Patterns and Children's Responsible Gadget Use

The findings demonstrate that parental supervision of gadget use cannot be understood solely as a set of restrictions but should be examined as a broader family communication process. Across the six families, parents combined dialogue, explanations, advice, negotiation, and behavioral rules to manage children's interaction with digital devices. This combination reflects the interpersonal nature of family communication, in which messages are exchanged through continuous interaction and immediate feedback rather than transmitted unilaterally (DeVito, 1991, 2016). The findings therefore position communication as the relational mechanism through which parental authority and children's participation are simultaneously maintained.

From the perspective of Family Communication Pattern Theory, the participating families generally demonstrated a relatively strong conversation orientation. Children were given opportunities to express preferences, complaints, and objections concerning gadget use, while parents listened and responded through discussion or explanation. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002) conceptualize conversation orientation as the degree to which family members are encouraged to communicate openly and participate in discussions concerning issues that affect family life. The empirical pattern observed in this study consequently indicates that gadget-use supervision frequently occurred within a communication climate that recognized children's voices rather than treating them merely as recipients of parental instructions.

Conformity orientation nevertheless remained clearly present because parents continued to establish limits that children were expected to follow. Rules regarding screen duration, appropriate content, study schedules, rest periods, and permitted applications represented the continuing exercise of parental authority within otherwise open communication relationships. Morissan (2013) explains that conversation and conformity orientations may coexist and generate different family communication configurations depending on the relative strength of each dimension. The present findings support this proposition because parental openness did not necessarily reduce rule enforcement but instead influenced the manner in which those rules were communicated and accepted.

The coexistence of conversation and conformity orientations was particularly evident in differences among the participating families. DA and RA demonstrated relatively strong dialogic tendencies by listening to children's perspectives and discussing disagreements, while NA involved

the child in organizing daily schedules that included gadget-use time. RD demonstrated a comparatively stronger conformity orientation because the parent generally established rules first and subsequently explained them, whereas NK emphasized gradual explanation when correcting inappropriate behavior. Such diversity confirms that family communication should be understood as a continuum rather than a rigid classification, particularly because parents may move between democratic discussion and directive authority according to the situation being addressed (Husnaeni, 2024).

These findings also correspond with DeVito's typology of family communication patterns, particularly the distinction among equality, balanced split, unbalanced split, and monopoly patterns (DeVito, 1991). None of the observed households can be reduced completely to a single fixed pattern because parental authority remained stronger in some situations while more equal dialogue appeared in others. The communication practices of DA, NA, SP, and RA approached more participatory forms of interaction, whereas RD showed elements of an asymmetrical decision-making structure accompanied by explanation. This variation illustrates that the effectiveness of communication may depend less on formal equality and more on whether children receive sufficient opportunities to understand, respond to, and meaningfully engage with parental decisions.

Table 3. Integration of Family Communication Orientations and Gadget-Use Supervision

Communication Dimension	Empirical Indication	Parental Role	Child's Position	Supervisory Implication
Conversation orientation	Open dialogue, listening, discussion, expression of opinions	Facilitator and guide	Active communicator	Encourages understanding and participation
Conformity orientation	Time limits, content restrictions, schedules, consequences	Authority and boundary setter	Expected to comply with established limits	Maintains structure and behavioral control
Democratic/authoritative tendency	Negotiation and explanation within clear rules	Decision-maker who remains responsive	Participates without holding full authority	Balances autonomy and supervision
Educational communication	Advice, gradual explanations, discussion of risks and benefits	Educator and mediator	Learner who interprets reasons behind rules	Supports internalization of responsible use
Consistent enforcement	Withdrawal of access or reduction of screen time after violations	Consistent rule enforcer	Accountable for behavior	Strengthens credibility of communicated rules
Adaptive mediation	Adjustment of rules according to circumstances and children's responses	Flexible supervisor	Participant in negotiated adjustments	Supports realistic implementation of digital parenting

Table 3 indicates that effective gadget supervision emerged from the interaction between openness and control rather than from the dominance of either dimension alone. A highly restrictive approach without dialogue may secure short-term compliance but provide limited opportunities for children to understand why particular boundaries exist, while unlimited openness without consistent rules may weaken parental guidance. Salsabilla et al. (2022) demonstrate that family communication

patterns can influence parent–child conflict, particularly when children perceive that their perspectives are insufficiently acknowledged. The present study therefore suggests that balancing conversation and conformity orientations may provide a more constructive framework for managing children's digital behavior while preserving relational quality.

The role of educational communication is particularly important because children's responsible gadget use requires more than compliance with externally imposed rules. Parents who explain the risks of excessive screen time, inappropriate content, disrupted learning, and reduced social interaction help children connect behavioral boundaries with understandable consequences. Pradona and Qarni (2023) identify psychosocial risks associated with problematic gadget use, while Syifa et al. (2019) report potential effects on children's concentration and psychological responses, reinforcing the need for developmentally appropriate parental guidance. Communication therefore functions as an educational process through which digital rules can gradually become meaningful principles rather than temporary restrictions.

The findings further indicate that parental communication may contribute to the development of children's self-regulation when rules are applied consistently and accompanied by understandable explanations. Some parents observed that children increasingly recognized usage limits and, in certain situations, returned gadgets after their allocated time without extensive parental intervention. Such behavior should not be interpreted as definitive evidence of causal behavioral change, but it indicates the potential internalization of rules when supervision is sustained through supportive interaction. This interpretation is consistent with Ulya et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of parental accompaniment in supporting children's discipline and adaptive behavior, and with Pradevi (2020), who demonstrates the developmental value of parental involvement during children's gadget use.

Responsible digital behavior is also shaped by the broader quality of family interaction because parental communication competes with digital practices occurring throughout the household. Parents' own smartphone engagement may reduce opportunities for meaningful face-to-face interaction and potentially create phubbing behavior that weakens emotional connection within families (Litha & Mediana Tobing, 2025). Pratiwi et al. (2023) similarly argue that digitalization has transformed family interaction and requires deliberate efforts to preserve meaningful parent–child relationships. Effective supervision consequently depends on parental consistency not only in enforcing children's rules but also in demonstrating communication practices and digital behaviors that support the standards they expect children to follow.

The analysis further highlights that the effectiveness of supervision must be understood in relation to practical family circumstances. Parents may face occupational demands, fatigue, peer influence on children, and limited opportunities for continuous co-use, requiring them to adapt their mediation strategies without abandoning communicative involvement. Rusdiana Ika (2021) notes that increasing human–computer interaction has contributed to transformations in family communication, while Rahmawati and Nur (2025) emphasize the need to balance technological developments with traditional relational values in contemporary parenting. Digital parenting is therefore not a standardized practice but a flexible process in which families continuously negotiate between technological opportunities, children's needs, and parental responsibilities.

Overall, the results indicate that effective supervision of children's gadget use is most strongly supported when parental authority is integrated with open, dialogic, educational, and consistent communication. Conversation orientation allows children to participate and express their views, whereas conformity orientation preserves necessary limits regarding time, content, and acceptable digital behavior. This pattern supports findings from Amala (2021), Ul Hikmah (2024), Furodh et al. (2023), and Sumarni (2022), which collectively emphasize the importance of supportive parental communication in guiding children's technology use and behavioral development. The integration of active dialogue, clear boundaries, parental mediation, and consistent implementation therefore provides a comprehensive explanation of how communication patterns can contribute to more responsible gadget use among children in the participating families.

CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that parent–child communication in supervising gadget use is predominantly characterized by open, dialogic, and two-way interaction. Parents generally provide children with opportunities to express opinions, objections, wishes, and experiences while

maintaining authority over rules concerning duration, content, schedules, and appropriate digital behavior. Conversation orientation appears more dominant because children are actively involved in communication, although conformity orientation remains evident through the establishment and enforcement of parental boundaries. The coexistence of these orientations indicates that effective gadget supervision does not depend solely on restriction, but on the ability of parents to communicate rules through explanations, advice, negotiation, and responsive dialogue.

Parental mediation was implemented through a combination of active mediation, restrictive mediation, co-use, and consistent consequences for rule violations. These strategies enabled parents to connect digital restrictions with children's understanding of health, learning, rest, and appropriate content while gradually encouraging responsible gadget-use behavior. Consistency in communication and rule enforcement may also support the development of children's self-regulation, although peer influence, parental fatigue, and limited time remain important barriers to effective supervision. Overall, successful digital parenting requires a balance between parental authority, clear behavioral boundaries, sustained involvement, and supportive communication that enables children to understand and responsibly respond to the rules governing their digital activities.

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