



# Empowerment of Family Communications in Engagement Effectiveness of Family Members in Pandemic Times

S. Bkti Istiyanto<sup>1</sup>, Ifan Iskandar<sup>2</sup>, Maulina Larasati Putri<sup>3</sup>, Kiki Dwi Arviani<sup>3</sup>, Hana Hanifah<sup>3\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Communication Science, Faculty of Social Science, Jenderal Soedirman University, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Communication Science, Faculty of Arts and Languages, State University of Jakarta, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Communication Science, Faculty of Social Science, State University of Jakarta, Indonesia

\* Correspondence: [hanahanifah\\_1410620076@mhs.unj.ac.id](mailto:hanahanifah_1410620076@mhs.unj.ac.id)

SUBMITTED: 21 March 2022; REVISED: 2 April 2022; ACCEPTED: 13 April 2022

**ABSTRACT:** Families are essential to a healthy and prosperous society. During a pandemic, the family's role in the development of family elements is diminished. The research question is whether family communication exists regarding family members' engagement during a pandemic. The study's objective was to ascertain the effect of family communication on family members' involvement during a pandemic. The term "family communication" refers to the exchange of information between family members and the involvement of family members. The researchers distributed validated and reliable questionnaires to respondents. The findings of this study indicate that family communication has a strong correlation with family member involvement. In this study, the null hypothesis was rejected. As a result, the alternative research hypothesis was accepted. All aspects of family communication that have a positive value, such as words, gestures, voice intonation, actions to instill hope, expressions, and mutual understanding, have a strong relationship with the two variables. The research concludes and suggests that all family communication components possess positive descriptive elements and thus exert a strong influence on family members' participation in this study.

**KEYWORDS:** Family communication; family member; engagement; self-disclosure

---

## 1. Introduction

On the online news portal, tempo.co, an academic from Jenderal Soedirman University Purwokerto Indonesia, Wisnu Widjanarko explained how crucial family communication is in shaping children's character. Family communication, which includes the willingness of each member to listen to each other, understand each other's point of view, and accept each other's differences, is very crucial [1]. In addition, in an effort to create and function family communication, parents must understand the child's psychology, provide opportunities for children to express what they feel and think without forcing the parents' will on their children. Parent-child communication can work effectively if parents set an example first. With good communication intensity, children's growth and development go in a good direction, namely, children become happy, have good attitudes and behavior, are not ashamed to voice their opinions, are willing to listen and have empathy [2]. Based on the online news portal, kompas.com, family communication should be carried out in two directions by involving

feedback from children in the process. Thus, parents can see whether the message can be understood by the child or not and give the child the opportunity to exercise their rights. UNESCO, UNICEF, the Brookings Institution, and the World Bank say that kids who are between the ages of 4 and 6 have learned how to be part of a group of people can adjust what kind of message they want to convey to their children. Giving communication rights to children means giving messages to children in simple language, paying full attention when children provide feedback, and making them feel comfortable and safe. There are also other ways to communicate that aren't verbal, like hugs and kisses [3].

For the first time since March 2020, the government has announced two cases of positive COVID-19 patients in Indonesia. However, University of Indonesia Epidemiologist Pandu Riono said the SARS-CoV-2 type of Corona virus, the cause of COVID-19, had entered Indonesia since early January. Since January, when this new type of Corona virus was announced, it has been transmitted between humans and has colonized various countries, apart from Wuhan in China. According to news on detik.com, the number of positive Covid-19 cases in Indonesia rose by 399 until November 12, 2021. Patients who were declared cured of COVID-19 increased by 560 people, while patients who died increased by 20 people. BNPB Public Relations always informs the development of the spread of COVID-19, which is updated every day at 12.00 WIB. From the announcement of the COVID-19 case in Indonesia from March 2020 to November 12, 2021, the total number of COVID-19 cases was 4,250,157 [4]. Based on the KOMPAS.com online news page, the ministry of health has informed all parties to remain disciplined in implementing health protocols. This is due to an increase in COVID-19 cases at the global level. The number of full-dose vaccinations in European countries is already high. Vaccination alone is not enough to stop the development of the COVID-19 virus. [3] The World Health Organization has recommended that the rate of people being tested for and having positive results stay at a level that's safe for people. Ratih Zulhaqqi, a child and family psychologist, said that the pandemic indirectly gave each member of the family a chance to get to know each other better. Family members can adjust to each other and work together to solve problems. On the other hand, family members who are together in the house for 24 hours have a tendency to cause various frictions. The more contact and interaction they have, the more likely they are to have fights [5].

Conflict generally occurs because of differences in opinion. However, this change should be handled properly so that each family member can adjust to the other. The new normal which refers to a new lifestyle can be used as a form of peace with COVID-19 in which family members need time to go through a process of habituation. The research question is whether there is a relationship between family communication and the engagement of family members during a pandemic. The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between family communication and family member engagement during a pandemic.

## 2. Literature Review

Family communication is an organization that uses words, gestures, voice intonation, and actions to create image expectations, express feelings, and share mutual understanding. Judging from the above understanding, words, attitudes, body language, tone of voice, and actions contain the intent of teaching, influencing, and providing understanding. While the main purpose of this communication is to initiate and maintain interactions between members so as to create effective communication. Communication within the family can also be defined as a

readiness to talk openly about everything in a good family, both pleasant and unpleasant. They are also ready to finish problems in the family with conversations that are lived in patience, honesty, and friendliness [6]. Smooth and healthy communication in a family is a hope for every member of the family, because there are individuals with other individuals in their attachment, interconnectedness, and mutual need. Therefore, communication that is smooth and harmonious in the family is highly coveted by every member of the family to continue well and intensively [7]. Communication in the family can also be interpreted as a readiness to talk openly about everything in the family, both pleasant and unpleasant, and a readiness to solve problems in the family with conversations that are carried out with patience, honesty, and openness. Thomas (2007) says that work engagement is a stable psychological state and is the result of interaction between an individual and the environment in which they work [8]. Family communication is the process of delivering a statement or communication message to family members with the aim of influencing or forming attitudes according to the content of the message conveyed by Mr. or Mrs. as a communicator. Family communication is communication that occurs in families where the source is parents to their children or children to parents who have certain patterns. The pattern of family communication proposed by McLeon and Chafee in Reardon (1987) consists of laissez-faire, protective, pluralistic, and consensual patterns. The four patterns presented by McLeon and Chafee exist in both traditional societies and industrial societies [8].

Open and honest family communication allows children to express their hearts through conversations with parents, so that children's problems or difficulties are reduced, and vice versa, parents also know the problems that are being faced by children. If parents are skilled at communicating with their children, it can have an influence on the development of a child's personality [9]. Djamarah said that the intensity of family communication can be interpreted as conveying a deep message from individuals as family members to others. To create a deep communication intensity, parents can pay attention to aspects of communication intensity such as openness, understanding, honesty, trust, support, and face-to-face communication to create a deep communication intensity between parents and children so that a harmonious relationship is always created between the two [6]. According to Evans, family engagement is the active role of parents in developing their children's learning and education at school, as well as the active role of parents as overall companions in their child's education and involved in the decision-making of their children. According to Sheridan et al., family engagement includes a series of activities and behaviors related to the nature of supporting or encouraging children that are carried out in an interactive, oriented, and directed way towards meaningful learning with affective end results [10]. According to Heather B. Weiss and San Redding, the definition of family engagement in general is a kind of activity such as a partnership between family members that is carried out in order to increase a sense of responsibility and awareness of the importance of all things related to child development and provide some knowledge and skills to children to develop themselves [5].

### **3. Materials and Methods**

There are two types of studies, namely qualitative research and quantitative research. Qualitative research is a means to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups that are attributed to social or human problems. Quantitative research is a tool for testing objective theories by examining relationships between variables. These variables can be

measured, usually on an instrument, so that numbered data can be measured and analyzed using statistical procedures. The final written report has a structure consisting of an introduction, literature and theory, methods, results, and discussion. The approach used in this study is a quantitative approach because the variables in the study can be measured using a questionnaire distribution instrument, and the aim is to see the effectiveness. In this study, questionnaires were distributed to 108 respondents. In measuring the data, the researcher used a validity test. Validity is a term that describes a measure that accurately reflects the concept it is intended to measure. In testing the validity, this study uses the Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy Test, which is an index used to test the suitability of the analytical model. The results of the validity of the KMO family communication = .721 significance = 0.000 and KMO family member engagement = .657 significance = 0.000.

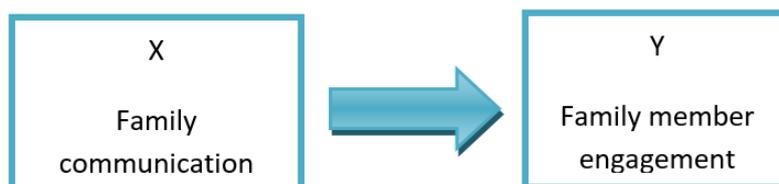
#### 4. Results and Discussion

The results of descriptive research show that all components of family communication have positive values. Words, gestures, voice information, actions to create hope, express feelings and share each other in a positive sense. Respondents in the study were enthusiastic about answering research statements. So they really need things related to strengthening the engagement of family members in a pandemic (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Descriptive Research Results

No.	Family communication	f	Family member engagement	f
1.	Words	.722	Psychological state	.765
2.	Gesture	.875	Voice intonation	.799
3.	Action to create hope	.767		
4.	Expression of feeling	.749		
5.	Sharing understanding	.804		

Simple linear regression research has a positive effect on family member engagement. Based on the results of simple linear regression in this study, there is an influence between family communication and family member engagement that has an  $r$  value of 0.654 and a significance value of 0.000, indicating that family communication has a strong relationship with family member engagement. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there is an influence between the variables of family communication and the involvement of family members if the significance of the simple linear regression test results is less than 0.05, and vice versa, if it is less than 0.05, it is not significant or there is no effect (Figure 2).



**Figure 1.** The  $r$  value and significant value of research variables ( $r$  value = 0,564; significant value = 0,000)

The relationship between family communication on the indicator of words (frequency 0.722) and previous research on the importance of choosing effective words in family communication is explored. The use of the right words, especially by parents who become figures who are imitated or imitated, is an important aspect that needs attention. Starting from how each family member, especially parents, composes words into messages that they would convey. In other words, well-structured words in spoken or written form make the interlocutor. In this case, family members can easily accept, pay attention to, and understand what is conveyed by other family members [10]. The choice of words should also be appropriate and clearly related to the concept of conversation [2]. The concept of a conversation can be likened to a headline, and words are a continuation of the headline delivered. Each point conveyed must be clear so that the use of words can fulfill the purpose. In connection with the two things above, namely the structure and concepts that are in accordance with the words to be used, it can be emphasized that before speaking, family members should make a plan. The wiser in planning the choice of words, the more likely the words will be accepted and understood by family members [2]. Diction, namely how family members choose words that are in harmony with expressing thoughts and feelings with the expected goals, should be done carefully. Family members should be aware of and pay attention to who they are talking to and the extent to which the interlocutor (other family members) recognizes and understands the references contained in the words used in the family communication process [2].

The relationship between family communication and body posture indicators (frequency 0.875) and previous research shows how family members use their body postures to determine the smoothness of conversation and the family communication process. The posture shown creates its own meaning and forms a perception of other family members as the interlocutor. Body posture is used in the right circumstances, seeing the place and time of the communication process, so that it can increase the value of the meaning in the words conveyed. In carrying out the family communication process, each family member should know and understand various body postures, ranging from intentional to unintentional, from hidden to visible in real life, and ranging from those carried out in a short time to those carried out throughout the communication process. takes place. Body postures can show and describe the state of the interlocutor, such as what family members are actually feeling when they are involved in the family communication process, what family members want to show, and how deeply they are involved or interested in the communication process being carried out [11]. Body posture becomes another form of thoughts and feelings that are wrapped into messages to be conveyed. Body posture can be an effective communication tool if family members know how to condition their bodies when communicating with each other so that conversations become more meaningful. Body posture includes how family members express themselves through their faces, hand gestures, gaze, posture, and touch [11].

The relationship between family communication and indicators of action to create hope (frequency 0.767) and previous research is how each family member carries out the communication process to realize expectations, both their own and those of other family members. Of course, there is a systematic and gradual process to this. Family communication as a tool to take action to create hope starts with every family member who is able to identify a hope (their hopes or other family members), understand the circumstances and a number of possibilities from the creation process, convey various ideas related to strategic efforts that can be made to create expectations, group, select, and determine ideas that are the most effective

actions that can be taken to create expectations, and carry out these actions in accordance with the agreement with a strong commitment from each family member.

The relationship between family communication on the indicator of expression of feelings (frequency 0.749) and previous research shows how strong the desire of each member to express their feelings is and the extent to which they are able to express them to their family members. This relates to the level of closeness, trust, and openness that each family member has. In the indicator of expression of feelings, the communication process is carried out by involving the frequency and intensity of interaction of family members with each other. The higher the frequency and intensity of interaction, the greater the possibility of family members expressing their feelings, meaning that it is easier and more flexible for family members to express their feelings.

The relationship between family communication and the indicator of sharing understanding (frequency of 0.804) with previous research suggests the importance of the similarity of meaning in the communication process in general. The similarity of references owned by each family member, both in the form of words and all nonverbal forms involved, is an important thing that must be understood and paid attention to in order to understand each other. The similarity of meaning departs from the similar perception and interpretation of each family member. The process of sharing and understanding is easier to do if there is a desire, interest, and willingness from each family member to express (deliver) and listen (receive) messages in the ongoing family communication process. The delivery of messages is carried out with proper planning, with clear goals and expectations, and involves a series of communication tools or attributes that can be utilized to facilitate and expedite the process. Reception of messages is done wisely, patiently, and attentively. The correct and careful implementation of these two things (delivery and receiving of messages) can help family members understand each other better.

The relationship between family member engagement on indicators of psychological state (frequency 0.765) and previous research indicates the importance of family members understanding each other's psychological states and also the psychological states of other family members. Each member should know and understand each other's mental or mental conditions, as well as the impact or influence of these mental conditions on the attitudes and behavior of a family member. By understanding psychological conditions, family members can also predict responses or responses from other family members. People who understand their own psychological conditions can also keep other family members from acting in ways that they don't want to. For example, they can figure out the best way to deal with their psychological conditions when they're having family communication processes.

The relationship between family member engagement on the voice intonation indicator (frequency 0.799) and previous research shows how voice intonation plays a role in confirming the meaning of the message conveyed. Basically, intonation includes the high and low voice, the loudness or lowness of the voice, and the rhythm of the voice that can bring certain expressions and colors to the family communication process [12]. The use of intonation by each family member is quite important considering that it can give its own meaning, accompanying each meaning of the words contained in the message. Intonation helps each family member to convey their attitudes, behaviors, and feelings about something implicitly, such as how the intonation of voice is able to emphasize the difference between a statement, a command, or a question, and can convey the meaning of whether the message is conveyed for

preventive, persuasive, or other purposes [12,13]. Family communication with appropriate words and clearly related to the concept of conversation, body posture can be an effective communication tool if family members know how to condition their bodies when communicating with each other and have a close relationship with family member engagement. With family communication that pays attention to the clarity of words, attitudes, and intonation of voice, it is able to increase a sense of responsibility and awareness of the importance of all things related to family [14]. In addition, family communication can also provide knowledge and skills in the family. Family communication that pays attention to the indicators previously mentioned can create and increase family member engagement if there is two-way communication or interactional communication between families, so that family members feel comfortable, confident, and have expectations of a good response from each other.

#### 4. Conclusion

The conclusion of the study is that the relationship of family communication has a strong influence on the engagement of family members during the pandemic. The suggestion for this research is that this research can be elaborated with other concepts and methods in order to develop the concept of health communication literacy and public attitudes.

#### Acknowledgments

The researchers express their deepest gratitude to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, the UNJ Community Service Research Institute, Universitas Soedirman, and the UNSOED Community Service Research Institute.

#### Competing Interest

All authors declared no competing interest.

#### References

- [1] Pentingnya Komunikasi dalam Keluarga untuk Bentuk Karakter Anak. (accessed on 1 March 2022) Available online: <https://gaya.tempo.co/read/1253545/pentingnya-komunikasi-dalam-keluarga-untuk-bentuk-karakter-anak>.
- [2] Riskika, S.; Restu Pertiwi, M.; Anggun Primasari, N.; Salamung, N. (2020). The Effectiveness of Family Communication Strategies for Family Members with Health Problems: A Systematic Review. *D’Nursing and Health Journal*, 1, 69–78. <https://doi.org/10.36835/dnursing.v1i2.44>.
- [3] Komunikasi Anak dan Tantangan Orang Tua di Masa Pandemi. (accessed on 1 March 2022) Available online: <https://amp.kompas.com/lifestyle/read/2021/03/19/123326320/hak-komunikasi-anak-dan-tantangan-orangtua-di-masa-pandemi>.
- [4] Data Lengkap 399 Kasus Corona 12 November, DKI Tertinggi. (accessed on 1 March 2022) Available online: <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-5808814/data-lengkap-399-kasus-corona-12-november-dki-tertinggi>.
- [5] Dampak Positif-Negatif Pandemi pada Hubungan Keluarga. (accessed on 1 March 2022) <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/gaya-hidup/20200514141751-284-503363/dampak-positif-negatif-pandemi-pada-hubungan-keluarga>.
- [6] Tondo, H.; Rembang, M.R.; Kalangi, J.S. (2015). Analisis semiotika komunikasi pada program acara talkshow Sarah Sechan di Net TV. *Acta Diurna Komunikasi*, 4, 1-10.

- [7] Baharuddin, B. (2019). Pengaruh Komunikasi Orang Tua Terhadap Perilaku Anak Pada Min I Lamno Desa Pante Keutapang Aceh Jaya. *Jurnal Al-Ijtima'iyah*, 5, 105. <https://doi.org/10.22373/al-ijtima'iyah.v5i1.4207>.
- [8] Sari, A.; Hubeis, A.; Mangkuprawira, S.; Saleh, A. (2010). Pengaruh Pola Komunikasi Keluarga Dalam Fungsi Sosialisasi Keluarga Terhadap Perkembangan Anak. *Jurnal Komunikasi Pembangunan*, 8, 245186. <https://doi.org/10.29244/jurnalkmp.8.2>.
- [9] Setyowati, Y. (2013). Pola Komunikasi Keluarga dan Perkembangan Emosi Anak (Studi Kasus Penerapan Pola Komunikasi Keluarga dan Pengaruhnya terhadap Perkembangan Emosi Anak pada Keluarga Jawa). *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 2, 67–78. <https://doi.org/10.24002/jik.v2i1.253>.
- [10] Pramono, F. (2020). Analysis of the Family's Communication Pattern and the Benefits of Mother School Program for Building a Harmonious Family. *Informasi*, 50, 1–14.
- [11] The Power Of Mindful Nonverbal Communication. accessed on 1 March 2022) Available online: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nazbeheshti/2018/09/20/beyond-language-the-power-of-mindful-nonverbal-communication/?sh=7cb637f31501>.
- [12] Tiwari, M.; Tiwari, M. (2012). Voice - How Humans Communicate? *Journal of Natural Science: Biology and Medicine*, 3, 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0976-9668.95933>.
- [13] Kelty, N.E.; Wakabayashi, T. (2020). Family Engagement in Schools: Parent, Educator, and Community Perspectives. *SAGE Open*, 10, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020973024>.
- [14] Smith, M. (2018). Family engagement. In: Borderline Personality Disorder: A Case-Based Approach; Palmer, B., Unruh, B., Eds.; Springer, Volume 7, pp. 137–150. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90743-7\\_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90743-7_12).



© 2022 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).