

Negotiating Sundanese Cultural Values through Family WhatsApp Communication

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Abstract

This study examines how Sundanese cultural values are negotiated and communicated through family WhatsApp group interactions in everyday digital communication. The research aims to explore how family members reproduce cultural meanings and maintain relational values through routine online interaction. The study contributes to communication studies by providing insight into the role of digital family communication in shaping cultural identity within the context of Indonesian local culture. A qualitative approach was employed using thematic analysis informed by semiotic interpretation. Data were collected from three Sundanese family WhatsApp groups in West Java, Indonesia, over a three-month observation period. The data consists of text-based conversations containing greetings, advice, religious expressions, humor, and everyday family

discussions. The findings show that Sundanese cultural values are communicated through recurring interactional patterns such as politeness, respect toward elders, expressions of care, humility, and religious discourse. These interactions demonstrate that WhatsApp group communication functions not only as a medium for information exchange but also as a space where cultural meanings are continuously negotiated through everyday interaction. The study highlights the importance of digital family communication in sustaining social relationships and cultural identity within contemporary mediated environments.

Keywords: Digital Communication, Family Whatsapp Groups, Sundanese, Cultural Values

1. Introduction

Indonesia has hundreds of tribes, one of which is the Sundanese ethnic group in West Java. It ranks second among Indonesian tribes, in terms of population, or its equivalent, with 15 percent, or 36.701.67, of the Indonesian population (Sukarna, T., Ming, D., & Windarti, 2023). A study by BPS and ISEAS (Institute of South Asia Studies) identified that Indonesia has at least 633 ethnicities. The largest group is the Javanese at 40.06%, followed by the Sundanese at 15.51%, with other ethnic groups below 5% (Na'im, A & Syaputra, 2021). The Sundanese ethnic group mainly resides in West Java and Banten. Their unique culture, passed down through generations, is reflected in their beliefs, livelihoods, arts, kinship, language, and customs. Approximately 27 million people speak Sundanese, making it the second-largest language group in Indonesia after Javanese, which has about 75.2 million speakers, and more than the Betawi language, with around 20 million speakers. Although the Sundanese ethnic group has the largest amount, the local wisdom among Sundanese families has almost disappeared (Cece, 2007).

The number of Sundanese speakers is quite large in quantitative terms. In an era of globalization and modernization, Sundanese traditions face significant challenges. The younger generations are increasingly exposed to global cultural influences, which can weaken the transmission of traditional knowledge. The use of Sundanese in daily life, especially in urban areas in West Java and Banten, is decreasing. The decline in using Sundanese for daily communication is closely tied to the family's role in early education (Munawaroh et al, 2021). Many young Sundanese families have a limited understanding of Sundanese culture. Instead of seeking complete knowledge, they often replace Sundanese terms and practices with Indonesian, which they find easier for communication. This habit, rooted in their use of Indonesian as a social language outside the home, also extends to their interactions within the household. Moreover, the

indigenous Sundanese people's character is also eroded because of the challenges of the times and presence, along with the increasing use of advanced technology. At the same time, local wisdom preservation can be integrated through the use of communication technology (Lestari, P., Kertamukti, R., & Ruliana, 2019).

The development of digital communication technologies has significantly transformed the way families interact in everyday life. Mobile messaging applications such as WhatsApp have become an important medium for maintaining communication among family members across different generations and geographical locations (Fitriyani, 2015). Through WhatsApp groups, family members can exchange information, express emotions, share daily experiences, and maintain interpersonal relationships continuously. In many Indonesian families, WhatsApp is not only used for practical communication but also functions as a social space where values, norms, and everyday cultural practices are communicated through routine interaction (Sari, Y., Afiatin, T., Subandi, S., & Setiawan, 2020). However, young people think that both local wisdom and traditional outlook on life are ancient views and thoughts that are irrelevant to today's modern times. In fact, with local wisdom, the surrounding social and natural order remains sustainable and maintained. Local wisdom is an important part of cultural heritage that the younger generation should embrace to preserve the community's unique characteristics. It includes valuable insights and positive values rooted in long-standing beliefs, often developed over many years.

Family communication plays an important role in shaping social relationships and cultural understanding within society. In the context of Indonesian culture, families remain central to the transmission of values related to politeness, respect, togetherness, and religious life. As communication increasingly shifts into digital environments, cultural interaction also adapts to new forms of mediated communication. Everyday conversations in family WhatsApp groups, therefore, provide an important context for understanding how cultural values are expressed and negotiated through digital interaction.

This study addresses this gap by examining how family WhatsApp groups function as sites of mediated cultural reproduction, where cultural meanings are enacted, negotiated, and stabilized through routine communication practices. Rather than treating cultural values as fixed or explicitly transmitted, this study conceptualizes them as emergent from everyday interaction, including greetings, advice, humor, and expressions of care. In this sense, digital family communication becomes a key

mechanism through which cultural identity is continuously produced in practice (Alencar, A., & Camargo, 2022).

Empirically, the study explores how Sundanese cultural values are reflected through routine interaction in family WhatsApp communication. The intergenerational nature of family WhatsApp groups provides a particularly relevant context for examining how cultural meanings are reproduced across age groups, where differences in linguistic practices, digital literacy, and cultural orientation may coexist (Taipale, S., & Farinosi, 2018) (Palviainen, Å., & Kędra, 2020). By analyzing everyday interactions within these groups, this study explores how intergenerational identity works through digitally mediated communication.

Previous studies have explored the role of social media and mobile communication in maintaining interpersonal relationships and strengthening family interaction (Sukarna, T., Ming, D., & Windarti, 2023) (Kamal, F. M., Noor, N. L. M., & Baharin, 2014) (Gong, W.-J., Wong, B. Y.-M., Ho, S. Y., Lai, A. Y. K., Zhao, S. Z., Wang, M. P., & Lam, 2021). The digital family communication shows that messaging platforms help families sustain emotional closeness, coordinate daily activities, and maintain social support despite physical distance. WhatsApp groups have been widely used to facilitate routine communication among family members because of their accessibility and immediacy.

Other studies have examined the relationship between digital communication and cultural practices. (Ho, 2025). Scholars have found that online communication enables individuals to express cultural identity through language use, humor, religious expression, and symbolic interaction (Huang, 2024). Digital communication platforms also provide opportunities for users to maintain local cultural practices while simultaneously engaging with broader social and technological changes. These studies suggest that communication technology does not simply change interaction patterns but also influences how cultural meanings are represented in everyday life.

Research in the Indonesian context has additionally highlighted the importance of local cultural values in shaping communication practices (Frasetya, 2024). Sundanese culture, for example, emphasizes values such as politeness, respect toward elders, humility, friendliness, and collective harmony (Sjafirah, N. A., Indriani, S. S., Yanto, A., Sjachro, D. W., & Viannisa, 2024). These values are often reflected in language use and interpersonal interaction within family and community settings. However, most previous studies on Sundanese culture have focused on traditional

face-to-face interaction, cultural preservation, or educational contexts rather than digital family communication environments.

Despite the growing literature on digital communication and cultural interaction, limited research has specifically examined how Sundanese cultural values are communicated through everyday interaction in family WhatsApp groups. Previous studies tend to focus broadly on social media usage, interpersonal communication, or cultural identity without paying sufficient attention to routine family-based digital interaction. In addition, little research has explored how cultural values are expressed through everyday conversational practices such as greetings, advice, humor, religious messages, and expressions of care within mediated family communication. This limitation indicates the need for further research on how local cultural values are negotiated in contemporary digital communication settings. Therefore, this study aims to explore how Sundanese cultural values are communicated through family WhatsApp group interactions. The study also examines how everyday digital communication reflects cultural practices among Sundanese family members.

2. Method

The findings presented in this section are based on recurring communication patterns identified from approximately 30 screenshots of text-based interactions collected from three family WhatsApp groups during a three-month observation period. The 5 screenshots of messages presented in this study were selected as representative of broader interactional themes that consistently emerged across the conversations within the three family WhatsApp groups. We conducted this research with the approval of all informants who have officially signed the consent letter. Since we involved human participants who, in this case, are three Sundanese families, we asked all informants to sign consent letters to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process due to the private and interpersonal nature of family WhatsApp communication. Informed consent was obtained from group administrators and participating members prior to observation and data collection. Participants were informed about the research objectives, observation procedures, and the use of anonymized communication excerpts for academic purposes. Participation was voluntary, and participants retained the right to withdraw from the study at any stage. All personal identities, phone numbers, profile images, and identifiable information were removed during documentation and analysis to maintain

confidentiality. The collected data were securely stored and used exclusively for research purposes. In the revised manuscript, screenshots were replaced with anonymized text excerpts to further protect participant privacy while maintaining analytical clarity.

This study employed qualitative thematic analysis to examine recurring communication patterns within Sundanese family WhatsApp groups. The analysis focused on identifying repeated interactional practices related to religious expression, politeness, emotional support, humor, and collective care. Semiotic interpretation was used as a supporting interpretive lens to understand the cultural meanings embedded in linguistic expressions and communicative practices emerging from the conversations. The unit of analysis consisted of recurring text-based interaction patterns appearing within family WhatsApp conversations. The researchers identified repeated communication patterns across the conversations. The researchers systematically reviewed the collected WhatsApp conversations to identify recurring interactional patterns relevant to the study objectives of 3 Whatsapp Families Groups to review the content of their daily interactions by upholding the concept of Sundanese character, with the permission of all family members who joined the family WhatsApp Groups.

The three observed WhatsApp groups consisted of extended Sundanese family members, including parents, children, siblings, cousins, and elderly relatives. Group membership ranged from approximately 6 to 15 participants per group, with participants ranging from teenagers to older adults. The diversity of family roles within the groups enabled the observation of recurring communication practices within everyday digital family interaction.

Table 1. Three Sundanese Families WhatsApp Group

No.	Family Whatsapp Group Names	Region & Tribes
1	<i>Keluarga Besarku</i> (‘My Big Family’)	Purwakarta, West Java Sundanese Family
2	<i>Family Baiti Jannati</i> (‘Family is my heaven’)	Subang, West Java Sundanese Family
3	<i>Bandung Families Barakah</i> (‘A Blessing Families’)	Bandung West Java Sundanese Family

Table 1 displayed the names of the Family WhatsApp Group (Keluarga Besarku (‘My Big Family’), Family Baiti Jannati (‘Family is my heaven’), and Bandung Families Barakah (‘A Blessing Bandung Families)).

Data were collected through non-participant observation of three Sundanese family WhatsApp groups over a three-month period. Approximately 30 screenshots of text-based interactions were documented during the observation process. The observation period was considered sufficient to capture recurring communication practices and routine interactional patterns consistently appearing within everyday family communication. The researchers systematically reviewed the collected conversations to identify recurring themes related to religious expression, politeness, emotional support, humor, collective care, and relational interaction.

The research procedure was conducted systematically from problem identification to data interpretation and conclusion drawing. The overall stages of the study are illustrated in Figure 1.

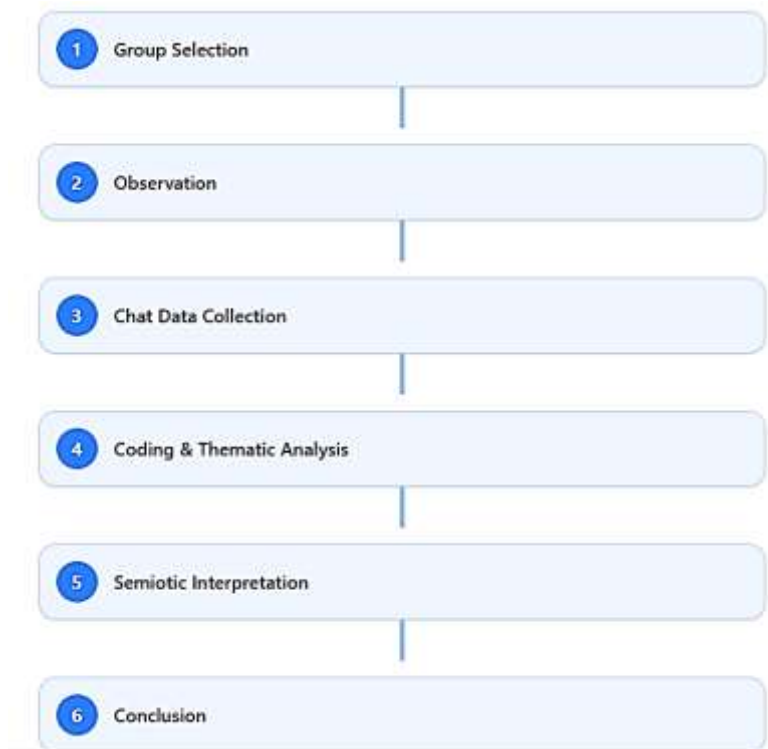


Figure 1. Research Method Flow Diagram

The research began with the selection of three Sundanese family WhatsApp groups in West Java, Indonesia, using a purposive sampling technique. The selected groups actively used the Sundanese language in their daily interactions and involved routine communication among family

members from different age groups. Before conducting the study, the researchers obtained informed consent from all participants to ensure ethical research procedures and participant privacy. The study employed a non-participant observation approach over a three-month period, during which the researchers observed communication activities without directly participating in the conversations. Chat data containing greetings, religious expressions, advice, humor, politeness, and expressions of care were documented and anonymized to protect participant confidentiality.

The study employed purposive sampling to select three Sundanese family WhatsApp groups considered relevant to the research objectives. The inclusion criteria included active family interaction, routine use of Sundanese language expressions, and the willingness of group administrators to provide research access. The selected groups represented communication contexts where recurring family interaction could be observed within everyday digital communication practices.

The researchers joined the WhatsApp groups as non-participant observers after obtaining permission from group administrators and participating family members. The researchers recognized that their presence within the groups could potentially influence interaction and interpretation. To minimize researcher bias, the analysis focused on recurring communication patterns consistently observed across the conversations rather than isolated messages. Reflexive attention was maintained throughout the interpretation process to ensure that cultural meanings were interpreted contextually within the flow of family interaction. Participant identities and personal information were anonymized during data documentation and analysis.

After the data collection process, the researchers conducted coding and thematic analysis to identify recurring communication patterns related to Sundanese cultural values. The data were categorized into themes such as respect toward elders, friendliness, humility, collective care, and religious communication. Themes were identified inductively through recurring communication patterns found in the conversations. The interpretation of findings was later contextualized using Sundanese cultural values discussed in previous literature. Sundanese cultural values were used as interpretive references during the discussion stage to contextualize the findings within the local cultural setting.

Data analysis followed the interactive qualitative analysis model consisting of data condensation, thematic organization, data display, and interpretive conclusion drawing (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, 2014). The researchers systematically reviewed the collected WhatsApp conversations to identify recurring communication patterns

related to prayers, politeness, emotional support, humor, and collective care. The coded interactional patterns were then organized into broader thematic categories and interpreted within the context of Sundanese family communication and mediated digital interaction. Through this process, the researchers interpreted how everyday digital communication reflects the negotiation of Sundanese cultural values in family interaction.

3. Results

The findings show that family WhatsApp groups function as important digital communication spaces where Sundanese cultural values are expressed through routine interaction among family members. Communication activities in the three observed groups were dominated by greetings, prayers, advice, humor, emotional support, and everyday family discussions. These interactions demonstrate that cultural values are communicated through repeated communicative practices embedded in daily conversations. The analysis identified five dominant themes reflecting Sundanese cultural values: religious expression, respect and politeness, relational warmth, honesty and responsibility, and humility. These themes emerged from recurring linguistic expressions and interactional patterns used by family members during everyday communication. Figure 2 presents the thematic findings identified in the family WhatsApp group interactions.

Theme	Communication Pattern	Cultural Meaning
 Religious Experience	Prayers, blessings, gratitude	Spiritual values
 Respect and Politeness	Refined language, respectful response	Respect the elders
 Relational Warmth	Humour, greetings, encouragement	Family closeness
 Collective Care	Advice, information sharing	Mutual support
 Humility	Charity, support	Social harmony

Figure 2. The Thematic In Family Whatsapp Group
Source: Data result (2026)

3.1. Religious Expression

Religious expression emerged as one of the most dominant communication patterns within the WhatsApp groups. Family members

frequently exchanged prayers, blessings, gratitude, and religious reminders in response to family activities, health conditions, and everyday interaction. These expressions repeatedly appeared throughout conversations and were often used to reinforce emotional closeness and collective well-being among family members. One of the dominant themes identified in the family WhatsApp groups is religious expression. For example (see figure 2), one participant wrote, “*Mabruk fikum berkah sadayana, nuhuntos nyekar makam nini sarehat cucu nini sadayana sehat oge aki,*” which expressed blessings and prayers for the health and well-being of family members.

This interaction reflects the importance of spiritual values within Sundanese family communication. Similar religious expressions appeared repeatedly in the form of gratitude, Islamic greetings, and prayers for family safety, with the response “*aamiin allahuma aamiin*” from another family member. These interactions indicate that spirituality is embedded naturally in routine digital communication and contributes to maintaining emotional closeness within the family.

3.2 Respect and Politeness

Another recurring communication pattern identified in the findings is the use of respectful and polite language during interaction between younger and older family members. Refined Sundanese expressions were consistently used when responding to parents or elder relatives, particularly in conversations involving requests, advice, and daily family activities. One participant stated, “*Muhun enjing teteh sakolah nganggo saragam, saur bu guru, Mangga bi,*” demonstrating the use of respectful language when communicating with parents. Expressions such as “*muhun,*” “*mangga,*” and “*nuhun*” repeatedly appeared throughout conversations across the three family groups.

These linguistic forms function not only as everyday expressions but also as communicative markers reflecting respect toward elders within Sundanese family interaction. The findings suggest that politeness is maintained through repeated communicative practice in routine digital interaction. Respect toward older family members is therefore reflected through language use embedded in everyday communication patterns.

3.3. Relational Warmth

Relational warmth also emerged as a dominant interactional pattern in the family WhatsApp groups. Family members frequently exchanged greetings, humor, encouragement, and supportive responses during everyday conversations. Casual interaction and playful communication were commonly used to maintain emotional closeness among relatives despite physical distance. For example, one participant

humorously encouraged a child learning to fast by stating, “*Muantaf de ray, sakeudik-keudik we. Konengna gaya milenial,*” which humorously encouraged a child who was learning to fast gradually. Similar forms of emotional support repeatedly appeared through jokes, greetings, and expressions of appreciation among family members.

These communication patterns indicate that WhatsApp interaction functions as an important space for maintaining emotional connection and strengthening family solidarity. Humor and encouragement contribute to creating a friendly and supportive communication environment within the family group.

3.4 Collective Care

The findings also reveal recurring communication patterns related to collective care and mutual support among family members. Participants regularly shared advice, reminders, information, and updates regarding family matters and daily responsibilities. Information sharing frequently functioned as a form of social concern and relational maintenance within the group. For instance, one participant conveyed greetings and information from another relative by writing, “*Aya salam dari Yuyu bu Tarjan eta nomor Yuyu bu Tarjan tetangga waktu di Tongkeng.*”

These interactions demonstrate that communication within family WhatsApp groups reflects collective responsibility and mutual concern. Everyday communication practices, therefore, contribute to maintaining social connections and shared support among relatives.

3.5 Humility

Humility emerged as another important communication pattern identified in the findings. Messages related to charity, gratitude, helping others, and appreciation frequently appeared throughout the conversations. Family members regularly informed others about charitable activities and expressed gratitude toward people contributing to social support efforts.

One participant stated, “*Alhamdulillah paket sodaqoh atos dibagikeun kanu membutuhkan..seer nu ngahaturkeru nuhun sareng ngadoakeun,*” indicating that charitable donations had been distributed to people in need.

These communication patterns reflect the importance of humility and social harmony within Sundanese family communication. Rather than emphasizing individual achievement, participants highlighted togetherness, empathy, and collective support through routine interaction.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that family WhatsApp communication functions not only as a medium for exchanging information but also as a communicative space where Sundanese cultural values are continuously practiced through everyday interaction.

4. Discussion

The communication patterns observed in the family WhatsApp groups indicate that digital family interaction functions not only as a medium for maintaining interpersonal contact but also as a space where cultural meanings are continuously negotiated through routine communication practices (Sabilla, T. R., & Rochmaniah, 2025). The recurring use of prayers, respectful language, humor, emotional support, and collective concern suggests that family communication in digital environments remains strongly connected to relational and cultural norms embedded in everyday interaction. Rather than appearing through formal cultural instruction, these values emerge through repetitive communicative participation among family members within mediated interaction.

The digital family communication have emphasized the role of messaging applications in maintaining emotional closeness among geographically dispersed families (Mogharrab, A., & Neustaedter, 2020), (Tammissalo, K., & Rotkirch, 2022), (Räisä, 2022). Meanwhile, the research on WhatsApp interaction in communication contexts has similarly shown that digital messaging platforms support continuous relational maintenance through informal and routine interaction. The present study supports these arguments by demonstrating that family WhatsApp groups facilitate ongoing emotional connection among family members through everyday exchanges such as greetings, prayers, reminders, and supportive responses (Migamba, J., Zakayo, E., & Mashinde, 2025). However, the analysis further indicates that WhatsApp communication within Sundanese families also functions as a culturally meaningful interactional space where local linguistic norms and relational values continue to shape communication practices.

The recurring use of refined Sundanese expressions such as “*muhun*” and “*mangga*” illustrates how politeness continues to operate as an important relational norm within mediated family communication. Previous research on language practices in digital interaction has argued that online communication does not eliminate local linguistic identity but instead creates new communicative contexts where cultural expressions are adapted and maintained. In the present study, polite linguistic forms functioned not only as markers of respect toward older family members but also as communicative strategies for maintaining relational harmony within everyday interaction. This suggests that digital communication platforms may transform the mode of interaction without necessarily weakening culturally embedded communication practices.

The study uses the term mediated cultural reproduction to describe how cultural meanings continue to emerge through repetitive

communicative participation within everyday digital family interaction (Bărbuță, A., Ghețău, C., & Iovu, 2023). In this context, mediated cultural reproduction differs from Bourdieu's concept of cultural reproduction, which primarily focuses on the institutional reproduction of social class and cultural capital through formal structures such as education. The present study instead emphasizes routine interpersonal communication practices occurring within informal family interaction in digital environments. The concept also differs from Silverstone's domestication theory, which focuses on how technologies become integrated into everyday domestic life. While domestication theory explains the integration of WhatsApp into family routines, the present analysis focuses more specifically on how communicative interaction within the platform enables the continued negotiation of cultural meanings. Similarly, the discussion differs from Appadurai's concept of cultural flows, which emphasizes global cultural movement and transnational media circulation. The present study concentrates more narrowly on localized family interaction and the everyday communication practices embedded within specific cultural settings.

The argument that WhatsApp creates conditions under which cultural meanings continue to be negotiated should therefore be understood cautiously rather than as a universal claim about digital media. Previous studies on digital media and cultural change have shown that communication technologies may simultaneously support cultural continuity while also transforming communication styles, relational structures, and identity practices (Maddox, J. L., & Kanthawala, 2022). In this study, WhatsApp interaction enabled family members to maintain routine communication and relational closeness, yet the interactions also became shorter, more immediate, and highly contextual compared to conventional face-to-face communication. These shifts suggest that digital communication platforms do not simply preserve cultural practices unchanged but reshape how cultural meanings are expressed within mediated environments.

Rather than proposing mediated cultural reproduction as a grand theoretical framework, the present study uses the concept as an interpretive explanation for understanding how cultural values continue to appear through routine mediated interaction. Religious expressions, humor, emotional encouragement, and collective support repeatedly emerged as ordinary communicative practices rather than formal teaching processes (Sharma, S., & Liu, 2024). This indicates that cultural meanings within family WhatsApp communication are sustained through repetitive

participation in everyday relational interaction rather than through direct cultural instruction alone.

At the same time, the analysis reveals several complexities and contradictions within digital family communication. Although WhatsApp interaction enables the continuity of cultural communication practices, many conversations were brief, fragmented, and highly contextual. Family members often relied on abbreviations, informal expressions, and implicit shared understanding that could potentially reduce the depth of cultural explanation within communication (Palviainen, Å., & Kędra, 2020). In several interactions, emotional expressions and humor appeared more dominant than explicit cultural references, suggesting that digital communication may simultaneously sustain and simplify cultural interaction. These patterns indicate that mediated family communication does not reproduce cultural values in a uniform or stable manner but instead involves ongoing adaptation to the communicative logic of digital media platforms.

The communication practices observed in the conversations may also be interpreted in multiple ways beyond cultural reproduction alone. For example, the repeated use of polite expressions and emotional support may reflect broader norms of Indonesian family interaction rather than exclusively Sundanese cultural values. Similarly, short greetings, humor, and supportive responses could also be interpreted as common features of WhatsApp communication culture, shaped by platform affordances such as immediacy, informality, and conversational brevity (Arisma, Y. W. R., & Aesthetika, 2024). This suggests that some interactional patterns identified in the study may emerge not only from local cultural orientations but also from the communicative structure of digital messaging platforms themselves.

Although the interactions involved family members from different age groups, the analysis did not specifically examine intergenerational negotiation patterns in detail. The conversations demonstrated respectful interaction between younger and older family members, particularly through the repeated use of polite linguistic expressions directed toward elders. However, the data did not consistently reveal explicit negotiation, tension, accommodation, or conflict between generations that would support a stronger analytical focus on intergenerational identity work. (Wahyuningtyas, B. P., Asteria, D., 2023).

The study also recognizes several limitations associated with the semiotic approach used in the earlier version of the manuscript. Interpreting digital conversations through semiotic analysis may risk reducing complex interpersonal interaction into fixed symbolic meanings.

Communication within WhatsApp groups is highly contextual, dynamic, and relational, making it difficult to assign singular cultural meanings to isolated messages. The analysis instead emphasizes thematic communication patterns emerging inductively from recurring interactional practices observed throughout the conversations. This revision allows the interpretation to focus more directly on interactional context, communicative repetition, and relational meaning-making within everyday digital communication.

The study further highlights the importance of WhatsApp communication characterized by collectivist orientations and close interpersonal relationships. In Indonesian family communication, routine interaction often functions not only to exchange information but also to reinforce emotional bonds and social belonging. The communication practices identified in this study suggest that WhatsApp groups extend these relational processes into mediated environments where cultural values continue to be enacted through daily interaction. Digital communication technologies, therefore, function not only as technical communication tools but also as social spaces where culturally meaningful interaction develops through repetitive communicative participation (Maddox, J. L., & Kanthawala, 2022).

Several limitations should nevertheless be acknowledged. The analysis focused primarily on text-based interaction and did not examine multimodal communication elements such as emojis, stickers, voice notes, or images that may also carry important cultural meanings in WhatsApp communication. The study was also limited to three Sundanese family WhatsApp groups observed within a specific time period, which restricts broader generalization. Future research may therefore explore how generational differences, visual communication, and broader family networks shape cultural interaction within digital communication environments.

5. Conclusion

Family WhatsApp groups are not only used to exchange information but also function as everyday communication spaces where Sundanese cultural values continue to be practiced in digital life. The interactions observed in this research show that values such as politeness, religious expression, emotional closeness, humor, and mutual care are communicated through routine conversations among family members. These cultural meanings do not appear through formal teaching alone but grow naturally through repeated interaction in daily digital communication.

The analysis also shows that WhatsApp communication helps maintain emotional connection and family relationships while allowing local cultural expressions to remain visible in contemporary communication practices. In this context, mediated cultural reproduction is understood as the process through which cultural meanings continue to emerge through repetitive interaction within digital family communication. At the same time, the communication patterns found in the WhatsApp groups were often brief, informal, and highly contextual, showing that digital media also reshape how cultural interaction is expressed in everyday life.

Several limitations should nevertheless be acknowledged. This research focused only on three Sundanese family WhatsApp groups and mainly analyzed text-based interactions, so the findings may not fully capture the complexity of digital communication practices involving emojis, stickers, voice notes, or visual content. In addition, the interpretation of communication patterns remained closely connected to the specific cultural context of Sundanese family interaction. Future research may therefore examine multimodal communication practices in family WhatsApp groups or compare digital family communication across different cultural communities in Indonesia to provide broader insights into the relationship between digital media and cultural interaction.

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