

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN MAINTAINING
INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN INDONESIAN
MIGRANT WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY AMONG MIGRANT WORKERS
RECRUITED THROUGH PT WIRA KREASI USAHA PONOROGO**



Student Thesis Research Report

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM
FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL CULTURE
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INDONESIA**

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APPROVAL SHEET

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MOTTO

وَاصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“And be patient, for indeed Allah does not allow the reward of the good-doers to be lost.”

(Q.S. Hud: 115)

وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ

“But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you.”

(Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 216)

This journey taught me that nothing truly grows without patience and faith.

“Ketika lelah datang, aku belajar percaya bahwa doa orang tua tak pernah salah alamat.”

DEDICATION

This thesis is written as a dedication to:

1. My parents and family, who have continuously supported and prayed for me throughout my academic journey.
2. My colleagues and friends, who have stood by me through moments of laughter, challenges, and growth.
3. My beloved Universitas Islam Indonesia and the Communication Studies Program for providing knowledge, guidance, and meaningful academic experiences.
4. Special appreciation to the management and staff of PT Wira Kreasi Usaha (WKU) for their support and cooperation during this research.
5. Everyone who contributed to and supported the completion of this thesis, directly or indirectly.

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

Bismillahirrohmanirrahim

Undersigned, I henceforth

Name : Syahrul Dzaky Asy Syafiq

Student Number : 22321149

Through this letter, I hereby state the following:

1. Throughout the completion of this thesis research, researchers upheld academic integrity by refraining from academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, enlisting assistance from others in writing the thesis, or engaging in any other violations that contradict the esteemed academic ethics upheld by the Islamic University of Indonesia.
2. Therefore, this thesis is entirely my own original academic work as the author and does not constitute plagiarism or the work of any other party.
3. In the process of writing this thesis, I used Generative Artificial Intelligence responsibly and limited its use to the following aspects:
 - a. ChatGPT, used for brainstorming and refining the language of my ideas into a formal style.
 - b. GPTZero is used to detect AI-generated plagiarism, so I can edit and paraphrase the text.
4. If, at a later date, after I have been declared to have graduated from the Communication Studies Program, Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences, Islamic University of Indonesia, convincing evidence is found that this thesis is not my own original academic work, but rather the result of plagiarism or the work of another party, I agree to accept academic sanctions in accordance with the applicable rules and regulations of the Islamic University of Indonesia.

I hereby make this statement in good faith, without coercion from any party, to be used as intended.

Yogyakarta, 23 January 2026

Sincerely,



Syahrul Dzaky Asy Syafiq

FOREWORD

All praise and gratitude are due to Allah Ta’ala, the Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate, for His grace and guidance that enabled the completion of this undergraduate thesis entitled “The Role of Social Media in Maintaining Interpersonal Communication between Indonesian Migrant Workers and Their Families a phenomenological study among migrant workers recruited through PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo.” The author realizes that this journey was not without challenges; however, this thesis would not have been completed without the support, prayers, guidance, and encouragement from many individuals. Therefore, the author would like to express sincere gratitude to all parties who contributed to the completion of this study, especially to:

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14. To all Indonesian migrant workers across the world, may your strength, sacrifices, and prayers become a bridge of hope for your families at home. May every effort you make be rewarded with protection, health, and blessings. Stay strong and never lose faith.

The author realizes that this thesis is far from perfect. Therefore, the author sincerely welcomes constructive criticism and suggestions from readers as valuable input for future improvement. It is hoped that this thesis may provide benefits for readers, the author, and the development of Communication Studies. May all parties who have contributed to the completion of this thesis be rewarded with goodness and blessings from Allah SWT. Finally, may Allah SWT continue to bestow His mercy and guidance upon us all. Aamiin Ya Rabbal 'Alamin.

Yogyakarta, 23 January 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and lines, followed by a period.

Syahrul Dzaky Asy Syafiq

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ABSTRACT

Syahrul Dzaky Asy Syafiq, *The Role of Social Media in Maintaining Interpersonal Communication Between Indonesian Migrant Workers and Their Families: A Phenomenological Study Among Migrant Workers Recruited Through PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo. Undergraduate Thesis.* Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences, Islamic University of Indonesia.

This study aims to examine the role of social media in maintaining interpersonal communication between Indonesian migrant workers and their families, focusing on migrant workers recruited through PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo. Labor migration often results in long-term physical separation, creating challenges for emotional closeness, family roles, and relationship stability. In this context, social media has become an essential means of maintaining communication within transnational families. This study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of Indonesian migrant workers in maintaining family communication through social media. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with three Indonesian migrant workers employed in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The findings reveal that social media, particularly WhatsApp, plays a significant role in maintaining emotional closeness, facilitating emotional expression, providing psychological support, and enabling digital parenting practices such as monitoring children's activities, offering advice, and providing emotional guidance. However, several challenges were identified, including limited communication time, long working hours, time zone differences, restricted access to mobile phones, and emotional misunderstandings resulting from the absence of non-verbal cues. To address these challenges, migrant workers develop adaptive communication strategies, including establishing communication routines, maintaining openness, practicing emotional regulation, and fostering trust and harmony within their families. Overall, this study concludes that social media functions not only as a technological tool but also as an emotional bridge that supports the continuity of interpersonal communication within transnational families. The effectiveness of such communication depends largely on emotional commitment, mutual understanding, and sustained interpersonal efforts among family members.

Keywords: social media, interpersonal communication, Indonesian migrant workers, family communication, transnational families, phenomenology

ABSTRAK

Syahrul Dzaky Asy Syafiq, *Peran Media Sosial dalam Mempertahankan Komunikasi Interpersonal antara Pekerja Migran Indonesia dan Keluarga Mereka: Studi Fenomenologi pada Pekerja Migran yang Direkrut melalui PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo.* Skripsi. Program Studi Ilmu Komunikasi, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial Budaya, Universitas Islam Indonesia.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran media sosial dalam menjaga komunikasi interpersonal antara pekerja migran Indonesia dan keluarga mereka, dengan fokus pada pekerja migran yang direkrut melalui PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo. Migrasi tenaga kerja sering kali mengakibatkan perpisahan fisik dalam jangka panjang yang menimbulkan tantangan terhadap kedekatan emosional, peran keluarga, dan stabilitas hubungan. Dalam konteks tersebut, media sosial menjadi sarana komunikasi yang penting dalam menjaga hubungan keluarga transnasional. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif fenomenologis untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman hidup pekerja migran Indonesia dalam mempertahankan komunikasi dengan keluarga mereka melalui media sosial. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap tiga pekerja migran Indonesia yang bekerja di Taiwan, Hong Kong, dan Singapura. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media sosial, khususnya WhatsApp, memainkan peran penting dalam menjaga kedekatan emosional, memfasilitasi ekspresi emosi, memberikan dukungan psikologis, serta memungkinkan praktik pengasuhan digital seperti memantau aktivitas anak, memberikan nasihat, dan menyediakan dukungan emosional. Namun, penelitian ini juga menemukan berbagai tantangan, seperti keterbatasan waktu komunikasi, jam kerja yang panjang, perbedaan zona waktu, keterbatasan akses terhadap telepon genggam, serta kesalahpahaman emosional akibat minimnya isyarat nonverbal. Untuk mengatasi tantangan tersebut, para pekerja migran mengembangkan berbagai strategi komunikasi adaptif, seperti membangun rutinitas komunikasi, menjaga keterbukaan, melakukan regulasi emosi, serta mempertahankan kepercayaan dan keharmonisan keluarga. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa media sosial tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai alat teknologi, tetapi juga sebagai jembatan emosional yang mendukung keberlangsungan komunikasi interpersonal dalam keluarga transnasional. Efektivitas komunikasi tersebut sangat bergantung pada komitmen emosional, saling pengertian, dan upaya interpersonal yang dilakukan secara berkelanjutan oleh seluruh anggota keluarga.

Kata Kunci: media sosial, komunikasi interpersonal, pekerja migran Indonesia, komunikasi keluarga, keluarga transnasional, fenomenologi

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Driven by globalization, the flow of Indonesian migrant workers (Tenaga Kerja Indonesia/TKI) has increased significantly, which has not only transformed labor market dynamics but also impacted interpersonal relationships between migrant workers and their families. Historically, maintaining communication has always been a major challenge; aside from the great distance, there are several other factors that influence this, including time zone differences and expensive international call rates. However, with advancements in digital technology, the expanding availability of the internet, user-friendly interfaces, and the popularity of social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, TKI can now communicate with their families back home efficiently and, of course, at an affordable cost.

Several recent studies have highlighted the role of social media as a bridge connecting TKI with their families. This is related to research conducted by Aricat (2025), which shows how WhatsApp video calls have become the primary means for TKI in Japan to communicate daily with their families, thereby fostering emotional closeness despite physical separation. Most TKI actively use social media, not only to communicate with their family members but also to maintain a sense of belonging to their home communities (Zulianto, 2024). The presence of this digital technology has helped reduce feelings of loneliness, isolation, stress, and even anxiety. Hennida et al. (2021) also emphasize that the regular use of social media, such as Facebook, Skype, and YouTube, plays a crucial role in both maintaining and fulfilling their responsibilities toward their families, particularly among female migrant workers. These findings confirm that social media has now truly evolved into more than just a platform used for communication; it has become a vital emotional bridge in empowering TKI to maintain family closeness, overcome the challenges of long-distance parenting, and maintain psychological stability.

The breakdown of communication with family is a major issue and a common occurrence among migrant workers. Sri Mariyati is a migrant worker from Banyuwangi who worked in Malaysia; due to limited communication, she lost contact with her family for 15 years. Fortunately and touchingly, Sri Mariyati finally returned to Indonesia and was reunited with her

family. While this case did not directly facilitate a reunion between Sri Mariyati and her family, it highlights how crucial smooth and sustained communication is for migrant workers to maintain family bonds and alleviate the emotional burden caused by separation (Tribun Jateng, October 29, 2023). There is a similar story experienced by Wiwi, a female migrant worker from West Bandung. Wiwi lost contact with her family for 13 years while she was working in Saudi Arabia. Wiwi was found through a viral video on TikTok, and many netizens shared the video. Thanks to the video's popularity, Wiwi was able to reconnect and get in touch with her family, resuming communication with them after more than a decade without any news. Wiwi's story illustrates how social media, particularly TikTok, can play a crucial role in reuniting family members separated by distance and time. This case also demonstrates that social media is not merely a source of entertainment but can also serve as a vital tool for family reunification (Kompas TV, September 15, 2022). Wiwi's case has also garnered attention from various media outlets, including Pikiran Rakyat and INews, which further explored how the viral TikTok video helped reunite a family that had been separated for over a decade. This highlights the extraordinary power of social media to connect people, even in cases where they have been separated from their families for a long time. In this context, social media is not merely a communication tool for individuals; it also serves as a platform that unites people within a broader community. With support from the public and authorities in facilitating the reunion process (Pikiran Rakyat, September 14, 2022; INews, September 15, 2022).

Migrant workers may also be able to voice requests for help or simply voice complaints through social media, especially during times of crisis. In the case of Siti Kurmeisa, a migrant worker in Saudi Arabia, she requested repatriation to her home country via social media. This illustrates how these platforms were used by Siti Kurmeisa as a channel to seek help, justice, and government intervention. After her video went viral, the authorities responded and immediately took steps to repatriate her. This case certainly underscores that social media has the power to amplify individual voices, even in critical situations that require government intervention (Antara News, January 29, 2023)

Social media, which continues to evolve daily and introduce the latest innovations, has enabled migrant workers to use it as a powerful platform to voice their concerns and seek help in urgent situations. A notable example involves a female migrant worker from South Sumatra who uploaded a TikTok video in which she tearfully pleaded to return home due to mistreatment

by her employer. The video went viral, sparking widespread reactions. It eventually prompted a response from the Indonesian government and led to her repatriation to her home country (Kompas, February 14, 2025). This case highlights the critical role of social media as a platform for advocacy and government intervention in real-time crises. Similarly, in Dubai, after Indonesian authorities located and rescued her, an emotional reunion with her family was inevitable, even if it was only facilitated via a video call. This underscores the profound emotional power of mediated interpersonal communication during times of crisis (Kompas, July 11, 2023).

In addition, broader news coverage indicates that many Indonesian female migrant workers actively use social media as a lifeline. Social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok are used to find enjoyment during breaks from their work, with the aim of combating loneliness, sharing personal stories, obtaining information, and building a network of solidarity among migrant workers (kompas.id, November 9, 2020). Social media makes a significant contribution to the mental health of migrant workers, particularly Indonesian migrant worker mothers. A study by Airlangga University (UNAIR) found that migrant worker mothers often use social media as a strategy to alleviate loneliness and stress caused by being separated from their families. Social media enables migrant workers to stay connected, share their emotions, and maintain family bonds with their families back home. This, of course, has a very positive impact on their psychological well-being while working abroad (Universitas Airlangga, September 19, 2023). In Singapore, social media also plays a vital role in disseminating health information to Indonesian citizens, including migrant workers earning a living in Singapore. For example, the Indonesian Embassy in Singapore uses social media platforms to provide information regarding the vaccination program; this demonstrates that social media is an important tool for connecting the Indonesian migrant worker community with information about their health and safety. (Bisnis.com, November 17, 2021).

In the context of family life, social media certainly plays a vital role in fostering bonding between parents and children separated by distance. Many families use apps like WhatsApp and Facebook to communicate, share stories, and provide emotional support. Social media also allows parents to remain involved in their children's lives; even though they may not be physically present, they can still be there through video or voice calls via social media. This is particularly relevant for migrant workers, who are often separated from their children for

extended periods (Kompasiana, November 29, 2024). Sinaga et al. discuss how family communication via social media can strengthen emotional bonds and reduce stress. The study shows that migrant workers who communicate with their families regularly and consistently via social media platforms such as WhatsApp or BBM (BlackBerry Messenger) tend to have better psychological well-being compared to those who do not maintain regular communication. In this context, this demonstrates that social media serves not only as a means of sharing information and entertainment, but also as a way to maintain emotional closeness, even among those separated by distance and time (Sinaga et al., 2024) This phenomenon highlights the importance of social media in the lives of migrant workers, which has become a focus for agencies or companies specializing in labor recruitment in supporting the well-being of their workers.

Founded in 1999, PT Wira Kreasi Usaha is a company specializing in the recruitment, training, and placement of TKI for employment abroad. Operating as a licensed Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Agency (P3MI), the company holds full authorization from the Ministry of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia to legally place workers in various countries. Headquartered in Ponorogo, East Java, PT Wira Kreasi Usaha also maintains offices in several cities across Indonesia, including Jakarta, Bekasi, Madiun, Magetan, and Padang. Its primary objective is to provide skilled, well-trained, and legally protected workers to international employers, thereby ensuring the safety and professional success of the workers placed.

Vocational training is one of the services offered by PT Wira Kreasi Usaha. A wide variety of vocational training fields are available, such as construction, hospitality, domestic work, and manufacturing. The goal of this vocational training is to equip workers with the skills necessary to perform at their best in their future roles abroad. The company's training program not only covers technical skills but also offers language proficiency courses and cultural orientation to facilitate workers' adaptation to new environments in countries such as Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, where prospective migrant workers will be employed. The company emphasizes worker welfare by providing a comprehensive support system that may include training on health, safety, and general rights, as well as ongoing communication between migrant workers and their families. This holistic approach helps ensure that workers not only perform well in their roles but also maintain strong relationships with their family members.

This, in turn, helps reduce their emotional burden while working abroad. PT Wira Kreasi Usaha is known for its commitment to ethical recruitment and compliance with applicable laws. This indirectly helps reduce the risk of worker exploitation by ensuring workers are placed in reputable jobs with employers who respect applicable labor laws. Through its long-term relationships with international employers, the company places workers in safe, regulated, and supportive work environments. In addition to its core business, PT Wira Kreasi Usaha also contributes to the socioeconomic development of Indonesian migrant families by facilitating money transfer management, financial planning, and emotional support services.

As part of its ongoing commitment to improving the migrant labor sector, PT Wira Kreasi Usaha actively collaborates with various government and non-governmental agencies and organizations to address the challenges faced by TKI who use the services of PT Wira Kreasi Usaha. These efforts include advancing workers' rights and advocating for better working conditions in the workers' destination countries. One major challenge arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted migration processes worldwide. Nevertheless, PT Wira Kreasi Usaha has adapted by enhancing its digital platforms and expanding its services to meet the evolving needs of workers. The company's strong focus on ethical recruitment practices and worker empowerment positions it as an industry leader, ensuring that workers are treated with dignity and respect, and that their families receive ongoing support. Further information is available on the company's official websites: www.wirakreasiusaha.co.id and www.wirakreasiusahaponorogo.com

Social media plays a significant role among TKI; its contribution to maintaining religious and cultural practices from a distance is one example. Through platforms like YouTube and Instagram, workers can participate in religious activities virtually, such as listening to sermons from clerics in their hometowns, and celebrating traditional holidays from afar, even if only within a virtual setting. This allows TKI to maintain a strong spiritual connection and a deep sense of cultural identity; another important aspect is emotional stability while living in a foreign country.

Waruwu (2022) notes that mothers working as migrant workers use their smartphones as a means of communication regarding child-rearing. Furthermore, religious and cultural practices are also integral to their use, as this helps them maintain a sense of connection to their home communities, even while separated by distance across national borders. This demonstrates

the scope and importance of social media's role among migrant workers. The contribution to maintaining religious and cultural practices from a distance is one example of the importance of social media. Through platforms like YouTube and Instagram, workers can experience and participate in religious and cultural activities, such as celebrating traditional holidays and listening to sermons from their hometowns, even if only in a virtual setting. This helps maintain spiritual connection and a deep sense of cultural identity among migrant workers. In addition to being beneficial in terms of spirituality and a strong sense of cultural identity, this also contributes to the emotional stability of migrant workers during their time abroad.

In addition to serving as a source of emotional, spiritual, and cultural support, social media has increasingly established itself as a platform for migrant workers to share their stories and express themselves. By sharing their experiences both positive and challenging in the online world, TKI have found ways to tell their personal stories, challenge stereotypes, and, of course, advocate for their rights. Kaur-Gill (2022) highlights how migrant workers can and do adapt the use of platforms like TikTok to showcase their lives, build networks, and stand against isolation or the marginalization of individuals. These narratives can also serve to humanize migrant workers in the eyes of the public and authorities, which in turn can spark public support and media attention. This digital capability helps redefine their roles from passive workers who are often the subject of stories to active storytellers and advocates for their rights.

The integration of social media into daily life allows migrant workers not only to stay in touch, but also to access public services and important information. For example, the TKI Protection Agency (BP2MI) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conduct campaigns by regularly sharing information via social media platforms such as Twitter/X, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook to disseminate information regarding safe migration practices, general rights, job openings, and emergency contact numbers. These digital campaigns can improve migrant workers' literacy with the aim of reducing their vulnerability to human trafficking and exploitation. When social media literacy is combined with financial and legal education, it empowers migrant workers to lead safer and more independent transnational lives, as noted by Choerudin et al. (2023).

TKI, who are at the center of increased digital communication visibility, play a vital role in providing collective social support. With the proliferation of WhatsApp and Facebook groups many of which were initiated or spearheaded by migrant worker associations these platforms

serve as public spaces for sharing information, offering emotional support, and even organizing fundraisers during emergencies. During times of crisis such as illness, deportation, or even death these digital networks often respond more quickly than formal institutions. This demonstrates the strength and solidarity of the Indonesian diaspora. It must also be acknowledged that the gender dimension in digital communication among migrant workers is predominantly female, particularly in domestic work. This leads them to rely on social media as an emotional anchor to stay connected with their partners and children back home. These women often take the initiative in maintaining contact with their families, providing consistent emotional support, and even managing household affairs and decisions from a distance. Hasan (2019) notes that women in transnational families often bear a heavier emotional burden in keeping family ties intact, making social media an indispensable and irreplaceable resource in maintaining their roles as mothers and partners.

Although it offers many benefits, excessive reliance on social media can also have various consequences, one of which is emotional exhaustion. One example is when communication is disrupted due to technical issues or misunderstandings. Therefore, improving digital literacy, setting clear communication boundaries, and encouraging healthy online habits are crucial in ensuring that social media remains a positive force in maintaining emotional closeness within transnational families.

1.2 Research Question

1. To maintain interpersonal relationships with their families back home, what social media usage mechanism does migrants from PT Wira Kreasi Usaha employ?

Through this question, the researcher aims to explore in-depth the communication behavior of transnational migrants. This includes media choices, how these interaction patterns are formed, and the mediated communication techniques they use to convey feelings and emotional intimacy to family members left behind.

2. What obstacles significantly impact the smooth communication between migrant workers' families when interacting through social media?

This second question focuses on identifying problems in transnational communication.

Factors such as differences in working hours, connectivity issues, potential misinterpretation of messages due to the lack of physical contact, and cultural barriers will be analyzed to determine the extent to which these factors burden the dynamics of migrant workers' family relationships

1.3 Research Purpose

This study focuses on examining how social media can serve as a bridge for interpersonal communication between migrant workers employed by PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo and their families back home. This study is grounded in the needs of Indonesian migrant workers regarding how they utilize technology to maintain the unity and harmony of their families despite being separated by distance. The objectives include:

1. To investigate which social media platforms are most frequently used by Indonesian migrant workers from PT Wira Kreasi Usaha, as well as the benefits derived from these platforms in maintaining family bonds.
2. To identify the emotional and relational impacts of this communication on both the workers and their family members in Indonesia.
3. To analyze the communication patterns, routines, and specific challenges experienced by these migrant workers while abroad, in the context of maintaining interpersonal communication between migrant workers from PT Wira Kreasi Usaha and their families.

1.4 Research benefits

A. Theoretical Benefits

- a. Strengthening interpersonal communication theory: by demonstrating that social media serves as both a technological tool and a space that facilitates increased emotional intimacy. This study expands the boundaries of interpersonal communication theory. Although separated by what could be considered a significant geographical distance, this study shows that family members can maintain spiritual bonds, the continuity and sustainability of their relationships, and continue to care for one another.
- b. Advancing digital communication studies: From an academic perspective, particularly regarding transnational families, this study contributes to the body

of research on digital communication. It explores how digital platforms enable individuals to express emotions and maintain complex relationships across different countries.

- c. Empirical references for further research: This study offers reliable field data regarding the communication habits of Indonesian migrant workers. It is hoped that this research will serve as a valuable resource for future researchers, particularly those interested in examining the dynamics of social contact among migrants in the digital age. Furthermore, this study provides a conceptual understanding grounded in reality.

B. Practical benefits

- a. For Families and Migrant Workers: This study provides specific recommendations on effective social media communication strategies. It is hoped that these strategies will reduce the likelihood of conflicts or misunderstandings that often arise due to a lack of physical contact between migrants and their families back home. They also help migrants maintain emotional bonds with their loved ones.
- b. For PT Wira Kreasi Usaha: The company can use this study as a strategic reference when developing communication guidance modules or supplementary support programs. Institutions can provide tools to foster positive interpersonal communication and support the mental health needs of prospective migrant workers while they are working abroad.
- c. For academics and professionals: This work adds to the body of knowledge regarding interpersonal communication and the dynamics of transnational families. It explores how social media influences the social lives of Indonesian migrant workers; this information can serve as a foundation for further research.

1.5 Literature Review

1.5.1 Previous Research

1. THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN MAINTAINING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AMONG INDONESIAN MIGRANT WORKERS IN HONG KONG, Maria Anastasya, 2021, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Department of Communication Science.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong use social media to stay connected with their families back home. This study draws on theories of family communication and computer-mediated communication (CMC).

Ten migrant workers were interviewed in-depth; during these interviews, the workers' interactions on social media platforms were observed as part of the qualitative descriptive methodology employed in this study.

The findings indicate that social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp play a crucial role in maintaining emotional closeness, strengthening relationships, and providing social and emotional support despite being separated by geographical distance.

The commonality between the two studies is their emphasis on the importance of communication via media in maintaining emotional closeness despite geographical distance, as well as their focus on the role of social media in sustaining family bonds among Indonesian migrant workers. Additionally, both studies employ the same qualitative methodology, which allows for an in-depth exploration of migrant workers' communication experiences. Furthermore, both studies also emphasize that social media is a crucial aspect in maintaining relationships and providing emotional support within the context of transnational families.

Nevertheless, the two studies also have significant differences. This study is not limited to or focused on a specific country, whereas Maria Anastasya's study focuses on Indonesian migrant workers in Hong Kong. Additionally, this study focuses on migrant workers employed by PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo, introducing an institutional factor not considered in the prior study, whereas the previous study examined a broader population of migrant workers. Due to this distinction, the current study provides a more contextual explanation of interpersonal communication behaviors, taking into account employment systems and the organizational environment.

2. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF INDONESIAN MIGRANT WORKERS TO MAINTAIN FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH WHATSAPP IN PONOROGO DISTRICT, Indah Wulandari, 2022, Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo, Department of Communication Science.

The goal of this study is to comprehend how Indonesian migrant laborers from Ponorogo employ interpersonal communication techniques to sustain family ties using WhatsApp. The study makes use of ideas of interpersonal communication and media content richness. Semi structured interviews with migrant workers and their families were conducted as part of a qualitative descriptive technique, and interactions in WhatsApp groups were also observed.

Based on these findings, when family members communicate frequently and share multimedia content such as photos and videos, their emotional closeness increases significantly, and the psychological distance between them decreases.

Indah Wulandari's research, which focuses on interactions between migrant workers and their families, aligns with this study. Both studies examine how digital communication can strengthen emotional bonds and reduce psychological distance. Additionally, both studies employ a qualitative research approach that focuses on routines, emotional expressions, and communication patterns in long-distance interactions.

However, there are also significant differences evident in both studies. One such difference lies in the focus and scope of this study. This study examines how various social media platforms are used by migrant workers, whereas Indah Wulandari's study focuses solely on a single platform WhatsApp as a communication tool. Furthermore, this study examines the communication difficulties experienced by migrant workers, such as time differences, emotional misunderstandings, and technological barriers. In contrast, Indah Wulandari's previous study primarily focused on communication strategies. Therefore, this study offers a more comprehensive understanding of mediated interpersonal communication and transcends the limitations of specific platforms.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA AS A LONG-DISTANCE COMMUNICATION TOOL FOR
INDONESIAN MIGRANT WORKERS: STUDY ON INSTAGRAM USERS IN MALAYSIA,
Anisa Maulidya, 2020, Universitas Airlangga, Department of Communication Science.

Anisa Maulidya's research examines how Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia use Instagram as a means of long-distance communication to stay connected with their relatives and families back home. This study employs two theories: Social Presence Theory and Media Availability Theory.

The study conducted in-depth interviews using Instagram as the medium. Content analysis was also performed on posts and interactions on the platform, forming part of the qualitative descriptive methodology in this study. The findings indicate that Instagram features such as Stories and Direct Messages serve as important tools for maintaining emotional bonds, strengthening communication with relatives and family members living far away, and can be used to disseminate information quickly.

Both studies demonstrate how features within social media can help migrant workers stay connected with their families, particularly on an emotional level. Additionally, both studies employ a qualitative descriptive methodology, emphasizing the individual experiences of migrant workers in using digital platforms.

Differences between the two studies can be found in their subjects and analytical focus. The study conducted by Anisa Maulidya emphasizes visual communication through posts and stories on the Instagram platform and focuses exclusively on Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia. On the other hand, this study examines various social media sites frequently used by migrant workers. Furthermore, Anisa Maulidya's research focuses on specific aspects of social media, whereas this study focuses on interpersonal communication processes, such as the exchange of emotions and how to maintain family bonds.

4. FAMILY COMMUNICATION AMONG MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE DIGITAL ERA: A STUDY ON THE USE OF VIDEO CALLS AND SOCIAL MEDIA BY INDONESIAN MIGRANT WORKERS, Dwi Rahmawati, 2019, Universitas Indonesia, Department of Communication Science.

The purpose of this study is to understand how Indonesian migrant workers use social media and video calls as a means to fulfill their responsibilities toward their families despite being separated by great distances. The theoretical models employed include attachment theory and new media communication theory.

This phenomenological qualitative study utilized in-depth interviews with migrant workers and their families in Indonesia. The findings of this study indicate that Facebook, WhatsApp, and video calls help migrant workers strengthen and maintain emotional bonds with their families despite being geographically separated.

In discussing family relationships among Indonesian migrant workers in the digital age, the research conducted by Dwi Rahmawati aligns with this study. Both studies emphasize the importance of digital communication technology in maintaining family responsibilities and emotional bonds. Additionally, both studies recognize social media as an essential tool for sustaining family engagement in long-distance relationships and highlight the emotional aspects of long-distance communication itself.

The main difference between the two studies lies in their research focus and context. While Dwi Rahmawati's study primarily explores how social media and video calls help Indonesian migrant workers fulfill family responsibilities and maintain emotional bonds from a phenomenological perspective, this study specifically examines the role of social media in maintaining interpersonal communication among migrant workers recruited through PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo. In addition to exploring emotional experiences, this study also investigates communication barriers, digital parenting practices, and adaptive communication strategies developed by migrant workers to sustain family relationships across geographical distances. Furthermore, by focusing on migrant workers recruited through PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo, this study provides a more specific institutional and contextual perspective on interpersonal communication within transnational families.

5. CONNECTION IN TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES: FACE TO FACE AND DIGITAL SPACES IN PORTUGUESE EMIGRANTS, Inta Mieriņa & Inese Šūpule, 2024. Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

This study examines how Portuguese expatriate families use digital communication tools such as Skype and WhatsApp not only to see each other face-to-face but also to maintain close family ties despite being separated by great distances. This study highlights how technology can overcome the geographical distance between transnational families, as well as the importance of digital habits and emotional bonds. The importance of digital communication technology in maintaining family bonds across geographical distances and its focus on transnational family communication, as emphasized by both studies, is evident. Both studies demonstrate how family members can maintain daily contact.

Nevertheless, the two studies have several significant differences. Mieriņa and Šūpule's study focuses on Portuguese expatriate families within a European context, whereas this study examines Indonesian migrant workers recruited through PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo and their families within the context of transnational labor migration. Furthermore, Mieriņa and Šūpule's research compares digital communication with face-to-face interactions, emphasizing how direct encounters complement and enrich virtual communication. In contrast, this study focuses on the role of social media as the primary medium for maintaining interpersonal communication when face-to-face interaction is limited or impossible due to geographical separation. Additionally, this study explores the lived experiences of migrant workers, including emotional closeness, digital parenting practices, communication barriers, and adaptive communication strategies used to maintain family relationships across distances. Therefore, this study provides a more specific understanding of interpersonal communication within Indonesian transnational families in the context of labor migration.

1.5.2 Theoretical Framework

1.5.2.1 Social Media as a Medium for Maintaining Interpersonal Communication in Transnational Families

Social media has completely changed how individuals interact, establish connections, and communicate across geographical borders in the 21st century. Social media is a revolutionary digital communications platform that facilitates rapid information exchange, realtime connection, and multifaceted emotional expression. Their pervasiveness affects almost every facet of contemporary life, including business, education, and interpersonal interactions. Social media has become an essential instrument for preserving emotional ties and giving a feeling of presence in long-distance relationships, such as those between TKI and their families. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are not only useful as casual, entertainment-focused communication tools, but they also serve as a bridge that supports emotional well-being, a space that can alleviate feelings of loneliness and foster a sense of community, particularly among TKI currently scattered across the globe. These platforms can also help migrant workers overcome communication barriers, which are generally caused by distance, time differences, and expensive international call costs. Unlike traditional forms of communication, social media offers a variety of solutions, including synchronous interaction modes (real-time video calls, instant messaging) and asynchronous modes (status updates, voice messages). These options accommodate the varied schedules of migrant workers, allowing them to coordinate their communication with family back home.

The theoretical foundation regarding the impact of social media on interpersonal communication can be understood through several contemporary theories, which are directly related to how users engage with digital media. One of the most relevant frameworks today is the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which has been adapted in recent studies to analyze how individuals interact on social media platforms to fulfill their various interpersonal and emotional needs. In line with the study by Whiting and Williams (2020), they argue that social media is frequently used to fulfill needs such as connection, friendship, and maintaining relationships. In the context of migrant workers, social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram serve as a means of connecting them with their families despite emotional and physical distance. This is particularly relevant for migrant workers who rely on text messages, voice messages, and video calls to maintain communication and emotional

closeness. Collectively, these theories have provided a framework for examining how social media can support interpersonal communication within the context of transnational family life.

Social media platforms, which originally started out very simple such as text messages or email are now considered to lack the nuance needed to build emotional bonds. As a result, social media has evolved into a rich, multidimensional environment that can directly support the interpersonal needs of families separated by great distances. The Uses and Gratifications Theory provides an additional layer of understanding by exploring the motivations behind social media use. This theory suggests that people actively choose which media and platforms best satisfy their individual needs, including the need for entertainment, information, self-expression, and interpersonal interaction. For migrant workers, social media fulfills these needs by providing a space where they can stay updated on family matters, express their emotions, cope with homesickness, participate in family activities, and maintain a sense of their cultural identity. These platforms should not be used passively or excessively, but rather strategically to meet the psychological and emotional needs that naturally arise from life abroad.

One of the most significant contributions of social media is its flexibility. Migrant workers, who often work long or irregular hours, frequently lack the time for lengthy phone calls or traditional forms of communication. Social media allows them to stay connected on their own terms—leaving voice messages after their shifts, sharing photos of their daily lives, or checking in with family during breaks. This on-demand communication model plays a vital role in ensuring that family bonds remain strong. Additionally, social media fosters the formation of digital communities, where migrant workers can connect with others facing similar life situations. These communities serve various functions: providing emotional support, sharing useful information (such as labor rights or money transfer options), and even facilitating financial assistance through collective fundraising efforts. Online groups on Facebook or WhatsApp are often used to coordinate aid, report abuse, or simply share life experiences. This aligns with sociologist Barry Wellman's concept of networked individualism, where social bonds are no longer limited by geographical proximity but are formed and maintained through digital networks that are personal, dispersed, and mutually supportive.

The flexibility of social media is both a major advantage and one of its most significant contributions. Migrant workers, who often face demanding and unpredictable work schedules, frequently lack the time for lengthy phone calls and sometimes even find it difficult to make

even brief calls. With the advent of the latest social media technology, they can leave voice messages after their shifts and upload photos of their daily lives, allowing them to stay connected with their families during their breaks. Social media enables individuals to maintain relationships on their own terms. This on demand communication paradigm is crucial for sustaining family relationships over time. Social media also makes it easier for migrant workers to interact with others facing similar circumstances. By using social media, they can form online communities to connect with one another and share experiences with those in similar situations. These communities serve various functions, particularly providing emotional support, disseminating useful information (such as labor rights or money transfer options), and even facilitating financial assistance through group fundraising initiatives. Online groups on Facebook or WhatsApp are often used to share life experiences, report harassment, and organize support whether moral or material.

The emotional benefits of social media cannot be overstated. According to recent research, regular digital contact with family members can significantly reduce stress, anxiety, and sadness among migrant workers. Based on a 2023 study by Cleveland et al., social media use among migrant workers in Gulf countries is associated with better emotional well-being and reduced psychological distress; consequently, they are more likely to communicate with their family members more frequently. Specifically, WhatsApp facilitates informal conversations that are more likely to be sustained and follow a natural flow, much like family gatherings in daily life. For migrant workers abroad and their families—especially their children and spouses—these brief yet routine interactions can foster a sense of emotional presence and psychological closeness (Waruwu, 2022). In addition to offering emotional support, social media is also crucial for activism and crisis communication. Migrant workers are increasingly using social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok for self-defense and to alert fellow migrant workers. Some users use these platforms to document various incidents, such as acts of violence, harassment, or cases of unpaid wages. Such posts frequently occur and naturally attract public attention; the resulting impact inevitably prompts authorities to act swiftly. For instance, in 2023, a video on TikTok regarding the disappearance of Vivi, an Indonesian migrant worker in Saudi Arabia, went viral and garnered national attention. Thanks to the video's viral spread and global exposure, she was eventually reunited with her family. This incident demonstrates that

social media can serve as a powerful platform for public advocacy as well as a tool for interpersonal communication (BBC News Indonesia, 2023; Kaur-Gill, 2022).

Social media also allows migrant workers to stay closely connected to their identity as citizens of the Republic of Indonesia. So what can they do, or what are they doing? By staying up to date with local news, religious sermons, and various forms of entertainment from Indonesian channels on various platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, or TikTok these workers can maintain their cultural continuity even while living in another country. Such ongoing engagement can prevent cultural alienation and, on the other hand, strengthen a sense of belonging to the country which is particularly important for long-term migrant workers or those who work abroad repeatedly.

Although it offers many benefits, the use of social media among migrant workers is not without its challenges. Many factors, such as risks to personal privacy, cyberbullying, disinformation and hoaxes, cyber harassment, and digital fatigue, can have a significant impact on users' mental health. Additionally, some workers may feel emotionally burdened, stemming from pressure from family members who expect them to be constantly available even online especially when work conditions lead to physical and mental exhaustion. These challenges necessitate the promotion of digital literacy and privacy awareness, as well as the ability to set emotional boundaries. This is done to ensure that social media use remains a healthy complement and a comfortable, safe haven while working abroad.

In conclusion, social media can serve as a bridge that connects migrant workers with their families, and this is undoubtedly very important and beneficial for both parties, particularly in an interpersonal context. Social media can be said to connect them even when they are physically and emotionally separated. The multidimensional role of the relationships between migrant workers and their families and communities can encompass emotional support, information sharing, cultural preservation, community building, and crisis management. For migrant workers, social media plays a vital role-it is not merely a communication platform; it is a space for identity, solidarity, and survival. Understanding and optimizing this role is essential for the well-being of migrant workers, ensuring that no one is left behind by distance, to the point of being completely cut off.

1.5.2.2 Interpersonal Communication in Transnational Family Relationships

Interpersonal communication is generally defined as the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages between individuals, which fosters close and meaningful relationships. This form of communication usually takes place within the context of interactions between two people or in small groups, where such interactions are reciprocal and aim to foster mutual understanding, support, or influence. According to Rachmad (2022), interpersonal communication is characterized by mutual influence, interdependence, and efforts to achieve relational closeness. This differs from other types of communication, such as mass communication and intrapersonal communication. In contrast, intrapersonal communication refers to internal processes such as thinking, self-reflection, and inner dialogue that occur within the individual themselves. Meanwhile, interpersonal communication is inherently or closely related to interactive and relational nature. Mass communication, on the other hand, involves the transmission of information from a single source to a wide audience through media channels such as television or newspapers, and naturally often receives minimal feedback.

The uniqueness of interpersonal communication lies in its personal nature and emotional depth. This form of communication is influenced by context and requires both cognitive engagement and emotional involvement. Therefore, it is crucial to foster more meaningful human relationships. The core element of interpersonal communication is its multidimensionality. This encompasses several interrelated aspects, such as verbal messages (what is said), nonverbal cues (tone of voice, facial expressions, body language), emotional tone, psychological engagement, and the feedback loop, which adjusts communication in real-time. Culture can also influence interpersonal communication, as social norms and expectations can shape how people communicate and interpret the intent and content of messages. Emotional presence, empathy, and mutual understanding are crucial for building a connection. As noted by Udenze (2020), in the digital age, even emojis, voice notes, and short video messages convey significant emotional meaning. These can also foster empathetic understanding, particularly among people who are physically separated. These mediated forms of nonverbal communication can certainly help enhance interpersonal experiences by bridging emotional gaps that would otherwise remain unfilled if communication relied solely on text.

In the context of migrant workers, maintaining family bonds and psychological well-being is a crucial and vital role of interpersonal communication, even when separated by

geographical distance. The frequent use of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok among migrant workers is one way for them to remain “present” and stay emotionally and socially connected to their families. Although these interactions occur virtually or are limited to a smartphone screen, they are sufficient to alleviate homesickness and preserve the essential qualities of interpersonal engagement: reciprocity, the emotional richness received and given, and the maintenance of family relationships. A recent study by Lei, Ma, and Sun (2024) highlights that even brief yet emotionally meaningful digital interactions can function as a “social lifeline,” offering emotional stability, continuity, and reassurance despite the physical distance. The ability to “remain present” despite physical absence is a key strength of digital communication. These virtual connections enable them to fulfill their roles in the family, give each other emotional support, and keep participating in family decision making; this demonstrates and proves that interpersonal communication remains essential, even in the context of transnational families.

Migrant workers, who by nature have and experience long-distance family relationships, tend to maintain much deeper emotional bonds with their family members than those who do not, particularly when they regularly share their thoughts and feelings through digital platforms. In this context, Social Penetration Theory explains how relational closeness is formed through a process of gradual self-disclosure. Alinejad (2021) also emphasizes that frequent digital communication can help create a sense of presence and a psychological sense of belonging within transnational families.

Relationship Maintenance Theory also plays a crucial role in understanding how migrant workers maintain emotional bonds with their families. Sending messages of support, sharing information about daily activities, and participating in important family events—even online—are examples of the application of Relationship Maintenance. These actions reflect a commitment and emotional attachment to maintaining closeness within the family. Interpersonal communication also supports emotional regulation between migrant workers and their families. It cannot be denied that migrant workers often experience mixed emotions such as loneliness, work-related stress, and even cultural dislocation. By maintaining communication with their families, this can provide psychological relief and a sense of connection with family members back home. Furthermore, Duriez (2021) found that emotional exchange through digital channels

can help migrants cope with the demands of cross-border work and workplace stress, which contributes to better mental well-being among migrant workers.

The importance of consistent and meaningful interaction is a key emphasis of Attachment Theory. Faux et al. (2024) argue that the development of a sense of security also stems from sustained digital contact, particularly for couples and children who may experience anxiety caused by long-term separation. Even brief communication can provide emotional comfort, while reaffirming the presence and support of family members who are not physically nearby. Although it offers various benefits, digital interpersonal communication in a transnational context is not without its challenges. Different time zones, limited internet access, and workplace restrictions can hinder consistent interaction. However, a study by Williams and Veazey (2021) indicates that brief yet emotionally rich messages are highly valued by both migrant workers and their families. This can enhance relationship satisfaction and reduce emotional distance on both sides.

The dimension of “virtual parenting” is a new dimension in the context of migrant workers. An example of this dimension is migrant parents providing emotional guidance, discipline, and support to their children from afar. Pranawati et al. (2025) highlight how virtual parenting enables migrant workers to remain actively involved in their children’s development, thereby reinforcing their parental role despite physical separation. Additionally, interpersonal communication plays a collaborative role in family decision-making, whether regarding financial matters or simply for emotional support. Real-time information exchange is one way that enables migrant workers to remain involved in the family’s daily affairs. This mutual engagement fosters mutual respect and shared responsibility, which are essential for the stability of long-term relationships. Of course, the family’s emotional resilience is also a result of interpersonal communication. Hastasari (2023) emphasizes that open dialogue and continuous emotional support help families of migrant workers overcome the challenges of separation, such as stress, anxiety, and potential conflicts. By maintaining effective communication, families can foster a supportive and harmonious environment.

The role of the community in enhancing the interpersonal communication skills of migrant workers can be said to have a significant and central impact. This statement is supported by Djatmika et al. (2024), who found that intercultural communication competencies among migrant workers play a role in facilitating their adaptation to a foreign environment while also

strengthening their communication with their families back home. Training and the structure of community support influence the improvement of these skills and, consequently, strengthen family bonds as well. Additionally, there are other equally important factors: digital literacy and accessibility can significantly impact the effectiveness of interpersonal communication. In the case of migrant workers, not all may possess the same level of ability and proficiency, particularly regarding the use of communication technologies. Digital communication training is available, led by the government and NGOs. These programs aim to empower migrant workers to better use and leverage available platforms, thereby enabling them to maintain long-distance relationships through the use of communication technology (Choerudin et al., 2023).

Gender dynamics are also intertwined with interpersonal communication, particularly among migrant workers. Female migrant workers often play a more significant role in performing emotional labor—for example, maintaining family communication, initiating conversations more frequently, and ensuring family cohesion across long distances. This, of course, adds complexity to the division of roles and interpersonal expectations within transnational families, a dynamic that is undoubtedly influenced by gender dimensions (Hasan, 2019). Interpersonal communication facilitates the continuity of culture for the children of migrant workers left behind. Migrant workers often use video calls and storytelling to share traditions, values, and language, with the aim of ensuring their children remain connected to their cultural heritage, whether raised in single-parent households or extended families. This transmission of culture has strengthened family identity and fostered a sense of belonging (Kinasih, Koesbardiati, Wahyudi & Ida, 2023). Effective and sustained interpersonal communication is crucial, particularly in maintaining the emotional well-being of migrant workers. Regardless of the nature or extent of the challenges, digital technology and community support systems provide powerful and valuable tools for sustaining emotional bonds, connections, and resilience across borders.

1.5.2.3 Indonesian Migrant Workers (TKI) and Transnational Family Communication

TKI constitutes a significant portion of Indonesia's global diaspora. These migrant workers play a vital role both in the international labor market and in national socio-economic development. They often make the difficult decision to leave their families and home communities to work abroad, which inevitably takes them out of their comfort zones. Driven by

their aspirations, they hope to achieve a better life and greater financial stability. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea are among the destinations frequently sought by prospective migrant workers. The significance of TKI lies not only in their labor contributions to the host countries where they work but also in their remittances, which support millions of Indonesian households and contribute to macroeconomic stability.

TKI are employed in various sectors, including domestic work, construction, caregiving, manufacturing, agriculture, and the hospitality industry. Although some Indonesian professionals migrate for skilled work, the majority of migrant workers are classified as unskilled to semi-skilled workers. Their decision to migrate is often influenced by structural challenges in Indonesia, such as persistent poverty, chronic unemployment, unequal access to quality education, gender inequality, and limited social mobility in suburban and rural areas. Consequently, leaving home or migrating becomes a strategic and seemingly more promising solution, making it a necessity for families striving to achieve financial security and social mobility.

The Push-Pull Theory, in the context of migration, provides a useful framework for understanding the dynamics behind the movement of this labor force (migrant workers). “Push” factors in the Indonesian context may include low wages, high unemployment rates, and a lack of opportunities in remote or rural areas. Meanwhile, “pull” factors in the destination country include higher wages, demand for foreign labor, and opportunities to improve one’s quality of life. These push-pull forces are continuous and intersect with household pressures, such as the need to educate children or pay off debt. Consequently, a strong motivation to migrate is created among the people.

In a broader context, migrant workers also face social and legal challenges that are quite significant and cannot be taken lightly in their host countries. These issues are quite complex and are frequently experienced by migrant workers, particularly women. In cases that have occurred, they typically involve physical and emotional abuse, as well as violations of workers’ rights such as unpaid wages and exploitation. This situation is further exacerbated by the weak legal protection they receive. Several factors trigger and contribute to these issues, such as language barriers, lack of legal documentation, and discrimination in the host country. Various efforts have been undertaken by Indonesian government agencies, such as the Ministry of

Manpower and the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BP2MI), including regulating placement procedures, ensuring workers' rights, and providing legal assistance. Nevertheless, issues such as bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, and weak law enforcement remain ongoing problems and challenges.

An important role in managing and professionalizing overseas job placement is carried out by officially registered labor placement agencies, known as Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Agencies (P3MI), such as PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo. These agencies bear significant duties and responsibilities in managing all stages of the placement process for migrant workers (TKI), starting from recruitment, training, and preparing prospective workers. They also ensure the safety and legal validity of sending TKI to their destination countries. The services provided typically cover various aspects, such as: pre-departure orientation (Final Departure Briefing or PAP), vocational or skills training, language training for the destination country, health examinations, document verification, and facilitating social and health insurance, of course. According to Matompo (2022), the procedures with minimum standards implemented by P3MI aim to protect workers from exploitation and enhance their ability to adapt to foreign environments. Additionally, administrative processes integrated with digital technology can improve effectiveness, transparency, monitoring, and the provision of support services.

Furthermore, the issue of migrant workers cannot be separated from the gender dimension that is deeply embedded within it and must also be given greater attention. This is because the majority of migrant workers are women who work in the domestic sector, such as domestic workers and caregivers for children and the elderly. This often leads to migrant workers being looked down upon and underestimated. They can be said to have a high level of vulnerability to gender-based exploitation. Nevertheless, migration also plays a role in opening opportunities to empower many women, many of whom become the backbone and primary breadwinners of their families, thereby contributing to a shift in traditional gender roles and family dynamics. However, the feminization of migration can also raise concerns and create new issues regarding the commodification of care work, and most worryingly, the low value placed on women's labor, both domestically and abroad. Protection efforts continue to be developed; one of the most recent legislative developments is Law No. 17 of 2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers. This law marks a significant step toward

strengthening and ensuring the institutionalization of migrants' rights, ranging from pre-departure training, documentation or administrative support, legal aid, consular services, access to insurance, to repatriation mechanisms. In addition, collaborative cooperation between the government, international organizations such as the ILO and IOM, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector is also aimed at creating and developing a migration system that is safer, more ethical, and, of course, sustainable.

Serious attention must be paid to the psychosocial dimensions of labor migration, apart from the administrative and economic aspects. Their long-term separation from their families often triggers emotional impacts that warrant consideration. Loneliness, homesickness, guilt, and psychological exhaustion are common among migrant workers. At the same time, their families-particularly spouses and children-may experience emotional and financial instability. As noted by Varone et al. (2021), children of migrant workers are highly vulnerable to behavioral issues, emotional distress, bullying, and educational setbacks caused by the absence of their parents, which inevitably results in a lack of parental involvement. The sense of disconnection experienced by both workers and their families indirectly highlights the crucial role of consistent communication. In this context, social media platforms undoubtedly offer a solution to these challenges. Digital interaction through these social media platforms not only helps bridge the psychological distance but can also be leveraged to maintain parental roles and responsibilities toward the family even when physically apart (Pranawati et al., 2025). While the P3MI addresses the structural and legal frameworks of labor migration, the emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships within transnational families can still be sustained through digital communication.

From an economic perspective, remittances from migrant workers stand alongside natural resources and tourism as the country's largest sources of foreign exchange. According to the World Bank, Indonesia receives billions of U.S. dollars annually from these remittances, which can provide significant benefits for household consumption, education, and small business development. For many families in rural areas, remittances are a lifeline, and they often depend on them. However, without financial literacy regarding how to manage finances and without a culture of saving, these funds can be spent impulsively and inefficiently, leading to failure in achieving the planned long-term economic security.

One trend currently gaining traction among migrant workers is digital entrepreneurship. Armed with smartphones and supported by social media, many workers are venturing into business as a source of supplementary income. Online selling, affiliate marketing, and content creation have become their preferred options. By using digital platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, migrant workers can also share their stories of struggling in a foreign country to make a living, while also building transnational communities and inspiring many people. This shift reflects a transformation in the public's perception of migrant workers, from vulnerable laborers to agents of economic and cultural exchange.

Technological advancements can also transform migration management. This has led organizations such as PT Wira Kreasi Usaha to begin implementing digital management systems for their operations. The use of digital management systems encompasses the monitoring of documentation processes, training, and communication. These systems are highly effective in enhancing transparency, speeding up documentation, facilitating the dissemination of information, and, of course, ensuring a rapid response in emergency situations.

One factor that has exposed systemic vulnerabilities in global labor migration is the COVID-19 pandemic, including for Indonesian migrant workers. During the pandemic, many migrant workers faced sudden job terminations, wage-related fraud, lack of access to healthcare, and even forced repatriation due to strict lockdown policies. These conditions not only disrupted their livelihoods but also exacerbated psychological stress among migrant workers (IOM, 2021). In response, both government agencies and recruitment agencies have adapted their strategies by digitizing certain processes and requirements, such as conducting online interviews during the recruitment process, using digital or electronic documentation, and providing online pre-departure training to maintain worker mobility while ensuring the safety and health of all parties involved (Anaf et al., 2022).

Looking ahead, Indonesia's future labor migration system must be based on empowerment, protection, and reintegration carried out in a sustainable manner. Empowerment efforts should not only focus on improving migrant workers' access to financial services but also include other areas such as digital skills, strong language proficiency, and enhanced physical and mental health services. Reintegration programs have also been emphasized by BNP2MI and international organizations such as the ILO, which support returning migrant workers who have completed their contracts abroad to develop small businesses and participate

in local development initiatives. As reported by Bachtiar & Prasetyo (2017), many former migrant workers return home with valuable experience, entrepreneurial potential, and a global perspective. If properly supported, these factors can significantly contribute to community resilience and healthy economic growth. This shift indicates a growing recognition that migrant workers are not merely a source of labor or mere workers, but rather central actors who play a key role in the process of transnational development.

1.6 Research Method

1.6.1 Approach and Type of Research

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach. A qualitative approach was selected because the primary objective of this study is to explore and understand the lived experiences of Indonesian migrant workers in maintaining interpersonal communication with their families through social media rather than to measure variables or test hypotheses. Qualitative research enables researchers to capture participants' perspectives, emotions, interpretations, and meanings attached to their communication experiences within the context of long-distance family relationships (Rahmad, 2022).

The phenomenological approach was chosen because it focuses on understanding how individuals experience and make sense of a particular phenomenon in their everyday lives. In this study, the phenomenon under investigation is the use of social media by Indonesian migrant workers recruited through PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo to maintain interpersonal communication with their families while living and working abroad. This approach allows the researcher to explore participants' lived experiences, emotional realities, communication challenges, and adaptive strategies in maintaining family relationships across geographical distances.

Through phenomenological inquiry, the researcher seeks to uncover the meanings participants assign to their communication practices, emotional connections, and family interactions mediated through social media. Therefore, this approach provides a deeper understanding of how interpersonal communication is experienced and sustained within transnational family relationships.

1.6.2 Research Location

The main research location for this study is PT Wira Kreasi Usaha in Ponorogo, East Java. As a recognized Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Agency (P3MI), PT Wira Kreasi Usaha is essential to the recruitment, training, and deployment of migrant workers to different destination nations. Since the organization serves migrant workers who are separated from their families for extended periods of time and mostly rely on indirect contact, this place was selected because it is pertinent to the research issue.

Data collection is done online, despite the fact that research participants are geographically dispersed across several nations. Social media has a major role in mediating interpersonal contacts with family members in the real-life communication environment of TKI, which is reflected in this study environment. By carrying out the study in this manner, the researcher is able to record communication behaviors that naturally take place in the digital realm, which aligns with the features of transnational family communication in the digital era (Waruwu, 2022).

1.6.3 Data Collection

Data for this study was collected using qualitative data collection techniques, with in-depth interviews serving as the primary method. Interviews were chosen because this study aims to uncover and explore the personal experiences, emotional meanings, and interpersonal communication practices of Indonesian migrant workers in maintaining their family relationships through social media as the platform used. This qualitative interview process allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives of the informants and participants, particularly in research related to communication with family and emotional interactions focused on long-distance contexts (Hennida et al., 2021).

This study employed purposive sampling, as described by Morgan (2022), wherein participants are selected based on specific criteria and researcher judgment to determine who will be included in the sample. The use of purposive sampling in research allows the study to focus on addressing specific research questions by visiting locations such as specific cities to collect data. The process continued until data saturation was achieved, ensuring that sufficient depth of information was obtained through iterative selection. Additionally, purposive sampling

is often used in qualitative and experimental research to obtain in-depth data from the appropriate subjects (Firmansyah et al., 2022).

The interview process conducted by the researcher involved three Indonesian migrant workers employed and stationed abroad, who had departed through PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo. Each informant was located in different destination countries: Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Selecting informants from various placement locations allowed the researcher to explore the diversity of communication experiences, which are inevitably influenced by differing work conditions, time zone differences, and varying levels of access to digital media.

Table 1

NO	Full Name of Informants	Place of Employment as a Migrant Worker
1.	Laelatul Munawaroh	Indonesian Migrant Worker (TKI) in Taiwan
2.	Sinta Apriliani	Indonesian Migrant Worker (TKI) in Hong Kong
3.	Arum Ningsih	Indonesian Migrant Worker (TKI) in Singapore

The researchers chose to conduct all interviews via online video calls using WhatsApp. Given the informants' busy schedules, the need to obtain permission from the sending agencies, and the geographical distance between the researchers and the informants, online interviews were considered the most appropriate choice, as they align with the actual communication practices of migrant workers. Migrant workers, of course, rely heavily on digital platforms to interact with their families. This method also reflects the mediated communication environment that is a reality in the lives of Indonesian migrant workers while living abroad or working overseas (Waruwu, 2022).

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview technique, guided by a list of open-ended questions prepared in advance by the researcher. The interview questions were designed to explore and delve deeper into several key themes, including expressions of emotional closeness, digital parenting practices, communication barriers, and strategies for maintaining family relationships and trust. This approach allowed the researcher to remain focused on the research objectives while providing informants the flexibility to narrate and elaborate on their experiences in detail (Hennida et al., 2021).

During the interview sessions, the participants shared their experiences regarding how they use social media platforms such as WhatsApp, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook to stay in touch with their family members in Indonesia. The researchers also explored the various forms

of interaction the participants engaged in. These included text messages, voice calls, video calls, and how they shared photos, videos, and updates about their daily lives. Additionally, the interviews identified and revealed various challenges faced by the participants as migrant workers, such as time constraints including limited smartphone usage, work intensity, and emotional difficulties in expressing feelings through mediated communication.

These interviews were conducted with the participants' consent, and the researcher recorded them to ensure data accuracy. The recordings will then be transcribed, and the resulting transcripts will serve as the primary source for this study. The use of verbatim (word-for-word) transcription allows the researcher to preserve the authenticity of what the informants said and stated, and supports a more accurate and systematic data analysis process.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

This study was conducted using a quantitative descriptive analysis approach. The analysis process was then carried out after all the necessary interview data had been collected and transcribed word for word (verbatim). In this case, this approach was chosen because the study aims to describe and interpret the informants' experiences, specifically their experiences in communicating with their families through social media from the informants' own perspectives.

The data analysis process begins with the data familiarization stage, during which the researcher reads the interview transcripts repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the informants' experiences. Through this process, the researcher identifies relevant and meaningful statements regarding the use of social media, emotional communication, family interactions, and communication challenges. At this stage, it is important to ensure that the analysis remains grounded in the real-life experiences of migrant workers. The next stage involves data reduction, where information deemed irrelevant or repetitive is filtered out, while relevant and significant data is retained. The selected data is then grouped based on shared meanings. This process allows researchers to focus on key aspects of interpersonal communication, particularly emotional closeness, how digital-based parenting practices are carried out, what communication barriers exist, and what strategies are used to maintain family relationships. According to Hennida et al. (2021), the thematic grouping of qualitative data helps

identify patterns of emotional interaction and relationship maintenance within migrant or transnational families.

Following data reduction, the researchers categorized the data and conducted a thematic analysis. Statements from the informants were categorized into several main themes that emerged consistently throughout the series of interviews conducted. The themes identified and identified include the use of social media as a means of emotional connection, the role of social media in maintaining parental involvement, the challenges in mediated communication, and the strategies employed to maintain family trust and harmony. This thematic process enables the researcher to interpret and elucidate how interpersonal communication occurs in digital spaces among Indonesian migrant workers. During the interpretation phase, the researcher also examined how social media can facilitate emotional expression and relational closeness, despite physical separation. Findings from the study indicate that platforms such as WhatsApp have played a crucial and central role in facilitating routine communication through text messages, voice calls, and video calls. This supports the view that mediated communication has become an important part of daily family interactions for migrant workers, particularly in maintaining emotional bonds and reducing feelings of loneliness, as emphasized by Waruwu (2020).

In addition, the analysis indicates that the challenges inevitably faced by the informants as migrant workers—such as time constraints, including those related to smartphone use, work intensity, and emotional misunderstandings—can significantly impact the quality of interpersonal communication. These challenges often force migrant workers to be effective and resourceful in developing adaptive communication strategies, including scheduling specific communication times, prioritizing honesty and openness, and carefully managing emotional expressions during mediated interactions. These strategies demonstrate how interpersonal communication within transnational families is shaped not only by technology but also by emotional awareness and rational commitment (Hennida et al., 2021).

The final stage of data analysis involves drawing conclusions that link empirical findings with relevant concepts. These concepts pertain to interpersonal communication and the use of social media. Through this process, the researcher successfully explains how social media has become an emotional bridge that supports family bonds, trust, and the sustainability of relationships. It functions not only as a communication tool between Indonesian migrant workers and their families.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH OBJECT

2.1 Overview of Indonesian Migrant Workers

Known locally as Indonesian Workers Abroad (TKI) or Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI), these are Indonesian citizens who are working or earning a living abroad. They typically aim to meet their economic needs and improve their own well-being as well as that of their families. Migration has long been considered one of the most accessible strategies for individuals from rural or suburban areas, as they believe they can secure greater earning opportunities compared to working domestically. Many Indonesian migrant workers come from regions with relatively low and limited job availability, low wages, or high economic demands within their households.

Their decision to take risks abroad is rarely based solely on personal choice. In this context, the terms “forced” or “have no choice” may be the most appropriate to describe the reasons why they choose to become migrant workers. Driven by family responsibilities—for example, migrant workers typically serve as the primary breadwinners, are responsible for meeting the household’s daily needs, ensuring their children’s education, providing for the family’s healthcare, and planning for the family’s long-term future. These responsibilities drive many people, especially women to work abroad, even though they know they must face challenges ranging from the emotional consequences of long-distance separation from family to leaving their comfort zones. As for other challenges, such as complex social challenges, these are among the most significant impacts resulting from prolonged physical separation from their family members. This forces migrant workers to live far apart from their partners, children, or parents for periods lasting months or even years. This prolonged separation often leads to emotional vulnerability, including feelings of loneliness, homesickness, guilt, and anxiety. The lack of face-to-face interaction also has a significant impact on family dynamics, particularly when it comes to maintaining emotional closeness and fulfilling one’s role as a family member from a distance.

In the context of transnational families, communication is a truly central and vital element; the importance of communication among transnational families is a key factor in the resilience of the relationship. Without regular communication, even minor misunderstandings

can become a serious obstacle to maintaining a healthy relationship. Not to mention that emotional distance and conflicts within the relationship can easily arise without good communication among transnational family members. Therefore, maintaining consistent interaction with family members is not merely a personal need but has become a truly essential component of stabilizing family relationships. Migrant workers must also find ways to remain emotionally present even when they are not physically in the same place as their families.

Advances in digital technology and easy access to the internet have significantly transformed communication patterns, particularly for migrant workers. In the past, communication relied on letters or expensive and inefficient international phone calls, which severely limited the frequency of communication among transnational families. The emergence of social media and messaging apps has enabled migrant workers to communicate more easily, quickly, and, of course, more affordably. These technological changes have also transformed how migrant workers maintain family relationships separated by distance and long periods of time.

Through social media platforms, migrant workers can share various aspects of their lives, such as their daily experiences, express how they feel while living abroad, monitor their families' well-being, and participate in family decision-making processes. These digital interactions help bridge the psychological distance and foster a sense of togetherness, even though they are geographically separated. As a result, social media has become a constant companion for migrant workers and an integral part of their daily lives. It serves not only as a communication tool but also as a bridge connecting transnational families.

Understanding the background and social circumstances of migrant workers is crucial to this study, as their communication practices cannot be separated from economic pressures, emotional responsibilities, and, of course, the expectations of their families. This overview serves as the foundation for analyzing how interpersonal communication between migrant workers and their families is established and maintained through social media within the context of long-distance relationships.

2.2 Indonesian Migrant Workers from PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo



Figure 1. Logo PT. Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo

PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo is a licensed migrant worker placement agency (P3MI) operating legally in Indonesia, located in Ponorogo, East Java. This company plays a vital role in facilitating opportunities for Indonesian citizens who wish to work abroad. By managing the recruitment, training, documentation, and placement of workers, PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo operates in compliance with government regulations and collaborates with relevant authorities to ensure that migrant workers are placed legally and protected throughout their employment abroad. Prior to being sent abroad, prospective migrant workers undergo a series of preparatory stages organized by the company. These stages include administrative processing, vocational training, basic language instruction, and cultural orientation regarding the destination country. This preparation process aims to equip workers with technical skills and socio-cultural competencies, enabling migrant workers to adapt to their new work environment. Through this system, PT Wira Kreasi Usaha is able to stand alongside migrant workers, employers, and the families of migrant workers in Indonesia.

Migrant workers placed through PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo generally work in fields such as home care and caregiving. These jobs involve tasks such as managing household chores, caring for the elderly, and serving as nannies. This type of work often demands a high level of emotional involvement, long working hours, and significant, ongoing responsibilities. In many cases, these workers have very little personal time, and some even have limited access to smartphones, this depends on the employers who hire them. This directly affects how often

and in what ways migrant workers can communicate with their families. Despite these limitations, maintaining communication with family members remains a priority for migrant workers. They also frequently use brief windows of time such as breaks, when their employer is still asleep, or weekends to contact their families via social media. These constraints encourage migrant workers to develop adaptive communication patterns, such as scheduling specific communication times or prioritizing certain family members to contact first. Consequently, communication practices among migrant workers are shaped not only by personal intentions but also by the structural conditions at their workplaces.

Indirectly, PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo's role in supporting family communication is to provide information, assistance, and coordination when workers face problems or emergencies while abroad. Although the company does not directly manage this communication on a day-to-day basis, its presence as an intermediary institution can provide a sense of security for both parties.

By focusing on migrant workers from PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo, this study situates communication practices within a clear institutional context. By incorporating this institutional background, researchers can understand interpersonal communication not merely as individual activities but as a process influenced by organizational systems, work environments, and structural constraints faced by migrant workers abroad. Therefore, PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo serves as a highly relevant research subject for examining how social media is utilized to maintain family communication within a transnational context.

2.3 Characteristics of the Research Informants

The informants in this study are Indonesian migrant workers placed through PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo, all of whom are currently working abroad. The characteristics of the informants can be described as follows:

1. The informants are female migrant workers, consisting of three participants.
2. The informants' ages range from 21 to 35, which falls within the productive working age range.
3. The informants come from different destination countries. The aim is for this study to capture a diverse range of communication experiences. The destination countries for these migrant workers are Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

4. The informants' occupations are homecare and caretaking, which include managing household chores, caring for the elderly, and looking after children. Each role involves different workloads and levels of flexibility
5. The minimum duration of employment is 8 months from the first day of work, allowing for an assessment of communication frequency and the adaptation process.
6. All informants have family members in Indonesia, such as a spouse (husband), children, or parents, who are the primary parties involved in the interpersonal communication process.
7. The informants actively use social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp, as the primary means of maintaining communication with their families.

These various characteristics enable researchers to gain comprehensive insights into the practices of interpersonal communication, emotional experiences, and communication challenges faced by Indonesian migrant workers in their family communication through social media.

2.4 Social Media as a Communication Medium in Migrant Workers' Daily Life

The role of social media in the daily lives of migrant workers cannot be underestimated. Social media is vital as a means of maintaining strong communication with their families in Indonesia. Due to the great geographical distance between them and limited opportunities for face-to-face interaction, these migrant workers have come to rely entirely on digital platforms to stay connected with their family members. In daily practice, migrant workers generally use social media apps such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Among these platforms, WhatsApp is the primary and most frequently used choice; with the availability of various communication features; including text messages, voice notes, voice calls, video calls, media sharing, and the latest addition, video notes it undoubtedly helps and supports their interpersonal interactions.

Through social media, migrant workers can share daily updates, including expressing their feelings and keeping tabs on their families from afar. Communication typically takes place during breaks, work intervals, or on weekends, though this depends on the schedules and rules set by their employers. Although communication time is often limited, these interactions play a

crucial role in maintaining emotional closeness and reducing work-related stress among migrant workers.

Social media also serves as a platform and space for expressing emotions. Migrant workers use voice messages, voice notes, emojis, and video calls in their efforts to convey affection, care, and emotional support to their families. In this context, social media is not merely a communication tool but can also serve as an emotional bridge within the family.

2.5 Context of Family Communication in Long-Distance Relationships

Family communication in long-distance relationships certainly requires regular and ongoing adjustments, as well as mutual understanding of each other's circumstances. Due to physical separation, migrant workers face limitations in daily interactions, making social media the only feasible and practical option. Consequently, interpersonal communication within migrant workers' families largely takes place indirectly, and face-to-face contact is naturally not possible. In this context, maintaining emotional closeness becomes the primary challenge. Communication serves not only to exchange information but also to express care, affection, and concern, as well as to provide emotional support to families across borders. Both parties migrant workers and their families must find alternative ways or strategies to convey their feelings, resolve misunderstandings, and maintain trust through mediated interactions.

The lack of physical presence can also affect communication. Nonverbal cues such as physical touch, facial expressions, and immediate emotional responses are limited, which can lead to misunderstandings. Therefore, openness, honesty, and communication routines can be established or strengthened as key elements in maintaining family relationships despite being separated by distance. Despite these challenges, long-distance family communication can remain effective if supported by consistent active interaction and aligned emotional commitment. Through regular communication via social media, migrant workers can stay informed about their families back home. This communication context serves as the foundation for understanding how interpersonal communication is practiced and maintained between migrant workers and their families.

CHAPTER III

FINDING & DISCUSSION

This study aims to examine and understand how migrant workers employed abroad through PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo maintain interpersonal communication with their families, primarily through social media. In this chapter, the researcher also discusses the challenges faced by these migrant workers in maintaining family communication despite the long-distance nature of their relationships. The study also examines the strategies they employ to maintain emotional closeness, trust, and family harmony.

The findings presented in this chapter are based on data obtained through in-depth interviews conducted by the researcher. These interviews were conducted with three migrant workers from PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo who are currently abroad. This study also examines several issues discussed in previous chapters, particularly regarding the role of social media in facilitating interpersonal communication within transnational families.

This research was conducted with three migrant workers dispatched by PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo. The informants are currently working abroad and were selected based on their active use of social media, particularly for communicating with their families. It is not only about communication via social media, but also about their experiences in coping with long-distance separation from their families over an extended period. Most importantly, it involves their willingness to share their interpersonal communication experiences during the interview process with the researcher.

Table 2

Full Name of Informants	Age	Place of Employment as a Migrant Worker	Length of Service	Date of Interviews	Type of Interview
Laelatur Munawaroh	31	Indonesian Migrant Worker (TKI) in Taiwan	9 Months	December 16, 2025	Online Interview (WhatsApp Video Call)
Sinta Apriliani	33	Indonesian Migrant Worker (TKI) in Hong Kong	14 Months	December 14, 2025	Online Interview (WhatsApp Video Call)
Arum Ningsih	26	Indonesian Migrant Worker (TKI) in Singapore	8 Months	December 14, 2025	Online Interview (WhatsApp Video Call)

3.1 Finding

3.1.1 Social Media as a Medium for Maintaining Emotional Closeness

Based on these findings, the researchers demonstrate that social media plays a central role in maintaining emotional closeness between migrant workers and their families. Physical separation, coupled with limited opportunities for face-to-face interaction, necessitates that migrant workers continue to rely on digital communication. Naturally, digital communication via social media is their primary means of communicating with their families. For all informants, communicating with family members via social media is not merely a routine activity, but a fundamental emotional need that helps them cope with distance, work-related stress, and emotional vulnerability.

All informants also stated that WhatsApp is the primary communication platform they use to stay in touch with their families. The app is considered practical, easily accessible, and widely used by everyone. Moreover, WhatsApp offers a variety of communication features beyond text messages and voice calls, including video calls, voice notes, and video notes. These features allow migrant workers to choose various forms of interaction that align with their busy work schedules abroad. With this flexibility, interpersonal communication can continue despite limitations in its execution.

That was also confirmed by a statement from one of the sources, Laelatul Munawaroh, who is currently in Taiwan. She revealed that when Laelatul feels tired after working or when she misses her family, she immediately calls her family whenever she has free time. She also mentioned that hearing her family's voices can alleviate her fatigue and help her feel calmer, as if the burden she carries becomes lighter. Laelatul Munawaroh stated this during an interview on December 16, 2025.

This statement indicates that interpersonal communication via social media with her family can provide emotional support to migrant workers. Interaction with their family members can offer psychological comfort and alleviate emotional fatigue. Moreover, the motivation of migrant workers can be restored and enhanced, enabling them to carry out their daily duties while abroad.

The emotional complexities faced by migrant workers in long-distance relationships with their families leave them vulnerable to various emotional issues, such as feelings of loneliness, prolonged sadness, and even anxiety. Another interviewee, Sinta Apriliani, a migrant worker in Hong Kong, described the emotional difficulties she experienced due to being separated from her child and family for a long time:

“It’s so hard to cope with missing my children and family; I can only see and talk to them via video calls on my phone. I really want to hug them.”

(Sinta Apriliani, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Hong Kong, Interview December 14, 2025).

This proves that they can maintain an emotional connection through their interactions, even though this is accompanied by feelings of longing and sadness.

In addition to serving as a means of expressing their emotions, social media also allows migrant workers to remain involved in their families’ lives, even when separated by distance. For one thing, it at least allows them to stay informed about their families’ well-being and news while they are working abroad. However, the interviewees also acknowledged the limitations of online communication. As Laelatul Munawaroh shared:

“Through social media, I can ask how my family is doing at home; I stay informed about their health, their daily activities, and what’s happening at home. However, when communicating via social media, I can only express those feelings through words, which is very limited. This is different from meeting in person, where we can hug each other, clearly see their expressions, and feel deeper emotions compared to just communicating online”

(Laelatul Munawaroh, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Taiwan, Interview December 16, 2025).

Based on the statements and experiences of these informants, it is emphasized that social media does not entirely replace the role of direct or face-to-face interaction, particularly in terms of how they express deeper emotions and demonstrate physical affection. Nevertheless, the only

option available to them is to continue relying on digital communication as the most practical and easily accessible means of maintaining communication and relationships with their families. This finding directly answers the first research question by illustrating how social media can be utilized as a medium to maintain communication and interpersonal relationships within transnational family relationships.

3.1.2 Digital Parenting Practices among Migrant Workers

The findings of the study indicate that social media also enables migrant workers to continue fulfilling their duties, roles, and responsibilities as parents. Although separated from their children by physical distance, migrant workers strive to maintain their parental roles through digital communication, even though they cannot be physically present in their families' daily lives. For informants with children, communication via social media serves as the primary means to demonstrate care, supervision, and emotional support.

Informants with children stated that they communicate with their children primarily through video calls and voice calls, as this form of interaction allows for a more personal involvement in their children's lives compared to text messages alone. Through these interactions, migrant workers can monitor their children's daily activities, such as school routines and their emotional well-being. This approach is also one of the ways they ensure their children continue to feel supported.

Laelatul Munawaroh and Sinta Apriliani are interviewees who have children. They shared their thoughts on how they strive to remain involved in their children's daily lives. They noted that they regularly try to stay in touch with their children by sharing updates and discussing school activities. A sense of joy is clearly present, though it is accompanied by sadness at not being able to witness their children's growth and development, they said in the interview. (Laelatul Munawaroh, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Taiwan, Interview December 16, 2025; Sinta Apriliani, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Hong Kong, Interview December 14, 2025). These statements indicate that digital communication allows migrant workers to maintain a symbolic presence as parents. Regular interactions serve as a way to reassure their children that their parents' love and care are always present and remain intact, even though they are not physically by their children's side.

In the interview, Sinta Apriliani also stated that communication in parenting is not limited to supervision, but must include listening to children's stories and concerns, as well as providing emotional guidance. Moreover, the emotional burden experienced by migrant workers also extends to digital parenting. Although social media can facilitate ongoing interaction, there are still limitations to this mediated form of parenting—particularly regarding the physical absence during key moments in a child's life.

“My children often tell me about school or the problems they're facing. But I can't help them directly; I can only listen carefully and offer the best advice I can, so they feel like they're having a conversation with me, even though I'm not physically there. It's very painful, because I can only watch my children grow up through video calls. During important moments, I'm unable to be there in person, but that motivates me to keep communicating with my children so they don't feel abandoned”

(Sinta Apriliani, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Hong Kong, Interview December 14, 2025).

Despite the emotional challenges shared by the interviewees mentioned above, Laelatul and Sinta emphasized the importance of communicating with their children. They believe that consistent and ongoing interaction can truly maintain emotional bonds, as well as prevent feelings of alienation and neglect. Maintaining communication with their children is also a form of responsibility and commitment as parents. These findings also demonstrate how social media serves as a vital tool in digital parenting among migrant workers. By consistently engaging in such communication, they are able to maintain their identity and remain actively involved in their parental roles. These findings further reinforce the answers to the first and second questions in this study, demonstrating how communication and interpersonal relationships can be maintained within migrant worker families through social media, as well as how migrant workers and their families navigate the challenges of maintaining transnational relationships.

3.1.3 Communication Barriers in Long-Distance Family Relationships

Several barriers identified in this study not only affect the frequency of communication but also influence the quality and emotional depth of interpersonal relationships. One of the

main obstacles faced by the informants is limited access to their cell phones due to workplace regulations. For example, Arum Ningsih, a migrant worker currently working in Singapore, stated that she is not allowed to have her cell phone on weekdays, so she can only contact her family on her days off or weekends. However, on those weekends or days off, Arum can use her phone all day, as this is the allotted time provided by her employers. “As for challenges and obstacles, perhaps I cannot contact my family every day. Outside of weekends, I might not be able to reach them, but on weekends, contacting my family is my priority and has become a necessity for me” (Arum Ningsih, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Singapore, Interview December 14, 2025).

Arum’s statement indicates that communication barriers can arise due to existing factors. This situation leads to communication patterns that can become disorganized and reduce opportunities for meaningful conversation, even when both parties wish to communicate more frequently. The desire to stay in touch can also be hindered by work-related circumstances; these challenges highlight the existence of unavoidable limits between personal desires and professional obligations.

In addition to technical and time-related barriers, the interviewees also face emotional and interpretive challenges. Communication via text messages alone often leads to misunderstandings, due to the absence of intonation, facial expressions, and immediate responses—which frequently cause the recipient to misinterpret or misconstrue the sender’s intent. As experienced by Sinta Apriliani.

“There was a time when a misunderstanding arose. When I sent a message with a casual tone, my family thought I was angry or having a problem.”

(Sinta Apriliani, an Indonesian migrant worker in Hong Kong, Interview on December 14, 2025).

This quote indicates that mediated communication lacks the nonverbal elements that are so crucial in interpersonal interactions. Consequently, this makes it more difficult to interpret and understand emotions. Furthermore, emotional exhaustion sometimes leads migrant workers to reduce and limit communication with their families in order to avoid conflicts that might arise from communicating while in an unstable mood or emotional state.

“As a human being, I’m bound to reach a breaking point and have a desire for some time to myself. Especially when I’m really exhausted from work and things are unstable, I choose not to say much when I contact my family to avoid triggering arguments and misunderstandings. At the very least, I make sure to keep in touch with them and maintain their trust.”

(Laelatul Munawaroh, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Taiwan, Interview December 16, 2025).

This statement suggests that emotional self-control also serves as an adjustment strategy for migrant workers, even though it may be interpreted as a temporary restriction on communication. Overall, these findings indicate that the communication barriers and challenges experienced by migrant workers are multifaceted, encompassing technical, temporal, and emotional dimensions. These barriers affect how interpersonal communication takes place and require migrant workers and their families to continually adapt in order to maintain their long-distance relationships. These findings also directly answer the second research question by identifying the challenges faced by migrant workers in maintaining family communication through social media.

3.1.4 Strategies for Maintaining Trust and Family Harmony

The results of the interviews conducted in this study indicate that migrant workers actively develop various strategies to maintain trust and harmony within their families, despite facing geographical separation and various communication barriers. These strategies stem from the migrant workers’ daily experiences and emotional adjustment processes as they maintain interpersonal relationships with their families. One of the most commonly used strategies is the establishment of communication routines. This can be done by setting aside time to communicate with family. Consistent communication patterns can help reduce uncertainty and strengthen emotional bonds among family members.

This is reflected in the statement of one of the informants, who explained that despite having very limited time, she still makes an effort to set aside specific time to communicate with her family. This effort is made so that family members know the appropriate times to interact,

ensuring that communication remains regular. (Laelatul Munawaroh, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Taiwan, Interview December 16, 2025).

The interviewees also noted that another key strategy is honesty and openness, which involves consistently keeping family members informed about work conditions, health, and emotional well-being to help build trust and reduce misunderstandings. This was reinforced by interviewee Arum Ningsih, who stated that she always shares details about her work and current feelings with her family. (Arum Ningsih, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Singapore, Interview December 14, 2025).

In addition to these strategies, emotional support and expressions of care are also key to maintaining family harmony. There are several ways to show concern, such as checking in on family members by initiating a conversation or simply sending a message first. This is also supported by a statement from one of the informants, Sinta Apriliani, who makes an effort to contact her family first; even if it's just to ask how they're doing, such a small gesture can make the family feel cared for. (Sinta Apriliani, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Hong Kong, Interview December 14, 2025).

These small but consistent actions can help strengthen emotional bonds and prevent feelings of neglect. In addition, the interviewees also emphasized the importance of patience and emotional control. These strategies certainly reflect emotional maturity in managing long-distance interpersonal relationships.

Overall, these findings indicate that active effort, emotional awareness, and shared commitment are necessary to maintain trust and harmony within the family, particularly in transnational family relationships. Through communication habits, openness, providing reassurance, and self-emotional control, migrant workers are able to maintain family relationships despite physical separation and are able to cope with the limitations of communication. These strategies demonstrate that interpersonal communication within transnational families is not a passive matter, but rather something that must be continuously discussed and maintained together.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Social Media as an Interpersonal Bridge in Transnational Family Communication

The interview results indicate that social media serves as the primary driving factor in maintaining interpersonal communication between migrant workers and their families. This is because, within the dynamics of transnational families, distance creates structural limitations, making face-to-face interaction nearly impossible in their daily lives. Consequently, interpersonal communication shifts to a mediated space, where social media becomes the most important channel for families to stay in touch

In this study, social media serves as both a technological medium and an interpersonal bridge connecting family members separated by emotional distance. Platforms like WhatsApp are used as a means to maintain regular communication, express emotions, and remain engaged in family life. These findings support the argument that interpersonal communication undergoes a transformation into mediated communication in response to situational constraints.

“Social media is like the heart of my communication life. Without social media, it would be very difficult to stay connected with my family. The presence of social media now allows us to use technology to get news more quickly and easily.”

(Arum Ningsih, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Singapore, Interview December 14, 2025)

In this research, social media also plays a role in fostering emotional presence through mediated communication. Although interactions take place digitally, this does not diminish the emotional significance of the communication, which remains strong and personal. Social media also plays a role in maintaining the continuity of the relationship between migrant workers and their families by facilitating emotional exchange and routine interactions (Hennida et al., 2021). This indirectly indicates that migrant workers use communication as a strategy to reduce their emotional distance and to maintain a sense of togetherness with their families.

In addition, mediated communication also plays a crucial role in family life. Through social media, migrant workers can continue to fulfill their roles as parents, children, and partners. These findings indicate that interpersonal communication is not solely determined by physical proximity but also through emotional engagement and communicative commitment.

However, it is important to note that social media can alter the meaning of closeness. Emotional intimacy is no longer measured by physical presence but rather based on the consistency of interactions, attention, and emotional openness. This suggests that technology indirectly reshapes family communication patterns. In line with research conducted by Waruwu (2022), mediated communication plays a crucial role in maintaining relationships between families and migrant workers, particularly in preserving emotional bonds and daily engagement. Social media is viewed as a symbolic space—a place where family identity is expressed.

Overall, this discussion shows that social media plays a crucial role in helping migrant workers maintain family ties across geographical boundaries. Although physically separated, emotional closeness can still be maintained through mediated interpersonal communication, supported by factors such as trust, openness, and consistent interaction.

3.2.2 Mediated Interpersonal Communication and Emotional Presence

The interpersonal communication between migrant workers and their families identified in this study indicates that the majority of such communication takes place via social media. Although there is no physical interaction, emotional presence even if only virtual is a crucial element in maintaining family relationships. Emotional presence itself refers to a sense of emotional connection, engagement, and mutual care, even when communication occurs solely through digital platforms.

Data obtained through interviews indicate that migrant workers view communication as an emotional need, not merely a purely functional activity. In an interview (Laelatul Munawaroh, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Taiwan, Interview December 16, 2025), Laelatul stated that when she hears her family's voices even for just a moment, she feels more at ease. This also makes her feel as though her family is nearby. This finding further demonstrates that communication can help migrant workers build a sense of emotional closeness with their families.

This statement illustrates that mediated communication can create an emotional presence, even when physical presence is absent. This emotional closeness can be felt through symbolic interactions, in which voices, facial expressions, and mutual attention serve as substitutes for physical closeness. Hennida et al. (2021) argue that emotional presence within migrant families is maintained through routine communication and emotional reassurance. The

findings of this study also support this argument, indicating that consistent interactions can help migrant workers regulate their emotions, alleviate feelings of loneliness, and, of course, maintain their family bonds. This emotional presence is also built through attention and responsiveness.

The interviewees also emphasized the importance of communication—even if it's just asking about their families' well-being, listening to one another, sharing their concerns, and providing emotional support. This aligns with Waruwu (2022), who explains that social media can serve as a medium for emotional monitoring and the maintenance of relationships among migrant workers' families, by allowing parents and partners to remain emotionally engaged in their daily lives. However, emotional presence through mediated communication is not perfect and has its limitations. The absence of physical touch and immediate emotional feedback sometimes makes the longing even stronger.

In an interview, Sinta Apriliani described how she felt when she spoke with her child every day, yet at times when she desperately wanted to hug her child, she was unable to do so (Sinta Apriliani, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Hong Kong, Interview, December 14, 2025). This finding reveals a paradox in mediated communication. Social media simultaneously creates closeness while intensifying the awareness of separation. Emotional presence does exist, but it tends to be fragile and must be constantly maintained. Despite being aware of these limitations, migrant workers actively sustain emotional presence by increasing the frequency of their communication, openly expressing emotions, and prioritizing family interactions. This indicates that emotional presence is not automatically generated by technology, but rather built through communicative intent and relational commitment.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that mediated interpersonal communication allows emotional presence to be maintained within the context of transnational families. Although physical absence is inevitable, strong emotional bonds can still be maintained through consistent communication and emotional openness. These findings reinforce the notion that understanding regarding interpersonal communication is determined by emotional engagement, not merely by shared physical presence (Hennida et al., 2021; Waruwu, 2022).

3.2.3 Communication Challenges and Emotional Negotiation in Long-Distance Family Relationships

The interpersonal communication mediated by social media, as demonstrated in the findings of this study, is not a smooth and linear process for migrant workers and their families. Although social media facilitates their interactions, communication is constantly influenced by various challenges that require emotional negotiation from both parties.

One of the main challenges identified is limited access to communication caused by work regulations, long working hours, and time differences. These structural constraints often hinder migrant workers from communicating freely and inevitably affect the frequency and speed of communication responses. This results in communication becoming situational and requiring periodic adjustments. These conditions force migrant workers to engage in various forms of emotional negotiation, particularly in managing expectations and resolving misunderstandings. Emotional negotiation refers to the process of regulating feelings, interpretations, and responses to maintain a relationship.

“Sometimes my family thinks I’m ignoring them, when in fact I’m working and can’t hold my phone. I have to explain it again so they understand my situation.”

(Laelatul Munawaroh, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Taiwan, Interview December 16, 2025).

This excerpt from the interview with Laelatul demonstrates that communication challenges are not merely technical but also relational, as they affect emotional interpretation and trust.

Hennida et al. (2021) also explain that communication within transnational families often involves a process of negotiation, particularly in managing emotional expectations and maintaining the integrity and balance of the relationship. The findings of this study also support this view by showing that migrant workers must constantly clarify their intentions, regulate their emotions, and continually reassure family members to avoid tension and misunderstandings in the relationship.

Another challenge arises from the absence of nonverbal cues in mediated communication. Messages conveyed via text or voice calls are often prone to

misunderstandings, which can certainly trigger emotional misunderstandings as well. This was also experienced by Sinta Apriliani, previously discussed in this study; she stated that she once sent a simple message, but her family assumed she was angry or not feeling well. In reality, she was fine. (Sinta Apriliani, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Hong Kong, Interview December 14, 2025). This highlights how emotional meaning in mediated communication must be actively constructed and cannot rely on spontaneous cues, as is the case in face-to-face interactions.

Waruwu (2022) emphasizes that emotional misunderstandings are a common challenge in digital family communication, particularly in contexts with limited emotional expression. This study reinforces that emotional clarity is a crucial component in maintaining mediated interpersonal communication. Additionally, emotional exhaustion plays a significant and important role in shaping communication behavior. Migrant workers often choose to postpone or limit their communication with their families when they feel emotionally overwhelmed. This is not due to a lack of concern on their part, but rather as a protective strategy to prevent conflict. This negotiation process indicates that maintaining long-distance family communication also requires emotional maturity and sound relationship management. Migrant workers must also balance honesty with emotional control and the regulation of their empathy to preserve family harmony.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that communication challenges within transnational families are inseparable from the process of emotional negotiation. Interpersonal communication via social media is not merely about access to technology, but also concerns how to manage emotions, expectations, and interpretations. These findings also confirm that mediated communication inevitably requires ongoing emotional labor, aimed at maintaining family relationships. (Hennida et al., 2021; Waruwu, 2022).

3.2.4 Maintaining Trust and Family Harmony Through Mediated Interpersonal Communication

The findings of this study indicate that maintaining trust and family harmony are the primary goals of interpersonal communication between migrant workers and their families. Trust serves as a crucial foundation in long-distance relationships, as limited physical interaction can lead to misunderstandings and emotional insecurity.

Based on the interview results, trust is not formed immediately but must be continuously built through open, consistent communication, and emotional reassurance. Migrant workers actively maintain transparency with their family members regarding their daily experiences, working conditions, and emotional states. Nur Aini stated that she is accustomed to honestly sharing her circumstances and work with her family to avoid misunderstandings (Nur Aini, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Singapore, Interview December 18, 2025).

This finding is supported by research conducted by Hennida et al. (2021), which indicates that regular communication and emotional openness can maintain trust within transnational families. This supports the perspective that honesty and consistency are key indicators in mediated relationships.

Family harmony can be maintained through emotional reassurance and attention. Respondents strongly emphasized the importance of initiating communication, inquiring about the family's well-being, and providing emotional support. This demonstrates a sense of care and responsibility that can strengthen the stability of the relationship.

“Even simple messages matter. When I ask how they're doing, my family feels that I still care, even though I'm far away.”

(Sinta Apriliani, Indonesian Migrant Worker in Hong Kong, Interview December 14, 2025).

Mediated family communication requires emotional sensitivity and adaptive strategies to maintain relational balance (Waruwu, 2022). This implies that migrant workers continuously adjust their communication styles, emotional expressions, and timing to prevent conflicts and maintain harmony with their families.

In addition, an important strategy involves managing one's emotions to maintain trust. Some respondents interpreted this as choosing to be patient and postponing sensitive conversations when emotions are unstable. This self-control reflects interpersonal maturity and a commitment to relational well-being.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that trust and harmony within transnational families are sustained not only by technology but also by interpersonal efforts in mediated communication. Through openness, consistency, emotional security, and self-regulation, migrant workers are able to maintain stable family relationships despite being separated by

geographical distance. This underscores that interpersonal communication remains the core mechanism in maintaining family relationships, even through digital media (Hennida et al. 2021; Waruwu, 2022).

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion outlined in the previous chapter, this study concludes that social media can play a significant role in maintaining interpersonal communication between migrant workers dispatched and placed abroad through PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo and their families in Indonesia. The physical distance caused by working abroad can create significant limitations in face-to-face interaction; therefore, digital communication becomes the primary means of maintaining their family relationships.

This research reveals that interpersonal communication conducted via social media is not limited to the general exchange of information but also serves as a means to express emotions, provide emotional support, and, of course, strengthen and maintain family relationships. Through regular communication, migrant workers can maintain emotional closeness with their families, manage feelings of loneliness in their lives abroad, and uphold their sense of responsibility and affection despite being separated by geographical distance.

These findings also suggest that migrant workers continue to fulfill their roles within their families particularly their roles as parents through long-distance communication via digital platforms. Digital parenting practices such as monitoring their children's daily activities, offering advice, and providing emotional support demonstrate that parental involvement can be maintained even in the absence of physical presence. This indicates that interpersonal communication within transnational families does not disappear but rather undergoes transformation.

However, this study also identifies various challenges in maintaining family communication, including limited access to telephones, time zone differences, long working hours, and emotional misunderstandings caused by the absence of non-verbal cues. These challenges then require migrant workers and their families to continually negotiate their emotions, expectations, and communication with one another. To address these challenges, migrant workers develop adaptive communication strategies such as establishing communication routines, maintaining openness, providing emotional reassurance, and

practicing self-emotional regulation. These strategies contribute to the maintenance of trust and family harmony, which are essential foundations of long-distance family relationships.

Overall, this study confirms that interpersonal communication remains a key factor in maintaining family relationships among migrant workers. Although social media serves as a primary and important supporting tool, the effectiveness of this communication depends on the strength of their emotional bonds, the level of mutual trust between them, and their ongoing interpersonal efforts.

4.2 Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the number of informants involved in this study was relatively small, consisting of three Indonesian migrant workers. In addition, all informants were female migrant workers. This reflects the recruitment and placement focus of PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo, which primarily places workers in domestic and caregiving sectors such as homecare and caretaking roles. As a result, the findings of this study mainly represent the communication experiences of female migrant workers and may not fully reflect the experiences of male migrant workers who are commonly employed in other sectors such as manufacturing, fisheries, construction, or other industrial occupations. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all Indonesian migrant workers and their families.

Second, this study relies heavily on the self-reported experiences of the informants. Consequently, the findings in this study are heavily influenced by the informants' personal interpretations and, of course, their subjective perspectives.

Third, this study did not involve direct observation of interactions between migrant workers and their families via online communication—such as chat histories or call recordings—due to ethical and privacy considerations. Consequently, the analysis focused on the informants' narratives rather than their actual communication behaviors.

Fourth, this study did not include or involve the perspectives of family members residing in Indonesia, which may limit the comprehensiveness of our understanding of the dynamics of two-way family communication.

Finally, this study was conducted over a specific time period and did not capture long-term changes in communication patterns, emotional adaptation, or family dynamics over time.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, future research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse group of informants. In particular, future studies should include male migrant workers employed in different occupational sectors such as manufacturing, construction, fisheries, and other industrial fields, as their communication experiences may differ from those of female migrant workers working in domestic and caregiving sectors. Future researchers are also encouraged to involve migrant workers from a wider range of destination countries in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of interpersonal communication within transnational families across different cultural and occupational contexts.

Future research could also employ a mixed-methods approach or a quantitative approach aimed at statistically analyzing various findings, such as communication intensity, emotional closeness, or levels of trust. Additionally, observational or digital ethnographic methods could be utilized by future researchers as tools for analyzing actual communication practices on social media platforms.

For placement agencies such as PT Wira Kreasi Usaha Ponorogo, the findings of this study can serve as a reference for providing communication guidance or developing digital literacy programs for migrant workers. Through these efforts, it is hoped that migrant workers will be able to effectively use and manage emotional communication and maintain family harmony. This, of course, is closely tied to the role of placement agencies as the entities that have provided dedicated spaces and support.

For TKI and their families, this study highlights the importance of openness, consistency, and emotional awareness in maintaining long-distance relationships. Furthermore, strengthening communication strategies can help reduce misunderstandings and improve family well-being during periods of separation.

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