

THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL DIGITAL COMMUNICATION ON PARENTAL SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of digital communication carried out by schools on the level of parental satisfaction and loyalty at the elementary school level and to find out the correlation between parental satisfaction and parental loyalty. The approach used is quantitative with a survey approach. The population used was parents or guardians of students in Cilacap sub-district with a research sample of parents whose children were schooled in public schools. The sampling technique is stratified random sampling. The number of respondents was 50 people. The data collection technique carried out was a questionnaire consisting of a school digital communication questionnaire, a satisfaction questionnaire, and a parent loyalty questionnaire. The data analysis technique used the SPSS application with a simple regression test and a Pearson correlation test. The results of the study show that school digital communication has a significant influence on parental satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, parental satisfaction has been shown to have a strong and significant relationship in increasing their loyalty. These findings suggest that the implementation of effective digital communication can increase parental satisfaction, which in turn has implications for increased loyalty to schools. There is a reciprocal relationship, where increased parental loyalty also contributes to strengthening satisfaction with services and the quality of learning in primary schools. The implication of his research is that school principals can develop a structured, responsive, and interactive digital-based communication strategy to increase parental satisfaction so that it has an impact on strengthening loyalty and continuous support for the quality of services and learning in elementary schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication between school and parents is an important aspect in building harmonious relationships. School communication ideally develops into a space for dialogue, collaboration, and active participation, thereby increasing parents' understanding of the school's programs that impact their satisfaction. Quality communication also strengthens parental loyalty, supporting the stability, reputation, and sustainability of the school. Educational communication can occur in elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, colleges, course institutions, and so on (Arifah & Sudinadji, 2023). However, many schools still face challenges due to one-way, incidental, and minimal feedback. Important information is often late or incomplete due to low digital literacy and limited

infrastructure. This condition weakens parental trust, decreases loyalty, and encourages students to move to other schools. Schools and parents have crucial duties and responsibilities in children's education (Fuadah et al., 2025). Previous research has shown that good communication between schools and parents plays an important role in creating satisfaction with educational services. Building an equal and participatory relationship between school and family not only strengthens school programs, but also becomes the main support in creating a learning environment that is human, full of emotional support, and able to answer the complexity of educational challenges in an increasingly dynamic era. This means that parents feel more valued, heard, and involved in their child's educational process (Harnoto et al., 2025).

Parents have certain concerns, questions, or expectations regarding children's development at school, and through open communication, they can discuss with teachers or principals to find adequate solutions (Nurhakim et al., 2024). Parents of students consider schools to be trustworthy in instilling character values in students while the lowest satisfaction index is in the aspect of responsiveness (Fredy et al., 2019). Both of these studies show that good school communication must be two-way. Parents want to be involved in discussions about their child's development and expect schools to be responsive to their input. Along with the development of information technology, the communication pattern between schools and parents is now undergoing a transformation towards a form of school digital communication. Digital media such as WhatsApp Group, Google Classroom, the school's official website, and social media have become the main means of delivering information, coordination, and collaboration. Digital communication enables faster, more efficient, and well-documented message exchanges, while expanding the range of interactions across space and time limits. However, the success of school digital communication depends not only on the availability of technology, but also on the ability of schools to manage information in a transparent, responsive, and participatory manner to meet the expectations of students' parents. With the use of information and communication media, it is hoped that an educational institution in its activities can provide satisfaction and loyalty for all parties involved as its users (Pramono et al., 2017). However, most previous studies examined the relationship between two variables, such as communication and satisfaction or satisfaction and loyalty. This study seeks to offer novelty by analyzing the influence of school digital communication on parental satisfaction and loyalty. Especially in elementary schools in non-urban areas which are still relatively under-explored.

The results of initial observations in several elementary schools in Kesugihan District, Cilacap Regency, show that schools have utilized digital media, especially WhatsApp Groups and social media, as a means of communication with parents. However, the implementation is still not optimal because there is inconsistent information conveyed, school responses that are sometimes slow, and two-way communication that has not run optimally. A number of parents revealed that information about school activities, learning progress, and academic schedules is often given suddenly, making it difficult for them to adjust. However, parents tend to respond faster to information sent through WhatsApp than other communication methods.

Although digital communication has been widely used in elementary schools through WhatsApp Groups and social media, its implementation in non-urban areas such as Kesugihan District still faces various obstacles, such as lack of information consistency, low two-way interaction, and lack of optimal school response to the needs of parents. On the other hand, most previous research has focused more on the relationship between communication and satisfaction or loyalty separately and has been conducted more in the context of schools in urban areas. Therefore, this study has a novelty by simultaneously examining the influence of school digital communication on parental satisfaction and loyalty at the elementary school level in non-urban areas, so that it can provide a more contextual picture of the effectiveness of digital communication in building school-parent relationships.

Parental satisfaction arises when they feel that their information, service, and engagement needs are met through effective digital communication. This satisfaction then develops into loyalty, which is characterized by a commitment to keep the child in the same school and a willingness to recommend the school to others. The solution in this study is to test the influence of school digital communication on parental satisfaction and loyalty with a valid and reliable instrument-based quantitative approach. This analysis aims to find out how much influence school digital communication has on parental satisfaction and loyalty. When individuals feel satisfied with a service, the positive image of an institution will also increase (Harisatunisa, 2021). The results of the research are expected to provide a foundation and input for schools in developing a participatory, transparent, and service-oriented communication strategy. Based on this background, the purpose of the study is to find out the influence

of digital communication on parental satisfaction and loyalty and to find out the correlation between school service satisfaction and parental loyalty in elementary school.

METHOD

This study applies a quantitative method with a survey approach. Quantitative methods are used to objectively test the relationships and influences between variables based on statistically measurable numerical data. The survey approach is used to collect data from respondents in a specific population using standard instruments in the form of questionnaires or questionnaires. There are two main groups of variables analyzed. The free variable (X) is school digital communication, which refers to the extent to which the school carries out an effective, open, and responsive digital technology-based communication process to parents. The bound variable (Y) consists of two dimensions, namely parental satisfaction and parental loyalty. The population in this study is determined to all parents/guardians of students who have children attending school in a certain area in one sub-district. The population includes individuals who are actively involved in children's educational activities within the State Primary School environment and are targeted in assessing the influence of school digital communication and its impact on their satisfaction and loyalty. The total number of the initial population was 70 people. Given the relatively large population and spread across several educational units, sampling was carried out using stratified random sampling techniques. This technique was chosen to represent various categories of schools based on the size of the number of students, such as schools with small, medium, and large students.

This research instrument consists of three main questionnaires, namely school digital communication, parental satisfaction, and parental loyalty. The questionnaire consisted of 30 key statements describing aspects of the school's digital communication, parental satisfaction, and parental loyalty. The school's digital communication aspect consists of digital information components, digital participation, and digital responsiveness. Aspects of parental satisfaction include the quality of digital information, the ease of digital communication, and the digital openness of schools. The aspect of parental loyalty is based on sustainability commitment and positive advocacy. The assessment scale used is Likert scores of 1 to 5. Scores of 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). All instruments are first validated by expert validators to ensure the suitability of the content, clarity of the statement items, and the scalability of the construct. For reliability tests, it is carried out in conjunction with data collection through respondents, this aims to ensure the consistency of measurements. The results of the validation of the instrument show that they are valid and reliable for use in research. The research instrument is in the form of a questionnaire in the form of statements and answered using a measured assessment scale, so that quantitative data can be analyzed systematically and can be accounted for. The data analysis technique in this study begins with a validity test of the instrument through a validator assessment to ensure the feasibility of the statement item.

Data analysis was carried out quantitatively with the help of SPSS, starting with a reliability test, followed by a simple regression test to test the influence of school digital communication on parental satisfaction and the influence of school digital communication on parental loyalty, and correlation was used to analyze the relationship between satisfaction and parental loyalty. Thus, it is hoped that a more comprehensive picture can be obtained of the pattern of relationships between variables in this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSION

RESULT

Hypothesis tests were carried out to determine whether there was an influence and relationship between the variables studied, namely school digital communication, parental satisfaction, and parental loyalty. The hypothesis test was carried out using the help of IBM SPSS Statistics software version 27 based on the results of simple regression analysis and Pearson correlation test. The decision-making criteria in the hypothesis test were based on the significance value (Sig.) with a significance level of 0.05. The hypothesis is stated to be accepted when the Sig. value < 0.05, and on the other hand the hypothesis is rejected when the Sig. value $\geq$ 0.05.

Table 1. Results of Digital Communication Regression Test on Parental Satisfaction

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	1768.738	1	1768.738	458.723	0.001
Residual	254.482	66	3.856		
Total	2023.221	67			

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Based on table 1, a significance value of $0.001 < 0.05$ was obtained. This condition shows that the regression model is significant, so that school digital communication has an effect on parental satisfaction. In addition, the determination coefficient in the regression test was obtained of 87.4%, meaning that digital communication has an effect on parental satisfaction. Next are the results of a simple regression analysis between school digital communication variables on parental loyalty presented in table 2 below.

Table 2. Results of Digital Communication Regression Test on Parental Loyalty

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	1097.7779	1	1097.7779	118.722	0.001
Residual	610.280	66	9.247		
Total	1708.059	67			

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

The results of table 1 show the acquisition of a significance value of $0.001 < 0.05$. Thus, the school digital communication variable model has an effect on the parental loyalty variable. In addition, the determination coefficient in the regression test was obtained of 67.1%, meaning that parental satisfaction affects parental loyalty. The results of the next presentation were about the results of the correlation test between parental satisfaction and parental loyalty in the realm of implementing school digital communication.

Table 3. Correlation Test Results of Satisfaction with Parental Loyalty

Aspect	Aspect	Parental Satisfaction	Parental Loyalty
Parental Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	0.819
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
	N	68	68
Parental Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	0.819	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
	N	68	68

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Based on table 3, correlation data between parental satisfaction and parental loyalty in the context of school digital communication is obtained. The significance value between parental satisfaction and parental loyalty shows a score of 0.001, meaning less than 0.05, with a Pearson correlation index of 0.819. These results suggest that there is a significant correlation between parental satisfaction with parental loyalty and a strong correlation level. If parental satisfaction with the school increases, parental loyalty will also increase. The same results are also obtained the opposite. The significance value between parental loyalty and parental satisfaction showed a score of 0.001, meaning less than 0.05, with a Pearson correlation index of 0.819. These results suggest that there is a significant correlation between parental loyalty and parental satisfaction with a strong correlation rate. If parental

loyalty to the school increases, parental satisfaction will also increase. The correlation between parental loyalty and parental satisfaction is a strong category in the context of digital communication in primary school.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study which shows that school digital communication has a real influence on the satisfaction of parents of elementary school students in Kesugihan District. These findings indicate that communication practices carried out by schools through digital media, such as WhatsApp application channels and school social media. In line with research, Arianto & Handayani (2023) states that various features of social media platforms continue to innovate so that they can be used by the public as the main means of digital communication. Digital communication functions as a means of conveying information and is an important element in shaping the experience of educational services felt by parents/guardians of students. Schools are expected to provide easily accessible communication channels and develop a culture of open communication, respect differences, and focus on the best interests of students (Cahyani et al., 2025). Schools that improve their digital communication services are expected to meet the information needs needed and strengthen partnership bonds that result in increased overall satisfaction of parents/guardians. This is in line with Puspitosari and Lokananta (2021) explaining that communication theory is about two-way communication patterns, senders and receivers which emphasizes the importance of openness and two-way interaction. The success of communication is very much determined by the clarity of the message. The clarity of the message conveyed through various school digital media will minimize misunderstandings and increase parents' trust in the school. In school digital communication, clarity of information, consistency of messages on various platforms, and ease of access, can increase the satisfaction of recipients of information, namely parents/guardians of students. The results of this study are also in accordance with various previous studies that emphasize that effective communication is a factor that determines parental satisfaction with educational services. Satisfaction is a comparison between perceptions and expectations for perceived service quality (Pramono et al., 2017). Parents tend to feel satisfied when schools are able to build responsive, transparent, and participatory communication. Communication media such as WhatsApp and other social media are effective in use at the elementary school level because they are personal, fast, and easily accessible to parents. In the context of the people of Kesugihan Regency, WhatsApp has become a means of daily communication so that school information is easier to receive and respond to. The high involvement of parents at the elementary level also makes the need for regular and clear communication even more important, so that responsive digital communication can increase parental closeness, satisfaction, and trust in the school.

The regression results showed that digital communication contributed 87.4% to parental satisfaction. These findings confirm that clarity of information, school responsiveness, and ease of access to communication are the main factors in shaping parental satisfaction with educational services. Parents tend to feel satisfied when schools are able to build transparent and interactive communication (Švelec-Juričić & Luić, 2020; Taufik & Mulyanto, 2025). These findings are in line with research by Hardianto (2025) and Savira et al. (2024) who stated that effective school communication can increase parental engagement and satisfaction. In addition, this study found a strong relationship between parental satisfaction and loyalty with a correlation value of 0.819 and a contribution of 67.08%. This means that the higher the satisfaction of parents, the higher their loyalty to the school. This loyalty can be seen through increased trust, support for school programs, and the desire to keep children attending the institution. These results are supported by research by Nguyen et al. (2021), Kim et al. (2024), and Lo et al. (2025) who explain that the quality of communication and educational services affects parental satisfaction and loyalty.

Loyalty is formed through positive experiences that are implemented consistently. Fast, responsive, and open digital communication creates a pleasant service experience for parents, creating trust and emotional attachment to the school. Previous research has shown that good communication contributes to the formation of a positive image of educational institutions. In line with the research, Muhammad and Wahyudi (2022) wrote that a positive school image is a key factor in building parental loyalty and maintaining the sustainability of school enrollment. In this case, parents who feel that they get attention and a good response through digital media, will view schools as professional and caring institutions. Parental loyalty can also be seen through their willingness to be actively involved in school activities and programs, both online and offline. School digital media can reach communication with parents more widely, so that parental participation can be conveyed and quite representative. This situation further strengthens the relationship between parents and the school. In line with this, Cahyani et al.

(2025) stated that effective communication is not just the delivery of information, but the foundation of harmonious, collaborative, and sustainable relationships in education. School digital communication has a real role in building parental loyalty. Where schools are able to manage digital communication consistently and responsively, they will be able to maintain parents' trust and encourage them to be active support partners for schools.

Based on the results of the correlation test, it was shown that there was a very strong and significant relationship between parental satisfaction and parental loyalty. This reinforces that parental satisfaction is a key factor that encourages the formation of parental loyalty. In line with Pramono et al (2017) who stated that the satisfaction obtained by students and parents has a direct and significant effect on the loyalty of students and parents. Satisfaction with educational institutions significantly affects loyalty to the institution (Harisatunisa, 2021). Parental satisfaction with digital communication is formed through the experience of interaction between the school and parents that takes place consistently, transparently, and responsively. When the experience is felt repeatedly, loyalty will be formed naturally as a form of trust and emotional attachment between the two. In this case, school digital communication can be seen as a foothold in building parental satisfaction and loyalty in a sustainable manner. As in Puspita (2020) research which states that schools that are able to develop and maintain customer loyalty will achieve long-term success. When parents make school selection decisions, it can be seen from their trust, parental satisfaction, and learning achievements so far, meaning that the school's track record will greatly determine the decision of parents to send their children to school (Kosasih et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

The most important findings show that the more effective the digital communication carried out by schools, the higher the level of parental satisfaction, which then has an impact on increasing parental loyalty to the school. The conclusion that can be drawn from the results of the study is that school digital communication has a real effect on parental satisfaction and parental loyalty in elementary schools. In addition, parental satisfaction is significantly related to parental loyalty in elementary schools with strong categories. Digital-based communication has a positive impact on parental satisfaction and loyalty. The higher the satisfaction that parents get, the higher the loyalty shown by parents to the progress of the school. And vice versa, the better the loyalty of parents to the progress of the school, the increase in parental satisfaction with the school, especially in the service and quality of learning in elementary schools.

Based on the findings and conclusions, school managers are advised to develop a digital communication strategy that is routine, responsive, and easy for parents to understand. Types of digital content that can increase parental satisfaction include information on student learning progress, announcements of school activities, documentation of student activities, academic schedules, administrative information, and communication of appreciation for student achievements. In addition, the use of interactive media such as WhatsApp groups and school social media needs to be optimized in order to create fast, open two-way communication and build trust between schools and parents.

This study is limited to one main variable, namely school digital communication, as a factor that affects parental satisfaction and loyalty. In this case, parental satisfaction and loyalty is something complex. Various other factors such as the quality of academic services, teacher competence, principal's leadership, educational facilities or facilities, tuition fees, school culture, and school reputation also have the potential to affect the level of satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, this study uses data collected over a specific period of time. For this reason, this study could not capture the dynamics of changes in parents' perceptions over time. Satisfaction and loyalty are inherently dynamic and can change with experience, school policies, or changes in the quality of digital communication services. Further research can be carried out by modifying the target variables used, such as teacher competence, principal's leadership, and school facilities.

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