



SANGKÉP:

Jurnal Kajian Sosial Keagamaan

DOI: 10.20414/sangkep.v2i2.

p-ISSN: [2654-6612](#) e-ISSN: [2656-0798](#)

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Jurnal Kajian Sosial Keagamaan

THE ROLE OF MOTHERS AS LEARNING COMPANIONS IN KURIKULUM MERDEKA: A Study Through Relational Dialectics Theory

Asta Ayu Susanti,¹ Bambang Dwi Prasetyo,²

^{1,2}Postgraduate Program in Communication Science

Universitas Brawijaya

Jl. Cipayung 65145 Lowokwaru, Malang City, Jawa Timur, Indonesia

astaayu@student.ub.ac.id

Keywords:

Family Communication;

Kurikulum Merdeka;

Relational Dialectics;

Mother's Roles

Abstract

This study examines the evolving roles of mothers in facilitating their children's education within Indonesia's Kurikulum Merdeka. This curriculum prioritizes student autonomy, personalized learning, and less reliance on strict instruction, hence raising the expectation for mothers to offer both academic assistance and emotional support at home. The study employs a qualitative method rooted on a phenomenological paradigm, utilizing in-depth interviews with purposefully selected participants to explore how mothers navigate the tensions between autonomy and guidance. The findings underscore their crucial responsibilities in promoting autonomous learning while managing dialectical challenges, such as the balance between control and freedom, as well as emotional intimacy and children's increasing independence. Additionally, technology has emerged as both a facilitator and an obstacle, transforming family communication and educational practices. The research illustrates the cultural, emotional, and logistical difficulties put on mothers and proposes pragmatic solutions, such as digital literacy workshops, community-oriented support networks, and fair access to educational resources. These findings aim to enhance the overarching theoretical discussion on relational dialectics and provide practical solutions to augment family involvement in education within changing educational environments.

Vol. 8, No. 1, 2025

 10.20414/sangkep.v2i2.

Submitted: Dec. 12nd, 2024

Accepted: April 16th, 2025



A. INTRODUCTION

Family communication plays a pivotal role in shaping the social, emotional, and intellectual development of children. As the smallest yet most significant social unit, the family is where foundational values, norms, and skills are instilled (Galvin et al., 2024). Communication within this sphere is vital, serving as the medium through which relationships are built, roles are established, and learning is facilitated. Within the context of educational development, particularly in primary education, the role of mothers as key facilitators of children's learning has emerged as an area of interest. This article examines these dynamics through the lens of relational dialectics, focusing on how mothers manage the complex interplay of tensions inherent in guiding their children's education under the Kurikulum Merdeka.

The concept of family communication is multidisciplinary, intersecting with social psychology, clinical psychology, and sociology. Scholars such as Koerner and Schrodtt (2019) and Segrin and Flora (2023) highlight that family communication patterns are central to the development and maintenance of family relationships, influencing how family members interact, make decisions, and resolve conflicts. Communication within families extends beyond the mere exchange of messages; it encompasses the creation and maintenance of relational bonds. In this regard, mothers often seen as primary caregivers assume critical roles in mediating educational and emotional support for their children. These roles are further complicated in the context of Indonesia's recent educational reforms.

The Kurikulum Merdeka, introduced in Indonesia in 2022, marks a significant transformation in the nation's education system. Designed to promote student autonomy, creativity, and personalized learning, this curriculum departs from traditional, rigid frameworks (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). It emphasizes competency-based learning and allows students to explore subjects aligned with their interests and aptitudes. While the Kurikulum Merdeka aims to foster independent learning, it inevitably places greater responsibility on parents, particularly mothers, to guide and support their children in navigating this novel educational landscape.

For mothers, adapting to the Kurikulum Merdeka involves more than assisting with academic tasks; it requires balancing conflicting roles and

responsibilities. On one hand, mothers must provide guidance and structure to ensure their children's academic success. On the other hand, they are encouraged to allow their children the autonomy to explore and learn independently. This tension reflects a key premise of Relational Dialectics Theory (RDT), introduced by Baxter and Montgomery (1996), which examines the contradictions and interplay of opposing forces within interpersonal relationships.

RDT is a valuable framework for analyzing the dynamics of mother-child interactions in the context of education. It highlights the dialectical tensions between autonomy and control, emotional closeness and distance, and individual needs versus relational responsibilities. In the context of the Kurikulum Merdeka, these tensions manifest in various forms: the need to encourage self-directed learning while providing consistent support, maintaining emotional stability amid academic challenges, and balancing personal and familial obligations (Baxter, 2011). This study addresses the question:

“How do mothers navigate relational dialectics to support their children's education under the Kurikulum Merdeka?”. By examining how mothers balance the tensions between autonomy and control, closeness and distance, and individual versus relational needs, this research sheds light on the strategies employed to foster a supportive learning environment.

The role of mothers in Indonesia is deeply embedded in cultural and social contexts. Traditional gender roles often position mothers as the primary caregivers, educators, and emotional anchors of the family (Chen & Chen, 2023; McHale & Jenkins, 2023). This societal expectation amplifies the pressures faced by mothers as they navigate the complexities of educational involvement. Under the Kurikulum Merdeka, these pressures are intensified, as mothers are not only expected to provide emotional and academic support but also to adapt to an education system that requires flexibility and innovation.

The relational dynamics between mothers and their children are further complicated by the increasing integration of technology in education. Digital tools and platforms have become essential for facilitating learning, especially in the post-pandemic era (Coulter et al., 2024). While these tools offer opportunities for enhancing learning experiences, they also present new challenges in managing screen time, ensuring digital literacy, and maintaining meaningful interactions.

Mothers must navigate these challenges while maintaining the delicate balance of their dual roles as caregivers and facilitators of learning.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical knowledge. Theoretically, this research enriches the application of Relational Dialectics Theory in the context of family communication and education. It highlights how dialectical tensions shape and are shaped by the unique cultural and educational contexts of Indonesia. Practically, the insights gained from this study can inform strategies for supporting parents, particularly mothers, in navigating the challenges of the Kurikulum Merdeka. This includes recommendations for policy interventions, school-family partnerships, and community-based initiatives that foster collaborative approaches to education.

In addition, this study aims to illuminate the broader implications of family communication in educational contexts. By focusing on the relational dynamics of mother-child interactions, it underscores the importance of nurturing positive communication patterns within families. Such patterns not only enhance academic outcomes but also contribute to the emotional well-being and social development of children (Zhang et al., 2024). Furthermore, the emphasis on relational dialectics offers a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in family communication, providing a framework for addressing similar challenges in diverse educational and cultural settings.

B. METHODS

This study explores the nuanced dynamics of mothers' roles in supporting children's learning under the Kurikulum Merdeka by employing a phenomenological paradigm, qualitative research methods, and thematic analysis. Rooted in phenomenology, the research seeks to understand mothers' lived experiences and the meanings they attribute to their roles in navigating relational dialectics. This paradigm is particularly suited for uncovering subjective insights into family communication and educational practices within Indonesia's socio-cultural and educational contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

A qualitative approach underpins this study, allowing for an in-depth examination of relational dynamics and cultural influences. By focusing on rich, detailed data, this method is ideal for capturing the complexities of mothers'

interactions with their children and their strategies for balancing autonomy, guidance, and emotional connection in education (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Data collection was conducted through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with purposively selected mothers involved in their children's education under the Kurikulum Merdeka. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews facilitated open-ended discussions that uncovered participants' challenges, coping strategies, and reflections. Complementary observational notes and field memos added depth to the data, capturing non-verbal cues and contextual nuances (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Thematic analysis was employed to systematically identify patterns and themes within the data. The process involved familiarizing with the transcripts, coding meaningful data segments, and organizing these into recurring themes. These themes were refined iteratively to align with the study's objectives, ensuring a thorough and contextualized interpretation of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). By integrating phenomenological insights, qualitative methods, and thematic analysis, this study rigorously explores the relational dynamics of family communication and the evolving roles of mothers in the educational context of the Kurikulum Merdeka.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Education within the family unit is fundamental, especially when systemic changes, such as the Kurikulum Merdeka, are introduced. Mothers play a pivotal role in ensuring their children adapt to and thrive within this curriculum's structure. This chapter explores the nuanced roles of mothers, the challenges they face, and the influence of technology and family dynamics in supporting learning at home.

Mothers' Roles and Practices in Supporting Learning

The implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka has reshaped traditional parental roles, demanding mothers to transition from directive educators to facilitators of independent learning. This paradigm shift aligns with autonomy-supportive parenting principles, which emphasize creating environments where children feel empowered to explore and learn independently (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The findings in this study reveal a spectrum of maternal practices tailored to their

children's unique needs, influenced by socio-economic, cultural, and personal circumstances.

Mothers in professional occupations, such as Mama A, a university lecturer, adapted their strategies to encourage independence in their children. Mama A shared:

"We have disciplined our children to take responsibility for their studies, which helps when balancing our work demands" (Interview with Mama A, on November 7, 14, and 16 2024).

This approach reflects "concerted cultivation," a parenting style identified by Lareau (2021), where parents foster structured independence, particularly in middle- and upper-class families. These practices illustrate how socio-economic contexts influence the degree of autonomy granted to children.

In contrast, stay-at-home mothers employed hands-on and creative methods tailored to their children's developmental needs. Mama S, managing a home-based catering business, utilized mnemonic devices and simplified learning materials:

"For memorization, I create rhymes or stories" (Mama S).

Echoing Epstein et al.'s (2019) assertion that personalized parental involvement enhances children's comprehension and retention (Interviews with Mama S, on November 14, 29, and December 1, 2024).

Emotional regulation emerged as a pivotal aspect of maternal roles. Many mothers described balancing their emotional responses to avoid conflicts during teaching moments. Mama G, who frequently managed educational responsibilities alone due to her husband's work commitments, noted:

"When I feel emotionally unfit, I avoid teaching to prevent conflicts" (Interview with Mama G on October 30, November 26, and December 2, 2024).

Research supports this approach, as Wang and Degol (2019) highlight that parental emotional intelligence is integral to creating supportive learning environments that promote academic achievement and emotional stability.

Developmental stages of children also influenced maternal practices. Mothers with younger children, like Mama M, highlighted the necessity of supervision, while mothers of older children shifted towards monitoring progress:

“Children at this stage are more self-reliant, but I still check their work for accuracy”
(Interviews with mama M on November 14, 29, and December 1, 2024).

This adaptability aligns with Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, emphasizing that parental strategies evolve with the child’s growing cognitive and social needs (Bronfenbrenner, 2019).

Moreover, mothers balanced diverse roles that extended beyond academics. Mama S described incorporating character-building activities into learning routines:

“I teach my child the importance of honesty by involving her in planning our daily schedules” (Interviews with mama S on November 14, 29, and December 1, 2024).

This dual focus on academic and moral education underscores the broader cultural expectations placed on Indonesian mothers, as highlighted by Budiman (2020).

The findings emphasize the diversity and adaptability of maternal practices in supporting learning under the Kurikulum Merdeka. By fostering autonomy, maintaining emotional balance, and tailoring strategies to individual needs, mothers play a central role in navigating educational demands while nurturing their children’s holistic development.

The findings in this study align with broader literature emphasizing the critical role of parental adaptation in educational reforms. For instance, studies on parental involvement in curriculum changes globally reveal that mothers often assume multifaceted roles as facilitators, motivators, and emotional anchors. Park and Holloway (2018) found that maternal engagement in children's education is deeply rooted in cultural and socio-economic contexts, with higher involvement observed in households prioritizing structured learning environments. These findings mirror Mama A’s “concerted cultivation” approach, where socio-economic status enables structured autonomy, allowing children to develop self-regulation and independence while under parental supervision.

In addition, the emphasis on personalized strategies, as highlighted by Epstein et al. (2019), resonates with research on differentiated parenting. For example, a study by Jeynes (2021) demonstrated that tailored interventions, such as mnemonic aids or interactive learning materials, significantly improve academic outcomes, particularly in diverse educational settings. This supports Mama S's use of creative techniques tailored to her child's developmental needs, reinforcing the idea that flexible parental methods foster better comprehension and retention.

The role of emotional regulation, underscored by Mama G's experience, is similarly emphasized in contemporary studies. Research by Reay (2020) highlights that parents' emotional management not only mitigates conflict but also models resilience and problem-solving for children. This emotional intelligence becomes particularly salient in contexts where mothers manage educational responsibilities without consistent spousal support, aligning with the findings in this study.

Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory finds echoes in studies exploring developmental parenting. Erikson and Gecas (2021) emphasize that as children grow, the parental role transitions from direct involvement to oversight, ensuring a balance between guidance and independence. Mama M's observation of this evolution underscores how Indonesian mothers adapt their practices to meet their children's cognitive and social milestones, reflecting a broader trend of dynamic parenting in response to developmental changes. These studies collectively reinforce the pivotal role of mothers in navigating educational demands while addressing their children's holistic growth.

The adaptability demonstrated by mothers in this study highlights a significant intersection between cultural expectations and contemporary parenting challenges under the Kurikulum Merdeka. Indonesian mothers, navigating a dual role as both traditional caregivers and modern facilitators of learning, exemplify a cultural hybridization of parental practices. This duality is a response to broader socio-cultural norms that expect mothers to uphold family values while also supporting progressive educational reforms. Budiman (2020) suggests that Indonesian mothers often bear the brunt of educational responsibilities, as cultural norms disproportionately position them as primary caregivers. This dynamic, while affirming their central role, also amplifies the pressures they face in meeting diverse demands.

Critically, this study underscores the importance of emotional labor in educational support, particularly in contexts of limited systemic support. Emotional labor, as defined by Hochschild (1983), involves the regulation of emotions to create a positive environment. Mothers like Mama G who deliberately manage their emotions to maintain harmonious learning dynamics exemplify this concept in action. While this approach benefits children by modeling resilience and problem-solving, it also poses risks of emotional exhaustion for mothers, particularly those with minimal external support. This finding invites a broader critique of how educational systems like the Kurikulum Merdeka, while progressive, inadvertently place significant emotional and practical burdens on parents, especially mothers.

The findings also bring into focus the intersectionality of socio-economic status and parental involvement. Mothers from higher socio-economic backgrounds, like Mama A, benefit from access to resources and flexibility that enable "concerted cultivation," allowing them to prioritize structured independence in their children's education. In contrast, mothers from lower socio-economic backgrounds must often employ creative but less resource-intensive strategies, such as mnemonic devices, as seen with Mama S. This disparity underscores systemic inequalities that influence the degree of parental engagement and the outcomes of educational reforms. Lareau and Cox (2021) argue that such disparities necessitate targeted policy interventions to support parents across socio-economic spectrums, ensuring that all children can benefit equitably from reforms like the Kurikulum Merdeka.

Furthermore, the relational dynamics between mothers and children reveal a nuanced application of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory in real-world contexts. The study shows how mothers adjust their parenting strategies in response to both immediate family needs and broader socio-educational changes. This adaptability underscores the need for educational policies that not only focus on curriculum content but also consider the familial ecosystems in which learning takes place. Recognizing the relational and emotional labor invested by mothers, schools could introduce parent-focused workshops and support systems to alleviate these pressures and enable more collaborative educational environments.

However, this study also reveals the challenges and dialectical tensions in mother-child dynamics. The dual pressures of ensuring academic success while

maintaining harmonious relationships create significant challenges for mothers. These challenges manifest as dialectical tensions interplays of opposing needs that require careful negotiation to sustain both educational and relational goals.

One of the most prominent tensions observed was autonomy versus control. Mama S explained:

"Sometimes, I want to let my child explore and learn independently, but when she struggles, I feel the need to step in" (Interviews with mama S on December 1, 2024).

This struggle reflects Baxter's (2011) Relational Dialectics Theory, which posits that interpersonal relationships are shaped by the continuous negotiation of opposing forces. The findings suggest that the Kurikulum Merdeka exacerbates this tension, as its emphasis on independent learning increases parental uncertainty about when and how to intervene. Parents often oscillated between encouraging their children to take responsibility and stepping in to provide necessary guidance, a dilemma that revealed the deep emotional investment in ensuring academic success.

The tension between emotional closeness and independence was another recurring theme. Mothers often found it challenging to balance their roles as nurturers and educators. Mama G shared:

"When my child compares me to his teacher, it's hard not to take it personally" (Interviews with mama G on October 30, November 26, and December 2, 2024).

This illustrates the emotional strain of fulfilling dual roles, as children's expectations of parents differ from those of formal educators. Such dynamics align with the findings of Margolin and Oliver (2019), who highlight that role conflicts can strain parent-child relationships, particularly when parents must shift between supportive and authoritative roles. For many mothers, this dual responsibility created moments of tension where nurturing bonds were tested by the need for discipline and structure.

Time constraints further complicated these dynamics, particularly for working mothers. Mama A described the challenge of aligning her professional commitments with her child's educational needs:

“Sometimes, I have to delegate tasks to my husband” (Interview with Mama A, on November 28, 2024)

Highlighting the importance of shared parenting. Studies by Segrin and Flora (2018) underscore that collaborative parenting reduces role conflicts and promotes relational harmony. However, in families where spousal support was limited, mothers faced additional burdens, often leading to feelings of exhaustion and frustration. This highlights the need for a more equitable distribution of responsibilities within households to alleviate the pressures on mothers.

Socio-cultural expectations also shaped these challenges. In Indonesia, cultural norms position mothers as the primary caregivers, amplifying the pressure to ensure children’s academic success. Budiman (2020) notes that such expectations often lead to overburdened mothers, particularly in dual-income households, where societal expectations conflict with practical constraints. The cultural emphasis on maternal sacrifice often left mothers feeling isolated in their struggles, as societal acknowledgment of paternal contributions to education remains limited. This socio-cultural context underscores the importance of challenging traditional gender roles to create more supportive environments for mothers.

Mothers employed various strategies to navigate these tensions. Mama G emphasized the importance of setting boundaries:

“I make sure my child understands that while I’m here to support, he also needs to take responsibility for his work” (Interviews with mama G on November 29, 2024).

This approach aligns with the concept of scaffolding in educational psychology, where parents provide temporary support to help children develop independent problem-solving skills (Vygotsky, 1978). Scaffolding not only helps children build confidence but also allows mothers to step back, fostering a sense of autonomy in their children.

Another effective strategy involved emotional communication. Mama M shared:

“When my child is frustrated, I acknowledge his feelings and suggest taking a short break before continuing” (Interviews with mama M on November 24 and 28, 2024).

This approach reflects the principles of emotion coaching, as described by Gottman et al. (1997), where parents help children navigate their emotions constructively, fostering resilience and emotional intelligence. By addressing their children's frustrations empathetically, mothers were able to mitigate conflicts and maintain relational harmony.

The findings illuminate the complexity of mother-child dynamics in educational settings. The interplay of autonomy versus control and closeness versus independence reveals the intricate negotiations required to balance relational and academic goals. Mothers demonstrated remarkable adaptability in addressing these tensions, employing emotional intelligence, clear communication, and collaborative approaches to navigate the demands of the Kurikulum Merdeka. These strategies not only highlight their resilience but also underscore the importance of shared parenting and societal support in mitigating the challenges mothers face.

The findings further underscore the need for systemic changes to support mothers in managing these dialectical tensions effectively. Educational institutions can play a critical role by offering structured guidance and resources to parents, such as workshops on emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and effective communication strategies. These initiatives can help parents, particularly mothers, refine their scaffolding techniques and better manage their dual roles as caregivers and educators. Additionally, schools should foster inclusive family engagement policies that actively involve fathers and other family members in the educational process, reducing the disproportionate burden on mothers.

At a societal level, challenging entrenched gender norms is imperative to alleviating the pressures mothers face. Public awareness campaigns and community-based interventions can promote more equitable parenting practices, encouraging fathers to take on a more active role in both caregiving and educational support. Research by Reay (2020) highlights that dismantling traditional gender expectations not only improves parental well-being but also positively impacts children's academic and emotional development.

Moreover, policy interventions can address the structural challenges exacerbating these tensions. For example, providing accessible childcare services and flexible work arrangements for working parents can help mitigate time constraints and reduce parental stress. Similarly, government initiatives that

emphasize equitable access to educational resources, particularly for families in low-income or rural areas, can help level the playing field for parents navigating the demands of the Kurikulum Merdeka. These systemic changes would empower mothers to focus on fostering positive relational dynamics and academic success without bearing an unsustainable emotional and logistical load.

Ultimately, these findings highlight the intricate web of personal, relational, and societal factors shaping mother-child dynamics in educational contexts. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that combines individual adaptability, community support, and systemic reform. By prioritizing parental well-being and relational harmony, stakeholders can create an educational ecosystem that supports not just academic outcomes but also holistic family development.

Technology and Family Dynamics in Learning Support

Technology has become an indispensable component of educational practices, revolutionizing how parents and children engage with learning materials. However, this integration has brought both opportunities and challenges, influencing family dynamics in nuanced ways. Mothers in this study frequently highlighted the dual role of technology as a facilitator of learning and a source of tension within the household.

Digital platforms such as YouTube, educational apps, and online tutorials were cited as valuable resources for supporting children's education. Mama N explained:

"For subjects like Mandarin, I rely on YouTube videos because they explain the concepts better than I can" (Interviews with mama N on November 14, 29, and December 1, 2024).

This aligns with research by Livingstone and Blum-Ross (2020), who emphasize the transformative potential of technology in democratizing access to diverse learning materials. Similarly, Mama M utilized online resources to pre-learn complex topics before teaching her child, stating:

"I review materials online to ensure I can explain them effectively" (Interviews with mama M on November 24 and 28, 2024).

This proactive approach demonstrates how technology empowers parents to bridge gaps in their own knowledge while supporting their children's academic needs.

Despite its advantages, technology also introduced challenges, particularly in managing screen time and maintaining children's focus on educational content. Mama G expressed concern, noting:

"It's hard to ensure my child stays on learning apps and doesn't get distracted by games"
(Interviews with mama G on November 24 and 28, 2024).

Research by Plowman et al. (2019) supports this observation, highlighting that unregulated screen time can negatively impact children's cognitive development and family interactions. Furthermore, the reliance on digital tools sometimes reduced opportunities for face-to-face communication, potentially weakening relational bonds within families.

Another critical challenge was the digital divide. Families with limited access to high-speed internet or advanced devices faced significant barriers in utilizing educational technology. Mama S shared:

"Sometimes, our internet is too slow for my child to attend online classes, which frustrates both of us" (Interviews with mama S on November 24 2024).

This mirrors findings by Selwyn (2020), who highlights how unequal access to digital resources exacerbates educational disparities, particularly in low-income households.

The role of fathers and extended family members in mediating these challenges varied across households. While some fathers actively participated in monitoring their children's digital usage, others provided limited support, leaving mothers to shoulder the majority of responsibilities. Mama S noted:

"When I'm busy, my husband steps in to help with the technology, but it's rare"
(Interviews with mama S on November 28, 2024).

This uneven distribution of labor underscores the need for greater involvement from all family members to mitigate the pressures on mothers. Community networks and school-led initiatives also played a crucial role in

addressing technology-related challenges. Mama N described her reliance on WhatsApp groups to communicate with teachers and other parents, stating:

“We share tips on useful apps and strategies to keep our kids focused” (Interviews with mama N on December 28, 2024).

This collaborative approach reflects findings by Wang and Degol (2019), who argue that community support enhances parental efficacy in navigating educational demands. Additionally, school-led workshops on digital literacy equipped parents with the skills needed to effectively manage technology in educational contexts.

While technology offers significant benefits in facilitating learning, it requires careful management to avoid negative consequences. Parents, schools, and policymakers must collaborate to establish guidelines for balanced technology use. Schools can provide workshops on digital tools, while policymakers should ensure equitable access to digital resources to bridge the digital divide. By fostering a balanced and inclusive approach to technology, families can harness its potential to enhance learning while maintaining strong relational dynamics.

In addition to community support and digital literacy workshops, fostering a family-centric approach to technology use is essential for mitigating its challenges. Parents can establish clear boundaries and rules for technology usage to maintain a healthy balance between online and offline interactions. For instance, structured schedules for screen time can help ensure children remain focused on educational activities while minimizing distractions from non-educational content. Research by Barr and Linebarger (2019) underscores the importance of co-viewing, where parents engage with their children in using digital tools, fostering both learning and relational bonding. Such practices also provide opportunities for parents to guide their children in critically evaluating online content, enhancing their digital literacy and decision-making skills.

Moreover, the integration of technology in education highlights the need for culturally sensitive and inclusive digital platforms. Many existing tools are designed with limited consideration for diverse socio-cultural contexts, potentially alienating families from different backgrounds. Mama N's reliance on WhatsApp groups exemplifies how parents adapt to bridge these gaps, leveraging community networks

for localized solutions. Policymakers and developers should prioritize creating adaptable, accessible, and culturally relevant tools that align with the values and needs of various communities. Selwyn (2020) suggests that participatory design processes, involving parents, educators, and students, can help create platforms that reflect the lived experiences of their users.

At the systemic level, addressing the digital divide is crucial to ensuring equitable access to technological resources. Government programs that subsidize internet access and provide affordable devices to low-income families can significantly reduce disparities. Similarly, public-private partnerships can play a role in expanding digital infrastructure in rural and underserved areas, enabling more families to engage fully with the digital learning environment. Such initiatives align with broader educational equity goals, as articulated by global frameworks like the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

Finally, the findings reveal an opportunity to redefine family dynamics in the digital age. Encouraging fathers and other family members to take an active role in supporting children's education through technology can relieve the disproportionate burden on mothers. Schools and community organizations can facilitate this shift by promoting gender-inclusive parenting workshops, emphasizing shared responsibilities in managing technology and educational tasks. As families adapt to the evolving landscape of digital education, these collaborative efforts can strengthen relational bonds, enhance learning outcomes, and promote a more balanced and supportive household dynamic.

In conclusion, while technology has transformed the way families engage with education, its successful integration requires a multifaceted approach that combines individual practices, community collaboration, and systemic reforms. By addressing the challenges posed by technology through inclusive policies and family-centric strategies, stakeholders can maximize its benefits while fostering resilient and equitable learning environments.

D. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the pivotal role mothers play in navigating the challenges of supporting their children's education under the Kurikulum Merdeka. As facilitators, mothers adapt to evolving educational demands by balancing autonomy and guidance, negotiating dialectical tensions, and leveraging technology within the family dynamic. These efforts not only enhance academic success but also strengthen emotional and relational bonds within the family. However, the study underscores that these roles are shaped by broader socio-cultural expectations, time constraints, and uneven resource access, suggesting systemic inequalities that need to be addressed. Policymakers must consider the burdens placed on parents, particularly mothers, and develop targeted initiatives to support families, such as parent training programs, equitable access to digital tools, and community-based networks that foster collaboration between schools and families.

Additionally, this research has significant implications for educational practitioners and technology developers. Schools must reimagine their engagement strategies, offering tailored workshops on digital literacy and emotional intelligence to empower parents as effective co-educators. Moreover, technology developers should prioritize creating inclusive, intuitive, and culturally sensitive learning platforms that address the needs of diverse families. Future research should expand these findings by examining the experiences of fathers and children, as well as exploring longitudinal impacts on family dynamics and academic outcomes. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how family communication and technology intersect in shaping children's educational journeys, emphasizing the need for collective efforts to build an equitable and supportive educational ecosystem.

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