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# Digital Disruption in Family Living: A Multilevel Perspective in the Midst of Cultural Traditions and Socio-Economic Inequality

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Abstrak

Perubahan digital yang sangat cepat menggeser cara keluarga berinteraksi, mengasuh anak, dan menjalankan peran sosial ekonomi, terutama di negara dengan bentang budaya dan ketimpangan yang kuat seperti Indonesia. Urgensi kajian ini adalah memahami bagaimana disrupsi digital memengaruhi kehidupan keluarga dalam tradisi yang mengakar dan akses teknologi yang tidak merata. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah membangun kerangka multilevel yang menjelaskan dinamika disrupsi digital dalam keluarga, dengan memperluas gagasan model Qian dan Hu agar sesuai dengan kondisi sosial budaya Indonesia. Penelitian ini bersifat konseptual dengan pendekatan sintesis kualitatif, menggunakan data sekunder dari survei nasional, laporan riset tahun 2024–2025, dan literatur lintas disiplin. Analisis tematik dilakukan untuk mengidentifikasi pola pada tingkat mikro, meso, dan makro. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa teknologi digital memperkuat hubungan jarak jauh, tetapi juga memperdalam ketimpangan antara keluarga, memunculkan konflik antargenerasi, dan mengubah fungsi tradisi dalam ekologi digital. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi dengan menawarkan kontekstual yang menyoroti paradoks pemberdayaan dan beban baru dalam keluarga digital

*Keywords: digital disruption, family dynamics, multilevel frameworks, cultural traditions, socio-economic inequality*

*Abstract*

*Rapid digital change is shifting the way families interact, babysit, and carry out socioeconomic roles, especially in a country with a strong cultural landscape and inequality like Indonesia. The urgency of this study is to understand how digital disruption affects family life in deep-rooted traditions and unequal access to technology. The purpose of this research is to build a multilevel framework that explains the dynamics of digital disruption in the family, by expanding the idea of the Qian and Hu model to suit Indonesian socio-cultural conditions. This research is conceptual with a qualitative synthesis approach, using secondary data from national surveys, research reports for 2024–2025, and cross-disciplinary literature. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns at the micro, meso, and macro levels. The findings show that digital technology strengthens long-distance relationships, but also deepens inequalities between urban and rural families, gives rise to intergenerational conflicts, and changes the function of traditions in digital ecology. The study contributes by offering a contextual framework that highlights the paradox of empowerment and new burdens in the digital family.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the highly dominant digital era, information and communication technology has permeated various aspects of life, in this case in family dynamics. In Indonesia, a country with a population of more than 280 million people and a rich cultural diversity, this digital disruption is emerging as a transformative force that accelerates connectivity, even challenging the traditional foundations of the

family. With this, it is an effort to understand how digital technology configures family practices in a unique local context. The context in Indonesia, the combination of collective values, such as mutual cooperation and respect for parents, which is rooted in Javanese, Sundanese, and other ethnic cultures, with modern reality, as in urbanization and inequality of digital access. In the Data Reportal report (Digital 2025: Indonesia 2025). At the beginning of 2025, there will be 212 million internet users in Indonesia, with a penetration rate of 74.6%, a significant increase from 77% in 2023 according to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2025), which recorded a penetration of 80.66% or equivalent to 229 million users (APJII Records Indonesia's Internet Penetration Reaches 80.66 Percent in 2025 n.d.). This shows that digitalization is an elite phenomenon, which is an integral part of daily life, especially in the family, where the WhatsApp and TikTok applications are tools to maintain cross-generational and geographical relationships.

The impact of digitalization on family dynamics, in the Digital Mum Indonesia 2025 survey by The Parentinc, revealed that mothers in Indonesia are increasingly adopting short video content and parenting apps, with 57% of parents limiting their children's access to gadgets to maintain a balance with cultural values (From E-Commerce Trust to Affiliate Purchases: Digital Mum Survey (DMS) Indonesia Unveils In-Depth Insights on Indonesian Mum Consumers 2025). Meanwhile, the IDN Times Millennial and Gen Z Indonesia 2025 report shows that 73% of young people maintain extended family ties through social media, although in big cities only 70% compared to 74-76% in small cities, indicating the influence of urbanization (Kania and Yolanda n.d.). This is relevant as Indonesia is experiencing a digital economy boom, with the growth of e-commerce and fintech, such as GoPay which facilitates remittances of migrant families, and also exacerbates dependence on technology. Statista projects internet penetration to reach 81.17% by 2025, driven by the adoption of AI among Gen Z (52% of usage), which is changing family parenting and communication patterns (Internet penetration rate in Indonesia from 2017 to 2020 with forecasts until 2026 n.d.). However, behind these advances, digital disruption poses risks such as a decrease in face-to-face interaction, which according to the IntechOpen study (2025) leads to symbolic misconceptions such as intergenerational emoji interpretations in Javanese families (Kertamukti 2025). Hence how digitalization interacts with the gender revolution and individualization, in which women often bear the brunt of it."*Digital Kin-Keeping*" while navigating patriarchal norms.

The above problems occur due to the tension between cultural traditions and digital innovation, which is exacerbated by socio-economic inequality. In Indonesia, collective values such as mutual cooperation are increasingly displaced by digital individualism, where shared activities such as family dinners are replaced by the use of individual gadgets, leading to fragmentation of interactions (Nurhaliza and Savandha 2025). Based on middle-class families, it shows that technology mediates relationships in a *ambivalent*: strengthens connectivity but fuels generational conflict and redefinition of parental authority. In addition, *Digital divide* weakening access in rural areas and 3T (disadvantaged, frontier, outermost), where inequality of access to technology affects the social mobility of youth (Judijanto and Nurwanto 2024a). The World Bank (2022) notes that children from low-income families are three times less likely to have internet access, which exacerbates financial vulnerabilities and family dynamics, such as reliance on migrant remittances through fintech (How to bridge the gap in Indonesia's inequality in internet access 2022). This problem is even more acute post-pandemic, where technology adoption has soared, but intergenerational barriers in family MSMEs hinder digital transformation, with family harmony as the main mediator (Princeton and Rajaguguk 2025). On the cultural side, the evolution of Javanese communication patterns shows a stage of adaptation from incomprehension to active involvement, but threatens the transmission of values such as respect for parents (Kertamukti 2025).

In the above gap, the author wants to examine and address the lack of a contextual conceptual framework for Indonesia by using the global model in Qian and Hu (Qian and Hu 2024a) through a multilevel approach to family digitalization. This multilevel perspective divides the analysis into micro (individual practices), meso (online communities), and macro (economic-sociocultural-political systems). Thus, it needs to be adapted to include local elements such as Islamic family law and urban-rural inequality. The study "Growing Up Online Through Divorce: Child Influencers and Family Change in Indonesia" highlights the visibility of children online during celebrity divorces, which challenges the ideal nuclear family norms of the New Order era, but there has been no comprehensive integration with the perspective of inequality (Utomo 2025). This gap is evident in the lack of research that combines digital disruption with cultural traditions, where technology is often seen as a threat rather than a

preservation opportunity, such as the use of cultural apps by 27% of parents (Kania and Yolanda n.d.). In addition, digital inequality, where digital poverty exacerbates household vulnerability (Utomo 2025), has not been explored multilevel in the context of the Indonesian family.

Based on research written by Yue Qian and Yang Hu "The digitalization of family life: A multilevel conceptual framework" explains the digitalization of family life at the micro, meso, and macro levels (Qian and Hu 2024b). Loso Judijanto and Novi Nurwanto's paper "The Impact of Technology Access Inequality and Digital Skill Disparities on Social Integration and Life Satisfaction in Indonesia" explains the inequality of access to technology and digital skills (Judijanto and Nurwanto 2024b). Glen L. Pierce's article "The persistent educational digital divide and its impact on societal inequality" focuses on digital inequality and the reproduction of social inequality through education (Pierce and Cleary 2024). Christine Mc Call's "Reducing the Digital Divide for Families: State and Local Policy Opportunities" focuses on Access, affordability, and utilization of technology by families (McCall et al. 2024). Xinjian Wang et al's paper "Impact of digital divide on household consumption: Role of mental health and happiness" explains digital inequality and household consumption behavior (Wang et al. 2025). Written by Elisa Bassignana et al.The AI Gap: How Socioeconomic Status Affects Language Technology Interactions"focus on explaining the socio-economic status and differences in the use of AI technology (Bassignana, Curry, and Hovy 2025).

This research develops a multilevel contextual that integrates digital disruption with cultural traditions and socio-economic inequality in Indonesia with reference to the adaptive Qian and Hu models (Qian and Hu 2024a). As referring to the gap in previous research, written by Dworkin and Rudi explain how social media affects identity and family relationships (Dworkin, Rudi, and Hessel 2018), while Ollier-Malaterre highlighted gender-sensitive digital work in 29 countries that reinforce social and cultural gaps (Qian and Hu 2024a). In the context of child development, Qian showed that digital literacy and parenting practices are strongly influenced by socio-economic status (Ye 2025). Froma Walsh, on the side of family resilience, expands the understanding of how families adapt to digital change in diverse cultural environments (Walsh 2021). Another study, Fasihuddin (Kayaalp and Özdemir n.d.), Pattusamy (Han and Mortimer 2023), and Kerr (Browne et al. 2024) emphasizing that digital transformation affects family structures, work-family boundaries, as well as new dimensions in family system theory. A study of business succession by Kareem and Thomas (Saeed et al. 2024) and policy analysis by Ollier-Malaterre (Denier et al. 2024) shows that digital influence penetrates intergenerational legitimacy and public policy design

## METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study (*Library Research*) aims to build a conceptual synthesis of the impact of digital disruption on family dynamics through a multilevel perspective. The research data is sourced from the primary and secondary literature. The primary literature includes scientific articles on digital disruption and family dynamics. Secondary literature is obtained from academic books, reports of international institutions, policy documents, and publications of organizations (Thomas and Harden 2008). Meanwhile, data analysis was carried out using qualitative content analysis (*Qualitative Content Analysis*) which is integrated with thematic analysis through the stages of literature classification, theme identification, and comparative synthesis to find patterns of relationships between concepts and the development of theories regarding family transformation in the digital era (Snyder 2019). The analysis refers to a multilevel perspective that includes the micro level (individual characteristics, digital literacy, technology use behavior, and psychological well-being), meso level (family relationships, parenting patterns, communities, schools, and socio-religious organizations), and macro levels (public policy, digital infrastructure, education systems, economic, regulatory conditions, and culture), along with cross-level interaction analysis (*Cross-level interrelations*) to explain the relationship between factors in shaping family dynamics. To improve conceptual validity, the study applied source triangulation through a comparison of findings from various disciplines. The results of the analysis are then presented in a descriptive-analytical manner by integrating global findings and the Indonesian context so as to produce a conceptual model regarding the relationship of micro, meso, macro, and cross-level interactions in explaining changes in family dynamics in the era of digital disruption, as well as becoming a theoretical basis for further empirical

research (Qian and Hu 2024b).

## RESULTS

This research produced a conceptual synthesis of the influence of digital disruption on family dynamics through a multilevel perspective. Based on the results of this study, it was found that digital transformation affects individual behavior, changing the structure of families, communities, and broader social systems. The impact takes place in stages (*Multilevel*) so that a change at one level will affect another (Qian and Hu 2024).

In general, the results of the study show four main findings. *First*, digital disruption has changed family communication patterns, authority relations, gender roles, and household economic activities. *Second*, the impact of digital technology is greatly influenced by the characteristics of individuals, families, communities, and institutions, resulting in a variety of experiences between families. *Third*, Indonesia's socio-cultural context, especially the values of collectivism, religion, and kinship systems, serve as a mediating factor that differentiates the experience of Indonesian families from Western countries. *Fourth*, the interaction between micro, meso, and macro factors forms different patterns of family adaptation to digital transformation (Qian and Hu 2024).

To facilitate the understanding of the results of the synthesis, the main findings of the study are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1**. Synthesis of Research Findings Based on a Multilevel Perspective

| Yes | Aspects | Findings | Implications |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | *Micro* | Digital literacy, communication patterns, psychological well-being, and media use behavior affect the quality of relationships between family members. | Determine the family's ability to adapt to digital technology. |
| **2** | *Meso* | Parenting patterns, intergenerational relationships, schools, communities, and religious organizations are mediators of the use of technology. | Strengthen or weaken family resilience to digital risks |
| **3** | *Macro* | Digital infrastructure, government policies, education systems, digital economy, and regulations shape the environment for family adaptation. | Determine equal access, digital security, and family welfare. |
| **4** | *Interlevel Interaction* | Micro, meso, and macro factors influence each other dynamically | The impact of digital disruption is different on each family according to its social context. |

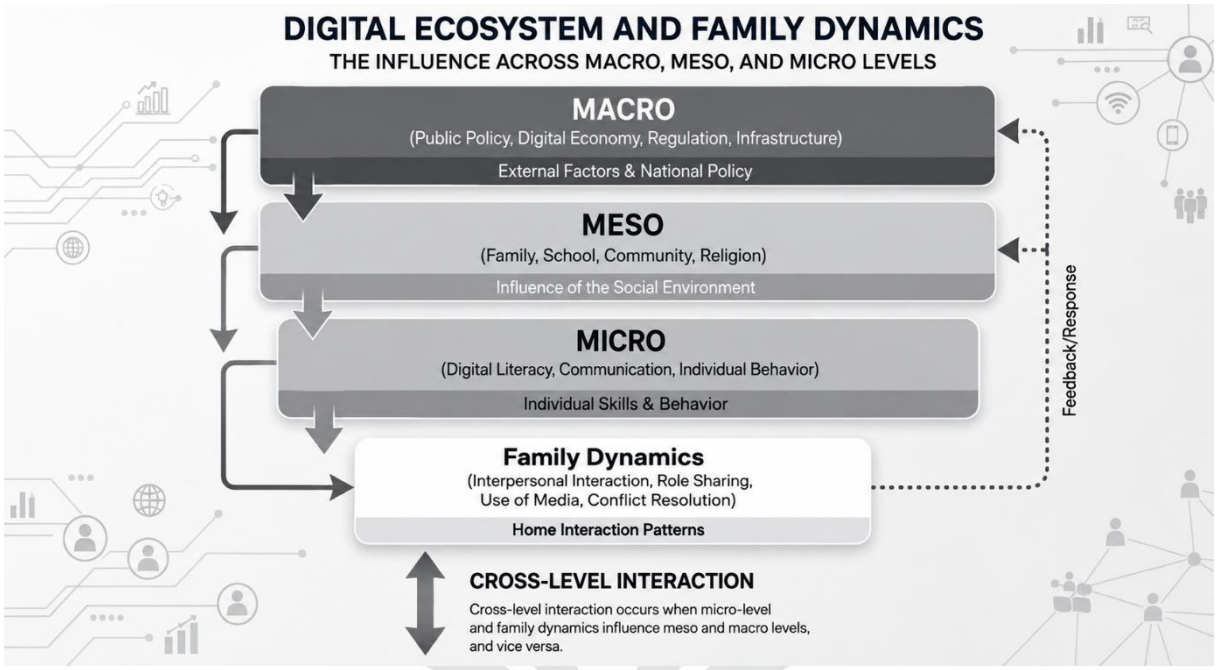
Furthermore, the results of the research are grouped based on the main themes as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Classification of Literature Synthesis Results.

| Theme | Synthesis Results |
|---|---|
| Communication Changes | Digital communication improves connectivity, but has the potential to reduce the quality of face-to-face interactions |
| Family Authority | There is a redistribution of authority because children have higher digital competence than some parents |
| Gender Roles | Technology opens up economic opportunities for women, but it also increases the *double burden*. |
| Family Economics | Digitalization creates work flexibility while increasing income uncertainty through *the gig economy*. |
| Family Resilience | Digital literacy, open communication, and community support improve family adaptability. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Indonesian context | Collectivism, religion, and kinship systems moderate the impact of technology on the family |

To provide a visual representation of the research results, the relationships between levels of analysis can be presented in the form of a conceptual model as shown in Figure 1




## DISCUSSION

### Digital Disruption and Changing Family Dynamics

Disruption Digital fundamentally transforms the structure of family life, namely by changing communication patterns, authority relations, gender roles, economic activities, and emotional interactions between family members (Maura Kiran Ramadhani and Thriwaty Arsal 2026). In contrast to technological changes in the past which only functioned as a tool to support household activities, digital technology is now the main space where family relationships are built, maintained, and negotiated. The rapid development of smartphones, social media, artificial intelligence (*Artificial Intelligence*), and the digital economy has created new opportunities to strengthen family cohesion, but at the same time also Raising unprecedented challenges related to intimacy, parenting patterns, and family life governance (Rico Alana Daniswara and Andhita Risko Faristiana 2023).

Communication is one of the real aspects that has changed due to digital media disruption. Media It turns out that family members become an instant to interact intensively even though separated by geographical distance through instant messaging applications, video calls, and social media. For transnational families, migrant workers, and family members living in different locations, digital technology makes it easier to maintain emotional closeness and regular communication. However, there are studies that show that increasing digital connectivity leads to an increase in the quality of emotional closeness (Hery Derajad Wijaya 2024). Excessive use of digital devices will reduce the intensity of face-to-face communication, weaken the ability to actively listen, and increase the emotional distance between spouses and between parents and children. This shows a paradox, namely when families are increasingly connected technologically, but actually experience a decrease in the quality of interpersonal interaction (Pratiwi, Maulana, and Ismail 2023).

Digital disruption is changing the structure of authority in the family. Traditionally, family authority has been built on the age hierarchy and parental status as the primary source of knowledge and decision-making (Hartono, Eliman, and Lase 2023a). However, the development of digital technology has led to a redistribution of information authority because children and adolescents have higher digital

abilities than their parents. Structural changes affect supervisory patterns, decision-making, and control mechanisms in the family. Parents need to act to provide instructions to their children by conducting dialogues and negotiations regarding the use of the internet, social media, digital privacy, and children's online activities. With Thus, family authority becomes more dialogical, participatory, and greatly influenced by the level of digital literacy of each family member (Hasanah and Rahmah 2025).

In addition, digital transformation has consequences for gender relations in the family. On the one hand, the growth of remote work (*Remote Working.*), digital entrepreneurship, and platform-based economies open up greater opportunities for women to participate in economic activities without having to abandon their domestic roles. But on the other hand, various studies show that digitalization often strengthens the phenomenon *Double Burden*, which is when women have to carry out productive work digitally while still bearing the main responsibility for household work. Thus, digital technologies do not automatically erase gender inequality, but often simply transform those forms of inequality into invisible digital and emotional work (*invisible emotional labor*) (Putranto, Natalia, and Pertiwi 2025).

In addition, changes occurred in the family economic organization. The development of the digital economy, *The Gig Economy*, e-commerce, and various forms of flexible work have expanded family sources of income while increasing the level of economic uncertainty (Kamarudin and Arif 2024). Nowadays many family members are starting to incorporate several types of digital jobs that offer time flexibility but have relatively low income stability. It affects the family's financial planning pattern, the balance between work life and family life (*Work-life balance*), as well as the economic decision-making process in the household (Insiatiningsih et al. 2024). Therefore, the family faces new challenges in managing economic risks along with the opening up of digital economy opportunities.

In addition to the economic aspect, social relations in the family have also undergone significant changes. Social media expands the network social, facilitate access to information, and open up opportunities to gain emotional support from various communities (Salsabila and Anshori 2025). However, social media brings various risks such as *Cyberbullying*, digital infidelity (*Digital Infidelity*), internet addiction, the spread of false information, and the practice of surveillance of spouses and children (Syam 2023). As a result, trust, privacy, and emotional commitment in the family are increasingly negotiated through digital spaces rather than through direct interactions. Therefore, family resilience in the digital era is determined by interpersonal communication skills, digital literacy levels, ethics in the use of technology, and the adaptability of all family members (Junaidi, Najamuddin, and Amaruddin 2025).

For example, In the United States highlights more issues *Digital Parenting*, adolescent mental health, and screen addiction (*Screen dependency*) (Nagata et al. 2025). Meanwhile, in European countries, more emphasis is placed on work- and family life balance, digital welfare systems, and changes in gender relations (Crompton and Lyonette 2006). In the East Asian region, the focus is more on educational competition, the intensity of technology use, intergenerational relationships, and social pressures in a highly digitized society (Siregar et al. 2024). Although they have a different focus, they are relatively the same, namely that digital disruption as a technological innovation is a structural change that changes the way families function in modern social life (Muliawaty 2019).

**Multilevel Perspectives in Family Studies**

The complexity of the impact of digital disruption on families requires an analysis that can explain the relationship between individual behavior and broader social structures. One of the approaches that is increasingly used is the multilevel perspective, which is an approach that shows family dynamics as a result of the interaction of various factors that work simultaneously at the individual, family, community, and institutional levels (Hartono, Eliman, and Lase 2023). The multilevel approach describes family behavior based solely on individual or household characteristics, which then considers how the environment social, cultural, economic, and public policy affect family life.

Meanwhile, at the individual level, digital technology affects psychological well-being, digital literacy, and ability to managing emotions, media consumption patterns, and how a person builds interpersonal communication (Ardhiyansyah, Bakker, and Sijabat 2023). Factors of age, gender, education level, economic conditions, and digital competence determine how individuals access and utilize technology. Children and adolescents generally have higher digital adaptability than older generations, creating a digital knowledge gap within the family. Therefore, the ability of individuals to

understand and manage technology is an important factor that determines the quality of family relationships.

Then, at the family level (*Family Level*), his attention is directed to communication patterns, parenting styles, role sharing, emotional cohesion, conflict resolution mechanisms, and household economic management. Each family has a different capacity to integrate digital technology into daily life (Rahmawati and Nur 2025). Some families set clear rules for the use of technology so that technology becomes a means of strengthening family relationships. On the other hand, families that do not have a good technology management mechanism tend to experience conflicts due to excessive use of gadgets, weak communication, and inequality of responsibility Digital answers.

At the community level (*Community Level*), families are influenced by the social environment in which they live, including schools, religious organizations, peer groups, and local communities. Schools have a role to playin shaping children's digital competence, while religious organizations contribute to providing ethical guidelines regarding the responsible use of technology (Agustina, Elmanora, and Hasanah 2024). High social capital (*Social Capital*) in communities can strengthen family resilience through information exchange, shared learning, and social support against digital challenges. Conversely, communities with low access to technology and weak levels of social cohesion tend to increase digital inequalities in society.

At the institutional level (*institutional level*), various public policies, legal regulations, digital infrastructure development, education systems, job market transformation, and social protection systems have a huge influence on the ability of families to adapt to technological changes (Sundari 2024). Policies regarding equal internet access, cybersecurity, digital education, child protection, and digital economy regulations determine the extent to which people can use technology safely and productively. Thus, the impact of technology on The family is determined by the characteristics of the family itself, and is even influenced by the policy environment that regulates it.

HangingMultilevel Katan focuses on why the impact of digital technology varies greatly between individuals and families. Technology does not produce uniform consequences because its influence is mediated by various factors that interact with each other at different levels of analysis (Shabihah and Misga 2025). Two families with the same access to technology can experience very different outcomes due to differences in parenting patterns, community support, local culture, and institutional protections. With this, the multilevel approach is able to avoid a deterministic view that thinks that technology always has a positive or negative impact automatically.

The research using a multilevel approach examines family resilience, digital inequality, education, and public health. However, it still focuses on the relationship between two levels of analysis only, for example the relationship of the individual to the family or the family to the community (Kusnanto et al. 2024). Relatively few integrate simultaneously the micro, meso, and macro levels while explaining the interactions between levels (*Cross-level interaction*) in the context of digital disruption. In addition, research using a multilevel perspective conducted in Western countries has not explained how collectivist cultures, religious values, and kinship systems such as in Indonesia affect the impact of technology on the family. This gap is an important basis for the development of a more comprehensive analysis.

**Multilevel Analysis: Micro, Meso, Macro, and Interlevel Interrelations**

Approach multilevel explains how the impact of digital disruption on Indonesian families is the result of a complex interaction between factors at the micro, meso, and macro levels (Imawan and Prasongko 2022). At the micro level, individual digital literacy, psychological adaptability, communication patterns, and media use behavior are the main factors that affect the quality of family relationships. Parents who Having good digital competencies tends to be able to build more effective digital parenting patterns so as to reduce the risk of conflict and misuse of technology by children.

At the meso level, families, schools, religious organizations, peer groups, and local communities serve as mediators that determine how technology is utilized in daily life. Families that have open communication, clear rules for the use of technology, and adaptive parenting patterns are generally better able to face the challenges of the digital era. Similarly, schools and community organizations play an important role in increasing digital literacy and strengthening family resilience to various digital risks.

At the macro level, government policies, digital infrastructure development, national education systems, digital economy regulations, and social protection form an environment that affects the ability of families to adapt to technological changes. Equitable internet access alone is not enough if it is not accompanied by increased digital literacy, child protection, cybersecurity, and policies that support family welfare.

Then most importantly, the three levels interact with each other through cross-level relationships (*Cross-level interaction*) (Setiabudi and Jumiati 2026). Government policies affect the capacity of communities; communities shape family norms and practices; family influences individual behavior; and the accumulation of individual behaviors will ultimately result in broader social change. Therefore, digital disruption must be understood as a dynamic social ecosystem, not just a collection of stand-alone technological impacts.

Therefore, the analysis Multilevel provides a more comprehensive explanation of why the impact of digital transformation is different on each family. The multilevel approach shows that efforts to strengthen family resilience cannot be done through technology development alone or the provision of digital infrastructure, but require integrated interventions at the individual, family, community, and institutional levels (Revelation 2024). Therefore, family policies in the digital era need to combine strategies to increase digital literacy, strengthen family education, empower communities, social protection, and develop regulations that are sensitive to Indonesia's socio-cultural context.

## CONCLUSION

The results show that digital disruption reshapes the lives of Indonesian families through non-uniform processes at the micro, meso, and macro levels, with patterns influenced by cultural traditions and socioeconomic inequality. Data analysis shows that technology strengthens long-distance relationships and opens up opportunities for empowerment, but at the same time widens access gaps, triggers intergenerational conflicts, and increases the cognitive burden, especially for women. These findings enrich the understanding of the ecology of the digital family by affirming that family dynamics cannot be separated from the local context, while also expanding on previous multilevel theories by including the value of collectivism and regional disparities as important variables. From a social and cultural perspective, this study highlights the need for inclusive policies so that the use of technology is in line with the preservation of family values and equitable digital access. Although it provides a comprehensive conceptual overview, this study is limited to a literature analysis without empirical data, so further research needs to explore how new digital platforms shape family relationships in the long term and how digital inequalities develop in various groups of society.

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