



Intergenerational Communication in Bandung City: A Case Study of the Digital Divide in Local Communities

Renda Sandi^{1*}, Dhika Surya²

¹*Communication in Research and Publications, Bandung, Indonesia*

²*Research Collaboration Community, Bandung, Indonesia*

*Corresponding author email: rendasandi8888@gmail.com

Abstract

The digital divide between the younger and older generations has become an important issue in social communication in the digital era. This study investigates the differences in understanding and use of digital technology between generation Z, generation Y, and generation X/Baby Boomers in Bandung City. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with case studies, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and surveys of 90 respondents. The results showed that the younger generations (Z and Y) have higher digital skills, especially in the use of social media and instant messaging applications, while generation X and Baby Boomers still rely more on face-to-face communication and telephone. This digital divide creates barriers in intergenerational communication, causes social isolation among the older generation, and limits their participation in wider social spaces. These findings suggest that interventions such as digital literacy training and the creation of inclusive spaces for intergenerational collaboration can reduce the digital divide and improve social communication. This study provides important insights into how the digital divide affects intergenerational relationships in Bandung City and suggests strategic steps to reduce the gap through education and technology empowerment programs.

Keywords: Communication, digital divide, social media, Bandung City, technology

1. Introduction

Intergenerational communication is a very important social phenomenon in the development of society, especially in today's digital era. Each generation has different ways and patterns of communication, influenced by life experiences and the social environment in which they grow up. Along with technological advances, especially in the digital field, the way of communicating has also changed rapidly (Chee, 2024). This phenomenon poses a major challenge, especially in big cities like Bandung, where the gap between the younger generation who are very connected to the digital world and the older generation who may feel alienated by this technological advancement is increasingly apparent (Sulistyawati et al., 2024).

The city of Bandung, as the capital of West Java Province, has unique social dynamics. As one of the big cities in Indonesia, Bandung is a center of culture, education, and technology. However, in an increasingly advanced society, various challenges arise, one of which is the digital divide between the younger and older generations. The younger generation in Bandung, especially those born after 2000, have grown up with very sophisticated digital technology, while the older generation is still struggling with limitations in accessing and understanding new technology. This phenomenon creates a gap in terms of communication, which affects social interactions in the local community (Bustamante et al., 2024).

This digital divide not only affects the technical ability to use digital devices or platforms, but also the way a person thinks and interacts with information. The younger generation tends to be more open to digital innovation, using social media, instant messaging applications, and other communication platforms as part of their daily lives (Paul et al., 2024). On the other hand, the older generation, who grew up without digital technology, often feels isolated or has difficulty adapting to these changes. This leads to a gap in the way they communicate, which affects relationships between individuals in the family, work environment, and society (Ali et al., 2024).

The rapid development of digital technology also adds another challenge, namely the dependence on technological devices. For the younger generation, smartphones and the internet have become an inseparable part of their lives. This has a major impact on communication patterns, where digital interactions dominate more than face-to-face

interactions. Meanwhile, the older generation, who grew up with more traditional ways of communicating, such as face-to-face or talking on the phone, find it difficult to adapt to these changes. As a result, there are often differences in the way they convey information and understand the messages received (Tetteh & Kankam, 2024; Haider & Akhtar, 2024).

In addition, the impact of this digital divide is also felt in the social and economic context. The younger generation who are more familiar with the digital world have easier access to job opportunities, education, and other information. Meanwhile, the older generation who cannot keep up with these developments often feel left behind, even marginalized. This phenomenon leads to differences in social and economic participation, which in turn exacerbates the gap between generations in big cities like Bandung (Irzalinda, 2024).

The importance of intergenerational communication in this digital era is increasingly prominent, especially when we see how society is developing and transforming. Effective communication between the younger and older generations is key to strengthening social ties, encouraging active participation in community life, and creating an atmosphere of mutual understanding (Merung et al., 2024). In the context of Bandung City, where various cultural and social backgrounds are mixed, understanding the dynamics of intergenerational communication is very important to create strong social cohesion.

The study of the digital divide in intergenerational communication in Bandung City is very relevant to dig deeper into how technology affects people's social lives, as well as how to bridge the gap. This study aims to understand the communication patterns that develop between various generations in Bandung, as well as the impact of inequality in access and understanding of digital technology. The results of this study are expected to provide deeper insights into how the digital divide affects social interactions and what can be done to reduce the gap (Susilawaty & Tambawang, 2024).

Effective intergenerational communication requires an understanding of the ways in which different generations communicate and receive information. For the younger generation, digitalization and technological advancements provide new ways to communicate, such as through social media, instant messaging applications, and other digital platforms. In contrast, the older generation tends to be more comfortable with more traditional ways of communicating, such as face-to-face or using the telephone. This difference in preference often causes difficulties in establishing relationships between generations, even leading to miscommunication (Richards et al., 2024).

Not only that, the digital divide is also related to technological literacy. The younger generation tends to be quicker to understand and master digital technology, while the older generation requires more intensive training and mentoring to be able to master these skills (Foster et al., 2024). In Bandung, although there are government and local community programs that provide digital training, many individuals still feel unable to keep up with the development of this technology. This creates greater social isolation for those who cannot access or use digital technology properly.

Through this case study, it is hoped that more inclusive solutions can be found to reduce the digital divide between generations in Bandung. One of them is by increasing digital literacy for the older generation through training that is tailored to their needs. In addition, it is also important to develop a communication strategy that combines old and new ways, so that all generations can feel comfortable and connected in various social situations. In this study, Bandung was chosen as the focus because this city reflects a fairly complete picture of a diverse urban society, with various age groups who have different ways of communicating. In addition, Bandung is also a city that continues to develop and innovate in the field of technology, making it an ideal place to explore this digital divide. This study will provide a clear picture of the challenges faced by the people of Bandung in adapting to technology, as well as the efforts that need to be made to create more inclusive communication between generations.

2. Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method to explore in depth the phenomenon of the digital divide in intergenerational communication in Bandung City. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the social context, communication patterns, and individual perceptions and experiences related to the use of digital technology in their daily lives. This case study aims to describe in detail how the digital divide emerges and affects social interactions between generations in local communities in Bandung City.

(1) Population and Sample

This study focuses on the people of Bandung City by involving three age groups that reflect generational differences, namely:

a. Generation Z (born between 1997–2012)

This group is a generation that has grown and developed with digital technology since an early age. They are usually more fluent in using technological devices and digital platforms.

b. Generation Y or Millennials (born between 1981–1996)

This group grew up amidst the development of digital technology, although not as fast as Generation Z. They have fairly good access to technology, but are not fully familiar with the sophistication of the latest technology.

- c. Generation X (born between 1965–1980) and Baby Boomers (born before 1965)

These groups tend to be more limited in their use of digital technology, although some of them have begun to access the internet and digital devices. However, this difference may be more significant in terms of skills and comfort in using technology.

The research sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, where researchers select participants who have relevant knowledge or experience related to the study topic, as well as representatives of each generation involved. A total of 30 people from each age group (Generation Z, Generation Y, and Generation X/Baby Boomers) will be selected to be interviewed. In total, 90 participants will be involved in this study.

(2) Data collection techniques

Data were collected through three main techniques to gain an in-depth understanding of intergenerational communication and the existing digital divide:

- a. In-depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with members of each generation. These interviews aim to explore participants' experiences in using digital technology, differences in how they communicate between generations, and their perceptions of the impact of the digital divide on social and work relationships. Interview questions are designed to open up discussions about participants' views, feelings, and attitudes towards technology, as well as the barriers they face in adapting to technological change

- b. Participatory Observation

The researcher will be involved in the daily activities of local communities in Bandung City, observing social interactions between different generations, especially in the context of technology use. These observations will be conducted in various locations, such as shopping centers, public spaces, and local communities in Bandung, to record how different generations interact in their daily lives and how the digital divide affects their communication patterns.

- c. Survey

A structured questionnaire will be distributed to participants to collect quantitative data on technology access, use of digital devices, and frequency of intergenerational communication. The questionnaire will include questions about devices used, social media accessed, comfort level in using technology, and perceptions of the digital divide in their community. The survey will help confirm the findings obtained from the interviews and observations.

(3) Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected from interviews, observations, and surveys will be analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involves identifying key themes that emerge from the qualitative data, such as the barriers faced by each generation in adapting to technology, differences in communication styles, and the social impact of the digital divide. The steps of the analysis are as follows:

- a. Transcription and Categorization

The interviews that have been conducted will be transcribed to facilitate further analysis. Data from the interviews will be categorized by age group and themes related to the digital divide and intergenerational communication.

- b. Theme Development

The researcher will identify common themes that emerge from the interviews, observations, and surveys. These themes will cover topics such as gaps in access to technology, differences in communication preferences, and the social impact of generational differences in using technology.

- c. Triangulation

To increase the validity of the research results, the researcher will use data triangulation by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and surveys. This will ensure that the research results are more accurate and reliable.

(4) Research Ethics

This research will be conducted in compliance with applicable ethical standards. Each participant will be given an explanation of the purpose of the research and will be involved voluntarily with their consent after receiving clear information about the research procedure. Data collected from participants will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. The identity of participants will be protected by using codes or

numbers that do not reveal personal identities. And researchers will try to involve local communities in this research to gain a deeper perspective on the role of intergenerational communication in their social lives.

(5) Research Limitations

This research has several limitations that need to be noted. One of them is the limited sample that only covers people in Bandung City. The results of this study may not be fully generalizable to other cities in Indonesia with different characteristics. In addition, although this study covers three age groups, variations in socio-economic, educational, and cultural factors among participants may affect the results of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

All figures should be numbered with Arabic numerals (1,2,...,n). All photographs, schemas, graphs and diagrams are to be referred to as figures. Line drawings should be good quality scans or true electronic output. Low-quality scans are not acceptable. Figures must be embedded into the text and not supplied separately. Lettering and symbols should be clearly defined either in the caption or in a legend provided as part of the figure. Figure is center, as shown Figure 1 and cited in the manuscript.

This study aims to explore the dynamics of intergenerational communication in Bandung City and identify the digital divide that occurs between the younger generation (Generation Z and Y) and the older generation (Generation X and Baby Boomers). Based on the results of data collection from in-depth interviews, participant observations, and surveys conducted, several key findings related to the digital divide and its impact on intergenerational communication can be described as follows:

3.1. Digital divide between generations

The results of the study indicate that the digital divide between the younger and older generations in Bandung City is quite significant. The younger generation, especially Generation Z and Y, are more skilled in using various digital technologies, including social media, instant messaging applications, and other digital platforms. They use technology as the main tool for communicating and accessing information. In contrast, Generation X and Baby Boomers, although they have started using technology, especially for basic communication such as telephone and text messages, find it difficult to master more sophisticated technologies such as social media or internet-based applications.

Table 1: Level of ability to use digital technology by generation

Generation	Level of Ability to Use Digital Technology	Percentage of Social Media Usage	Primary Devices Used
Generation Z	Very High (100%)	95%	Smartphone, Laptop
Generation Y	High (85%)	85%	Smartphone, Tablet
Generation X	Medium (60%)	60%	Smartphone, Television
Baby Boomers	Low (40%)	30%	Telephone, Television

The results of Table 1 show that Generation Z has a very high ability to use digital technology, with almost 100% of them accessing social media and using various digital devices. Meanwhile, Generation X and Baby Boomers have lower usage rates, especially in terms of social media, indicating a gap in the use of digital technology among the older generation.

3.2. Intergenerational communication patterns

The communication patterns between the younger and older generations in Bandung City are greatly influenced by differences in how they use technology. The younger generation tends to use text-based communication (such as instant messaging and social media), while the older generation is more accustomed to face-to-face or telephone communication. When interacting, there is often difficulty in conveying messages effectively, especially if the message involves digital technology that is unfamiliar to the older generation.

Table 2: Intergenerational communication patterns in Bandung city

Generation	Primary Ways to Communicate	Percentage of Usage	Difficulties Encountered
Generation Z	Instant Messaging, Social Media	95%	Difficulty with face-to-face communication
Generation Y	Instant Messaging, Social Media, Phone	85%	Difficulty using older devices
Generation X	Phone, Face to Face	70%	Difficulty with social media and instant messaging apps

Baby Boomers	Phone, Face to Face	60%	Difficulty using new technology, uncomfortable with social media
--------------	---------------------	-----	--

Table 2 illustrates how these differences in communication can create difficulties in intergenerational interactions. The younger generation, who are more accustomed to technology and digital communication, often feel frustrated when having to communicate using traditional methods that are more familiar to the older generation.

3.3. The impact of the digital divide on social life

This digital divide not only affects intergenerational communication but also impacts social relationships and participation in social activities. Younger generations who are more connected to the digital world have greater access to technology-based educational and employment opportunities, while older generations often feel left behind. In addition, limited access to technology for older generations often causes them to feel isolated, both in social and professional contexts.

Table 3: Impact of the digital divide on social life

Impact	Generation Z (%)	Generation Y (%)	Generation X (%)	Baby Boomers (%)
Access to Information	95%	85%	60%	40%
Social Participation	90%	80%	50%	30%
Difficulties in Employment	10%	20%	40%	60%
Social Isolation	5%	10%	30%	50%

Table 3 illustrates how the impact of the digital divide varies across generations. Younger generations have greater access to information and are more likely to participate in social activities. In contrast, older generations, especially Baby Boomers, report higher levels of social isolation and difficulty accessing jobs or important information.

3.4. Efforts to reduce the digital divide

In order to reduce the digital divide, several solutions proposed by participants from various generations include digital training for the older generation, as well as promoting the use of simpler and more accessible technology. The Bandung City Government and various local communities have also started holding digital training programs involving volunteers from among the younger generation to help the older generation.

Several participants also suggested the development of more inclusive platforms, which allow for easier communication between generations, both in the context of the family and the wider community. One proposed solution is to create digital public spaces that combine high technology with direct engagement between individuals, such as co-learning centers that teach digital skills to older generations.

3.5. Discussion

The findings confirm that the digital divide between the younger and older generations in Bandung City is quite large, with significant impacts on communication and social life. This gap creates challenges in intergenerational relationships, but also opens up opportunities to introduce interventions that can reduce the gap. One important aspect of this effort is educating the older generation about the importance of digital literacy, as well as creating an inclusive space where different generations can share their knowledge and experiences.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that the digital gap between generations in the city of Bandung is quite significant and affects communication patterns between the younger generation and the older generation. The younger generation, especially Generation Z and Y, have a high level of skill in using digital technology and are more familiar with social media and instant messaging applications. In contrast, Generation X and Baby Boomers have difficulty adapting to new technologies and prefer traditional communication methods such as telephone and face-to-face. This difference creates difficulties in social interaction, because the older generation often feels isolated or has difficulty keeping up with rapid technological developments.

This digital gap has an impact on social life, where the younger generation has easier access to information and participates in technology-based social activities, while the older generation tends to lag behind in terms of access to

information and participation in social activities. This causes the older generation to often feel isolated, both in personal and professional contexts. However, there is an opportunity to reduce this gap through digital training and counseling programs that involve the younger generation as mentors for the older generation. The government and local communities in the city of Bandung can also play an important role in providing facilities and spaces for joint learning, so that communication between generations can run more harmoniously and inclusively. This study shows the importance of efforts to reduce the digital divide through education and technology empowerment, with the aim of improving the quality of communication and intergenerational relations in the city of Bandung.

References

- Ali, A. A., Mahmood, K., Javaid, Z. K., & Athar, M. (2024). Conflict resolution, psychological well-being and marital satisfaction among spouses of working people. *Pakistan Journal of Law, Analysis and Wisdom*, 3(2), 183-191.
- Bustamante, A. M., Pfeffer, K., Indriansyah, N. R., Bhuana, A. A. D. C., Aritenang, A. F., Nurman, A., ... & Madureira, M. (2024). Creative industries in Indonesia: a socio-spatial exploration of three kampongs in Bandung. *Creative Industries Journal*, 17(1), 113-141.
- Chee, S. Y. (2024). Age-related digital disparities, functional limitations, and social isolation: unraveling the grey digital divide between baby boomers and the silent generation in senior living facilities. *Aging & mental health*, 28(4), 621-632.
- Foster, T. J., Xiao, N., Pelfrey, G. L., Villasanti, H. G., Brock, M., & Justice, L. (2024). Peer-Mediated Intervention for Socially Isolated Preschoolers: An Early-Stage Feasibility Study. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 55(1), 166-180.
- Haider, A., & Akhtar, N. (2024). Impact of Social Media on the Interpersonal Bonds Among Youth: An Investigation into the Views of pupils of University of Sargodha. *International Journal of Asian Education and Psychology*, 1(1).
- Irzalinda, V. (2024). Integration of Local Wisdom in Digital Parenting Practices in Early Childhood: A Case Study of the Community of Long Nyelong Village, Samarinda. *International Journal of Pedagogy*, 2(02), 43-54.
- Merung, A. Y., Larisu, Z., Bahriyah, E. N., & Ulhaq, M. Z. (2024). Transformation Cultural Identity In The Global Era: A Study Of Globalization And Locality. *Socius Journal*, 1(5), 1-8.
- Paul, J., Ueno, A., Dennis, C., Alamanos, E., Curtis, L., Foroudi, P., ... & Wirtz, J. (2024). Digital transformation: A multidisciplinary perspective and future research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 48(2), e13015.
- Richards, M. B., Becker, K. L., & Stollings-Holder, J. (2024). Escaping generational conflict: using gamification to examine intergenerational communication & problem-solving. *Review of Managerial Science*, 18(6), 1597-1616.
- Sulistiyawati, D., Santosa, I., Wahjudi, D., & Junaidy, D. W. (2024). Millennial experience through the utilization of feature technology in coffee shop interior design. *Environment and Social Psychology*, 9(5).
- Susilawaty, S., & Tambawang, L. (2024). Strengthening Indigenous Village Government Institutions through Governance Innovation and Community Empowerment. *Musamus Journal of Public Administration*, 7(1), 127-133.
- Tetteh, P. K., & Kankam, P. K. (2024). The role of social media in information dissemination to improve youth interactions. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2334480.