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Strategies for Controlling Children's Media Access: The Role of Single Parents in Preventing Domestic Violence in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

In the digital era, media exposure has become increasingly complex and carries the potential to influence behavioural risks, including domestic violence. Single parents often face challenges in regulating their children's media access due to constraints in time, resources, and social support. This added difficulty makes the issue of media management among single parents a compelling area of research. Accordingly, this study aims to explore the strategies employed by single mothers in controlling their children's media access as a means of preventing domestic violence. While many studies have discussed media supervision in general, research that specifically focuses on the strategies of single parents in managing children's media exposure remains limited. This study employed a mixed-methods approach involving 208 respondents who were members of the Women-Headed Households (PEKKA) organization in West Java. The findings indicate that one of the effective strategies adopted by single mothers is regulating media usage time based on the child's age and needs. Single mothers employ a communicative and participatory approach by engaging children in regular discussions about media content, modelling appropriate technology use, and encouraging alternatives activities. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of single parents in fostering children's media literacy and preventing domestic violence. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and social service providers in designing support programs that address the specific needs of single parents.

Keywords: *Family communication, social media, violence, media literacy, communication patterns.*

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, children aged 9–16 have broad access to media, including violent content. A large-scale survey of around 10,000 European children identified pornography (22%), cyberbullying (19%), and violent content (18%) as the most prevalent online risks (Livingstone et al., 2014; Tariq et al., 2022). The growing exposure to violence, abuse, and crime through media highlights the need for continuous monitoring and preventive measures. Previous studies have shown that early exposure to violent media is associated with negative socioemotional and academic outcomes, marking it as a significant public health threat that caregivers must actively address (Ahmadi & Adzhani, 2019; Fitzpatrick et al., 2012).

Parental supervision plays a vital role in protecting children from the negative impacts of violent media content. Parenting styles in this context can be grouped into several categories. "Media Managers" actively control media access and educate children about violence. "Enablers" watch TV with their children and discuss violent scenes. "Harmonizers" limit exposure but avoid discussing its effects. "Agent Evaluators" watch violent content with their children without engaging in discussion (Ahmadi et al., 2019; Vijayalakshmi et al., 2019).

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Parental attitudes and practices also differ based on the child's age and the parent's gender (Cheng et al., 2004).

Single parents often face additional challenges in supervising their children's media use. While parenting norms emphasize the responsibility of ensuring children's safety, modern digital media complicate this task. A qualitative study of 40 parents of teenagers in Australia identified five online monitoring methods: physical observation, digital surveillance, trust-based and discursive strategies, social or technical restrictions, and communication with other parents (Page Jeffery, 2020). The study shows that when other methods fail, parents tend to rely on trust-based and discursive strategies (Ahmadi et al., 2023a; Kurnia et al., 2022a; Sulaiman & Ahmadi, 2020).

The challenges faced by single parents in supervising their children's media use are complex and multifaceted. Research shows that single parents are often burdened with parenting responsibilities, face social stigmas, and lack social support, making it difficult to spend quality time with their children. Consequently, children of single parents often exhibit lower academic achievement, diminished social engagement, and increased emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, recent research has shifted toward positive outcomes and protective factors leading to better outcomes for these children. Emphasizing resilience-building and protective factors can help children adjust in both the short and long term (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023). Families headed by single mothers often face harsh living conditions, with pressures and demands that can hinder their ability to fulfil parenting responsibilities (Hutasoit & Brahmana, 2021; Rinawati et al., 2025). Single parents, particularly those raising teenagers, face significant challenges, with both parents and teenagers experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties (Dodaj, 2020; Sangeet & Singh, 2022)

Single parents often face time constraints due to full-time work, limiting their ability to consistently supervise their children's media use. Many also lack adequate knowledge of the technology their children use, making it difficult to apply parental controls or identify harmful content. The emotional and psychological stress of single parenting further impacts their capacity to enforce consistent supervision. Studies show that 90% of single mothers experience general stress and 86.70% face psychological well-being issues, largely due to partner loss, divorce, or separation (Chanda, 2018).

Economic constraints can hinder single parents from providing alternative activities or purchasing effective parental control tools, leading children to rely more on media for entertainment. Limited social support further reduces assistance in supervising children, often leaving parents feeling isolated and overwhelmed. External influences, such as peers and the surrounding environment, may also expose children to inappropriate content, which is difficult to monitor without constant presence. Setting consistent rules becomes challenging, especially when parents feel guilty for limited time with their children or when children sense a lack of supervision. The wide accessibility of media: TV, internet, smartphones, and video games adds complexity to supervision, requiring more comprehensive and consistent strategies.

Research shows that in 2018, 63.6% of students in Cilegon City had poor communication patterns with their families (Rinawati et al., 2025). The main cause was gadget misuse, which led to students becoming addicted to their devices, resulting in less time spent with their parents as they increasingly devoted their free time to gadgets. This dependence on media leads students to constantly think about using it. Gadgets, intended for long-distance communication and schoolwork assistance, have instead become a

necessity accompanying students in every activity (Uldafira & Rochmaniah, 2023). This study aligns with other research on adolescent communication with their families in the digital era. Among 372 respondents aged 15-18 years, social media ranked second after school (peer communication) as the most comfortable place for teenagers to communicate, while communication with family at home ranked last in terms of comfort (Pramono et al., 2017). Research in the U.S. shows a similar trend of disconnection within families, with the number of families reporting a decrease in quality family time due to children's internet use nearly tripling from 11% in 2006 to 28% in 2011 (Sahiti et al., 2017).

The research gap regarding strategies for controlling children's media access and the role of single parents in preventing domestic violence in the digital age is multifaceted. Existing literature reflects the challenges and evolving dimensions of domestic violence due to technological advancements, but there remains a lack of targeted studies on strategies specifically for single parents.

The prevalence of domestic violence within familial settings, particularly those involving children, has been documented significantly in existing research. For instance, a significant number of children are witnesses to domestic violence, impacting their psychological and emotional well-being (Dodaj, 2020, Yosep et al., 2022). However, these studies do not specifically address the preventative roles single parents can adopt within digital contexts, particularly given the increased accessibility of media that can expose children to such violence (Tan, 2024).

Single parents often face unique challenges compared to dual-parent households, especially in safeguarding children from potential threats posed by digital media. Empowering single parents with effective media access strategies is crucial for mitigating the risks associated with domestic violence. Research highlights the emotional turmoil children experience in domestic violence situations and the necessity of intervention strategies that can promote healthier environments (Faizah, 2023; Pinna, 2016). Despite these insights, there is a dearth of resources that focus on the specific strategies single parents might employ to control media access, potentially leading to gaps in protective measures against digital exposure to violence.

Furthermore, the digital landscape has altered the way domestic violence manifests, with technology allowing abusers to exert control through various means, including monitoring social media usage (Dragiewicz et al., 2021; Kouzani, 2023). This highlights a critical need for strategies not only to control children's media access but also to educate single parents on recognizing and mitigating the risks posed by online interactions. While some studies have raised awareness of technology's dual role—as both a facilitator of abuse and a tool for intervention—comprehensive guidelines tailored for single parents are scarce (Dragiewicz et al., 2018, Esmail Hassan et al., 2016). Strategies should thus encompass not only the oversight of media consumption but also parental education regarding the potential uses of technology for both safety and control.

The intersection of gender dynamics and domestic violence further complicates the scenario. Research indicates that single mothers often perceive their parenting within a context of domestic violence, which may influence their willingness or ability to impose restrictions on media access (Scrafford et al., 2022). This complicates the development of effective strategies centered on single parents, indicating the necessity of interventions that support both the mental health of the parent and the safety of the children (Dargis & Koenigs, 2017). Addressing these intertwined issues could yield more effective pathways for

preventing domestic violence in the digital age and empowering single parents to take decisive action.

To summarize, while there exists significant literature on domestic violence, children's exposure to violence, and the associated emotional implications, there remains an evident research gap regarding specific strategies for single parents to control their children's media access as a preventative measure against domestic violence. Focusing on this demographic may foster more resilient family structures and healthier developmental environments for children exposed to potentially harmful influences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective communication between parents and children serves as the foundation for preventing domestic violence. Research findings indicate that communication with a positive attitude toward children's social interactions, empathy towards children, and equality within the family encourage children to be more open with their parents, especially when sharing various statuses on social media (Fardiah et al., 2020).

Parents need to guide and provide explanations about inappropriate or harmful content and teach children to understand the difference between comfortable and uncomfortable content. Additionally, parents should establish open communication and prioritize a persuasive approach when dealing with inappropriate content issues. Thus, parents must be active monitors, provide proper supervision and guidance, and maintain open communication channels with their children to help them develop the necessary skills to consume online media wisely and healthily (Ahmadi et al., 2024; Ahmadi et al., 2023a; Ahmadi et al., 2023b; Kurnia et al., 2022a; Kurnia et al., 2022b; Kurnia et al., 2023). Parents with an open communication style are more likely to use discussion-based intervention strategies (Fujioka & Austin, 2002). Parental availability, the time parents spend with media, and parental demographics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and education level as well as children's demographics such as age and gender significantly impact the creation of more targeted parental interventions to encourage shared media use (Connell et al., 2015).

Controlling children's media use is crucial as it provides positive impacts. Parental monitoring of children's media use has a protective effect on sleep quality, academic achievement, and both prosocial and aggressive behaviour, mediated by the total duration of media use and exposure to media violence (Nathanson, 1999). Parental monitoring of media also offers protective benefits for various academic, social, and physical aspects of children, and can provide multiple health advantages (Gentile et al., 2012, 2014). Parental mediation of screen media is generally restrictive and reactive in nature, with siblings often playing a more dominant role, while media use within families frequently occurs in parallel on individual mobile devices (Domoff et al., 2019). Parents can mitigate some of the negative effects of media by applying appropriate mediation strategies (Collier et al., 2016). Media co-viewing activities are influenced by parental availability, the amount of time parents spend with media, and demographic factors such as the parents' age, gender, ethnicity, and level of education, as well as the child's age and gender.

The findings of this study have implications for the development of more targeted parental interventions to encourage co-use of media (Connell et al., 2015). Parental rules with an autonomy-supportive style reduce children's screen time, while a controlling style increases excessive screen use (Bjelland et al., 2015). Parental communication style influences consumer socialization related to children's media use, with an alignment

between specific Family Communication Patterns (FCP) and parental socialization styles (Mikeska et al., 2017). Authoritative parenting styles are more likely to recognize the severity of pornography consumption and take firm and active measures to protect children, whereas fathers tend to have more dysfunctional communication about pornography compared to mothers (Boniel-Nissim et al., 2020). General parental socialization styles can predict the tendency of children's consumer socialization but do not necessarily promote autonomy in consumption. Instructive parental mediation and open family communication enhance children's perception of the differences between television reality and the real world, as well as the negative effects of television viewing (Gentile et al., 2014). Parental monitoring of children's media use can reduce negative effects related to media consumption time, exposure to media violence, and academic achievement, with children's self-reports being slightly better predictors (Gentile et al., 2012). Parental computer and internet usage positively influence children's computer and internet use, with older adolescents spending more time on computers and engaging in internet activities (Vaala & Bleakley, 2015). In other countries, such as China, parental monitoring of adolescents leads to increased problematic mobile phone use, partially mediated by escape motivation and moderated by feelings of shame. Parental behaviours related to children's media consumption have long-term effects on children's BMI during childhood.

These findings highlight the importance of targeting parental media monitoring as an effort to prevent childhood obesity (Tiberio et al., 2014). Parents play a crucial role in accompanying and monitoring their children's digital media use, fostering empathy, a sense of belonging, and allowing children to express their thoughts and feelings. The level of children's emotional intelligence is not significantly affected by digital media use, but reading has a positive impact on it, while parental media-related behaviours can significantly influence children's emotional intelligence (Nabi & Wolfers, 2022). Restricting social media use also impacts personal well-being, the ability to connect with others, and fosters a spirit of unity (Ahmadi et al., 2023c; Paquette, 2013).

In recent years, the dynamics of parental mediation concerning children's media consumption have garnered significant attention, particularly in the context of single-parent families. Parental mediation, which refers to strategies employed by parents to manage or control their children's media usage, plays a pivotal role in shaping children's media experiences and subsequent literacy skills. Studies indicate that the strategies employed by single parents differ from those of two-parent households, often influenced by the unique challenges faced in single-parent scenarios, such as limited supervision and resources.

One major finding is that single parents often employ less restrictive approaches to mediation of media, which may result in higher media consumption among their children compared to those from dual-parent families. Research by Nikken suggests that single parents are generally more lenient, which may lead children to engage more frequently with various media platforms without adequate oversight. This trend aligns with findings by Nikken and Schols, who emphasize the importance of parental mediation in nurturing children's cognitive and social skills developed through media (Nikken & Schols, 2015). Moreover, restrictive mediation techniques can become less effective as children age, complicating the mediation process for single parents who might lack the resources to influence their children's media interactions effectively (Desimpelaere et al., 2020).

Additionally, the demand for structured parenting support to assist these parents in navigating children's media use is increasingly recognized. As highlighted in studies exploring parental attitudes toward media, single-parent families may require additional guidance on effective mediation techniques tailored to contemporary media challenges, especially concerning digital technologies (Nikken & Opree, 2018; Tan & Zhooriyati, 2021). This demand is significant, as the potential for exposure to hazardous content increases in environments where media is consumed alone or without parental supervision, a common scenario in single-parent households (Nikken & Opree, 2018).

Understanding the mediation patterns among single parents also necessitates examining how socioeconomic factors might influence their strategies. Studies suggest that socioeconomic status (SES) significantly impacts parenting strategies, implying a need for tailored interventions that consider these factors (Salway et al., 2019). Single-parent households, particularly those with limited resources, may face challenges implementing effective media regulation strategies, resulting in a higher incidence of exposure to inappropriate content (Poulain et al., 2023).

In addition, recent analyses have explored negotiation dynamics between parents and children regarding media use. Research indicates that children frequently engage in negotiations to bypass parental restrictions, highlighting an evolving power dynamic that complicates mediation efforts. It is critical for single parents to develop negotiation and conflict-resolution skills that enhance their mediation effectiveness amidst their children's increasing media autonomy (Beyens & Beullens, 2017).

In conclusion, the research surrounding strategies employed by single parents to manage children's media access reveals a complex landscape characterized by challenges and the necessity for supportive frameworks. As single parents navigate issues like restricted access to resources and the evolving nature of children's media consumption, tailored strategies based on a comprehensive understanding of their situations can significantly mitigate the potential risks associated with uncontrolled media exposure.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed methods approach. Mixed methods research combines elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches including perspectives, data collection, analysis, and inference techniques, to provide a broad and in-depth understanding and explanation (Hakim Nasution et al., 2024; Nasution, 2023). This approach allows researchers to collect, analyse, and integrate both quantitative and qualitative data, either simultaneously or sequentially, for a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. Mixed methods combine numerical data with descriptive information like expressions and gestures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2017). The adoption of a mixed method approach in this research is hence intended to provide the comprehensive and nuanced understanding of communication patterns used by single parent mothers in utilizing children's media as the preventive effort against family violence. This research found out the communication practices engaged by both the single parent mothers and their children aiming to figure out the strategic approaches employed by the single parent mothers in regulating children's media access in anticipating the violence in a family setting.

The population of this study comprises single-parent mothers residing in West Java. The selection of West Java as the research site is grounded in statistical data indicating that this province has the highest divorce rate in Indonesia. According to data on divorce cases

across several provinces in 2023, West Java recorded 102,280 cases, followed by East Java with 88,213 cases, and Central Java in third place with 76,367 cases. The distribution of divorce cases by province is as follows:

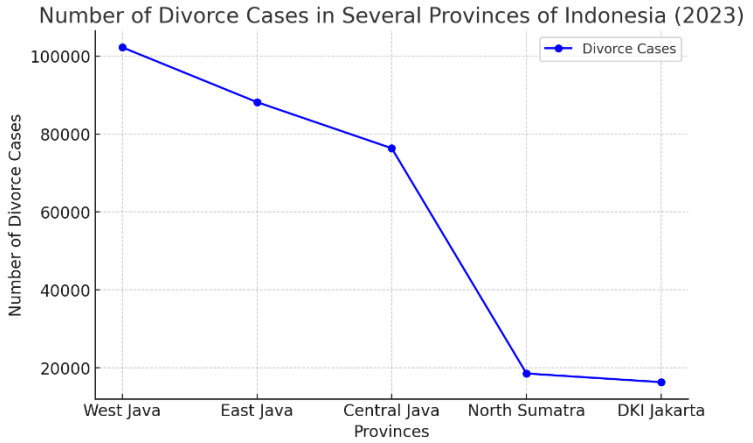


Figure 1: Divorce cases in Indonesia
Source: Annur (2023)

These single mothers are typically affiliated with the Women Heads of Households (PEKKA) group, that is supported by the West Java BP3AKB. The selection of PEKKA as the focus group for female heading household is based on their positioning as both vulnerable and resilient actors. This positioning presents a valuable opportunity to explore the internal dynamics of families in responding to media exposure, as well as the resistance strategies they employ against potential media-induced domestic violence.

The research sample was obtained through cluster sampling across 27 cities/regencies in West Java (Guan et al., 2019; Supardi, 1993). From these 27 cities/regencies, one will be chosen based on the representation of the areas where the PEKKA group is active. Within each selected city or regency, 15% of single mothers who are members of the PEKKA group will be selected as respondents. The respondents were chosen using a cluster sampling technique from four targeted cities/regencies. The final sampling identified the following four locations:

Table 1: Research sample

No	Selected Cities/Districts	Number of Pekka Groups	Number of Members
1	Sukabumi Regency	37	418
2	Subang Regency	78	118
3	City of Cirebon	11	182
4	City of Tasikmalaya	47	632
Amount		**173**	**1350**

PEKKA members in these four regencies were designated as the research population. From a total of 1,350 PEKKA members across these areas, 20% or 270 members were selected as research respondents. However, only 208 respondents completed the research instrument. This lower response rate was mainly due to work commitments and other responsibilities that prevented some single mothers from participating fully in the study.

Data collection was carried out through several methods: distributing written questionnaires to single mothers about their communication with children, conducting random interviews to supplement and validate the questionnaire responses, and reviewing relevant literature reviews on topics such as effective communication, women's empowerment, and violence. The data analysis was carried out using Percentage Analysis, in which all collected data were examined by the researchers using descriptive analysis methods. This approach involves explaining the obtained data using percentage calculations, also known as relative frequencies (Kurniawan & Puspitaningtyas, 2016). The concept of strategies employed by single mothers to prevent violence against children is subsequently measured using the following assessment tools.

Table 2: Measuring Instrument for the concept of single parent mothers' strategies in using children's media

No.	Single parent strategy concept	Measuring instrument
1.	Media usage time restriction policy	Parents have clear rules about how long children can access media.
2.	Monitoring the quality of media content	Parents monitor the types of content accessed by children according to age and family values.
3.	Parental involvement in monitoring	Parents discuss the content watched and provide examples in media use.
4.	Open communication	There is open communication between parents and children about media usage habits.

The interview results, serving as qualitative data, were then analysed in four stages. In the first stage, data were collected either manually or by program with the assistance of software from the research. In the second stage, the data were classified according to advantages and disadvantages. The third stage involved analysing the qualitative data either manually or using relevant applications, based on the established classifications. The fourth which was the final stage presents recommendations for the use of appropriate data analysis according to the research needs (Rofiah, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Media Usage Time Limitation Policy

Nowadays, children's communication is more frequently conducted through social media. Children use social media to share information and build relationships. One of the most utilized features on social media by children is the creation of groups. Various groups are created by children on platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, or Discord (Ahmadi et al., 2024). Interestingly, the social media groups joined by children are also joined by their parents, meaning that both parents and children are actively engaged in these groups. Research findings reveal that the parents of the child respondents are actively involved in the social media groups in which their children participate as members. The following is an overview of the research results regarding the groups joined by both children and parents:

Table 3: Children's and parents' social media groups

No	Group	Jumlah	%
1	Tiktok	2	1.0
2	Whatsapp	178	85.6
3	Whatsapp, Facebook	10	4.8
4	Whatsapp, Instagram	6	2.9

5	Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook	4	1.9
6	Whatsapp, Instagram, Telegram	2	1.0
7	Whatsapp, Instagram, Tiktok, Facebook, Telegram	2	1.0
8	Whatsapp, Tiktok	2	1.0
9	Whatsapp, Tiktok, Facebook	2	1.0
Total		**208**	**100.0**

Research findings indicate that the most frequently joined group by children and their mothers, as research respondents, is the WhatsApp group. The participation of mothers in social media groups has both positive and negative effects. One positive aspect is that parents can monitor and provide protection for their children in social media use. Another positive effect is the establishment of effective communication between parents and children. Additionally, the involvement demonstrates parental support for their children's social media activities. The role of parents in guiding their children in using social media for communication is crucial. This will provide positive value in helping children build relationships within their environment (Setiadi et al., 2024).

Restricting children's media time is crucial to prevent negative effects like exposure to violence, which can increase aggression and harmful behaviour. Limiting media use helps control the content children access and promotes healthy social skills such as empathy and peaceful conflict resolution. It also encourages outdoor play and activities that support development. These restrictions raise parental awareness and promote active supervision and education on healthy media habits. Research shows that single mothers in the "Female-Headed Household" (PEKKA) group tend to enforce stricter time limits compared to more flexible approaches.

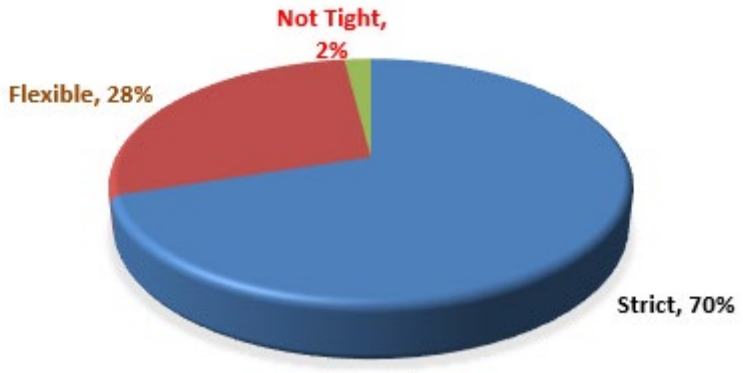


Figure 2: Media usage time limitation policy
Source: Rinawati et al. (2025)

Implementing media usage policies for children is a challenge often faced by many parents, especially single parents. Based on field data, limiting media usage time is one way to avoid the negative impacts of excessive media exposure. Single parents interviewed in the field set rules by making agreements regarding when their children are allowed to use electronic devices. This was conveyed by a research informant who stated that "the point is, ma'am, I have a toddler, still 2 years and a half, still used to parenting, sometimes our upbringing should not be like that, ma'am, holding a cell phone, but because my child is cared for because of my activities, usually with his grandmother and his parents because there are so many siblings, so sometimes there are peers who like to carry cell phones so yes, so

sometimes he knows so, When I come home, I also say "Mom, where is the cell phone", but I have a note even though my child is still a toddler, but discipline must be applied like that, ma'am, discipline is applied from an early age so you can play cell phones for 1 hour a day, 1 hour is like that, but if he has used it for 1 hour and wants it again even though he cries and tantrums, the child will definitely tantrum, I would rather let him tantrum like that than later the child will be addicted to gadgets" (Informant Interview).

There are several categories of how they enforce time limits on media usage. The first category is for children over 17 years old and those in college; parents generally trust their children to use media without strict rules, assuming they are mature enough to understand when and for how long they should use media. This type aligns with previous research showing that the family environment has a significant influence on a child's psychosocial development. A democratic family environment positively influences children's psychosocial development, making them more creative, as they have the freedom to explore themselves without overly restrictive rules limiting their desired activities (Sinta et al., 2024).

The second category is for children aged 6-16 years, where parents set moderate rules. This means that parents decide when their children can use media, for example, after completing homework or assignments and on weekends. At this age, parents feel supported by the school because most schools have rules prohibiting the use of media devices during learning sessions, except when the lesson requires the use of media devices or when assignments need to be completed using them. The third category is for young children, particularly toddlers, where very strict rules are applied. This means parents fully supervise their children's media use by not giving them their own devices and allowing them to use the parents' devices instead. The timing is carefully controlled, deciding exactly when children can use media, usually permitting it during the afternoon and evening under direct parental supervision.

The categories of parental communication patterns in managing their children's social media use were studied in Malaysia by Nurhamizah (Hashim & Razali, 2019). The first is the primitive style, where parents have high involvement but low supervision of media and technology. The second is the cyber parents, who pay attention to the presence of social media and technology. This parenting style is considered the most ideal in today's social media and technology era. The third type is indifferent parents who show little concern for media use and are viewed as irresponsible. Lastly, there is the geek parenting style, characterized by parental involvement. Among these four parenting styles, the cyber style is the most relevant in supporting the establishment of rules and limits that help avoid the negative impacts of media and technology on children (Hashim et al., 2007; Hashim & Razali, 2019).

The results of this study indicate that it is crucial to impose time restrictions on children's social media usage. With such limitations, children's social, emotional, and mental health will be better ensured (Wulandari, 2020). Restricting children's social media usage is correlated with improved interpersonal communication between parents and children. This leads to more open communication and a stronger relationship between parents and their children (Putri Mulia & Fauzi, 2021). According to research findings, parental restrictions on social media usage show that single mothers often encourage their children to engage in alternative activities (such as sports, social interactions, and play) to prevent social media addiction. The research findings can be seen in the following figure:

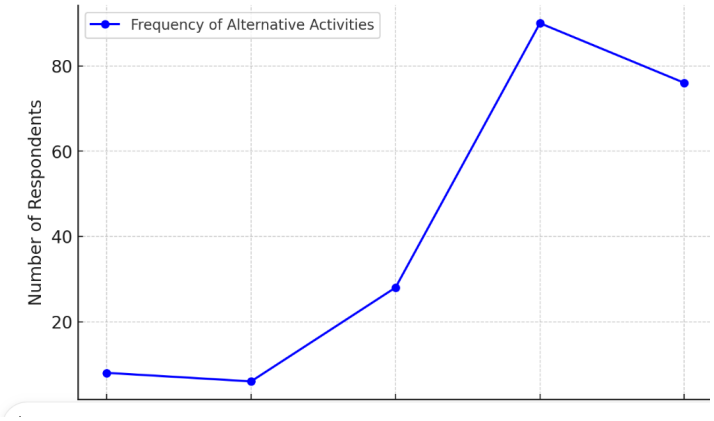


Figure 3: Alternative activities besides social media usage
Source: Rinawati et al. (2025)

The presence of alternative activities for children besides spending time on social media has been shown to improve children's mental health, according to research findings (Gursoy et al., 2020; Meikle, 2016). This can be understood as excessive gadget use negatively impacts children's social interactions. Therefore, parents are encouraged to motivate their children to engage in traditional play activities with their peers, such as role-playing, physical games, or other creative activities. These activities can enhance children's communication skills and social interactions (Huang et al., 2020).

2. Media Content Quality Monitoring

Monitoring the quality of media content is vital in preventing domestic violence by ensuring children are exposed to educational and positive values like cooperation, empathy, and respect. It helps avoid content that reinforces stereotypes or promotes aggression. By consistently guiding children to choose healthy media and developing their critical evaluation skills, parents provide clear boundaries and foster understanding of how media influences attitudes and behaviour.

Content monitoring also creates an opportunity to talk openly with family members about what they are viewing, open discussions about the values and behaviours encountered in the content and teach them how to deal with content that may not be in line with the family's values. In this context, it is important for parents to use the tools and resources available to help them monitor and control what family members consume, so that a healthy media environment can be promoted at home and violence in the family can be prevented.

As stated by the informant, "Yes, children are really fond of holding cell phones, ma'am, it's their time so they all hold cell phones even though sometimes they are not allowed to play cell phones, sometimes their friends bring cell phones to the house so they want to play but they are still supervised, ma'am, so they are supervised. How to supervise it, ma'am, is seen by me, so they play with their friends because they like to come to the house, so they try to see what if they don't watch what, ask me, while being invited to chat" (Informant Interview).

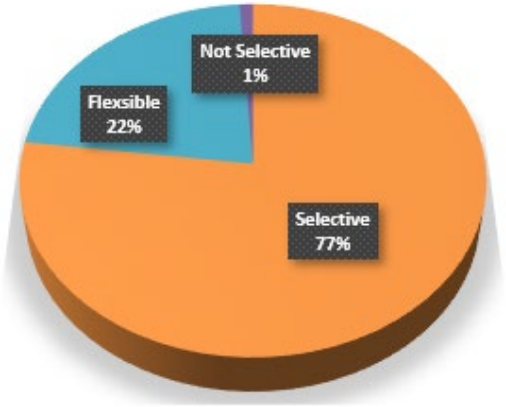


Figure 4: Media usage time limitation policy
Source: Rinawati et al. (2025)

Single parents regulate content access by giving permission to their children to use age-appropriate and educational applications and websites. Some also utilize parental lock feature on devices to limit access to certain types of content. This is supported by research that has been conducted that parents have various ways to control their children's use of social media, such as checking the contents of cell phones, limiting use, discussing the impact of social media, accompanying use, blocking pornographic content, using Google Kinds, asking friends to become children's followers, limiting and asking for children's passwords, and dividing study and play time. Minimizing children's exposure to negative content requires parents to play an active role in regulating gadget use and setting time limits for playing games or using social media. Once children begin using gadgets, parents must consistently monitor and supervise their social media activities. This ensures that children's growth and development progress in accordance with their age (Uldafira & Rochmaniah, 2023).

3. Parental Involvement in Monitoring

Parental involvement in monitoring children's exposure to violent content is essential to protect them from harm and promote positive experiences. Parents should educate children about the risks of violent media and the importance of positive values while using parental control tools like privacy settings, content filters, and monitoring software to supervise online activities. This includes setting time limits and blocking harmful websites. Monitoring can also involve checking browsing history, downloading apps, and social media to prevent exposure to inappropriate content. Through proactive and caring supervision, parents help children use the internet safely and responsibly.

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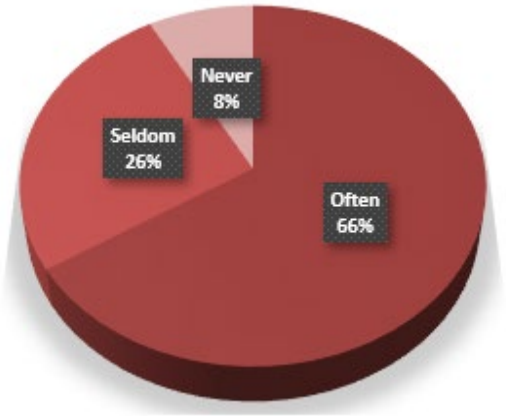


Figure 5: Parental involvement in monitoring
Source: Rinawati et al. (2025)

A single parent's effort to engage with their children to control their media use includes discussing and modelling healthy and responsible media use, talking about the importance of setting time limits for media use and the impact of media, regularly checking their children's media usage, and evaluating policies based on the child's development and needs. Research findings show that parents frequently provide guidance and engage in discussions with their children about how to use social media content wisely, thereby creating positive value for children in their media usage.

Informant's statement, "because now children learn from cell phones, it must be controlled to what extent the child uses it. to children it is indeed given provisions if they want to hold a cell phone from that morning the child is not allowed to look at the cell phone and as parents we also have to set an example if we, for example, forbid it to children while we are the mother when we wake up looking at the cell phone, it's just a lie. So, I do have an initiative, that waking up in the morning while the mobile phone is not allowed to be seen first, even my child just left the mobile phone at home and did not bring it to school.

The research findings above indicate that parents are aware of the negative impacts of unwise or excessive social media use (Kotler et al., 2020) “Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship,” Therefore, parental involvement in guiding children to use social media with positive content is essential. This awareness is already present among the parent respondents in the study. It is hoped that the wise use of social media will have a positive impact on children.

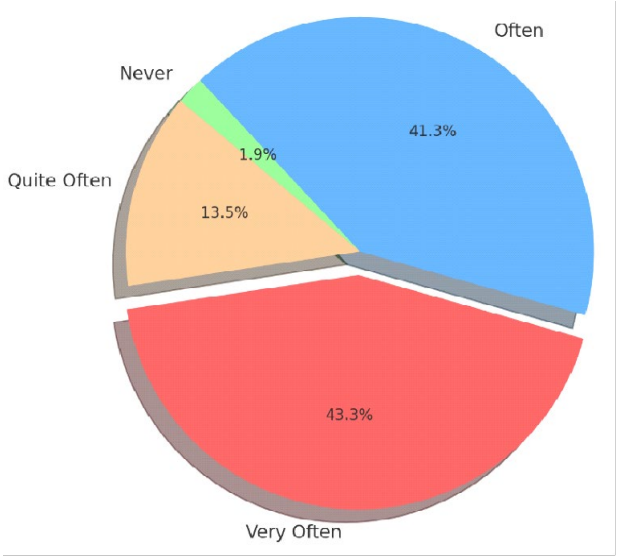


Figure 6: Frequency of parents teaching social media content wisely and safely
Source: Rinawati et al. (2025)

Findings show that parents use various methods to monitor their children's media use. These include setting limits on screen time and permitted apps or websites, using parental control features to block inappropriate content, and engaging with the same platforms to better understand what their children access. Parents also discuss content with their children, educate them on identifying fake news and harmful material, and explain the impact of violent or inappropriate content. Regular conversations about online experiences and feelings of discomfort are common, along with periodic checks of online activity. This approach balances supervision with the freedom needed to teach children responsible and wise media use.

In turn, parental monitoring of children's social media use becomes a crucial aspect of parenting within the family. Furthermore, parental empathy emerges alongside this monitoring. This empathy is demonstrated through parents' active involvement in their children's lives. Parental empathy, shown through understanding and responding to children's feelings and perspectives, plays a vital role in fostering harmonious relationships and supporting children's emotional development. Effective parental monitoring is often aligned with the implementation of a democratic parenting style. In this approach, parents not only supervise but also provide space for children to express themselves, listen to their opinions, and respect their feelings. Parental empathy is reflected in their ability to understand and feel what their children experience, thereby creating a supportive and understanding environment (Mikeska et al., 2017; Vijayalakshmi et al., 2019).

4. Open Communication

Open communication between parents and children is crucial for monitoring media use and preventing family violence. It builds trust, making children comfortable to share their media experiences, including exposure to harmful content. Through open dialogue, parents can discuss media effects, set limits, teach values like respect and non-violence, and help children develop critical skills to evaluate media influence on their behaviour and emotions.

The informant's statement stated that, "My children are close to me, my children like to tell me if there is anything. Sometimes their mum is like a friend. If I am like a sibling, it is not awkward, with children there are no boundaries. I have three children. I got divorced in 2010. My children were still in school; I was divorced alive. All my children came with me. Coincidentally at that time, the first was in college, the second was in 3rd grade high school, the youngest was in kindergarten. I struggled, thank God now my children are independent. Now I live alone. Whatever there is a problem, I always tell them. Incidentally, the children's mobile phones are never locked, so I can see them. When we're together now, for example, if their siblings go to the toilet, my brother and I, for example, let's look at their mobile phones. But there's nothing wrong. There's nothing to worry about. His father is separated, so he tells me anything, so if he has a problem at work, he goes to his friend, so he always tells me (Tasikmalaya informant).

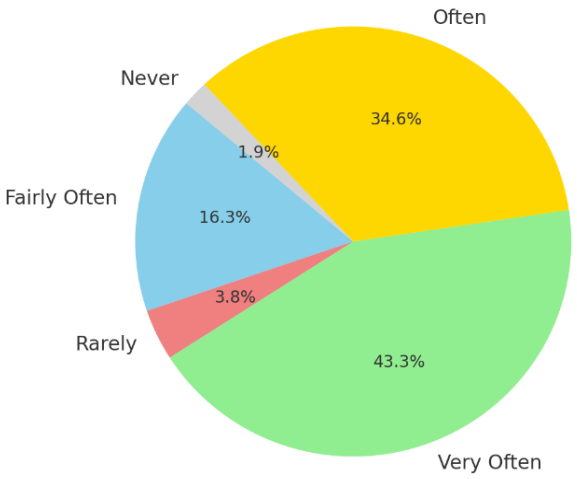


Figure 7: Frequency of teaching positive media usage
Source: Rinawati et al. (2025)

Research shows that the majority of single mothers (43.3%) reported very often teaching their children about positive media use, while only 3.8% said they rarely do so, and 1.9% never do. These findings indicate that single mothers view educating children about responsible social media use as highly important. This supports previous studies emphasizing the role of parental guidance in preventing negative media effects, where open communication and active supervision are key to helping children use media wisely (Kathleen, 2010). Other research also highlights the risk of children freely accessing violent and pornographic content online. When parents lack the necessary skills and understanding to supervise media use effectively, children are more vulnerable to harmful content. Thus, this study reinforces that parents play a vital role in educating and monitoring children to protect them from the negative impacts of digital media responsibility that all parents must uphold (Chavda & Nisarga, 2023; Cheng et al., 2004). Open communication helps parents set clear media rules and behavioural expectations aligned with family values. By listening attentively to children's media experiences, parents build trust and provide supportive guidance. This approach enables active monitoring and creates a safe environment that helps prevent domestic violence.

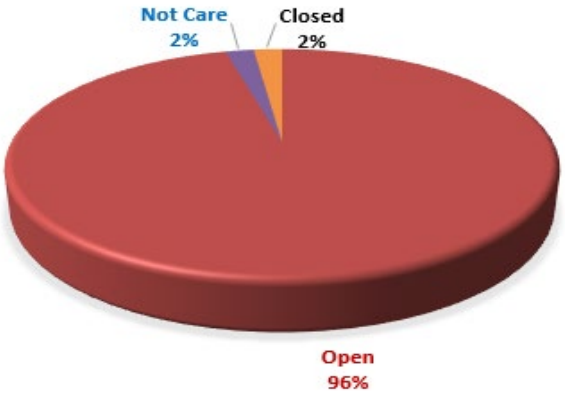


Figure 8: Open communication
Source: Rinawati et al. (2025)

Rules on media use are more effective when discussed openly with children, including clear consequences for violations, and applied consistently. Involving children in these discussions fosters responsibility. Parents also offer alternatives to the media, such as creative activities (e.g., painting, crafts, cooking) or engaging in sports and recreation. Qualitative data shows that single parents predominantly use communication in supervising media use. Parents of toddlers (0–5 years) often accompany their children during media use, avoid providing personal devices, and divert attention from screens through play and interaction with the environment. For teenagers, single parents maintain open communication, allowing teens to speak freely without judgment, fostering trust so that children feel comfortable sharing their activities and receiving guidance when needed.

Open communication with children to foster healthy relationships and prevent violence involves creating a safe and comfortable environment where children feel free to express themselves without fear. Parents, especially single parents listen attentively without interrupting, show empathy through supportive body language, and avoid harsh language, opting instead for positive and encouraging words. Children are regularly invited to share their thoughts, feelings, and daily experiences without judgment, helping to build mutual respect. They are also taught to express emotions clearly and politely. Parents make time for uninterrupted interactions through shared activities, ensuring emotional support in both joyful and difficult times. This consistent, empathetic communication helps build strong, trusting bonds and reduces the risk of violence.

This open communication method is in line with research that has been conducted that if most parents are good enough in caring for and providing warmth and love and affection by parents accepting their children's existence, loving them with full love, praising them sincerely, being involved in children's activities, and chatting about children's problems, listening to children's words, and playing with children, it turns out that it has a significant effect on the affection dimension (50%), and 36.7% who have closeness to their parents, children become open in discussing various things and children become happy (Panggabean et al., 2022). Parenting mistakes such as lack of guidance and direction, not spending enough time, not showing affection, being verbally and physically abusive, and ignoring and rejecting children's existence will affect children's personality and behaviour in the future (Smith et al, 2020).

Open communication between parents and children through social media is crucial in fostering harmony, thereby minimizing the risk of domestic violence, particularly against children. The openness in communication between parents and children serves as the foundation for a strong emotional bond between them. Interpersonal communication between parents and children is essential in helping children understand how to protect themselves. With effective communication, children feel more comfortable discussing their experiences or concerns, allowing parents to take preventive measures before undesirable situations occur. A lack of attention, affection, and communication between parents and children can be a triggering factor for violence. Effective communication between parents and children contributes to violence prevention by building relationships based on trust and understanding (Rinawati & Fardiah, 2016).

CONCLUSION

This study analysed strategies single parents use to control their children's media access to prevent domestic violence. Findings show that single parents set firm rules on screen time and content, actively supervise media use, and utilize tools like parental controls and filters to block harmful material. They also educate children on responsible media use and recognizing inappropriate content, helping develop critical evaluation skills. Open communication and emotional support between parents and children further create a safer, supportive environment.

Effective management of children's screen time requires balancing media use with activities like sports, learning, and social interaction to reduce exposure to harmful content and prevent family violence. Given the limited time and resources of single parents, support from community and educational institutions is vital. This study highlights that single parents' use of clear rules, technological tools, media literacy education, and open communication is crucial in safeguarding children from violence and fostering healthy development.

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