

**COMMUNICATED PARENTING:
SINGAPORE-BASED FILIPINO WORKING MOTHERS AND
THEIR LONG-DISTANCE PARENTING OF THEIR TEENAGE CHILDREN
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

MA. ROSEL SANCHEZ SAN PASCUAL
(Bachelor of Arts in Communication Research, University of the Philippines
Master in Development Economics, University of the Philippines)

**A THESIS SUBMITTED
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATIONS AND NEW MEDIA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND NEW MEDIA
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE**

2012

Acknowledgements

I am sincerely grateful for the valuable help and contributions of these people and institutions in making this thesis possible:

- Thanks to all the migrant mothers who have graciously participated in my study. Without your help, I would not have been able to pursue this worthwhile undertaking.
- Thank you Dr. Lim Sun Sun for your brilliant guidance throughout the conduct of this research.
- Thanks to the National University of Singapore and the Department of Communications and New Media for enriching my knowledge further and expanding my research skills. Thank you for the research scholarship that you have generously given me, without which, I would not have been able to pursue graduate studies in one of the world's best universities. I am definitely proud to be a graduate of NUS!
- Thanks to the University of the Philippines, the UP College of Mass Communication, and the Department of Communication Research for developing in me the desire to advance the knowledge and skills that I have gained as UP alumna. Thanks to my colleagues at the Department of Communication Research for encouraging me to pursue graduate studies abroad. Thank you Dr. Elena E. Pernia and Prof. Ruperto P. Alonzo for your recommendations that helped me earn a scholarship in one of the world's best universities.
- Thanks to all my friends in Singapore for being my family away from home.
- Thanks to my family back home who have unconditionally supported me throughout my academic years: my parents, Elmer and Rose; my siblings, Waro and Cheia; and my grandmother, Medy.
- And most importantly, my special thanks to the Lord Almighty for all the blessings.

Summary

In the era of globalization and mobility, this thesis looks into how family members who are separated by transnational labor migration persist in being a family. Specifically, this research focuses on migrant mothers and their efforts to parent and remain connected with their children even across borders. By doing so, this study describes the communication efforts and processes which are at the core of these mothers' transnational parenting.

In conceptualizing long-distance parenting, this thesis synthesized relevant concepts from communication theory, specifically Rosengren's General Model of Uses and Gratifications, family theory, particularly Family Systems Theory, Role Theory, and concepts from parenting, family, communication, and transnational migration literature.

Findings that addressed the three main objectives of this thesis were derived from the 32 Singapore-based Filipino working mothers with teenage children living in the Philippines who were interviewed within the period of October 2010 to March 2011. In response to the first objective, this study describes the migrant mothers' demographic, social, and technological profiles, which this thesis collectively labels as their "communication environment". For the second objective, this study explains how these migrant mothers view parenting and their role as a mother now that they are living away from their teenage children. Finally, for the third objective, this study describes how long-distance parenting takes place as these migrant mothers use communication media and technologies in their remote parenting and this study also presents these mothers' assessment of these communication media and technologies in enabling them to parent their children despite the distance.

With regard to the social aspect of communication environment, the migrant mothers in this study are classified based on their live-out or live-in employment arrangement. The mothers

on live-out employment setting include professionals, associate professionals, managers, clerical support workers, sales and service workers, and an elementary occupation worker. All the mothers on live-in employment, on the other hand, are domestic workers.

Pertaining to the demographic aspect of communication environment, the migrant mothers reported a combined number of 45 teenage children, their average age is 15 years old, and slightly more than half of them are female. The children of live-out mothers reside either in Metro Manila or in urban to partially urban areas outside Metro Manila while the teenage children of half of the live-in mothers dwell in partially urban to rural areas. And in addition to the social aspect of communication environment, the migrant mothers generally leave their children in the care of their father, maternal grandparents particularly their grandmother, and maternal aunts and uncles.

Concerning the technological aspect of communication environment, all the migrant mothers in this study conveyed that they prefer newer forms of communication media and technologies. However, the interviews reveal that live-out mothers have a wider range of access to newer forms of communication media and technologies compared to live-in mothers, such that, while access to mobile phone is universal among the migrant mothers interviewed, live-out mothers also have access to Internet-connected computer. Thus, aside from the mobile-based technologies of SMS and voice call, the live-out mothers can also choose from an array of Internet-based technologies of e-mail, chat, voice/video call, and even *Facebook*. As the interviews show that technological proficiency is associated with the communication media and technologies frequently used, live-out mothers also have wider technological skills.

Relating to the second objective, the migrant mothers defined their parenting roles as being provider, friend, and guide. The interviews uncover that these mothers' parenting roles are motivated by their desire to achieve the goals of securing their teenage children's well-being

as well as the goal of maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations. However, these mothers admitted that their migration-led separation from their children makes parenting challenging as they explained that parenting is a visual and tactile activity. Nonetheless, these mothers endeavor to continue parenting their teenage children despite their physical distance from them. Through long-distance communication and use of communication media and technologies, these mothers engage in long-distance parenting which enables them to carry out their parenting roles of being provider, friend, and guide which then allows them to achieve the goals of securing their teenage children's well-being and the goal of maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations despite their physical separation from their children.

Finally, in connection with the third objective, long-distance parenting transpires when the migrant mothers and their teenage children narrate activities, exchange experiences, extend care, share concerns, express emotions, and articulate affections through long-distance communication. Thus, these mothers' long-distance parenting depends on being able to communicate activities, experiences, care, concerns, emotions, and affections with their teenage children. Moreover, long-distance parenting also depends on being able to talk to their teenage children during routine or typical conversations, during special occasions and events, and during situations that bring stress to the achievement of family goals such as during urgent, emergency, serious, delicate, and tenuous circumstances. In addition, these mothers' long-distance parenting also depends on being able to communicate with their children's caregivers so that they can easily consult parenting matters with them. Furthermore, long-distance parenting also depends on being able to choose and use communication media and technologies that would meet the families' communication needs and overseas communication budget. All these are already being experienced by this study's migrant mothers and, as such, they confirm that long-distance communication and use of communication media and technologies make parenting, even across borders, possible. For this reason, this thesis emphasizes the centrality of communication in long-distance parenting.

The findings of this thesis are actually in line with the reviewed literature that migrant mothers strive to parent their children back home through long-distance communication and use of communication media and technologies. Consequently, the findings of this thesis were subsequently integrated with the findings from the reviewed communication and family theories as well as with the findings from the reviewed parenting, family, communication, and transnational migration literature and this integration resulted to the development of the proposed Integrated Model of Communicated Parenting. Thus, with both literature and actual data as its bases, the proposed model asserts that an integral part of long-distance parenting is “communicated parenting”.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
Summary	ii
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables and Figures	ix
<hr/>	
A Focus on Filipino Mothers' Long-Distance Parenting	1
Chapter 1: Introduction	
Background of the Study	1
A. International Labor Migration of Filipino Women	1
B. Transnational Migration and Communication	4
C. Demographic, Social, and Technological Circumstances of Long-Distance Parenting	4
Significance of the Study	5
<hr/>	
The Context of Long-Distance Parenting	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review, Study Framework, and Research Objectives	
Family Systems Theory	8
Role Theory	10
Uses and Gratifications Approach	12
A. Communication Environment: The Individual and Social Influences on Long-Distance Parenting	15
B. Communication Media and Technologies: The Mediators of Transnational Parenting	23
C. The Communication Experience of Transnational Parenting	29
Synthesis: Contextualizing Long-Distance Parenting	33
<hr/>	
Conducting the Study	39
Chapter 3: Methodology	
Research Method	39
Research Instruments	39
Selection and Profile of Participants	40
Data Analysis	41
Presentation of Findings	41

Integrated Model of Communicated Parenting	43
Chapter 4: Proposed Model for Understanding Long-Distance Parenting	
Communication Environment	52
Chapter 5: Addressing the First Research Objective	
Demographic Profile	53
Social Profile	56
Technological Profile	57
A. Mobile Phone	62
B. Personal Computer	66
C. Land-Based Phone	68
D. Postal System	69
E. Smartphone	70
Mothers' Parenting Role	72
Chapter 6: Addressing the Second Research Objective	
Achieving Family Goals and Its Link with Parenting Role	74
A. Securing Their Teenage Children's Well-Being	74
B. Maintaining and Sustaining Healthy Mother-Child Relations	77
Communication Environment and Its Association with Parenting Role	77
A. Demographic Profile and Its Association with Parenting Role	78
B. Social Profile and Its Association with Parenting Role	81
The Challenge of Physical Distance on Parenting and the Potential of LDC to Bridge the Physical Gap	82
A. Parenting as a Visual Activity	82
B. Parenting as a Tactile Activity	85
Synthesis: The Migrant Mothers' Parenting Role	87
A. Being a Provider	87
B. Being a Friend	92
C. Being a Guide	94
Long-Distance Parenting	99
Chapter 7: Addressing the Third Research Objective	
Choice and Use of Communication Media and Technologies	102
A. Communication Environment and its Association with the Choice and Use of Communication Media and Technologies	102
B. Capacities and Limitations of Communication Media and Technologies and Its Association with the Choice and Use of Communication Media and Technologies	109
Long-Distance Communicated Parenting	114
A. Communicated Parenting During Routine or Typical Conversations	115
B. Communicated Parenting During Special Occasions and Events	122
C. Communicated Parenting During Urgent or Emergency Situations	124

D. Communicated Parenting During Discussions of Serious Matters or Concerns	127
E. Communicated Parenting During Discussions of Delicate Matters or Concerns	130
F. Communicated Parenting During Moments of Misunderstandings, Disagreements, and Fights	132
G. Synthesis: Communication Environment, Choice and Use of Communication Media and Technologies, and Communicated Parenting	134
Assessment of Communication Media and Technologies in Enabling Parenting	134
A. Importance of Communication Media and Technologies in Communicated Parenting	135
B. Managing the Long-Distance Communication Cost of Communicated Parenting	137
<hr/>	
Communicated Parenting in the Context of Filipino Working Mothers in Singapore	139
Chapter 8: Summary, Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations	
Summary and Conclusion	140
Limitations of the Study	144
Recommendations	145
<hr/>	
References	149

List of Tables and Figures

List of Tables

Table 1	Demographic profile	54
Table 2	Social profile	56
Table 3	Technological profile	58
Table 4	Achieving family goals and its link with parenting role	74
Table 5	Demographic factors and related teen concerns	78
Table 6	Parenting roles	87
Table 7	Technological profile and its link with the frequently chosen and used communication media	103
Table 8	Capacities and limitations of CMT and its link with technologies chosen and used for LDC	109
Table 9	Frequency of technological use	116
Table 10	Communicated parenting during routine or typical conversations	119
Table 11	Communicated parenting during special occasions and events	122
Table 12	Communicated parenting during urgent or emergency situations	124
Table 13	Communicated parenting during discussions of serious matters or concerns	128
Table 14	Communicated parenting during discussions of delicate matters or concerns	130
Table 15	Communicated parenting during moments of misunderstandings, disagreements, and fights	132

List of Figures

Figure 1	Rosengren's (1974) paradigm for uses and gratifications research	15
Figure 2	Synthesis of literature reviewed	34
Figure 3	Integrated Model of Communicated Parenting	45
Figure 4	Communication environment of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers	53
Figure 5	Mothers' parenting roles in the context of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers with Philippine-based teenage children	73
Figure 6	Long-distance parenting in the context of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers with Philippine-based teenage children	101

A Focus on Filipino Mothers' Long-Distance Parenting

Chapter 1: Introduction

In their study of Filipino migrant mothers, Asis, Huang, and Yeoh (2004) noted that “While transnational migration is reshaping the contours of the Filipino family, it has in no way diminished the importance of being, or the desire to be, “family”” (p. 204). Generally, this research is a study on family as it focuses on transnational migrant mothers who seek to sustain relations with their children back home and who continue to parent their children even though they are spatially apart from them. Particularly, this research is a study on communication as it highlights how long-distance communication (LDC), made possible through the use of communication media and technologies (CMT), plays a major role in the lives of migrant mothers and their children. As this thesis presents how Singapore-based Filipino working mothers engage in long-distance parenting of their Philippine-based teenage children through LDC and use of CMT, it asserts that an integral part of these mothers’ transnational parenting is “communicated parenting”.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Since this study deals with transnational migration and communication, this section provides a brief background on the international labor migration of Filipino women and how the mothers among them manage to maintain ties with their children even across borders.

A. International Labor Migration of Filipino Women

The phenomenon of increasing international labor migration of Filipino women has been widely observed in the literature (Asis, 2006; Beltran, Samonte, & Walker, 1996; Go, 1998; Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc., 2007; National Commission on the Rights of Filipino Women Website, n.d.; Sobritchea, 2007). Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc. (2007) even stated that “For some time, Philippine labor migration has been described as one that wears a woman’s face” (p. 3).

Sobritchea (2007) wrote that labor migration of Filipino women may be attributed primarily to factors within the home country particularly “the inability of the local economy to generate enough jobs and adequate income” which are then addressed by the increased demands outside the country for “domestic work, club entertainment and caregiving” (p. 173). It must be noted, however, that a good number of these women are also employed in fields other than those mentioned by Sobritchea (2007), although in Singapore, for example, an overwhelming number of these women are employed in the service sector, particularly domestic work (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, n.d.).

Women migration has led to questions on how the Filipino family is affected especially with the growing number of married women and women with children who are joining the migration trail (Battistella & Conaco, 1998; Beltran, Samonte, & Walker, 1996; Parreñas, 2001; Parreñas, 2005a; Sobritchea, 2007; Uy-Tioco, 2007). Physical separation of mothers from their families, for instance, questions the social and cultural norms that define the structure and dynamics of the Filipino family (Parreñas, 2005a).

There is a commonplace notion that an “ideal” Filipino family has a father as the breadwinner and a mother as the caretaker of home and caregiver of her husband and children (Parreñas, 2005a). In the past when the so called Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) were mostly men, the implications to the family structure and dynamics of fathers parenting away from home had not been given much attention as the culturally-expected role of the father as breadwinner was justified as he sought better sources of income abroad and the culturally-expected role of the mother as caregiver was still upheld (Parreñas, 2005a). It is in recent years when more mothers have been leaving their children behind to work abroad that the interest in the implications to the family structure and dynamics has been more pronounced (Parreñas, 2005a). The expected role of the mother to be physically present to care for the home and her family runs in contrast with the family set-up inherent in women migration (Parreñas, 2001; Parreñas, 2005a; Uy-Tioco, 2007).

However, this gendered view has been met with strong arguments and criticisms from various scholars (for instance, Gustafson, 2005; Parreñas, 2001; Parreñas, 2005a; Uy-Tioco, 2007). Then again, Cheng (2004) noted that,

For the millions of migrant women..., the issue of motherhood is not about male dominance, the public-private dichotomy, unequal gender division of labor, double shift, or struggle for individual autonomy. For them, they cannot mother their children the conventional way because economic deterioration and family survival compel them to seek overseas employment... In short, their fundamental concern is the deprivation of their right to motherhood. (p. 136)

Thus, this research is a study on migrant mothers and how they assert their parenting rights despite the consequent physical distance imposed by their transnational labor migration. Devasahayam and Yeoh (2007) wrote in the back-cover of their edited book that “In an effort to balance conflicting demands of these roles, women in various Asian societies are negotiating, contesting and reconfiguring motherhood”. Accordingly, this thesis intends to find out how Filipino migrant mothers view parenting, how they define their role as a mother, and how they manage to parent their children even if they are physically separated from them.

Particularly, this study focuses on Filipino working mothers who are now based in Singapore and with teenage children based in the Philippines. The choice of studying families with teenage children is deliberate because, compared to childhood, adolescence is a period of numerous significant changes in the lives of the children, such as pubertal, cognitive, self-definitional, and social changes, and parents also deal with these changes with their children (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). While parenting during adolescence has been examined in extant literature (for instance, Bornstein, 2002; Gerris, 2001; Herbert, 2004; Medina, 2001; Steinberg & Silk, 2002), it is interesting to consider how parenting transpires when the mother is not physically present to experience the teenage years with her children. Thus, this

study focuses on how Singapore-based Filipino working mothers attempt to transcend the physical boundaries of migration as they continue to parent and deal with these changes with their teenage children even though they are living apart from them.

B. Transnational Migration and Communication

Studies on transnational families have observed that migrant mothers actively engage in long-distance parenting and this has been facilitated by communication technologies, from traditional CMT such as letters, packages, and land-based phone calls, to new CMT such as SMS, mobile voice calls, e-mail, Internet chat, and Internet voice and video calls (Burman, 2006; Parreñas, 2001; Parreñas, 2005a; Parreñas, 2005b; Sobritchea, 2007; Thomas & Lim, 2009; Uy-Tioco, 2007). The use of CMT to remain connected in order to maintain and sustain relationships with the family back home has been referred to by Parreñas (2001) as the “technological management of distance” (pp. 130-131). Through CMT, Uy-Tioco (2007) expressed that, “Those apart are able to maintain presence and build associations despite physical distance” (p. 259) or in the words of Pertierra, an “absent presence” (as cited in Uy-Tioco, 2007, p. 259).

Hence, previous studies confirm how LDC and CMT use are essential in carrying out parenting across borders. Adding on to the existing transnational migration and communication literature, this thesis discusses the matters addressed by the Singapore-based Filipino working mothers in their LDC with their teenage children, the range of CMT that they use, and their assessment of these CMT in enabling them to parent their teens despite the distance.

C. Demographic, Social, and Technological Circumstances of Long-Distance Parenting

Furthermore, this thesis looks closely at the Singapore-based Filipino working mothers in various demographic, social, and technological locations, which this study collectively labels

as “communication environment”, as these circumstances are deemed to have a bearing on these mothers’ long-distance parenting.

In terms of demographic location, communication environment in the context of this study is primarily defined by the demographic profile of the Singapore-based Filipino working mother’s children. In particular, this refers to the age, gender, and birth order of her children as Medina (2001) pointed out that child-rearing is influenced by these factors. Aside from these, communication environment is also defined by another demographic characteristic, the geographic location of her family back home which may impose limits on her family’s access to CMT (Parreñas, 2005b).

In terms of social location, communication environment in this study’s context is defined on the one hand by the employment classification of the migrant mother, whether she is on live-in or live-out employment arrangement, as this is seen to influence the CMT that she can afford and have access to as well as her freedom to use these CMT anytime and anywhere in parenting away from home (Parreñas, 2005b; Rule, 2009; Thomas & Lim, 2009). In addition, her communication environment, with regard to social location, is also defined by her relationship with her children’s caregivers as this is also considered to have an effect on her long-distance parenting (Aguilar, 2009).

In terms of technological location, communication environment in this study’s context is defined by the technological access of the migrant mother and her Philippine-based children, her technological attitude, and her technological skills as these are deemed to be associated with the CMT that she will use in her transnational parenting (Fransisco, 2000; Rule, 2009).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Extant studies on transnational migrant mothers have established the constant communication between them and their families (Burman, 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parreñas,

2001; Parreñas, 2005a; Parreñas, 2005b; Sobritchea, 2007; Thomas & Lim, 2009; Uy-Tioco, 2007). These studies also revealed that even when mothers live away from home, they still try to be actively involved in parenting.

In fact, Parreñas (2005a) noted that children are more likely to accept the changes brought about by their mother's migration with less difficulty if they have assurances of their mother's love through constant communication and parenting even from a distance. Parreñas (2005a) also found through her research that "it is the continued nurturing of mothers that sets apart children who find less dissatisfaction in the transnational family" (p. 107).

Given these, this thesis is significant as it contributes to the growing field of transnational migration and communication scholarship by providing further reasonable evidence that Filipino migrant mothers are still able to parent their children even if they are spatially apart from them. In particular, this thesis is important as it furnishes an in-depth discussion of how such long-distance parenting takes place between the Singapore-based Filipino migrant mothers and their Philippine-based teenage children as they constantly engage in LDC. Hence, this thesis does not only have the capacity to present worthwhile contribution to the academic community but it also has the ability to offer the government, non-governmental organizations, and women's groups in the Philippines, Singapore, and other countries hosting Filipino migrant workers with sound rationale for advancing the welfare of Filipino migrant workers and their families through safeguarding their right to communication.

To the academic community, this thesis offers relevant contribution to the field of transnational migration and communication scholarship, more so in the arena of communication research, as it examines the important role of communication in the lives of an increasing number of families who are affected by transnational labor migration. In addition, this thesis is a concrete application of family communication concepts in the context of migration-led separation, as cases in family communication literature generally focus on

family members who are more or less physically proximate. Furthermore, the development of the proposed Integrated Model of Communicated Parenting, which is a model grounded on both literature and actual data, presents the academic community with a framework for understanding long-distance parenting.

As Filipino migrant workers are being acknowledged as “*mga bagong bayani*” or “modern-day heroes” because of their contribution to the local economy, this thesis provides evidence for the Philippine government to work hand-in-hand with the government of Singapore and other countries hosting Filipino migrant workers to push for policies that can better support transnational migrant workers and enforce their rights for a more conducive environment for communicating with their families. Moreover, this thesis also presents a valid impetus for the Philippine government to develop the necessary infrastructure that would widen and enhance the country’s telecommunications coverage as such would greatly benefit the growing number of Filipino migrant workers and their families.

In addition, this thesis also provides data for the government of the Philippines, Singapore, and other host countries to advance agreements with hardware and software providers as well as with telecommunication networks to make technologies more accessible and affordable to members of transnational families. These governments may even argue that such would be a noble cause for the company’s corporate social responsibility campaign given that transnational families are increasingly becoming an important telecommunications consumer segment.

To non-governmental organizations in the Philippines, Singapore, and other host countries serving transnational migrants, this thesis offers data to advocate for a better technological environment among members of transnational families. To women’s groups in these countries, this thesis provides arguments for enhancing the support structure for mothers parenting away from home.

The Context of Long-Distance Parenting

Chapter 2: Literature Review, Study Framework, and Research Objectives

The current study on long-distance parenting integrates concepts from communication theory, particularly Rosengren's General Model of Uses and Gratifications, family theory, specifically Family Systems Theory, Role Theory, and concepts from parenting, family, communication, and transnational migration literature to help explain how Singapore-based Filipino working mothers parent their Philippine-based teenage children through long-distance communication (LDC) and use of communication media and technologies (CMT). This study's research objectives are listed at the end of this chapter.

FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY

Family Systems Theory (FST) can be traced from the General Systems Theory (GST) as FST incorporates the systems perspective in explaining family communication (Bavelas & Segal, 1982; Cox & Paley, 1997; Le Poire, 2006). According to Cox and Paley (1997), the four basic principles of GST that were applied in FST include the properties of (1) wholeness and order as a whole system "is greater than the sum of its parts and has properties that cannot be understood simply from the combined characteristics of each part"; (2) hierarchical structure as "systems are composed of subsystems"; (3) adaptive self-stabilization or the "homeostatic features" of the system as the internal workings of the system adjust with the changes in the environment; and (4) adaptive self-organization or the capability of open and living system to adjust to changes in the system or to even challenge the system (p. 245). Cox and Paley (1997) also tracked the application of systems perspective in the study of family such as in the works of Cottrell, Ackerman, Bowen, Bateson group, Haley and the Palo Alto group, Milan group, Minuchin, in the area of lifespan theories, ecological theories, Lewin's psychological field theory, and in the perspective that the family is a relational environment.

In the study of transnational families, FST provides a relevant backdrop for understanding how family system persists even during the course of migration-led separation of family members, and in the context of this study, for understanding how a migrant mother's parenting continues to transpire even during her physical absence. In studying any family system, Le Poire (2006) pointed out the centrality of the concepts of wholeness, interdependence, and homeostasis.

While the concept of wholeness necessitates that the entire family system be examined and not just the individual parts comprising it as the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Galvin, Bylund, & Brommel, 2004; Le Poire, 2006; White & Klein, 2002), this study on long-distance parenting only focuses its attention on the experience of migrant mothers who are nonetheless vital constituents in the entire family system. Even so, the researcher recognizes the pertinence of studying the family in its entirety and thus recommends future studies to build on the current researcher's findings in her study of migrant mothers.

According to Le Poire (2006), the concept of homeostasis underscores "the nature of families as goal-attaining systems" (p. 72) and extant literature suggests that Filipino migrant mothers, even from a distance, strive to contribute to the realization of family goals that focus on the growth and development of their children as well as those that maintain and sustain their relationship with them (for instance, Parreñas, 2001; Parreñas, 2005a). Correspondingly, this study seeks to uncover how long-distance parenting contributes to the realization of these goals. Moreover, this study also attempts to understand the stressors that may compromise the attainment of these goals.

Meanwhile, the concept of interdependence highlights the "intricate and necessary interrelationships" between and among family members in order "to promote the functioning of the family" (Le Poire, 2006, p. 72). Thus, this study also looks into the dynamics of both

mother-child relationship and mother-caregiver relationship in order to find out how such relationships may influence the migrant mothers' long-distance parenting.

ROLE THEORY

According to Biddle (1986), Role Theory began as a theatrical metaphor such that,

If performances in the theatre were differentiated and predictable because actors were constrained to perform “parts” for which “scripts” were written, then it seemed reasonable to believe that social behaviors in other contexts were also associated with parts and scripts understood by social actors. (p. 68)

Biddle (1986) identified George Simmel, George Herbert Mead, Ralph Linton, and Jacob Moreno as the early proponents of role theory. Moreover, Biddle (1986) noted that, although disagreements exist among scholars regarding the “definitions for the role concept, over assumptions they make about roles, and over explanation for role phenomena” (p. 68), there is agreement among role theorists that the theory basically concerns itself with the concepts of “role” or “characteristic behaviors”, “social position” or “parts to be played”, and “expectation” or “scripts for behavior” (pp. 68-69).

Thus, aside from FST, this study on long-distance parenting integrates concepts from Role Theory in order to understand how migrant mothers function as parents. According to Le Poire (2006) in her discussion of Role Theory in the context of family, “roles provide powerful prescriptions for behavior and expectations for how those behaviors should be carried out” (p. 56). Hence, this current study on long-distance parenting explores the migrant mothers' definitions of their role as a mother to their teenage children as these are seen to influence how they engage in long-distance parenting.

While various literature classify parenting functions differently in terms of the labels used for categorical classifications, the number of these classifications, and the specific items under these classifications (for instance Hoghughi, 2004; Le Poire, 2006; Parreñas, 2001), it can be summarized that parenting role essentially encompasses the functions of nurture and control (Le Poire, 2006).

Le Poire (2006) stated that the parenting function to nurture “basically includes the provision of care, warmth, and an environment capable of encouraging the growth and development of family members” (p. 58). This nurturing function comprises the two important aspects of being providers and nurturers (Le Poire, 2006). As providers on the one hand, parents make available resources such as food, clothing, shelter-related items, and money (Le Poire, 2006). This coincides with Hoghughi’s (2004) definition of provision of physical care as well as some aspects of Parreñas’ (2001) definition of material care. As nurturers on the other hand, parents support the growth and development of their children’s physical, social, emotional, and intellectual health (Le Poire, 2006). Again, this coincides with Hoghughi’s (2004) identification of activities geared towards the emotional, social, and instrumental development of children as well as Parreñas’ (2001) definition of emotional care and some aspects of material care.

Together with the function to nurture, Le Poire (2006) also identified the parenting function to control, which primarily refers to the regulation of behavior, setting guidelines, and imposing discipline. Hoghughi (2004) also used the same term to label this function. Meanwhile, Parreñas’ (2001) definition of moral care covers this definition of control as well as aspects of Le Poire’s (2006) social nurturing and Hoghughi’s (2004) inculcation of values. It must be noted that, in the Philippine context, control and moral care in child-rearing are generally influenced by the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church given that the country has a predominantly Catholic population.

The similarities in the definition of parental function by Le Poire (2006) and Hoghughi (2004) with that of Parreñas (2001), a Filipino scholar, indicate that Filipino parenting is also characterized by these functions. For the purposes of this research, Le Poire's categorization of parenting function in terms of nurture and control are used.

In the Philippines, Medina (2001) noted that Filipino “[p]arents are generally nurturant, devoted, affectionate, solicitous, and protective” (p. 236). She also observed that parents of today “are adapting gradually to the changing times by shifting their child-rearing orientation from dependency to independence, from restrictiveness to permissiveness, from extreme control to autonomy, and from authoritarianism to liberalism and individuality” (Medina, 2001, p. 237).

This study on long-distance parenting seeks to describe the kind of parenting Singapore-based Filipino migrant mothers carry out in the context of transnational migration. By looking into how they parent their teenage children who are based in the Philippines, this study describes the communication experience of these migrant mothers as they fulfill their parenting role across borders.

The synthesis at the end of this chapter depicts the integration of Family Systems Theory and Role Theory with Rosengren's General Model of Uses and Gratifications and concepts from parenting, family, communication, and transnational migration literature. The statements of this study's objectives are also listed at the end of this chapter. In the meantime, the succeeding sections will tackle the Uses and Gratifications Approach in the context of long-distance parenting.

USES AND GRATIFICATIONS APPROACH

The Uses and Gratifications Approach (U&G) focuses its attention on the audience as active users of media and media content. In discussing this approach, Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch

(1973) noted the assumption of an active and goal-directed audience and that media choice for need gratification rests on them. In explaining such assumptions, Littlejohn (2002) wrote that this approach views the audience as “discriminating” users of media such that the audience member “knows his or her own needs and how to meet them” and that he or she is “responsible for choosing media to meet needs” (p. 323). Even so, Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973) recognized early on that there is a host of sources of need satisfaction and media use is just one of them.

Ruggiero (2000) outlined the developments in the area of U&G scholarship as well as the criticisms that the approach faced over the years. While Ruggiero (2000) acknowledged the contention on the “precise roots of the approach” (p. 5), he traced its early association as “a subtradition of media-effects research” (p. 3; for instance, Ruggiero noted the studies done by Berelson, 1949; Cantril, 1942; Cantril & Allport, 1935; Herzog, 1940, 1944; Lazarsfeld & Stanton, 1942, 1944, 1949; Suchman, 1942; Waples, Berelson, & Bradshaw, 1940; Wolfe & Fiske, 1949). Ruggiero (2000) then proceeded to discuss U&G’s assertion of an active media user (for instance, Ruggiero cited the work of Klapper, 1963); its emphasis on the social and psychological bases of media use and gratification (Ruggiero noted the work of Blumler, 1979; Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973; Rosengren, 1974; among others); calls for theoretical refinements (for instance, Ruggiero cited Rubin, 1986; Swanson, 1987; Windahl, 1981); its application in more contemporary forms of media (for instance, Ruggiero noted the studies of Donohew, Palmgreen, & Rayburn, 1987; Funk & Buchman, 1996; LaRose & Atkin, 1991; Perse & Dunn, 1998; among others); and with the advent of the Internet, on how it continues to address new media research (Ruggiero cited the studies of December, 1996; Kuehn, 1994; Morris & Ogran, 1996) and on how the approach could be refined to better explain the use of new media and new media content (for instance, Ruggiero, in the same article, advocated taking into account concepts such as interactivity, demassification, hypertextuality, and asynchronicity). While criticisms of U&G have always been in existence and will inevitably persist as the approach further develops, Ruggiero (2000) wrote that “if we are able to situate

a “modernized” U&G theory within this new media ecology, in an evolving psychological, sociological, and cultural context, we should be able to anticipate a highly serviceable theory for the 21st century” (p. 29).

In concluding his review, Ruggiero (2000) pointed out that the basic questions for U&G scholars have been the same over the years, and these are, “Why do people become involved in one particular type of mediated communication or another?” and “[W]hat gratifications do they receive from it?” (p. 29). These basic U&G questions, asked in the context of long-distance parenting, are also addressed in this thesis.

Thus, while the U&G approach was originally conceptualized to explain more traditional mass media use, it has fundamental concepts that may be effectively applied to study the use of technology for mediated interpersonal communication. This study, in particular, applies this approach in the context of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers’ choice and use of CMT in their attempt to parent their Philippine-based teenage children through LDC.

The current study on long-distance parenting uses Rosengren’s General Model of Uses and Gratifications (Figure 1) as its base in identifying the elements of the study and in mapping out their relationship in the context of migrant mothers’ parenting via long-distance mediated communication. According to Ruggiero (2000), Rosengren’s model is one of the many attempts in the 1970s to “theoretically refine U&G” (p. 6). In discussing Rosengren’s model, McQuail and Windahl (1993) wrote:

The ‘needs’ of the individual form the starting point... but for these to lead to relevant action they have to be perceived as problems... and some potential solution has also to be perceived... In the model, the experience of needs is shown to be shaped or influenced by... aspects of the social structure... and also by... individual characteristics... The perception of problems and

possible solutions leads to the formulation of motives... for media use... or other kinds of behavior... (p. 135)

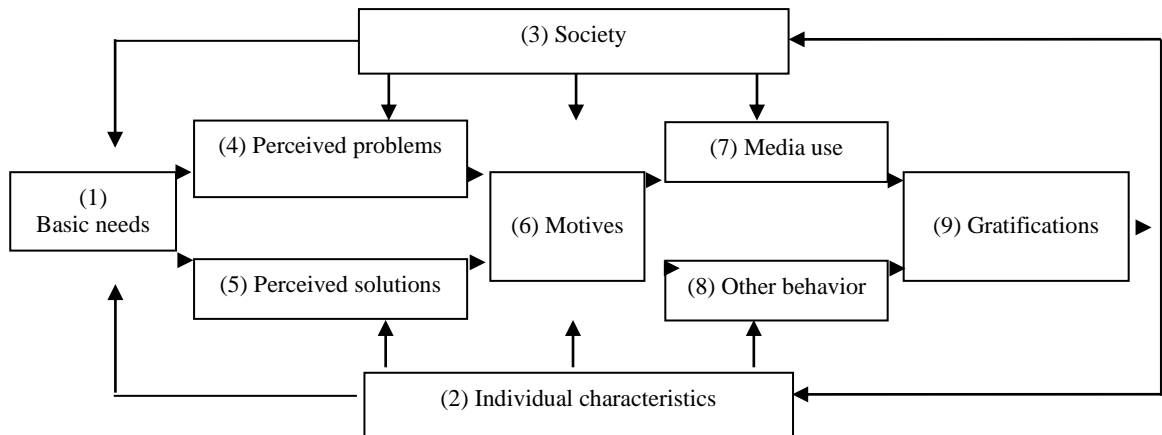


Figure 1. Rosengren's (1974) paradigm for uses and gratifications research
(McQuail & Windahl, 1993, p. 135)

Rosengren's General Model, as adapted for this study on long-distance parenting, is illustrated in the synthesis diagram (Figure 2) at the end of this chapter. This synthesis diagram brings together the relevant theories and concepts from the reviewed literature that would help in understanding how parenting across borders takes place.

The proceeding sections will discuss the concepts from Rosegren's General Model that are adapted for this study on long-distance parenting: the individual and social influences on transnational parenting which this study labels as "communication environment", the CMT used in mediating parenting, and the transnational parenting being carried out in what is essentially a communication experience.

A. Communication Environment: The Individual and Social Influences on Long-Distance Parenting

The U&G Approach factors in the individual and social circumstances that influence mediated communication. In this regard, this study examines the demographic, social, and

technological profiles of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers, which shape what this study dubs as their “communication environment” and their long-distance parenting.

1. Demographic profile

In the context of this study, demographic profile refers to the age, gender, and birth order of the Singapore-based Filipino mother’s children as these elements are considered to influence her children’s parenting needs which she then attempts to address in her LDC.

In addition, demographic profile also includes the geographic location of the migrant mother’s family in the Philippines as this is deemed to influence the CMT that are available for them to use in their LDC with their migrant mother.

a. Age of children

Communication environment is influenced by the age of the migrant mother’s children as age-related circumstances shape how she will relate to them. Laursen and Collins (2004) wrote that “As families navigate the transition from childhood into adulthood, the frequency and content of their interactions change” (p. 333). This study chooses to focus on families with teenage children because adolescence is a period where children can communicate more independently and where the development of the youth can pose various challenges that require more active parenting.

The teenage phase, commonly defined in the Filipino context as around the age of 13-19 years old, is also the time of adolescence. Steinberg and Silk (2002) enumerated the developmental changes that happen during this period which includes pubertal, cognitive, self-definitional, and social changes. They explained that “[p]hysical and sexual maturation profoundly affect the way that adolescents view themselves and the way that they are viewed and treated by others including their parents” (Steinberg & Silk, 2002, p. 105). Steinberg and Silk (2002) also noted the changes in the teens’ social context such as increases in unsupervised time and

autonomy. According to these authors, “the increased responsibility, independence, and freedom that accompany the transition from childhood to adulthood, combined with the attainment of an adultlike physical appearance, lead adolescents to feel as though they should be treated more like adults” and parents may have reservations about granting “adolescents the autonomy or independence that they seek, leading to conflicts over rules, regulations, and rights” (Steinberg & Silk, 2002, p. 107). Laursen and Collins (2004) noted however that “communicative problems are not pre-ordained” and that “most families are well equipped to navigate the developmental challenges of adolescence” (p. 333) especially if the nature of parent-child relationship is positive and relatively strong. As such, while Laursen and Collins (2004) recognized that “many families experience a modest uptick in conflict at the outset of adolescence, disagreement is not a threat to these relationships” (p. 343). Be that as it may, it is important to note the findings of Mendez and her co-authors that Medina (2001) recounted when she wrote “Adolescence among Filipinos is generally not a turbulent period characterized by tension, rebellion, and confusion similar to the West” (p. 229).

There is evidence from literature that the content of communication exchanged between migrant mothers and their children depends on the children’s age (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2005a; Parreñas, 2005b; Sobritchea, 2007; Uy-Tioco, 2007). For instance, an El Salvadorian migrant mother with teen school-aged children in Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila’s (1997) study constantly “reminds her daughters to take their vitamins” as well as “to never go to bed or to school on an empty stomach” through regular phone calls and letters (p. 558). Meanwhile, Sobritchea (2007) noted that, although the discussion of sex and sexual relations is uncommon and awkward between Filipino parents and children, one of her Filipino mother informants expressed that “I try to reach out to my daughters. They can talk to me about their romantic relationships, even sexual experiences with boyfriends” (p. 186). However, data on transnational parenting of teens is rather limited in the literature and this thesis seeks to address this oversight through its study of Filipino migrant mothers and their Philippine-based teenage children.

b. Gender

Aside from changes associated with the adolescent years, the gender of the migrant mother's teenage children also plays an important factor in shaping her communication environment as gender relates to certain expectations and concerns pertaining to issues of character and behavior.

For instance, there are biological differences in pubertal changes between teenage boys and girls (Cobb, 2007). For Filipino teenage girls, the onset of menstruation is significant as this heralds "*pagdadalaga*" (a Filipino term that refers to transition from being a girl to a woman) which is accompanied by parental concern regarding the teens' capability for child-bearing. As such, teenage boys "are given more freedom to go out with other boys and come home late at night" while teenage girls "are more restricted and protected" (Medina, 2001, p. 228).

Rule (2009) wrote that one of her migrant mother informants mentioned that she constantly advises her eldest daughter, who is at the age where boys are starting to show attention, "to mind her morals and her actions whenever she is around boys" (p. 120). This is usual in the conservative Philippine society where parents usually monitor their teenage children, especially daughters, when it comes to relating with the opposite sex. It is also common to hear parents advising their daughters to graduate from college first before entering a romantic relationship, or at times, before even entertaining suitors. As one of Rule's (2009) mother-informant said, "*Huwag munang mag-boyfriend, aral muna*" [No boyfriends now, study first]" (p. 120).

Le Poire (2006) also noted that there are still gendered role expectations in her discussion of Role Theory such that mothers are expected to be nurturers while fathers are expected to be providers. While this gendered role expectation may appear outdated, it is still largely true in Philippine society and Filipino teenage children are also generally reared along these lines (Medina, 2001).

c. Birth order

Aside from gendered expectations, there are also birth order expectations in the Filipino family (Arevalo, Toloza, & Nicolas, 1997; Medina, 2001) and this may also shape the migrant mother's communication environment. For instance, Medina (2001) wrote that Filipinos usually place the eldest child in the position of "parental surrogate" and this child "has authority over the younger ones" (p. 227). In addition, older children tend to "participate in the decision-making process at home by making suggestions as to choices or alternatives; making decisions with parents from time to time; influencing final decisions; and making decisions themselves" (Medina, 2001, p. 237).

2. Social profile

In the context of this study, the communication environment is also shaped by the social profile of the Singapore-based Filipino migrant mother and this refers to her employment classification and her relationship with her children's caregivers.

a. Employment classification

The migrant mothers in this study are basically categorized as those on either live-in or live-out employment arrangement. This social profile determinant is significant as it is seen to influence the mother's technological profile or the CMT that are available to her and her family. According to Parreñas (2005b), "The social location of the migrant mother controls the access of families to different modes of transnational communication..." (p. 329). Besides, the kind of employment more or less determines a migrant mother's salary which then influences the LDC that she can afford to spend on. For example, mothers who are on live-in employment arrangement are classified as semi-skilled workers so they earn comparatively less and Sobritchea (2007) noted that LDC is a challenge for migrant mothers who are earning less as the limited salary has to be apportioned for living expenses and remittances alongside LDC. In fact, communication expenses can constitute a significant portion of their budget (Paragas, 2005; Thomas & Lim, 2009; Uy-Tioco, 2007).

Moreover, the kind of employment is also seen to influence the migrant mother's liberty to use available CMT at any moment (Parreñas, 2005b; Thomas & Lim, 2009). For instance, Thomas and Lim (2009) found that domestic helpers in Singapore have limitations with regard to their freedom to communicate and use a variety of technology anytime given the confines of their live-in employment.

b. Mother's relationship with children's caregiver

In this study, caregivers may be the children's father, the mother's own mother, father, siblings, aunts, or her in-laws. According to Aguilar (2009), "Specific arrangements for caregiving are determined largely by the availability of trustworthy persons who are willing and able to fill the role" (p. 303). As caregiving work may involve not only managing the daily needs of children and may also encompass giving permission, disciplining, and managing remittances, migrant mothers depend on caregivers whom they can trust to carry out these responsibilities (Aguilar, 2009). As her co-parents in the context of transnational migration, it is important to look into the migrant mother's relationship with her children's caregivers to be able to understand how she herself parents her children across the distance.

Nonetheless, Sobritchea (2007) noted that conflict between migrant mothers and their children's caregivers also arise and issues raised during these conversations include the manner of raising the children as well as management of remittances and properties.

3. Technological profile

The communication environment, in the context of this study, is also shaped by the technological profile of the Singapore-based Filipino migrant mother as this is linked with the CMT that she will use in her long-distance parenting of her teenage children. Technological profile refers to the technological access of the migrant mother and her teenage children in the Philippines as well as the mother's technological attitude and skills. As noted in the thesis of Fransisco (2000), even if communication tools "were perceived helpful, if they were not

available or accessible, they were also not used” (p. 70). As previously mentioned, technological profile is shaped by the mother’s employment classification as this is deemed to have certain influence on the availability and affordability of CMT as well as her freedom to use available CMT anytime and anywhere.

In addition, the geographic location of the mother’s children, which was earlier identified as a determinant of demographic profile, also has a bearing on their media access. As noted by Parreñas (2005b), “Transnational communication and the achievement of intimacy would thus be a greater challenge for migrants with families located in rural areas without the appropriate facilities and infrastructures” (p. 318). But should there be significant developments in facilities and infrastructure coupled with new media skills training for folks in rural areas, Filipino transnational migrants and their families would most likely achieve what Panagakos and Horst (2006) envisioned in their article when they wrote that “Internet penetration into the most isolated corners of the world would allow transnational migrants in industrialized countries unprecedented access to their families and networks back home and vice versa” (p. 120).

As noted in the previous section, the financial cost of communication matters because communication expenses constitute a significant portion of the migrant mother’s budget (Paragas, 2005; Thomas & Lim, 2009; Uy-Tioco, 2007). Rule (2009) explained that OFW families who can afford a computer and Internet connection were able to have longer and more frequent communication as communication over the Internet is much cheaper, while OFW families who primarily depend on the mobile phone to communicate with each other have “to contend with cost of talk time or the number of messages sent which severely limited their frequency and duration of usage” (pp. 144-145). Families back home who are constrained by the cost of international calls “send text messages to request persons based overseas to call them” (Aguilar, 2009, p. 213) as the person overseas is seen to better afford the cost of long-distance call (Rule, 2009). Given that the cost of international calls is

expensive even for the migrant, Rule (2009) also noted that “they only discussed important matters to (sic) each other, mostly on what they needed financially” (p. 145). In such circumstances, there is limited opportunity to communicate often and the range of topics discussed is also limited. Still, Fransisco (2000) noted that “even if the tools may be expensive, if they meet most of informants’ needs, such as the landline phones, they were still the ones commonly used” (pp. 70-71).

Aside from cost, attitude towards technology comes into play when choosing and using CMT. In understanding attitude, this research borrows the concepts of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which were posited by Davis in his explanation of Technology Acceptance Model, wherein an individual’s attitude towards technology, which has a bearing on his/her adoption of technology, is influenced by his/her perception of the technology’s usefulness and ease of use. (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989). While the said concepts focus its attention on computer acceptance (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989), this study looks into the possible influence of the usefulness and ease of use of a range of CMT, as perceived by the Singapore-based Filipino migrant mothers, which may then influence their attitude towards technology. As earlier mentioned, this study considers technological attitude as a determinant of a migrant mother’s technological profile.

Aside from attitude, individuals’ skills also determine the CMT used (Rule, 2009). That said, skills function alongside the availability of CMT: “[s]kills in using landline was universal among all the informants” but even with this skill “not all informants were able to use it because of unavailable infrastructure in the place of work or non-ownership of devices” (Rule, 2009, p. 132). Hence, this study also takes note of technological skills, alongside technological access and attitude, in understanding the migrant mother’s technological profile.

B. Communication Media and Technologies: The Mediators of Transnational Parenting

Aside from individual and social factors, long-distance parenting is also influenced by the characteristics of the chosen and used CMT. In the context of this current study, Information and Media Richness Theory (IMRT) is useful as it highlights the capacities and limitations of a particular type of media and/or technology to mediate information-rich communication.

Daft and Lengel (1984) posited that different media have varying degrees of richness in communicating both verbal and non-verbal information. Communication media can then be arrayed in terms of the “richness of information processed” (Daft & Lengel, 1984, p. 196). The criteria used in evaluating richness include availability of instant feedback (synchronicity or asynchronicity of exchange), ability to communicate multiple cues (i.e., facial expression, body language, tone of voice), capacity to communicate using natural language (mobile voice call vs. SMS, for instance), and its personal focus (i.e., personal communication vs. impersonal communication) (Trevino, Lengel, Bodensteiner, Gerloff, & Muir, 1990). The theory explains that the richer the medium, the more effective it is in communicating richer information. In terms of the continuum of media richness, face-to-face communication ranks the highest and unaddressed generic documents rank the lowest. Thus, communication technologies that resemble face-to-face communication rank higher in the media- and information-richness scale. Although the original range of media does not include new CMT, later studies which adopted Daft and Lengel’s theory included electronic communication (for instance, Rice & Shook, 1990).

While IMRT was originally conceptualized to help explain the capacities and limitation of a range of communication channels to exchange information of varying degrees of richness in an organizational setting (Daft & Lengel, 1984, 1986; Daft, Lengel, & Trevino, 1987; Lengel & Daft, 1988; Trevino, Lengel, & Daft, 1987), it nonetheless contains basic concepts that could be applied in the study of interpersonal communication in the family setting. And although there have been criticisms against IMRT (for instance, Markus, 1994; Ngwenyama

& Lee, 1997; Lee, 1994), its recognition that each communication technology has a particular set of capacities and limitations makes it relevant to this study.

Then again, one of the arguments against IMRT is that richness is not just an inherent property of a medium but is also a product of human-medium interaction (for instance, Lee, 1994). Recognizing this as well, this study catalogs the capacities and limitations of CMT based on what the migrant mothers have identified from their personal experience with the CMT or from what they know about them. As such, in the context of this study, choice and use of a particular CMT is considered to be associated with the migrant mother's perception of the benefits offered by that CMT, which comes from either her experienced capacities and limitations of that CMT or simply even her familiarity with the capacities and limitations of that CMT.

This is actually related to Palmgreen and Rayburn's expectancy-value approach to media gratifications, which is an extension of the U&G approach (McQuail & Windahl, 1993). The expectancy-value approach to media gratifications explains that an individual's involvement with a particular medium is "a combination of perception of benefits offered by the medium and the differential valuation of these perceived benefits" and these perceptions come from the individual's past experience with a certain medium or from his/her knowledge about it (McQuail & Windahl, 1993, p 137).

Thus, while IMRT is useful in this study, if taken alone, it is rather limited in explaining choice and use of CMT. Hence, this study incorporates the concepts of IMRT with U&G to be better equipped in understanding how technology-related factors, along with the migrant mother's communication environment, influence the migrant mother's choice and use of CMT for long-distance parenting. As Katz and Aakhus (2002a) argued, users' "evaluations and choices are based not only on the function of the technology but on their own social roles, status and values" (p. 315).

CMT, both old and new, play a significant role in the lives of transnational families. Huang, Yeoh, and Lam (2008) wrote that,

... transnational families are primarily defined by the fact that they continue to maintain shared imaginaries and narratives of belonging... through “virtual intimacies” (Wilding, 2006)... enhanced by rapid advancements in information and communication technologies particularly in the form of email, telephone, fax, and even web logs. (pp. 6-7)

Before the turn of the century, transnational parents depended on letters, cassette tapes, and landline phone calls to maintain contact with their Philippine-based families (Aguilar, 2009; Paragas, 2005). Letters and cassette tapes sent through post, however, take weeks to be received and exchanged. Nicolas (1993) studied migrant Filipinos, then popularly referred to as OCWs (Overseas Contract Workers) and found that “[b]ecause of the delay in the delivery of letters, problems such as communication gaps or lapses in the information the OCWs and their families relay to each other occur” which “happens when a family member writes to the OCW about a certain problem. The OCW’s reply is received by the family only after several weeks during which the problem has been either solved or has worsened” (p. 38). Paragas (2008), who himself experienced being a child of a transnational migrant father from the 80s to mid 90s, wrote that, “Simultaneity was, to us, an alien concept because of the asynchronous nature of our correspondence given the media at our disposal” (p. 39). Still, Nicolas (1993) wrote that “Both the OCWs and their families admitted that through writing and receiving letters, they are able to share their problems to (sic) each other. As a result, feelings of assurance and emotional strength are mutually expressed and accepted” (p. 41).

Talking over the phone during those years was also fraught with difficulties. In the Philippines, long-distance landline phone calls used to be limited to certain geographic areas and Paragas (2005) narrated that families without access to private telephone lines would go to centers with telephone booths to be able to talk to the migrant family member: “calling my

father then meant having to queue in line, during office hours; which, because of the time difference, meant we only had a two-hour window opportunity to talk to him” (p. 244).

Thus, it would not be an overstatement to say that the advent of new CMT has revolutionized the ways in which transnational parents communicate with their children. Paragas (2008) expressed that “Changing communication technologies have increased the potential for simultaneity among OFWs... Until the arrival of mobile phones, OFWs depended upon very asynchronous modes of communication...” (pp. 41-42). The anytime-anywhere element of new CMT, particularly of mobile phones, enables migrant parents to keep and stay in touch with their children anytime of the day and from almost any place where OFWs abound (Paragas, 2005). This anytime-anywhere element is described by Katz and Aakhus (2002b) as being in “perpetual contact”. The anytime-anywhere concept is also echoed in Castells’ (2008) “timeless time” where mediated interaction may be overlapped with other activities thus creating the “blurring of sequences” (p. 450) and Castells’ (2008) “space of flows” wherein the “simultaneity of social interaction can be achieved without territorial contiguity” (p. 449). Aguilar (2009) found from their study that before the advent of the mobile phone, telephone calls in a rural village in the Philippines “were cumbersome to receive” as “each call was a prearranged and synchronized event” and that “the recipient needed to be at the designated place at the appointed time” as delays “could be costly” (p. 208). According to Chu and Yang (2006),

...the fixed [line] phone broke the constraints of physical proximity on human beings, but still keeps people in a certain space... With the emergence of wireless transmission technologies, which then developed into ICTs and then to the birth of cell phones, people have been brought into a new era where they can engage in communication that is free from the constraints of physical proximity and spatial immobility. Or, phrased in another way, the spatial and temporal limitations on human interaction have been reduced. (p. 223)

Aside from the temporal and spatial constraints which existed prior to the advent of the mobile phone, Aguilar (2009) also noted that international calls then were expensive and Paragas (2008) reported that three-minute international calls before cost about US\$13.40 (based on 1989 exchange rate). As such, Aguilar (2009) found that international calls “were made only when urgent and important matters had to be discussed”, otherwise, postal letters “remained the principal means of communication” (p. 209).

Nowadays, Vertovec (2004) observed that the cost of international calls is generally lower than before and this has “impacted enormously and variously on many kinds of transnational communities” (p. 220). Then again, even if the cost of international calls is lower now, it can still weigh upon the budget of migrant workers as LDC constitutes a substantial portion in their expenses (Paragas, 2005; Thomas & Lim, 2009; Uy-Tioco, 2007). Hence, Filipino migrant workers usually resort to prepaid phone cards that can be used for long-distance land-based or mobile phone calls (Paragas, 2005). Phone card is a cheaper alternative and its prepaid value ensures that the amount spent is within the budget of OFWs.

Mobile phone use in the Philippines gained momentum in the late 1990s due in large part to the popularity of SMS which was then offered for free. Even though text messaging is no longer a free service, it still remains popular and widely used among Filipinos as it continues to offer a cheaper and more convenient alternative for communicating. It is of no surprise then that various literature on Filipino migration reported that transnational family members remain in contact with each other through regular and constant exchanges of SMS (Madianou, 2006; Paragas, 2005; Parreñas, 2005a; Parreñas, 2005b; Thomas & Lim, 2009; Uy-Tioco, 2007).

For Filipino migrant workers and their families with access to a networked computer, the Internet provides the cheapest technology for mediated communication (Rule, 2009). While there is cost involved in Internet subscription, the range of technologies it offers for unlimited

free conversation has the potential to offset its cost. For instance, voice calls, and even video calls, may be conducted over popular online services such as *Yahoo Messenger* and *Skype* for free. Other online communication services that may be conducted at relatively no-cost include chat, e-mail, as well as online text messaging. Online services such as *Chikka* enable Filipinos to send text messages from an Internet-connected device for free to any Philippine mobile number anywhere in the world and such messages will be sent directly to the recipient's mobile phone with the Philippine mobile number.

However, while Internet use has gained popularity among Filipinos, it still remains low compared to mobile phone use. Based on the latest Internet statistics, as of December 2011, Internet penetration in the Philippines is at 29.2% of the population (Internet World Stats Website, n.d.). Thus, while migrant workers may have access to the Internet which allows for cheaper communication, their families back home may not have Internet access, thus limiting the migrant workers' choice of technology for LDC.

In addition, the Internet does not provide the immediacy of communication inherent in mobile phones. For instance, one of Paragas' (2005) informants expressed that "she writes e-mails for the long, but not urgent, stories" (p. 248). Then again, this trend may be changing with the advent of Internet-capable smartphones and this study also looks into how this technological development influences LDC in transnational families.

Rule (2009) learnt from her informants that "when they discussed matters that involved lengthy conversations, they preferred using communication tools that were cheaper and rated higher in the media richness hierarchy" (p. 151). For instance, one of her OFW families mentioned using "SMS and landline to tell each other to go online when they wish to talk to each other at length" while another family "devised an agreement of sending missed calls to each other's cellular phones as a signal to meet online" (p. 152).

The use of social networking sites (SNS) has also gained popularity in recent years. Rule (2009) noted the use of *Friendster*, which was the most popular SNS back then, by saying that one of her OFW families uses “Friendster to share pictures, music and leave messages into each other’s testimonial pages instead of emails because they (sic) provided a more interactive experience that allowed them to share pictures to (sic) each other instead of sending it to one recipient” (p. 152). As such, this study also looks into the use of *Facebook*, which is currently the most popular SNS, for LDC between and among members of transnational families.

Studies on Filipino transnational family members’ use of various online communication services, however, are rather limited as most of these studies have focused on mobile phone use (for instance, Madianou, 2006; Paragas, 2005; Parreñas, 2005a; Uy-Tioco, 2007). To fill this lacuna, this study on long-distance parenting explores both old and new CMT and how migrant parents, particularly Singapore-based Filipino migrant mothers, harness CMT in parenting their Philippine-based teens. Literature has pointed out that new technology has not completely replaced the use of old technology (for instance, Madianou, 2006; Paragas, 2005). As Paragas (2005) reported in his study, migrant workers have “evolved nuanced combinations of e-mail, landline, and cell-phone usage to communicate with the Philippines” (p. 247). Therefore, migrant mothers and their families with access to a range of CMT appropriate the use of technology depending on circumstances as Wilding (2006) noted in her study of migrants from various countries. Madianou and Miller (n.d.) are even proposing the use of the term “polymedia” to refer to this use of various combinations of technology (as posted in a web log by Geismar, September 30, 2010).

C. The Communication Experience of Transnational Parenting

Transnational parenting greatly involves LDC thereby making it a communication experience. The intimacies of family life inherent in shared experiences, activities, care, concerns, emotions, and affections of family members living together have been replaced by

communicated experiences, activities, care, concerns, emotions, and affections in transnational families (Huang, Yeoh, & Lam, 2008; Madianou, 2006; Parreñas, 2005a; Parreñas, 2005b; Uy-Tioco, 2007).

Paragas' (2005) study reported that for his migrant parent informants, striking a balance between working to earn for the family and maintaining contact to pursue parental and familial duties is important. One of his migrant mother informants mentioned that "it becomes a condition where balancing priorities in life between family and financial success will lead to complicated family ties. That is why we always have to be alert to prevent this failure by constant communication" (Paragas, 2005, p. 245). Hence, while most transnational migrant mothers work abroad to provide for their children's material care, mothers do not ignore their role to provide for the emotional and moral care of their children even during migration (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). As expressed by a Mexican migrant working mother in the study of Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) of Latina migrant mothers, "You can't give love through money" (pp. 563-564) and according to the said authors, this mother "insisted that motherhood did not consist only of breadwinning" (p. 563) as "motherhood required an emotional presence and communication with a child" (p. 564). This is a concrete case of what Katz and Aakhus (2002a) described as "physically mobile, but socially "in touch"" (p. 301).

The study of Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) highlighted that migrant mothers combine breadwinning, caregiving, and guidance through LDC. They explained that physical absence of migrant mothers does "not signify emotional absence from her children" and as expressed by one of their informants, "I'm here, but I'm there" (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997, p. 558).

In the case of Filipino migrant mothers, it is also common among them to establish a routine or scheduled communication with their Philippine-based family (Madianou, 2006; Parreñas, 2005b). For instance, Parreñas (2005b) reported that a good number of mothers in her study

send letters through postal service on specific periods of the month and a *balikbayan* box (“*Balikbayan*” comes from two Filipino words – “*balik*” which means return and “*bayan*” which means nation. “*Balikbayan*” is used to refer to homecoming of migrant Filipinos) filled with clothes and goods every few months or so. The Philippine-based children in Parreñas’ (2005b) study have thus come to expect letters or packages from their mother on specific periods of the month and year. Rule (2009) also noted the scheduled communication of her OFW family informants.

Still, there are instances when communication among family members happens more frequently than usual. Aguila (2006) found out from her interview of an OFW family for her thesis that “[f]requency of their CMC [computer-mediated communication] use was also affected by their need for information. When the kids were sick, the OFW nurse monitored their health and gave instructions for their care via e-mail” (p. 236).

As discussed in the previous section, CMT, both old and new, play an important role in the lives of transnational parents. However, the use of the mobile phone, particularly the use of SMS, has been repeatedly mentioned by migrant mothers who participated in the studies of Parreñas (2005a, 2005b), Uy-Tioco (2007), and Thomas and Lim (2009). Uy-Tioco (2007) wrote that, “Cell phone technology has empowered these women, creating new ways to ‘mother’ their children across time and space” (p. 253). As earlier mentioned, the use of the Internet in transnational parenting has not been given much attention probably because, aside from the extreme popularity of SMS among Filipinos, there is higher mobile phone than Internet penetration among migrants and more so among the Philippine-based families at the time of the said studies.

Extant research has found that communication between migrant mothers and their children usually revolves around the everyday routines of family life such as asking about how their children’s day was, school, homework, reminders about eating healthy and on time, and

simple greetings (Aguilar, 2009; Madianou, 2006; Parreñas, 2005a; Parreñas, 2005b; Uy-Tioco, 2007). This is referred to by Pertierra as “absent presence” where mothers are still able to affirm their active presence in the lives of their children even if they are not physically present to perform with them the daily routines of family life (as cited in Uy-Tioco, 2007, p. 259). According to Aguilar (2009), “Even simple greetings... signified a relationship that remained valued despite the distance” (p. 207).

Moreover, Aguilar (2009) observed that, aside from spoken words, “the tone, velocity, cadence, accent, pauses, and other aspects of speech can be heard and felt” and that silence is also a form of communication (p. 219). Even though Aguilar wrote this in the context of communication between spouses, it is nonetheless true for mother-child communication as non-verbal cues matter as much as verbal messages in interpersonal relationships.

Communicating across distance is not always easy for these migrant mothers. As stated by Sobritchea (2007), “The effort to communicate their love for their children was often hamstrung by their own inability to “find the right words” and “the right time” to do it” (p. 186). In addition, there are times when migrant mothers have to deal with conflict between her and her children (Sobritchea, 2007).

Although CMT are harnessed by these mothers in maintaining closeness with their Philippine-based children, these mothers also recognize the extent of intimacy being carried through communication technologies. As Panagakos and Horst (2006) noted in their article, transnational migrants’ increased use of communication technology does not “necessarily mean that individuals feel more connected” (p. 112).

Balamiento (2010) wrote that “A limitation of the medium was that assurance of love and affection could only be manifested through constant verbal reinforcement of emotions and feelings” (p. 242). But even with constant affective communication, Parreñas (2001) found

out from her study that, “[n]ot one of my interviewees... claims that their family achieves intimacy from such efforts. Instead, they recognize the limits in such form of communication” (p. 125). For these mothers, Parreñas (2001) observed that “[a]lthough they ease the spatial barriers imposed on intimacy with postmodern communication, most parents do admit that technology cannot replace the intimacy that only a great investment in time and daily interactions can provide the family” (p. 131). Likewise, Wilding (2006) noted that ICTs do not “completely eliminate the effects of distance” (p. 138). This is also echoed by Rule (2009): “Although the OFW parent-informants took on nurturance and emotional support roles for their children, they were often limited in doing so due to their distance” (p. 93). Nicolas (1993) also stated that “Because of their distance from their family (sic), the OCWs feel hopeless and useless over family problems” (p. 46). As such, this study also explores how migrant mothers assess CMT in enabling them to parent their children despite the distance.

SYNTHESIS: CONTEXTUALIZING LONG-DISTANCE PARENTING

The transnational migration literature reviewed in this chapter point out that migrant mothers strive to continue parenting their children back home through LDC. The literature reviewed also depict the communicative nature of transnational parenting as migrant mothers come to depend on CMT as they talk with their children about daily experiences, give them reminders, share emotions, and exchange other things in their long-distance conversations with them as well as in their overseas talks with their caregivers in their attempt to parent their children across borders. The literature reviewed likewise describe the capacities and limitations of the various forms of CMT in mediating long-distance parenting. Hence, the researcher came up with the notion that a fundamental part of long-distance parenting is “communicated parenting” and the literature reviewed provide the researcher reasonable evidence to investigate this notion.

As a synthesis of the literature reviewed, this section presents a diagram (Figure 2) that has been adapted by the researcher for the purposes of this study on transnational parenting to

help explain how Singapore-based Filipino working mothers parent their Philippine-based teenage children through LDC. This diagram adopts Rosengren’s General Model of Uses and Gratification as its base and incorporates concepts from Family Systems Theory and Role Theory as well as concepts from parenting, family, communication, and transnational migration literature, in order to illustrate the important elements and associations gathered from the review of literature that would aid in understanding the migrant mothers’ long-distance parenting.

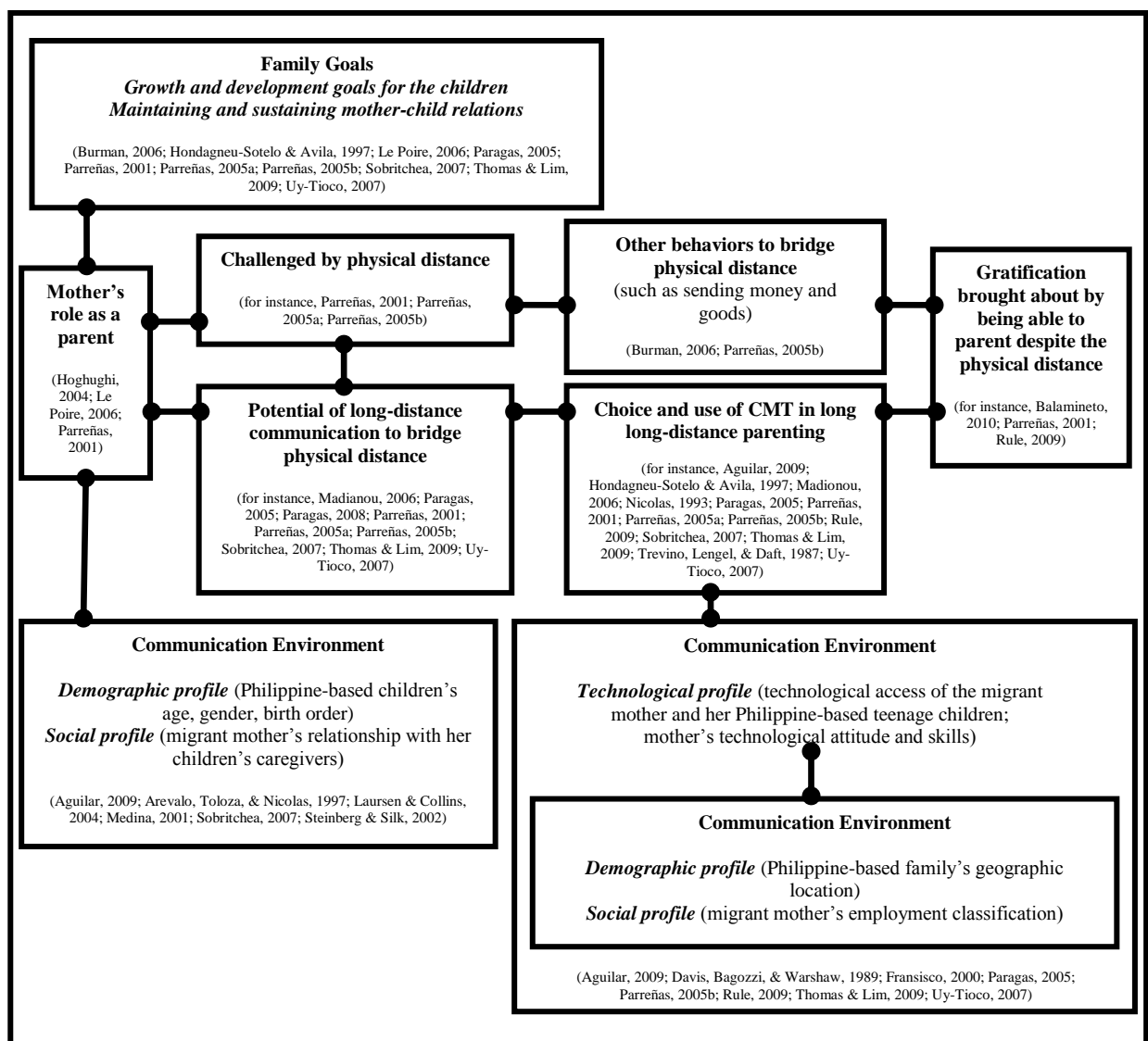


Figure 2. Synthesis of literature reviewed

Extant literature suggests that Filipino migrant mothers recognize their **role to parent** which is motivated by the impetus to **attain growth and development goals for their children** and the goal of **maintaining and sustaining mother-child relations** (Paragas, 2005; Parreñas, 2001; Parreñas, 2005a; Sobritchea, 2007; Uy-Tioco, 2007). In the diagram, this association is illustrated by a connecting line linking the boxed spaces of “Family goals” and “Mother’s role as a parent”. According to literature, a migrant mother’s parenting role encompasses the functions of nurture and control in order to provide material, emotional, and moral care (Le Poire, 2006; Parreñas, 2001). The **mother’s role as a parent**, however, is **challenged by the physical distance** brought about by her transnational migration. This problem is depicted in the diagram by a connecting line linking the boxed spaces of “Mother’s role as a parent” and “Challenged by physical distance”. In addressing the **challenges** imposed on parenting by her migration-led separation from her children, the migrant mother sees the **potential of long-distance communication to bridge the physical distance** as well as **other behaviors** such as providing material care by sending money and goods (Burman, 2006; Paragas, 2005; Parreñas, 2001; Parreñas, 2005a; Parreñas, 2005b; Sobritchea, 2007; Uy-Tioco, 2007). The diagram also depicts these linkages (“Challenged by physical distance” is linked with “Potential of long-distance communication to bridge physical distance” and also with “Other behaviors to bridge physical distance”).

As earlier stated, this study introduces the term “**communication environment**”. This study recognizes that transnational migrant mothers are situated in a **communication environment** that is shaped by the **demographic, social, and technological characteristics** of the migrant mother and her teenage children. In the context of this study, **demographic profile** is primarily determined by the **age, gender, and birth order** of the migrant mother’s Philippine-based children and these are considered to define the children’s parenting needs which are then associated with the **parental role** that the migrant mother carries out across borders. Meanwhile, the **geographic location** of the Philippine-based children, another **demographic characteristic** that shapes the communication environment of the migrant mother, influences

her **choice and use of communication media and technologies** through its association with **technological profile** as she will communicate with her children through CMT that her children have access to and are proficient in. Another determinant of communication environment in this study's context is **social profile**. On the one hand, **social profile** is defined by the **employment classification** of the migrant mother, whether she is on live-in or live-out employment arrangement, as this classification is seen to influence the migrant mother's **choice and use of communication media and technologies** also through its association with **technological profile**. On the other hand, it is also defined by the **migrant mother's relationship with her children's caregivers**, which is linked with the migrant mother's **parental role**. Meanwhile, **technological profile** is defined by the **technological access** of the migrant mother and her Philippine-based teenage children as well as the mother's **technological attitude** and **skills** and all these are associated with their **choice and use of communication media and technologies**.

In the diagram, the **demographic and social determinants of communication environment** are linked with the **mother's role as a parent** to illustrate the association of the **age, gender, and birth order components of demographic profile** and the **caregiver relationship component of social profile** with the migrant mother's **parenting role**. Moreover, the diagram shows the link of the **geographic location component of demographic profile** and the **employment classification component of social profile** with the migrant mother's **technological profile**. In turn, the **technological determinant of communication environment** is linked with **choice and use of CMT for long distance parenting** to demonstrate the association of the **access, attitude, and skills components of technological profile** with **choice and use of communication media and technologies**.

Apart from the communication environment, the capacities and limitations of media and technologies also matter in the migrant mother's **choice and use of communication media and technologies**. In the diagram, capacities and limitations are subsumed in the boxed space

of “Choice and use of CMT for long-distance parenting”. Capacities and limitations in this study refer to the migrant mothers’ experienced or perceived capacities and limitations of CMT. Hence, capacities and limitations of CMT may include those that were identified by the IMRT such as ability of CMT to enable mothers to phrase and transmit messages easily and quickly, to get immediate response, to communicate feelings or emotions verbally and non-verbally, and to engage in extended and deep communication (Trevino, Lengel, & Daft, 1987) as well as other CMT characteristics that the migrant mothers may deem as important considerations in their choice and use of CMT. Capacities and limitations of CMT also refer to the CMT’s capability to enable mothers to engage in conversation with their Philippine-based teenage children during various situations such as during routine talk, special occasions and events, urgent or emergency circumstances, during talks about serious and/or delicate matters, and moments of tension (Trevino, Lengel, & Daft, 1987). Through the **choice and use of CMT**, migrant mothers are able to engage in **long-distance parenting**.

In the context of this study, **long-distance parenting** leads to certain **gratification** when family goals are achieved or at least perceived to be on track. Otherwise, stressors that disrupt the attainment of family goals may lead to dissatisfaction.

As previously mentioned, aside from LDC, this study also acknowledges that migrant mothers engage in **other behaviors**, such as provision of material care through sending of money and goods, in fulfilling their parental role. While these activities are accounted for in the diagram, examination of such behaviors is not the study’s main focus.

This chapter thus identified the significant concepts that would help in understanding how Singapore-based Filipino working mothers with Philippine-based teenage children engage in transnational parenting. In studying long-distance parenting, this research aims:

1. To uncover the communication environment of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers across demographic, social, and technological locations.

2. To investigate how Singapore-based Filipino working mothers view parenting and their role as a mother now that they are living away from their teenage children.
3. To discover how Singapore-based Filipino working mothers, across demographic, social, and technological locations, parent their Philippine-based teenage children.
 - a. To describe the long-distance parenting being carried out by Singapore-based Filipino working mothers.
 - b. To map out the CMT used by Singapore-based Filipino working mothers in their long-distance parenting.
 - c. To understand Singapore-based Filipino working mothers' assessment of the CMT that they use in enabling them to parent their Philippine-based teenage children.

Conducting the Study

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study employed qualitative research method in order to understand how Singapore-based Filipino working mothers engage in transnational parenting of their Philippine-based teenage children through long-distance communication (LDC) and use of communication media and technologies (CMT). This chapter presents this study's methodology.

RESEARCH METHOD

In addressing the objectives of this study, in-depth face-to-face interviews of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers were conducted. A total of 32 Filipino migrant mothers participated in this study.

The in-depth interviews inquired on the communication environment of these migrant mothers in terms of their demographic, social, and technological profiles; their view of parenting and their role as a mother; the parental activities that make up their long-distance parenting; the CMT that they use in their long-distance parenting; and their assessment of the capacities and limitations of these technologies in enabling them to carry out long-distance parenting.

Each of these mothers was requested to attend only one interview session. These interviews were conducted from October 2010 to March 2011. Each mother was interviewed at a time and place convenient for her.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Two research instruments were used in addressing the objectives of this study. The first instrument is the In-depth Focus Interview Guide. This guide essentially contains questions on the mother informants' views of parenting, their role(s) as a mother, their relationships

with their teenage children in the Philippines, the topics that they discuss with their children relating to nurture and control, how they use CMT in parenting away from home, and how they evaluate these technologies in enabling them to parent from a distance.

The second instrument is the Profile Sheet which was administered right before the focus interview. This sheet inquired about the socio-demographic profile of the mother and her children, her access and use of CMT, and her perceived skills in using communication technologies.

While the research instruments were designed in English, the researcher used a combination of English and Filipino, which is the national language of the Philippines, during the actual interview for a more comfortable sharing. Being a Filipino herself, the researcher was able to carry out the interview sessions fluently using the above-mentioned languages.

SELECTION AND PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The Singapore-based Filipino working mothers who participated in this study were recruited through referrals. These mothers are employed in Singapore and have at least one child aged 13-19 years old based in the Philippines.

As suggested by the literature and also upon review of the data, it makes analytical sense to broadly categorize these mothers based on their live-in or live-out employment arrangement. Eventually, half of the mothers in this study are on live-out employment setting while the other half are on live-in employment arrangement.

The age of the mothers interviewed who are live-out employees ranges from 32 to 49 years old. All of them are at least college degree holders, two have a post-graduate degree, and another two have some post-graduate experience. Most of them have experienced working abroad only in Singapore and have done so for an average of about 3 years. Only one of them

has stayed and worked in Singapore for 10 years and another one has been working abroad for a total of 13 years, 2 years of which were spent in Singapore.

Meanwhile, the mothers interviewed who are live-in employees are from 33 to 44 years old. Five of them are high-school graduates, six are college degree holders, two have some college degree units, while the rest have a vocational degree. Most of them have worked abroad longer than the 3 year average of the live-out mothers. Their total number of years of working abroad and in Singapore ranges from 1 to 17 years with 4 years as the median value for years working in Singapore.

DATA ANALYSIS

Before conducting the interviews, the researcher first obtained the written consent of the mothers to participate and to record the interview. Afterwards, these recorded interviews were fully-transcribed.

In analyzing the data, the researcher thoroughly read each interview transcription. Guided by the concepts and associations illustrated in the synthesis diagram in Chapter 2 which have been derived from Rosengren's General Model of Uses and Gratification, Family Systems Theory, Role Theory, as well as from parenting, family, communication, and transnational migration literature, the researcher noted the concepts and associations that emerged from the reading of the interview texts. These were later on categorized then further refined into themes and sub-themes.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The discussion of findings in the next four chapters will begin with the presentation of the proposed Integrated Model of Communicated Parenting (IMCP) in Chapter 4. As will be explained in the said chapter, the proposed IMCP incorporates findings from the reviewed literature and from actual data derived from the interviews of migrant mothers who

participated in this study. Consequently, this proposed model offers a better illustration of long-distance parenting compared to the synthesis diagram presented in Chapter 2. In addition, the proposed IMCP also advances a better framework for understanding how transnational parenting takes place in the context of migrant mothers. Hence, by placing the discussion of the proposed IMCP in Chapter 4, the researcher is hoping to provide a good backdrop for explaining the findings in the subsequent three chapters after Chapter 4.

The three chapters following Chapter 4 are organized according to this study's three major research objectives to facilitate easier referencing: Chapter 5 will report the communication environment of the Singapore-based Filipino working mothers with Philippine-based teenage children who participated in this study, Chapter 6 will discuss these mothers' view of parenting and their role as a mother now that they are living apart from their teenage children, while Chapter 7 will cover their long-distance parenting efforts, the CMT that they use in their transnational parenting, and their assessment of these CMT in enabling them to parent their Philippine-based teenage children despite the distance. At the beginning of Chapters 5, 6, and 7, the corresponding portions of the proposed IMCP will also be presented and annotated.

Integrated Model of Communicated Parenting

Chapter 4: Proposed Model for Understanding Long-Distance Parenting

The concluding section in Chapter 2 presented a diagram that synthesized the literature reviewed in the context of this study's focus on long-distance parenting. This diagram, which adopted Rosengren's General Model of Uses and Gratification as its base and integrated concepts from Family Systems Theory and Role Theory as well as concepts from parenting, family, communication, and transnational migration literature, guided the researcher in studying how Singapore-based Filipino working mothers parent their Philippine-based teenage children through long-distance communication (LDC).

This diagram, however, has been further revised upon analysis and interpretation of the data derived from the interviews of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers. By incorporating the actual findings of this study, this revised diagram (Figure 3) now provides a better illustration of the long-distance parenting that takes place in the context of migrant mothers.

It was pointed out in the synthesis of Chapter 2 that the reviewed literature provided reasonable evidence for the researcher to investigate her notion that a fundamental part of long-distance parenting is communicated parenting. Indeed, the results of this study's inquiry on long-distance parenting revealed findings that reasonably sustain such conception. Thus, with the support of literature and actual data, this study asserts that an integral part of long-distance parenting is communicated parenting and the researcher proposes that the revised diagram be referred to as the Integrated Model of Communicated Parenting or IMCP.

The proposed IMCP is a communication model as it highlights the important role of communication in the lives of transnational families as they now depend on communicated experiences, activities, care, concerns, emotions, and affections in experiencing family life as well as depend on communication media and technologies (CMT) to be able to relay these

experiences, activities, care, concerns, emotions, and affections and all these have been corroborated by both the reviewed literature and actual data. Hence, the proposed model emphasizes the communicative nature of transnational parenting.

Then again, it must be noted that, even though IMCP is the revised version of the synthesis diagram presented in Chapter 2, it does not differ radically from the earlier version. What the IMCP basically offers, as it draws on both the reviewed literature and actual research findings, is a clearer illustration of all the elements and associations that were revealed to be significant in understanding long-distance parenting.

As shown in Figure 3, the IMCP highlights the key elements in the proposed long-distance parenting framework by allotting a boxed space for each of these vital components. This is a better way to demonstrate their importance in the overall framework and to show their particular link with the other central elements in the model. While the IMCP illustration in Figure 3 simply displays the key elements and their associations in the proposed long-distance parenting framework, the subsequent three chapters (Chapters 5 to 7) will present and annotate the corresponding portions of the proposed IMCP by displaying the revised model along with the actual key findings that correspond to the research objective addressed in each of the three succeeding chapters.

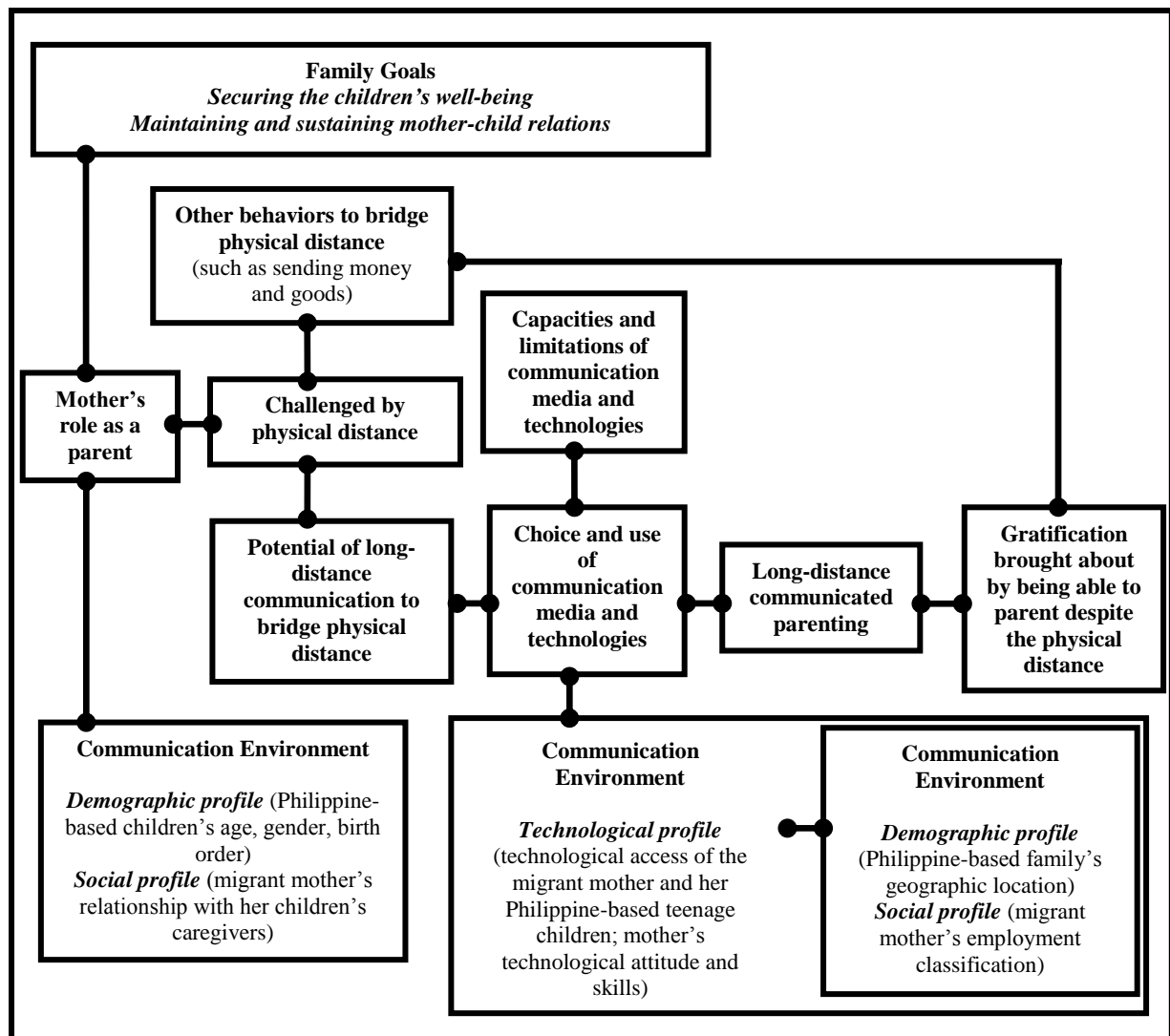


Figure 3. Integrated Model of Communicated Parenting

As with the synthesis diagram in Chapter 2, the proposed IMCP still includes **family goals** as an important component in the long-distance parenting framework. It has been found that, in the context of transnational migration, family goals are focused on **securing the children's well-being** and on **maintaining and sustaining mother-child relations**. Family goals, as illustrated in the proposed IMCP and the interview findings about it, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

The proposed IMCP still features the **migrant mother's role as a parent** to her children. It has been found that the migrant mothers recognize the importance of carrying out their

parenting roles in spite of their physical distance from their children and thus the proposed model also accounts for such. It has also been seen that their parenting roles are impelled by their desire to attain the abovementioned **family goals**. In the diagram, the association of family goals and the migrant mother's role as a parent is denoted by the connecting line linking the two. Similarly, it has been found that carrying out parenting roles is basically a function of nurture and control as the migrant mothers strive to continuously provide their children with material, emotional, and moral care despite the distance, which is consistent with the reviewed literature. Key findings on the migrant mother's roles as a parent will be displayed in the proposed IMCP in Chapter 6 as this chapter will discuss, in greater detail, findings from the interviews regarding the migrant mothers' view of parenting and their roles as a mother.

Like the synthesis diagram, the revised model still depicts that the **migrant mother's role as a parent is challenged by her physical distance** from her children. In the revised model, this association is illustrated by the connecting line linking the two and such representation captures the finding that the migrant mothers' parenting roles have been realigned by the circumstances of their transnational labor migration as they try to overcome the challenges imposed by their physical distance from their children. Chapter 6 will provide a more detailed discussion on how the mothers' parenting is challenged by her transnational labor migration.

Similar with the synthesis diagram, there is also a connecting line linking the boxed space of "Potential of long-distance communication to bridge physical distance" with the boxed space of "Challenged by physical distance" in the revised model. This line depicts the finding that the migrant mothers recognize the **potential of LDC to address the challenge of her physical distance** from her children. Chapter 6 will furnish a more detailed discussion of the interview results about these two important concepts. The proposed IMCP that will also be displayed in Chapter 6 will illustrate how the key findings about these two important concepts figure in the proposed long-distance parenting framework.

As with the synthesis diagram, the revised model still portrays that, aside from the potential of LDC to address the problem of physical distance, there are also **other behaviors** that the migrant mother could engage in to fulfill her parenting roles. Through a connecting line linking the boxed space of “Other behaviors to bridge physical distance” with the boxed space of “Challenged by physical distance”, the revised model recognizes that there are behaviors that could also possibly address the challenges imposed on the mother’s parenting by her migration-led separation from her children. It must be noted again, however, that examining such behaviors is not part of this study’s research objectives.

The IMCP still features the influence of the migrant mother’s **communication environment** in her remote parenting. As previously explained, communication environment is determined by the migrant mother’s **demographic, social, and technological profiles**. The specific components of each determinant of the migrant mother’s communication environment remain the same in the revised model. Similarly, the associations linking these components with the other elements in the long-distance parenting framework also remain the same.

The **age, gender, and birth order** of the migrant mothers’ teenage children, which are the **primary components of demographic profile**, have been seen to define their children’s parenting needs which are then associated with the migrant mothers’ **parental roles**. Meanwhile, the **geographic location** of the Philippine-based children, which is another **component of demographic profile**, has been seen to influence the mothers’ **technological profile** which then influences their **choice and use of CMT** as they opt to communicate with their children through CMT that their kids have access to and skills in using. Findings on demographic profile and its components will be presented in Chapter 5. Moreover, the key findings on demographic profile will also be summarized in the proposed IMCP that will be displayed in the next chapter. In addition, the association of age, gender, and birth order with the identified parental roles will be displayed in the proposed IMCP in Chapter 6 as well as a more detailed discussion regarding the said association.

Aside from the migrant mother's demographic profile, her **social profile, composed of her employment classification and her relationship with her children's caregivers**, also determines her communication environment. Results on social profile of the migrant mothers interviewed will be reported in Chapter 5 and its summary will also be presented in the said chapter's proposed IMCP illustration.

On the one hand, it has been found that the migrant mother's **employment classification**, whether she is on live-in or live-out employment arrangement, influences her **technological profile** which in turn influences her **choice and use of CMT**, details of which will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 7 respectively. On the other hand, the **migrant mother's relationship with her children's caregivers** has been found to influence her **parenting roles** and this will be further discussed in Chapter 6. Chapters 6 and 7 will also present the proposed IMCP illustrating the respective association of these two components of social profile.

Along with demographic and social profiles, a migrant mother's **technological profile** also shapes her **communication environment**. The interview results on technological profile of the migrant mothers will be reported in Chapter 5 and a summary of the key findings on technological profile will also be presented in the proposed IMCP illustration in the said chapter. A migrant mother's **technological profile**, which is defined by her and her Philippine-based children's **technological access**, her **attitude** towards various forms of CMT, and her **skills** in using available CMT, has been seen to be associated with her **choice and use of CMT** and Chapter 7 will provide a more detailed discussion regarding this as well as the proposed IMCP illustration of this link.

Alongside communication environment, the proposed IMCP also recognizes the bearing of the **capacities and limitations of CMT** in the **choice and use of CMT** for remote parenting as illustrated by the connecting line linking the boxed space of the former and the latter. In

this revised diagram, the concept of capacities and limitations has been allotted its own boxed space to give more emphasis to its importance in the overall long-distance parenting framework. The migrant mothers interviewed identified the capacities and limitations of CMT based either on their actual experience of using the CMT or on what they know about the CMT. Chapter 7 will present a detailed discussion of the capacities and limitations of CMT and its association with the choice and use of CMT. The proposed IMCP in the same chapter will also illustrate the said association.

It has been found that the migrant mothers' **choice and use of CMT** is influenced by their recognition of the **potential of LDC to bridge their physical distance** from their children, their **technological profile**, and their experienced or perceived **capacities and limitation of CMT**, and these links have been illustrated in the proposed IMCP. Chapter 7 will discuss, in greater detail, these influences on choice and use of CMT. The said chapter will also display the proposed IMCP and the related key findings regarding choice and use of CMT.

Compared to the synthesis diagram, the proposed IMCP now highlights **long-distance parenting** as it allots a separate boxed space to accord more prominence to its centrality in the overall framework. More importantly, it is now labeled as **long-distance communicated parenting** to emphasize the revised model's assertion that, based on the reviewed literature and actual findings, a vital part of long-distance parenting is communicated parenting.

A migrant mother's **long-distance communicated parenting** is actually the culmination of influence of all the components previously discussed. When the migrant mother engages in **long-distance communicated parenting**, she brings in her **parenting roles** which are influenced by both her **family goals** and **communication environment**, particularly **aspects of her demographic and social profile**. As the migrant mother is constrained to engage in "traditional forms" of parenting because of the **physical distance** which separates her from her children, she nonetheless recognizes that the **challenge of physical distance** may be

overcome by **LDC** and **other behaviors**. LDC is made possible through the **use of CMT** and the migrant mother **chooses** which CMT to use for her **long-distance communicated parenting** from a range of available CMT, with each alternative bearing a set of **capacities and limitations**. The range of available CMT, where the migrant mother can choose from for her long-distance communicated parenting, is influenced again by her **communication environment**, particularly her **technological profile**.

Chapter 7 will discuss the predominantly chosen and used CMT for long-distance communicated parenting during various communication situations such as during routine or typical conversations, special occasions, and moments of stress (during urgent or emergency situations, during discussions of serious matters or concerns, when there are delicate matters or concerns to be discussed, and during moments of misunderstandings, disagreements, and fights), and these situations are again parallel with the reviewed literature. Moreover, the same chapter will also discuss the migrant mothers' parenting roles during the said communication situations as they attempt to parent their children through LDC as well as the associated topics discussed and the related family goals being addressed during such long-distance conversations. The proposed IMCP in Chapter 7 will also display the key findings on the migrant mothers' communicated parenting.

The proposed IMCP still retains the concept of **gratification**. It has been found that **long-distance communicated parenting** leads to certain **gratification**, as illustrated by the connecting line between these two concepts in the revised model, as the migrant mothers are still able to parent their children even during migration. While these mothers recognized that they cannot "fully" parent their children because of their physical separation from them, they acknowledged the importance of regular LDC and proclaimed the significant contribution of CMT in enabling them to remotely parent their children. Chapter 7 will discuss further the findings on this concept.

Then again, as with the synthesis diagram, while the proposed IMCP asserts that a fundamental part of long-distance parenting is communicated parenting, it still recognizes that there are **other behaviors** aside from LDC that migrant mothers could engage in to **gratify** their parental roles and this has been depicted in the revised model by the connecting line linking the boxed space of “Other behaviors to bridge physical distance” with “Gratification”. The present study, however, does not focus on this aspect of parenting.

All things considered, the proposed IMCP has the potential to have substantial contribution to the field of family communication studies as it focuses on the parenting that transpires when transnational labor migration separates parents from their children. In the era of globalization where separation is increasingly becoming a reality especially among families in developing countries, the proposed model provides a framework for understanding how these families cope with migration. As such, while the proposed IMCP conceptualized for this study focuses on the migrant mother’s experience as she parents her teenage children across borders, the researcher believes in its heuristic value and encourages further application and refinement of the suggested model.

Communication Environment

Chapter 5: Addressing the First Research Objective

This chapter presents the communication environment of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers as it addresses the first research objective of this thesis: To uncover the communication environment of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers across demographic, social, and technological locations.

As explained in the proposed Integrated Model of Communicated Parenting (IMCP) in Chapter 4, **communication environment** influences a migrant mother's long-distance parenting through its link with her **parental role** and through its connection with her **choice and use of communication media and technologies (CMT)** in carrying out parenting across borders.

Using the proposed model, Figure 4 below presents this study's key findings on the communication environment of the migrant mothers who were interviewed:

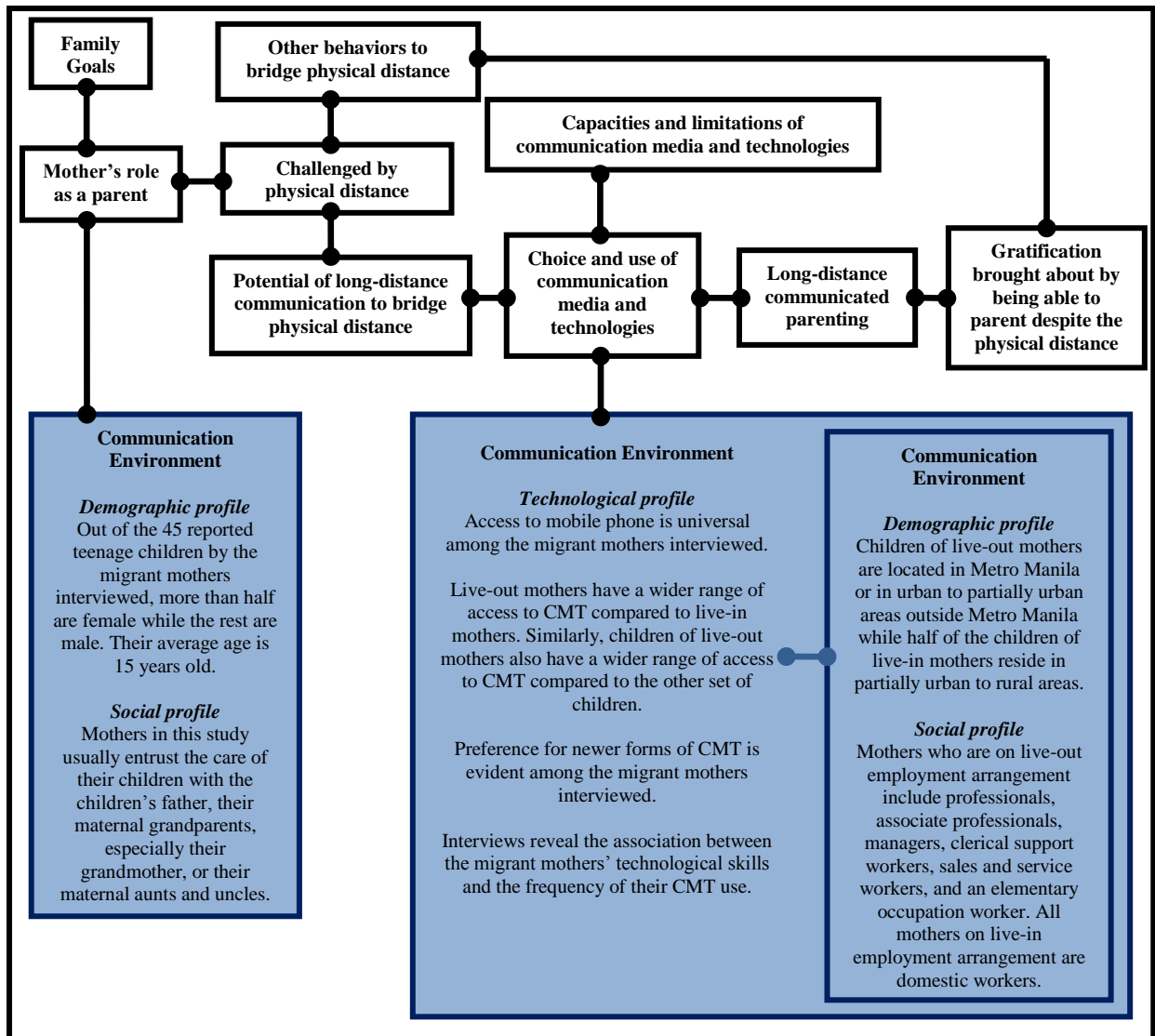


Figure 4. Communication environment of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The discussion on the proposed IMCP in Chapter 4 explained that an individual's demographic profile is one of the three determinants of a migrant mother's communication environment along with her social and technological profile. In this study, the demographic profile of the Singapore-based Filipino migrant mothers is defined by the age, gender, birth order, and current location of their Philippine-based teenage children.

As summarized in Figure 4, the combined number of teenage children reported by the mothers in this study is 45 and 25 of them are female while 20 are male. The average age of these children is 15 years old which means that they are generally in their high-school years. Meanwhile, the children of live-out mothers are located either in Metro Manila or in urban (U) to partially urban (PU) areas outside Metro Manila. In contrast, half of the live-in mothers have children residing in PU to rural (R) areas. Table 1 below provides details on the determinants of the demographic profile of the Filipino mothers interviewed which the proposed IMCP highlights as essential in understanding the migrant mothers' communicated parenting.

Table 1. Demographic profile

Mother ID	Age of Children	Gender of Children	Children's Provincial Location*
1	17	Female	Isabela (PU to R)
	14	Male	
	8	Male	
2	14	Female	Metro Manila (U)
3	18	Male	Laguna (U)
	16	Female	
	15	Female	
	8	Male	
4	16	Female	Cavite (U to PR)
	13	Male	
5	20	Female	Pangasinan (PU to R)
	18	Male	
	16	Female	
6	19	Female	Surigao del Norte (PU)
	18	Male	
7	19	Female	Laguna (U)
	16	Male	
	13	Female	
8	16	Male	Metro Manila (U)
	11	Male	
9	13	Female	Bulacan (U to PU)
	8	Female	
10	13	Male	Southern Leyte (PU to R)
	10	Male	Misamis Occidental (PU to R)
11	17	Female	Iloilo (R)
	13	Female	
12	20	Male	Camarines Sur (U)
	14	Male	
13	14	Female	Metro Manila (U)
	6	Female	Singapore (U)

Mother ID	Age of Children	Gender of Children	Children's Provincial Location*
14	27	Female	Metro Manila (U)
	22	Male	
	18	Female	
15	14	Male	Cotabato (U)
	11	Male	
16	14	Female	Surigao del Norte (PU to R)
	12	Female	
17	19	Female	Metro Manila (U)
18	13	Female	Metro Manila (U)
19	13	Female	Iloilo (PU to R)
	11	Male	
20	17	Male	Batangas (PU)
	16	Female	
	11	Male	
21	17	Male	Metro Manila (U)
	15	Female	
22	14	Male	Cebu (U)
	12	Female	
	8	Male	
23	17	Female	Pangasinan (U)
	15	Male	
	11	Female	
	7	Female	
24	13	Female	Nueva Ecija (PU to R)
	8	Female	
25	23	Male	Metro Manila (U)
	21	Female	
	15	Female	
26	17	Female	Zamboanga del Norte (PU)
27	20	Female	Iloilo (U)
	18	Female	
	15	Male	
	12	Male	
28	16	Male	Bulacan (U)
	12	Female	
	11	Female	
29	13	Male	Province in Visayas (PU to R)
	4	Male	
30	14	Male	Metro Manila (U)
	9	Female	
31	13	Male	Benguet (U)
	11	Female	
32	20	Male	Cavite (U)
	16	Male	

*Note: Based on the Philippine Standard Geographic Code (as of March 2011); Specific location in the province may be classified as: R-Rural; PU- Partially Urban; U-Urban.

SOCIAL PROFILE

As explained in the proposed IMCP in Chapter 4, social profile is another determinant of communication environment. In this study, social profile is defined by the live-in or live-out employment classification of the Singapore-based Filipino mother as well as her relationship with her teenage children's caregivers.

As mentioned in the methodology section, half of the mothers interviewed are on live-out employment arrangement and the other half are on live-in employment arrangement. Figure 4 summarizes that all the mothers interviewed who are on live-in employment are domestic workers. Meanwhile, the mothers in this study who are on live-out arrangement include professionals, associate professionals, managers, clerical support workers, sales and service workers, and an elementary occupation worker.

Figure 4 also summarizes that, with regard to caregivers, these mothers tend to leave their teens with their father, maternal grandparents most especially their grandmother, and maternal aunts and uncles. Table 2 below provides details on the determinants of the social profile of the Filipino mothers interviewed which the proposed IMCP emphasizes as crucial in understanding how long-distance parenting transpires.

Table 2. Social profile

LIVE-OUT EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENT		
Mother ID	Employment Classification*	Teenage Children's Caregivers
2	Sales and Service Worker	Child's father
3	Associate Professional	Children's father
4	Associate Professional	Children's father, house-help
7	Associate Professional	Children's father, maternal grandparents
8	Professional	Maternal grandmother
9	Sales and Service Worker	Children's father, maternal grandmother
12	Professional	Children's father; maternal grandparents, aunts, uncle
13	Professional	Maternal grandparents
14	Manager	Maternal grandmother
18	Associate Professional	Maternal grandmother, aunt, and uncle
20	Sales and Service Worker	Maternal grandmother

LIVE-OUT EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENT		
Mother ID	Employment Classification*	Teenage Children's Caregivers
25	Clerical Support Worker	Maternal grandmother, house-help
26	Elementary Occupation	Mother's current partner
30	Manager	Maternal uncle
31	Associate Professional	Maternal grandparents
32	Clerical Support Worker	Maternal aunt
LIVE-IN EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENT		
Mother ID	Employment Classification*	Teenage Children's Caregivers
1	Elementary Occupation	Maternal grandmother
5	Elementary Occupation	Children's father
6	Elementary Occupation	Maternal grandparents
10	Elementary Occupation	Child's father
11	Elementary Occupation	Children's father
15	Elementary Occupation	Children's father
16	Elementary Occupation	Maternal grandparents, aunts, and uncles
17	Elementary Occupation	Child's father (though child is over 18 years old already)
19	Elementary Occupation	Maternal grandfather
21	Elementary Occupation	Children's father
22	Elementary Occupation	Maternal grandmother
23	Elementary Occupation	Children's father, maternal uncle
24	Elementary Occupation	Paternal grandmother
27	Elementary Occupation	Children's father
28	Elementary Occupation	Children's father, paternal grandmother
29	Elementary Occupation	Maternal grandmother

*The original statements of occupation were classified according to the International Labor Organization's international standard classification of occupations (approved on 6 December 2007).

TECHNOLOGICAL PROFILE

As explained in the proposed IMCP in Chapter 4, technological profile is defined by the technological access of the migrant mother and her children back home as well as her technological attitude and skills. It was also previously pointed out that the mother's employment classification and her children's geographic location have bearing on the mother's technological profile. Table 3 provides details on the determinants of the technological profile of the Filipino mothers interviewed which the proposed IMCP highlights as vital in understanding how transnational parenting works.

Table 3. Technological profile

Communication Media*	Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
<p>Mobile phone</p>	<p>Access</p> <p>Mother’s personal ownership of a mobile phone enables convenient and direct access to a portable communication device.</p> <p>Teenage children’s personal ownership of a mobile phone enables them to be easily in-touch with their mother.</p>	<p>Access</p> <p>Generally the only medium for LDC among live-in mothers and their teenage children.</p> <p>Mother’s personal ownership of a mobile phone enables convenient and direct access to a portable communication device.</p> <p>Teenage children’s personal access/ownership of a mobile phone enables them to be easily in-touch with their mother.</p>
	<p>Attitude</p> <p>Mobile phone is a basic “must-own” LDC medium for live-out mothers.</p> <p>Preference for mobile phone is more apparent during times when live-out mothers cannot engage in computer-based LDC.*</p>	<p>Attitude</p> <p>Mobile phone is a “must-own” unit for live-in mothers given that this is generally the only LDC medium that they have ready access to.</p>
	<p>Skills</p> <p>Universal skills in the use of mobile voice call and SMS technologies.</p>	<p>Skills</p> <p>Universal skills in the use of mobile voice call and SMS technologies.</p>
	<p>Constraint</p> <p>Cost of using mobile technology.</p> <p>Discipline on the use of mobile phone only during free time.**</p>	<p>Constraint</p> <p>Cost of using mobile technology.</p> <p>Discipline on the use of mobile phone only during free time.**</p> <p>There are some employers who prohibit their house-help to engage in LDC during work-hours.*</p>
	<p>Strategy</p> <p>Live-out mothers budget their LDC expenses.</p> <p>To lower the cost of sending international SMS on the part of their teenage children and their caregivers, there are live-out mothers who own a Philippine sim</p>	<p>Strategy</p> <p>Live-in mothers budget their LDC expenses.</p> <p>To lower the cost of sending international SMS on the part of their teenage children and their caregivers, there are live-in mothers who own a Philippine sim</p>

Communication Media*	Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
	<p>card activated for international roaming.</p> <p>Live-out mothers generally engage in LDC during their free time.**</p>	<p>card activated for international roaming.</p> <p>More common for live-in mothers to own a Philippine sim card activated for international roaming.</p> <p>Live-in mothers generally engage in LDC during their free time.**</p>
Personal Computer	<p>Access</p> <p>There is only one live-out mother (Mother 3) who does not personally own a computer.</p> <p>Teenage children generally have access to a personal computer at home.</p>	<p>Access</p> <p>There is only one live-in mother (Mother 24) who personally owns a computer.</p> <p>Most of the live-in mothers' teenage children do not have access to a personal computer at home.</p>
	<p>Attitude</p> <p>There are live-out mothers who primarily depend on their computer for their LDC with their teenage children.</p> <p>The lower cost of computer-based Internet technology increases its favorability among live-out mothers.**</p>	<p>Attitude</p> <p>Live-in mothers who are able to engage in computer-based Internet technologies for their LDC with their children enjoy the audio and visual capacities of Internet technologies.</p> <p>For mothers who do not have vast experience on the use of computer-based Internet technologies, they nonetheless recognized how the Internet can enhance their LDC with their children.</p>
	<p>Skills</p> <p>Universal skills on the use of computer for both live-out mothers and their teenage children.</p>	<p>Skills</p> <p>Some live-in mothers and teenage children lack computer skills.</p>
	<p>Constraint</p> <p>Discipline on the active use of computer only during free time.**</p>	<p>Constraint</p> <p>Cost of personal computer.</p> <p>Some live-in mothers have limited to no access to computer.</p> <p>The nature of their work does not allow them to sit in front of the computer during their work-hours.**</p>

Communication Media*	Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
		<p>Most of these mothers' families back home also do not have access to a personal computer at home.</p> <p>Some live-in mothers and teenage children do not have the necessary computer skills.</p>
	<p>Strategy</p> <p>While live-out mothers generally engage in LDC during their free time, most of them are employed in jobs that enable them to have access to Internet which allows them to be on standby online even during work-hours.**</p>	<p>Strategy</p> <p>These mothers may rent a computer in Internet shops.</p> <p>There are employers who allow their house-help to use their computer.</p> <p>There are employers who taught their house-help how to use the computer for LDC. There are also live-in mothers who participated in computer skills training.</p> <p>Families back home may access an Internet-connected computer through Internet shops downtown.</p>
Land-based Phone	<p>Access</p> <p>Generally, live-out mothers have access to a land-based phone at home and at work.</p> <p>Generally, the families of these mothers have access to a land-based phone at home.</p>	<p>Access</p> <p>There are employers who allow their house-help to use their land-based phone and some even include free land-based international calls as part of their house-help's bonus income.</p> <p>There are families who do not have access to a land-based phone at home.</p>
	<p>Attitude</p> <p>Live-out mothers prefer the use of either their mobile phone or their personal computer in their LDC even if they have access to a land-based phone at home and at work.</p>	<p>Attitude</p> <p>Live-in mothers still generally prefer to use their mobile phone for their LDC.</p>
	<p>Skills</p> <p>Some live-out mothers admit that they do not know how to use land-based phone for international calls.</p>	<p>Skills</p> <p>It appears that live-in mothers are more knowledgeable with the use of land-based phone for international calls compared to live-out mothers.</p>

Communication Media*	Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
	<p>Constraint</p> <p>Live-out mothers' preference for newer forms of media restrains land-phone use.</p>	<p>Constraint</p> <p>Live-in mothers' preference for newer forms of media restrains land-phone use.</p> <p>Some employers do not allow their house-help to use their land-based phone.</p>
	<p>Strategy</p> <p>Ownership of mobile phone and personal computer becomes imperative for live-out mothers so they can have convenient and direct access to communication media.</p>	<p>Strategy</p> <p>Ownership of mobile phone becomes imperative for live-in mothers so they can have convenient and direct access to a communication device.</p>
Postal system	<p>Access</p> <p>Most mothers and children do not access the postal system.</p>	<p>Access</p> <p>Most mothers and children do not access the postal system.</p>
	<p>Attitude</p> <p>These mothers generally prefer newer channels of communication.</p>	<p>Attitude</p> <p>These mothers generally prefer newer channels of communication.</p>
	<p>Skills</p> <p>Some mothers admitted that they do not know how to use the services of the Singapore postal system.</p>	<p>Skills</p> <p>Some mothers admitted that they do not know how to use the services of the Singapore postal system.</p>
	<p>Constraint</p> <p>Live-out mothers' preference for newer forms of media restrains use of the postal system.</p>	<p>Constraint</p> <p>Live-in mothers' preference for newer forms of media restrains use of the postal system.</p>
	<p>Strategy</p> <p>Ownership of mobile phone and personal computer becomes imperative for live-out mothers so they can have convenient and direct access to communication media.</p>	<p>Strategy</p> <p>Ownership of mobile phone becomes imperative for live-in mothers so they can have convenient and direct access to a communication device.</p>
Smartphone	<p>Access</p> <p>A number of live-out mothers personally own a smartphone.</p>	<p>Access</p> <p>None of the live-in mothers personally own a smartphone.</p>

Communication Media*	Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
	<p>Attitude</p> <p>Live-out mothers with access to a smartphone acknowledged how it enables them to be easily in-touch through a variety of technology anytime and anywhere.</p>	<p>Attitude</p> <p>--</p>
	<p>Skills</p> <p>Live-out mothers with access to a smartphone are comfortable in using both its mobile and Internet technologies.</p>	<p>Skills</p> <p>--</p>
	<p>Constraint</p> <p>Cost of a smartphone unit.</p> <p>Cost of the required network service to maximize smartphone capability.</p>	<p>Constraint</p> <p>--</p>
	<p>Strategy</p> <p>Live-out mothers who do not own a smartphone use the mobile technologies of their regular mobile phone and the Internet technologies of their personal computer for LDC.</p>	<p>Strategy</p> <p>--</p>

*Details about the specific CMT used for LDC will be presented in Chapter 7.

**These items will be further discussed in Chapter 7 (See section on Communication Environment and Its Association with the Choice and Use of Communication Media and Technologies).

A. Mobile Phone

1. Access, attitude, and skills

Universal access to mobile phone is evident from all the migrant mothers interviewed regardless of their employment arrangement. In fact, for the live-in mothers in the study, the mobile phone is the only medium that they have ready access to in contrast with the live-out mothers who also have ready access to an Internet-connected personal computer.

Thus, the mobile phone is the most basic communication medium that all these migrant mothers own. In terms of ease of use, these mothers value their personal ownership of the medium as it offers them the liberty to conveniently and directly initiate, receive, and respond to calls and messages. This means that they do not have to access a land-based phone, which for most of them is not their private ownership, and owning a personal communication device thus bypasses requesting for permission to access. Personal ownership also means that they avoid the inconvenience of accessing land-based public phone service which some of the live-in mothers, who have worked in Singapore for many years, have experienced. For instance, Mother 11, who has been working in Singapore for 13 years, narrated that during her earlier years, queuing to access a public phone was the first order of the day during her day-off and she even experienced being cussed by those behind her who were rushing her to finish her call.

Personally owning a mobile phone also gives these mothers greater control of managing their LDC expense as they are also most likely the exclusive users of their unit and can then monitor their own use of their mobile phone for overseas communication. Personal ownership also promotes privacy of communication. For instance, as personal ownership of mobile phone most likely also means exclusive access, ownership presents them private access to all incoming calls and messages.

In terms of usefulness, the mobile phone is a portable medium that is constantly switched-on which enables these mothers to be in what Katz and Aakhus (2002b) refer to as being in “perpetual contact” regardless of time and place. Besides, as Singapore is on the same time zone as the Philippines, these mothers and their teens are on parallel active and sleeping cycle which enhances the temporal dimension of their being in “perpetual contact”.

With regard to skills, these mothers reported that they are adept in using the mobile technologies of voice call and SMS which also enhances their ease in using the medium.

2. Constraints and strategies

As the mobile phone has been a common device in the recent decade, the mothers in this study who arrived in Singapore in the last few years either set out to acquire a new mobile phone with a Singapore sim or simply purchased a Singapore sim for their existing unit upon arrival. Some of them, especially those on live-in employment, saved their Singapore income to be able to buy a mobile unit. While some mothers did not own a unit at all prior to departure from the Philippines, Mother 19, a live-in mother, was prohibited from bringing her mobile unit to Singapore. Still, there are others like live-in Mothers 6 and 22 who were given a mobile phone unit by their employers. Live-in mothers who arrived in Singapore much earlier also saved to be able to purchase a unit of their own.

Aside from owning a Singapore sim card, it is also common for these mothers, especially those on live-in employment, to own a Philippine sim that is activated for international roaming. This is a cost-efficient alternative given that live-in mothers and their families back home usually only depend on their mobile phone unit for their LDC. While opinions are mixed whether it is more economical to call or to send SMS to the Philippines from a Singapore sim or a Philippine sim, there is an agreement that mothers who own a Philippine sim on roaming significantly provide their Philippine-based families a cheaper means of reaching them through SMS. The Philippine-based family will only spend P1/SMS (about S\$0.03/SMS) if the SMS is sent to the mother's roaming sim and the mother will also not be charged for the incoming SMS received through her roaming sim. Thus, being able to send SMS at a much lower cost gives these mothers' families the opportunity not only to respond to these mothers' SMS but to initiate long-distance contact as well.

However, while the same local per-minute charges apply on the part of the Philippine-based family when they call the Singapore-based mother through her roaming sim, the substantial per-minute incoming call roaming charges (about P60/minute or S\$2/minute) that the mother will incur makes such a call unfavorable. Besides, the mothers in this study generally

dissuade their families from calling them as charges will be incurred by both parties. Hence, it is more cost-efficient if the mother is the one to initiate the call as receipt of call is free of charge in the Philippines. In effect, the Philippine-based sim is actually more for the benefit of the Philippine-based families so that they can respond to messages and initiate contact primarily through SMS. Through this, the families can also prompt the mothers to call them other than wait for the next call to come.

Meanwhile, Mother 30, a live-out mother, does not only have a Philippine roaming sim that enables her children to send her SMS at a cheaper rate but she also gave a Singapore sim on roaming to her teenage children which then enables her to SMS her children at a cheaper rate as well. She said that her children only use this Singapore roaming sim to receive SMS from her and she only has to maintain a minimum prepaid load credit on this Singapore roaming sim for her children to enjoy continuous roaming service. According to her, both she and her children can now send and receive international SMS at a cheaper rate.

Most mothers in this study also prefer that their teenage children have personal ownership of mobile phone and as such, they work on their children's ownership of the device. Some of them gifted their children with a brand new unit while other mothers passed down their old model when they were able to buy a new one. For one, as teens usually spend longer time away from home, these mothers said that they can easily monitor their children's whereabouts if they have their own unit. In addition, mothers can also get updates straight from their children. Mothers can also readily and directly contact their teens and avoid going through channels. This way, the teenage children are just within easy calling and texting distance from their mother.

Then again, as the Filipino teenage children would most likely be prepaid account subscribers, they should have the minimum prepaid load credit to be able to send SMS. In contrast, incoming SMS is free of charge so they can receive messages even at zero-balance.

Similar to the findings of Rule (2009), the mothers in this study also reported that they have developed a strategy to spare their teens the cost of shouldering overseas outgoing calls so that when these teens need to talk to their mother, they simply notify their mother to initiate the call by sending an SMS or through the “missed-call” prompt.

B. Personal Computer

1. Access, attitude, and skills

While there is only one live-out mother in this study who does not personally own a computer, only one live-in mother does. In addition, most of the teenage children of these live-in mothers also do not have a personal computer at home unlike the teenage children of live-out mothers. It is of no surprise then that live-in mothers are dependent only on their mobile phone for their LDC with their teens while live-out mothers have an array of Internet-based technological choices to be in-touch with their teens such as e-mail, Internet chat, Internet voice and video call, and even *Facebook*, aside from the mobile-based technologies of SMS and voice call.

Nonetheless, the live-in mothers recognized that, in terms of usefulness, having regular access to an Internet-connected computer will enable them to enjoy relatively free, frequent, and longer calls with their families. They also acknowledged the benefit of being able to regularly see their families through video call. Besides, these mothers conceded that, if their families have regular access to an Internet-connected computer, then their children can also use the medium not only for LDC but also for school-related projects.

In terms of ease of use, live-in mothers and their children still have to rent or borrow a computer to be able to access the Internet. While some mothers have the option of using their employer’s computer, they admitted that they are quite uneasy using their employer’s computer even if they have been given permission to do so.

Regarding skills, the interviews revealed that proficiency is associated with the frequency of CMT use. As such, the live-out mothers in this study appear to have higher skills in using personal computer and Internet technologies than the live-in mothers. In fact, there are live-in mothers, like Mothers 1, 6, and 29, who disclosed that they do not know how to use a computer and, as skills influence ease of use, insufficiency in computer skills affects their ease in using the medium.

2. Constraints and strategies

For these mothers to be able to regularly engage in Internet-based LDC with their children, technological symmetry necessitates that these mothers' families should also have constant Internet access. But while today's youngsters have been touted as the online generation, it is actually the children of live-out mothers who represent this online generation as these children are usually online when time and rules on Internet use at home permit them to do so. In contrast, the children of live-in mothers have more limited access to a computer with Internet which can be attributed to their families' limited resources to invest in personally owned and networked computer as well as to the lack of Internet service providers in their area due to geographic factors, all of which are consistent with the earlier findings of Parreñas (2005b).

Thus, for live-in mothers who do not own a personal computer but have access to it either through their employer or through an Internet shop, they have to set an "online date" with their children so that they can go to an Internet shop to engage in online chat, voice, or video call with them. This is similar to what has previously been noted in Chapter 2 about what Aguilar (2009) found from their study that, before the advent of mobile phones, telephone call "was a prearranged and synchronized event" (p. 208). Mother 21 narrates, "When I want to see them, they go to an Internet shop." Hence, limited access to technology imposes temporal and spatial constraints even for technology that is purported to have breached temporal and

spatial limitations. Thus, similar to mobile phone, personal ownership of a networked computer will give them greater ease in using the medium.

With respect to skill, there are live-in mothers who were able to develop their computer and Internet skills by participating in computer-training courses, as in the case of Mothers 10 and 19, or with the help of their employers like Mother 11.

C. Land-Based Phone

1. Access, attitude, and skills

With regard to land-based phones, the mothers in this study generally do not prefer to use such devices in their LDC even if they have access to them. In terms of ease of use, this attitude may be traced from these mothers' uneasiness to use a device that they do not personally own. For instance, live-out mothers did not report using their office phone for personal overseas calls. Moreover, while some employers allow their house-help to use their land phone either charged or for free, most of these mothers are still more comfortable in using their own mobile phone for international calls. Some of them reported that they only use their employer's landline during times of urgency when they do not have enough mobile prepaid credits to call home. Still, there are employers who encourage and do not charge their house-help on the use of their land phone by making international calls part of their bonus privilege, as in the case of Mothers 11 and 15.

In terms of usefulness, on the other hand, these mothers no longer see the utility of land-based phone since they already have a mobile phone that functions similarly. In fact, even when live-out mothers have access to a land phone at home, they mentioned that they still prefer to use their mobile phone or their Internet-connected computer. Besides, the capacity to send and receive SMS adds to the usefulness of mobile phone. Hence, it is not surprising that the mobile phone has progressively replaced the use of land phone among these mothers.

Meanwhile, consistent with the findings of Parreñas (2005b), not all Philippine-based families have access to a land-based phone at home primarily because of their geographic location. While families in urban areas are likely to have a land-based phone, land phone penetration is not as high in rural areas. As such, there are more live-in mothers who reported that their families do not own a land-based phone.

For Philippine-based families with land phone, it is interesting to note that some mothers prefer to call their teens through this line. According to Mother 18, a live-out mother, this is a way for her to monitor her daughter if she is truly at home.

2. Constraints and strategies

Since these mothers do not prefer using land-based phone for their LDC, ownership of mobile phone becomes imperative for them. For live-out mothers, ownership of a personal computer also replaces the need for land-based phone as Internet-based technologies can already perform both voice and video call functions.

Meanwhile, Mother 8, a live-out mother, gave a high rating on the VOIP technology that she was able to subscribe to. According to her, this technology enabled her Philippine-based family to have a Singapore number and the S\$15 monthly subscription fee that she pays already allows her family unlimited talk time with any Singapore number. As such, they can exchange phone calls as much as they want.

D. Postal System

1. Access, attitude, and skills

Meanwhile, only a handful of the mothers in this study reported that they access the postal system. Some mothers mentioned that they no longer see the personal usefulness of sending postal mail as the newer forms of technology already sufficiently meet their communication needs. In fact, most of those who have experienced sending postal mail, like Mothers 13 and

17 who are live-out and live-in mothers respectively, have done so only during their initial months in Singapore when they still did not have access to a mobile phone. It appears that those who habitually send postal mail, like live-in Mother 19 and live-out Mother 30, have done so due to the sentimental value of writing and receiving a postal letter so they manage to regularly send postal mail to their children. Meanwhile, live-out Mother 25 had only done so for the practical reason of sending an official document. Still, live-out Mother 3 said that she wants to send her children postal mail but she feels uneasy to do so because of her lack of familiarity with the Singapore postal system. Based on the factors of usefulness and ease of use, it is no surprise then that new media is replacing postal mail.

2. Constraints and strategies

Since these mothers generally no longer see the need for postal services due to the availability of newer channels of communication, it is thus imperative for these mothers to have ready access to new media such as mobile phone and Internet-connected computer.

E. Smartphone

1. Access, attitude, and skills

Aside from personal ownership of a networked computer, some live-out mothers also own a smartphone. Ownership of a smartphone elevates the concept and practice of Katz and Aakhus' (2002b) "perpetual contact" to a much higher level as smartphones allow these mothers to be connected not only through mobile technologies (mobile voice call and SMS) but also through Internet technologies (e-mail, chat, Facebook, Internet voice call) anytime and anywhere, thus further breaking the temporal and spatial constraints of mediated communication. For example, Mother 12 chats with her children online while in transit while Mother 7 checks if her children are online while on the way home and leaves a chat-message to her children telling them to wait for her to reach home so she can talk to them online before they go to bed. Mothers 2 and 9, who are in retail work, mentioned that they cannot sit in front of the computer during work-hours so their smartphone permits them to be on standby

online through their mobile phone. Besides, Mother 2 also mentioned that she is able to send free SMS through her smartphone as she can connect online to *Chikka*.

As such, these mothers gave their smartphone a high rating in terms of usefulness because it allows them to be in “perpetual contact”. For instance, the smartphones’ Internet voice call function rates high as it enables these mothers to engage in voice calls anytime and anywhere without the charges associated with international mobile voice calls. Internet voice calls through smartphones also rate high in terms of ease of use as it basically functions similarly to a mobile voice call. As for Internet chat and video call however, these mothers reported that, in terms of ease of use, they still prefer a regular computer because it allows for easier keyboard typing and offers better camera and screen capability. Hence, they reported that they switch to a regular computer once they are stationary especially when using the chat and video call functions during longer LDC sessions.

2. Constraints and strategies

While ownership of a smartphone gives mothers the advantage of being in “perpetual contact” through mobile and Internet technologies, the cost of acquiring the unit and the cost of network service make it impractical for other mothers. Hence, mothers without a smartphone make do by using a standard mobile unit and other mothers also regularly use Internet-connected computer. However, it will be interesting to find out how smartphones will transform these migrant mothers’ LDC over the years as its access widens in scope.

Mothers' Parenting Role

Chapter 6: Addressing the Second Research Objective

This chapter on the mothers' parenting role addresses the second research objective: To investigate how Singapore-based Filipino working mothers view parenting and their role as a mother now that they are living away from their teenage children.

The proposed Integrated Model of Communicated Parenting (IMCP) presented in Chapter 4 suggests that **parenting role**, which encompasses the functions of nurture and control, is associated with **family goals**. The model also advances that a migrant mother's **communication environment**, specifically, her **demographic profile**, or the **age, gender, and birth order** of her teenage children, is associated with how she carries out her **parenting role**, which is ultimately geared towards the achievement of **family goals**. For a migrant mother however, her **physical distance** from her children **challenges** her performance of her **parenting role**. Nonetheless, the proposed model also posits that her recognition of the **potential of long-distance communication (LDC) to bridge the physical divide** is one way of addressing the **challenge of migration-led separation**. Given her distance from her children, her **social profile**, or her **relationship with her children's caregivers**, also has a connection with how she performs her **parenting role** as caregivers act as her co-parents during her migration. All these factors will be examined in greater detail in the following sections.

Using the proposed model, Figure 5 below provides a brief snapshot of how these factors come into play in the context of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers with teenage children in the Philippines:

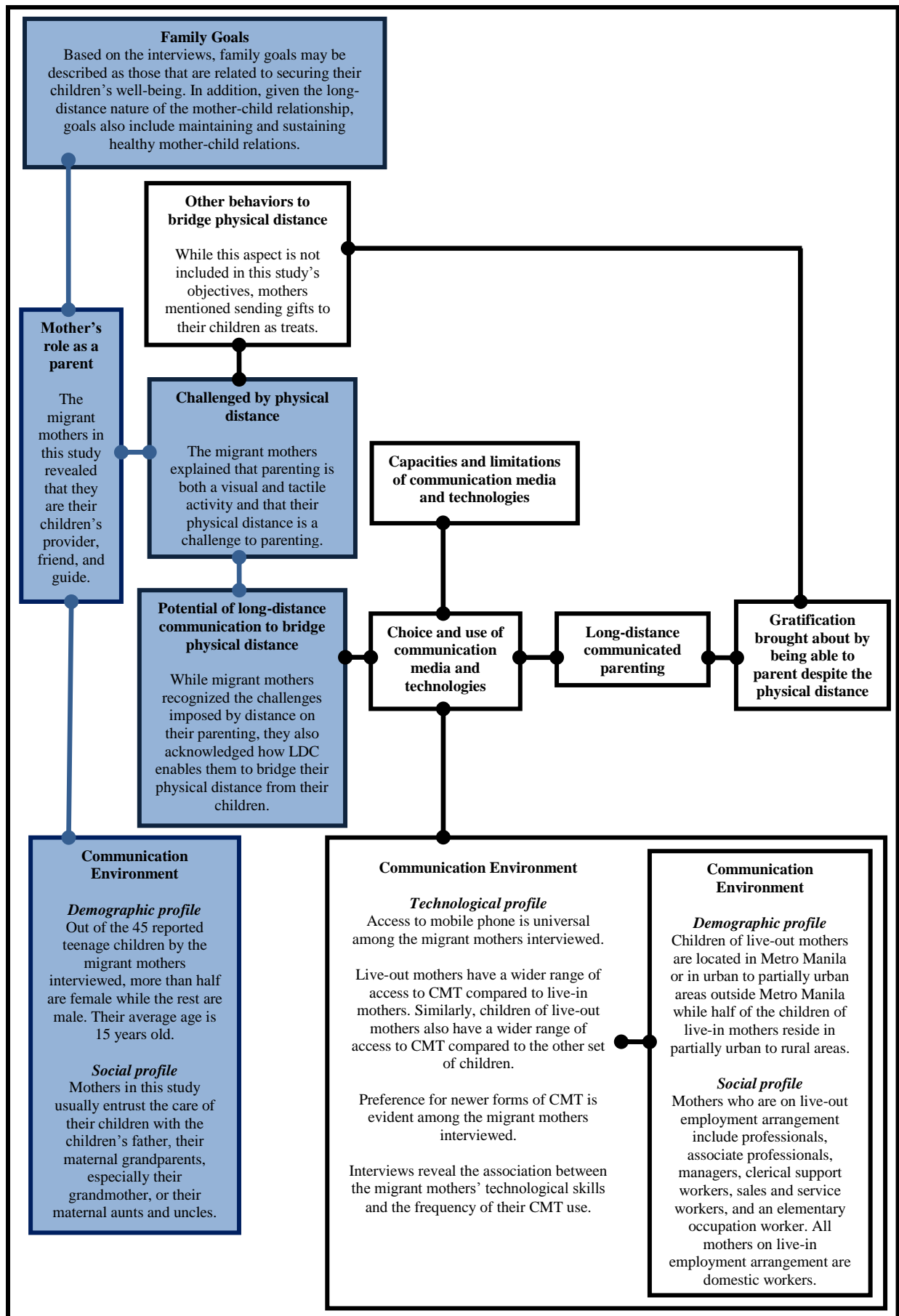


Figure 5. Mothers' parenting roles in the context of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers with Philippine-based teenage children

The order of discussion in this chapter follows the flow of the model in Figure 5, starting with the section on family goals and its link with parenting role, followed by the section on communication environment and its association with parenting role, then the section on the challenge of physical distance on parenting and the recognition of the potential of LDC to bridge the physical gap. Finally, this chapter is concluded by a synthesis section, which presents the migrant mothers' parenting roles in the context of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers with Philippine-based teenage children.

ACHIEVING FAMILY GOALS AND ITS LINK WITH PARENTING ROLE

As summarized in Figure 5, the interviews reveal that parenting is motivated by the migrant mothers' desire to attain two family goals: to secure their teenage children's well-being and to maintain and sustain healthy mother-child relations. In the process of realizing these two goals, these migrant mothers carry out the dual functions of nurture and control. Table 4 and the subsequent sections describe how achieving family goals is related with the migrant mothers' parenting roles.

Table 4. Achieving family goals and its link with parenting role

Family Goal	Parental Function
Securing teenage children's well-being Concerns over their teens' welfare and safety Aspiration for their children to obtain a college degree Concerns over their teens' initiation to romantic attraction and relationship	Nurture and Control
Maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations	Nurture

A. Securing Their Teenage Children's Well-Being

With respect to this goal, these mothers frequently mentioned their concern over their teens' welfare and safety. In addition, they repeatedly echoed their aspiration for their children to obtain a college degree. Moreover, these mothers also expressed their concern over their teens' initiation to romantic attraction and relationship.

1. Welfare and safety

These migrant mothers' concern over their teens' welfare and safety is in line with their nurture and control functions to secure their children's well-being. Consistent with the explanation of Le Poire (2006) with regard to nurturing, these mothers strive to ensure that their children are in good health, have proper care, and are in an environment that is safe and conducive for their growth and development. Also consistent with Le Poire (2006) in terms of control, in order to safeguard their teens' welfare and to ensure their safety, these mothers also instill values, set guidelines, and impart discipline among their teens. As such, stressors arise when matters that compromise the security of their children's welfare and safety surface.

One dimension of welfare is emotional welfare and when migrant mothers safeguard their teenage children's emotional welfare, they are also addressing the goal of securing their teens' well-being. Emotional welfare is consistent with Parreñas' (2001) definition of emotional care: "provision of emotional security through the expression of concern and feelings of warmth and affection" (p.117). As such, migrant mothers are performing their nurturing function when they safeguard their children's emotional well-being. Besides, in addition to addressing the goal of securing their teenage children's welfare, doing so also addresses the goal of having a healthy mother-child relationship.

2. Education

Currently, Philippine education is structured such that there are six years of required primary or elementary school, four years of secondary or high-school, and four years of tertiary or college education. There is also an option to enroll in technical or vocational school for those who will not enter college. While Filipino children may enjoy free public elementary and high-school education which is enshrined in the Philippine constitution, the state does not shoulder college education.

For Filipinos, a complete education means being able to graduate from college and parents take pride when their children obtain their college degree. It is also generally considered as a ticket to a better life as career opportunities and the potential to earn more widen with a college degree. Since finishing college is a means to secure a better future, Filipino parents associate facilitating the attainment of their children's college degree with the safeguarding of their well-being. According to Mother 19, a live-in mother, "I want to give my children a bright future. In our country, you won't achieve much if you don't graduate."

As with the concern for their teens' welfare and safety, these mothers' aspiration for their teenage children to graduate from college is also in line with their nurture and control functions. Through education, these mothers nurture their teenage children's positive growth and development and these mothers also control by imparting the value of education, providing guidelines, and instilling discipline to ensure its completion (Le Poire, 2006). Migrant mothers are also concerned with stressors that may hinder the attainment of this goal.

3. Romantic interest

These mothers' concern about their teens' initiation to romantic attraction and relationship, which is primarily aligned with the aspiration for their children to graduate on time, is consistent with the fulfillment of their function to nurture and control. It has been commonly regarded among Filipinos that teen romantic relationship interferes with studies and if such happens, a youngster's well-being for the future is compromised. Since facilitating their children's education is consistent with their nurturing function as education is deemed to enable a better life, these mothers tend to be cautious about stressors that could hinder its timely completion. And consistent with the function to control, it is common for Filipino parents to allow their children to engage in romantic relationship only after graduating from college. This is actually the sentiment of Mother 18, a live-out mother, when she tells her daughter that, "You succeeded in starting high-school early and if you keep it up, you get to

finish college early as well. Having a boyfriend can only distract you from finishing ahead. After you graduate, then you may do anything that you want.”

B. Maintaining and Sustaining Healthy Mother-Child Relations

The second goal, which is congruent with the fulfillment of these mothers’ nurturing function, is not surprising given the long-distance nature of these mothers’ relationship with their teens. Living away from home, these migrant mothers strive to keep in constant contact with their teenage children and to sustain their relationship with them. Mother 32, a live-out mother, mentioned that she assures her children that “Even if I’m afar, we can still talk.”

In fact, it appears that these mothers do not only maintain this connection to manifest what Pertierra refers to as their “absent presence” (as cited in Uy-Tioco, 2007, p. 259) to their children but also because of their own need to be connected with their families and to feel their children’s presence as well. Hence, these families experience the mutuality of “absent presence” through LDC. Mother 19 expressed that, “Getting good news from my family takes away stress from work. No matter how tired I am, if they tell me that they are okay and are doing fine, then I feel good as well.”

On the opposite end, relational stressors arise when there is tension in mother-child relationship. Mother 1, a live-in mother, noted that it is a joy to talk to her teens during happy moments but is such a task to talk to them when there are disagreements and confrontations.

COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH PARENTING ROLE

Based on the proposed IMCP, communication environment is associated with a migrant mother’s parenting role through her demographic and social profile. The discussions below describe this association.

A. Demographic Profile and Its Association with Parenting Role

As the IMCP proposes, age, gender, and birth order are associated with parenting role as these demographic factors present concerns that characterize a teen's life, which then define his/her parenting needs, which in turn have bearing on his/her migrant mother's parenting. Given that migrant mothers are not physically around to take care of their teens, these parental needs are dealt with through LDC. Table 5 presents the concerns related to each of the three aforementioned demographic factors that typically figure in the LDC of the migrant mothers interviewed.

Table 5. Demographic factors and related teen concerns

Demographic Factors	Related Teen Concerns
Age	Welfare, school, health and taking care of themselves, safety, values, discipline, behaving well, romantic interest, household chores and responsibilities, religious practice
Gender	Puberty, going out with friends, romantic attraction and relationship
Birth order	Additional responsibility

1. Age

A host of parenting concerns associated with the adolescent period is evident from the interviews as age-related circumstances shape how the mothers in this study parent their teenage children. Regarding age, these mothers usually ask for updates about their children, inquire about how they are and how their day or week has been, and discuss school matters, health and how to take care of themselves, romantic interest, welfare, safety, values, discipline, behaving well, household chores and responsibilities, and their practice of religion. Of these issues, the most frequently mentioned discussions during the interviews revolve around school, their teenage children's welfare and safety, and their teens' romantic interests:

a. School matters

Discussion about school matters is associated with the fulfillment of the family goal of securing the teenage children's well-being through education and is related with the migrant

mothers' function to nurture and control. Talk about school is natural as all of these mothers' teenage children are enrolled in school and these children typically spend a significant amount of their time there and in doing school-related activities. Specific areas about this discussion include general inquiries about how their children's studies are, about their assignments, school projects, grades, and academic standing. Some of these mothers, like live-out Mother 12 for instance, even engage in tutorial sessions with their children. Mothers with children who are about to enter college also talk about college plans with them, college entrance exams, course to take, and about living arrangements if their children are going to live in a dormitory or boarding house. For mothers with children in college who are boarding, they also talk about dormitory life with them.

b. Welfare and safety

Discussion about their teens' welfare and safety is congruent with the fulfillment of the family goal of safeguarding their well-being and is associated with the migrant mothers' function to nurture and control. This leads them to talk to their teens about health, taking care of themselves, keeping safe, values, religion, and household responsibilities. They also constantly give reminders and, if necessary, impose discipline.

Moreover, it was previously mentioned that another dimension of welfare is emotional welfare and this concerns expressions of affection and support. It was also earlier pointed out that these articulations are associated with facilitating the two family goals previously identified as these expressions safeguard the emotional dimension of their children's well-being and also lead to a healthy mother-child relationship. As Mother 18 narrated, "Before we end our phone call, we keep on saying "I love you", "I miss you" repeatedly without us knowing that we have already spent 2 to 3 minutes just doing so."

c. Romantic interest

As the teenage years mark the start of romantic interest, the interviews reveal that these mothers also discuss matters about romantic attraction and relationship with their teens. Reminders about the limitations to be observed with regard to romance also arise. Discussions about romantic interest and limitations to be observed are associated with the achievement of the goal of securing their teenage children's well-being and are related with the migrant mothers' function to nurture and control.

2. Gender

While there are migrant mothers who said that they tend to discuss the same topics with their sons and daughters, gender-specific discussions inevitably arise when discussions are related to matters of "*pagdadalaga*" (as previously explained, this is a Filipino term which means transition from being a girl to a woman) and "*pagbibinata*" (another Filipino term that refers to transition from being a boy to a man) such as puberty, going out with friends, and romantic relationship. These discussions are also related with the achievement of the goal of safeguarding their teens' well-being and are associated with the migrant mothers' function to nurture and control.

3. Birth order

While interview data reveal that birth order does not necessarily contribute to differences in the topics discussed between the migrant mothers and their teenage children, those who mentioned differences in the topics discussed usually report that such topics revolve around the additional responsibility requested from older siblings. For instance, some mothers request older siblings to watch over and take care of their younger siblings, help them in their schoolwork, and remind them of their household chores and responsibilities. There are also mothers who request their older teenage daughters to assist their younger adolescent sister during the onset of menstruation. Talking about additional responsibilities facilitates positive

growth and development which is associated with the goal of securing their teenage children's well-being and such is related with the migrant mothers' function to nurture and control.

B. Social Profile and Its Association with Parenting Role

As Aguilar (2009) explained, migrant mothers depend on caregivers whom they can trust and depend on. This helps ensure that the achievement of the family goal of securing their teenage children's well-being is kept on track. It is no wonder then that the mothers in this study commonly entrust the care of their teenage children either with the children's father or the children's maternal grandparents, aunts, and uncles. It is also evident from the interviews that the children's caregivers also perform nurturing and controlling functions as the mothers depend on them to take care of daily affairs, to give attention to the teen-related concerns identified above, and to impose rules, discipline, and handle remittance.

For instance, Mother 18, who left her 13 year old daughter with her parents, said that her decision to work abroad hinged on the assurance that she left her daughter in good hands. Mother 18 further explained that she feels comfortable that, when her daughter gets sick, her mother can take good care of her daughter as she already has years of experience in taking care of children. Given their previous experience on being mothers themselves, it is not surprising that a lot of mothers entrust their children to the care of their grandmother as they are deemed as suitable surrogate mothers.

In addition, the interviews reveal that these mothers feel more at ease if they know that the caregivers are reasonably strict with their children as this helps ensure their children's welfare and safety. They are also not worried when they know that their hard-earned income is spent and even saved wisely.

Furthermore, the support of caregivers increases the chances of migrant mothers to achieve the goal of having a good relationship with their teens as these caregivers also act as nurturers

of the mother-child relationship. For instance, caregivers can be the mothers' champion by making the children understand and appreciate their mother's effort to provide for them. They can also remind the children of their mother's love and concern for them despite the distance. They can likewise ensure that the children have regular communication with their mother. Having such support from caregivers also enables children to grasp the realness of their mother in their lives and that she is not just some fictional character who doles out money and gifts. In particular, live-in Mother 11, who has been working in Singapore for 13 years, acknowledged the role her husband played for her to have a close relationship with her 17- and 13-year old daughters despite being away from them most of their life.

THE CHALLENGE OF PHYSICAL DISTANCE ON PARENTING AND THE POTENTIAL OF LDC TO BRIDGE THE PHYSICAL GAP

The migrant mothers interviewed described the challenges that they face as mothers who live away from their children. As summarized in Figure 5, these mothers explained that they view parenting as both a visual and tactile activity and, as such, performing parenting functions while they are apart from their teens poses significant challenges. As live-out Mother 8 explained, "Nothing beats being physically there and you can physically function as a mother."

Nonetheless, these mothers rise to the challenge of parenting away from home by engaging in constant LDC with their children and their caregivers. Through LDC, these mothers are able to engage in communicated parenting as an attempt to address the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting that physical distance challenges. Communicated parenting transpires when communication takes up the dearth that physical separation brings.

A. Parenting as a Visual Activity

The mothers in this study admitted that long-distance parenting is quite challenging as they explained that parenting is a "visual" activity since they are assured of their children's well-

being if they “see” that their children are all right or they can do something if they “see” that their children are not. With their migration, they now depend on matters related to them to be in the know and to be able to act and react accordingly.

This is the process of communicated parenting and, in this case, the visual aspect of parenting is replaced by communicated updates from these mothers’ children and their caregivers in order to keep the attainment of family goals on track. For instance, mothers frequently talk to their children and their caregivers about school matters so that they can be updated on what is happening in this significant area in their teens’ life and to make sure that they are actually realizing the goal of securing their well-being. Mothers also depend on their children to talk to them about their romantic interests as they are initiated into romantic attraction at a time when their mother is not around to monitor them. Hence, in their communicated parenting, mothers attempt to engage their teenage children and their caregivers to talk to them so that they can be updated on the goings-on in the lives of their teens and can act and react fittingly.

1. Engaging teenage children to talk

It appears from the interviews that these migrant mothers have the advantage of being able to engage their teens in meaningful conversations since they are already old enough to do so. Thus, these mothers can get updates straight from their children themselves which facilitates easier communicated parenting.

In their LDC, these mothers encourage their teenage children to open up to them by initiating the discussion on topics that they want to get updates on, by looking for opportunities during their conversation to start the discussion on such topics, and by reassuring their children that they can talk about anything with their mother. Mother 4, a live-out mother, related that she told her son to share anything with her even if he thinks that the matter is unpleasant or might be considered unpleasant by his mother. She said that her son did not want her to worry and

she told him “Don’t worry about me worrying about you. It’s my role as a mother to worry about you.”

Besides, the interviews also reveal that there are also children who wait for their mother to open up about herself to them. For instance, Mother 8, a 34-year old single mother, mentioned that while she kept on asking her teenage son for updates about his romantic interests, she did not know that he is also interested in knowing about her dating life. It was only when he asked her outright about it that she realized that she should also be sharing her romantic interests with him. As such, reciprocity in the open exchange about self is expected.

In fact, the interviews reveal that children tend to open up if they have the assurance that their mother is also opening up to them. This reciprocity fosters a comfortable environment for sharing. For example, live-out Mother 20 explained that her daughter openly shares with her because her daughter knows that her mother also openly shares with her as well.

Indeed, there are mothers in this study who feel that being away enhanced the communication lines between them and their teenage children which then strengthened the bond between them. As such, even if they are not physically present to see what is going on, their constant communication with their children not only updates them about the goings-on in their children’s lives but it also enhances their relationship with them as the mutuality of the openness that they have experienced with their children engendered closeness between them.

2. Engaging caregivers to talk

These mothers’ communicated parenting also encompasses being able to communicate with caregivers on matters about the children. As mothers depend on these caregivers to be their eyes in monitoring their teens, talking with caregivers is important so that they can regularly get updates about their children, which would then enable them to generate informed decisions and actions. Moreover, these caregivers can tell the mothers matters that are

intentionally or unintentionally left out by their children during their conversations. As such, when mothers and caregivers are able to talk, they can consult co-parenting matters with each other.

B. Parenting as a Tactile Activity

The migrant mothers in this study also admitted that they long to physically care for their children's needs and to personally attend to their daily affairs. Moreover, they also disclosed that they miss the physical assurances of love and support that they can give to their children and receive from them as well. This shows how parenting is also a "tactile" activity that involves personal caregiving, exchanges of hugs and kisses, and even simple touching. As such, another challenge faced by these migrant mothers is their inability to share such physical acts and expressions with their children because of their physical distance.

Again, communicated parenting provides the opportunity to address this situation wherein the tactile dimension of parenting is replaced by verbal expressions of care and affection. Pertaining to verbal expressions of care for example, mothers frequently ask their teens how they are and how their day has been. On the one hand, mothers do so to be reassured that their teens are fine and doing well even if they are not around to physically tend for their children's care. On the other hand, if the mothers find out that their children are not okay, they are able to direct their teens and caregivers on what to do so that even if they are away, they can still be proactive in the care of their children. Aside from asking general questions about how their kids are, these mothers are also fond of asking specific questions related to basic administration of care. For instance, they ask "*Kumain ka na ba?*" ("Have you eaten?") or "*Ano kinain mo?*" ("What have you eaten?") to express that they still care about what their children eat even if they are not physically around to prepare meals for them as they used to.

Concerning verbal expressions of affection, it is now usual for these mothers and their teens to constantly exchange statements of "I love you" and "I miss you" in their conversations to

convey their affection for each other. As both parties cannot perform physical expressions of affection during migration, these articulations are now ever more important.

In fact, migration appears to have the capacity to open up the communicative nature of mother-child relationship by pushing both parties to be more expressive. Several of these mothers noticed how their distance strengthened the emotional bond between them and their teens. In fact, some even observed that they are much closer now with their children than when they were physically together. For instance, live-out Mother 31 commented that “We’re sweeter with each other now. Perhaps the distance drew us closer together, ironic isn’t it? We’re now more expressive of our feelings than before.” Meanwhile, live-in Mother 17 feels that even if she lives apart from her daughter, her relationship with her is even closer than her daughter’s relationship with her father. Besides, Mother 4 explained that she was not able to engage her children in lengthy conversations when she was still living with them as her children were preoccupied with the computer whenever they were at home. But now that she is also online most of her free time, she is able to catch her children while they are engaged in their computers and so is able to talk to them more.

Aside from oral expressions of care and affection, there are mothers who admitted that the simple act of initiating contact, in itself, is a form of non-verbal communication that conveys their affection for their children and their continued interest in them. In fact, there are also mothers who disclosed that they do not necessarily expect their children to respond to some SMS that they send but the simple act of sending such transmits their care and love so that their kids would know that they are in their mother’s thoughts even if they are apart. For instance, they send simple statements of “I love you,” “I miss you,” and “God bless”; greet them “Good morning” and “Good night”; and offer reminders such as “*Inga!*” (“Take care” which is a popular Filipino expression) without expecting their children to message them back.

SYNTHESIS: THE MIGRANT MOTHERS' PARENTING ROLE

As summarized in Figure 5, the interviews of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers reveal that their parenting role may be categorized as being provider, friend, and guide, and these roles encompass the parental functions of nurture and control. This section provides a synthesis of the link of these three roles with the earlier identified family goals and teen-related concerns. Table 6 presents a summary of the factors that the proposed IMCP associates with the migrant mothers' parental roles:

Table 6. Parenting roles

Parenting Role	Associated Parental Function	Associated Family Goals	Primary Teen-Related Concerns Addressed
Provider	Nurture	Securing teenage children's well-being: Welfare; Education	School, Welfare (including emotional welfare)
Friend	Nurture and Control	Maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations	Emotional welfare
		Securing teenage children's well-being: Welfare and safety; Romantic attraction and relationship	Welfare and safety, Romantic interest
Guide	Control	Securing teenage children's well-being: Welfare and safety; Education; Romantic attraction and relationship	School, Welfare and safety, Romantic interest

As previously discussed, the migrant mothers interviewed admitted that their parenting is challenged by their physical distance from their children as they explained that parenting is both a visual and tactile activity. This synthesis discusses how the migrant mothers in this study manage being a provider, friend, and guide as they attempt to address the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting that are being challenged by their transnational labor migration.

A. Being a Provider

As "provider", the mothers in this study provide for their teens' education and other welfare needs and, in doing so, they are performing their nurturing function to secure their teenage children's well-being.

1. Providing for education

In fulfilling their nurturing function, almost all of these migrant mothers expressed that they are working in Singapore primarily to be able to finance their children's educational needs. Given the state of the Philippine economy, these mothers reported that they will not earn in the Philippines what they are currently earning in Singapore. To illustrate, Mother 1, a live-in mother whose hometown is a rural community in Isabela, explained that, "If I stayed home, I will just be planting rice or selling vegetables to earn money. That is not enough. If I didn't leave, I won't be able to pay for my children's education." Even Mother 30, a live-out mother who worked as a manager in the Philippines said that, "I didn't earn enough back home even as a Manager."

2. Providing for other welfare needs

Aside from providing for their children's educational needs, these mothers reported that they are also providing for their other welfare needs which then nurtures their well-being. This is consistent with Parreñas' (2001) definition of material care or "the provision of the physical needs of dependents" (p. 117). It is understood among Filipinos that the parental duty to provide for children ends when children obtain their college degree as they can then earn their own money to provide for themselves. In the meantime, Mother 4 explained that "It's my responsibility as a mother to provide for their needs" and that these needs encompass both basic necessities and even small luxuries.

Mother 11 shared that, aside from securing her children's education and other needs, she also left to work abroad so that her children can enjoy the material things that she was not able to enjoy as a child. She narrated that, as a kid, she recycled and transformed old bottles to dolls because her parents did not have enough money to buy her a real one. She said that, "I wanted my daughters to play with real Barbie dolls." As such, during her first vacation leave, she brought home a couple of Barbie dolls for each of her two daughters.

3. Being a provider and overcoming the challenge of physical distance

These mothers recognized that, while working abroad enables them to financially provide, it also hinders them to personally care and be there for their children. Live-in Mother 15 emphatically expressed that, “That’s the curse of a mother working abroad, you are a mother financially but you are not a mother physically.” Thus, it is a toss-up between fulfilling two nurturing functions that are not essentially conflicting if not for the situation that inescapably leads these two roles to be so. Some of these mothers explained that the ideal situation is for mothers to be with their children. In fact, Mother 15 further explained that she is not a perfect mother as she can only financially provide for her children but could not be with them all the time. While these mothers’ sense of duty to secure their children’s well-being through providing for their education and other needs clinches their decision to leave, they also deal with the emotional hardship of longing for their children’s presence and guilt for not being able to personally care for and be around them. Mother 4 even expressed that, “Sometimes I feel like I’m a failure as a mother because I’m not with them. But what choice do I have?” Thus, there are mothers in this study who mentioned their plans of returning home after their children graduate from college. Mother 4 even said that “Maybe then I can be a mother to them.”

Thus, in making the best out of the situation, these migrant mothers do not merely provide for their children’s education and other welfare needs but also become actively involved in their lives through communicated parenting. This is consistent with the findings of Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) that migrant mothers do not only engage in breadwinning but also in caregiving and guidance through LDC. Communicated parenting gives these mothers the opportunity to address the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting, which are challenged during migration, when they address matters concerning their children’s education and welfare during their LDC with them and their caregivers.

For instance, aside from financially providing for their children's education, these migrant mothers also keep an eye on their schooling when they discuss school matters with their teens and their caregivers. By doing so, these mothers address the challenges to the visual dimension of parenting imposed by their transnational migration by monitoring their children's education through communicated parenting. Also through communicated parenting, these mothers also address the tactile dimension of parenting when they personally tutor their children or when they personally speak to their children's teachers through LDC, as what Mother 12 does. Through communicated parenting, these mothers attempt to make sure that they keep their children on track with the goal of securing their well-being even if they are spatially apart from them. Through communicated parenting, they are also able to show their children that they care and are still caring for them regardless of the distance.

Thus, through communicated parenting, these mothers are given the chance to function beyond financial provision by being able to be providers of care, concern, and affection as well. Besides, these mothers can potentially boost the emotional welfare of their children when the kids feel that their mother does not cease to extend her love, care, and concern for them despite the distance.

Then again, Mother 1 feels that her role in her teenage children's lives has been reduced to money. For instance, she recalled how her daughter gets mad when she cannot send money on time and how her daughter even reminds her that the purpose of her leaving is to financially provide for them. Her son also only requests for money or asks when she will send the next round of remittance whenever they talk. Her family also admonishes her when her long-distance calls become more frequent and tells her to save on calls and send the money to them instead. This somehow makes the mother feel as if she were a "cash dispenser" especially when she senses that her children think that they can just extract money from her anytime and use the financial argument of her migration against her.

Meanwhile, live-in Mother 23 also worries about her children as her husband is not a hands-on father and even freely spends the money she remits, much to the dismay of their children. As such, she depends on her brother to take over her husband's lapses.

Furthermore, there are mothers who depend on the support of other members of the family who are not necessarily assigned as their children's caregivers. For instance, Mother 19 reported that she is thankful that her sister-in-law was around when her daughter got her first menstrual period as her daughter probably would not have gotten much assistance from her grandfather, who is her assigned caregiver, regarding this. She also asks her cousin to tutor her children if they are having difficulty in school. She also depends on her aunt to set aside emergency money from the remittance that she sends home since she cannot expect her father to do so.

Aside from support from other family members, mothers can also depend on the support of her children. There are mothers who can depend on her older children to take care of their younger siblings. There are also mothers who can depend on one of her children to keep an eye on things and to update her on daily happenings. Mother 23, in fact, depends on her older daughter to get updates about her younger son as he does not share much with her but shares stuff with his older sister.

Mothers also appreciate the support of their children's school and teachers. Mother 19 felt the understanding extended to her children by their teachers as they know that their mother is away. Mother 32 also appreciates that her children's school includes parent-migration in their school orientations. Some mothers also have direct contact with their children's teachers so they can talk to them even if they are away.

B. Being a Friend

Aside from being providers, the other role that stands out from the interviews is the role of being a “friend” to their teenage children which also coincides with the fulfillment of their function to nurture and which may also be a channel to subtly manage control. Besides, being considered by their children as their friend is a form of reward for these migrant mothers as they feel that they are connected with their children over and beyond the role of being their providers.

1. Friendship expands mother-child relationship

Being friends opens a new dimension in the mother-child relationship as it is a way for both the mother and the child to reach out to each other and bridge the so-called generation gap. For instance, Mother 17, who has a 19 year old daughter, explained that, “My being a mother to my daughter is still there but we are more of friends now.” Steinberg and Silk (2000) noted that friends become important to teens as they expand their social circle outside the home. So when mothers become their children’s friend, they also become part of this increasingly significant cohort.

Being friends also addresses the goal of healthy mother-child relations as it nurtures the emotional welfare of both parties. As previously mentioned, this is especially important given the long-distance nature of their relationship. For instance, Mother 8 noted her satisfaction with her relationship with her teenage son when she said, “I’m happy that even if we’re not together, we’re close. We’re like buddies.” Meanwhile, Mother 11, who left for Singapore when her eldest daughter was only 4 years old, felt so elated when this daughter, now 17, said that her mother is her best friend.

2. Friendship secures children’s well-being

Being friends also addresses the goal of securing the children’s well-being. On the one hand, friendship nurtures a certain level of trust which then engenders emotional security for open

and comfortable sharing of experiences, plans, dreams, emotions, and concerns. Mother 11, who is considered by her daughter as her best friend, explained that, “We’re close. We don’t keep secrets from each other.” Mother 20 also spoke of her best friend status with her daughter and that she appreciates how they talk and share about a lot of things with each other.

On the other hand, friendship also addresses the goal of securing the children’s well-being by providing opportunity for parental control. Through their open sharing, mothers are able to be on the loop of the goings-on in their teens’ life, their emotions, secrets, and concerns. This way, mothers are able to subtly monitor and guide their teens even if they are not physically around to see and be with them. For instance, live-out Mother 2 explains that, as she is friends with her daughter, they are able to comfortably talk about boys and her daughter is openly able to disclose about the guys who are courting her. As friends, she can thus easily obtain information about the romantic aspect of her teen daughter’s life and their open sharing about it gives her the opportunity to guide her daughter accordingly.

3. Being a friend and overcoming the challenge of physical distance

As open sharing is essential in communicated parenting, friendship and the sharing that it fosters enable migrant mothers to address the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting that are challenged during migration. The challenges to the visual dimension of parenting are handled through communicated parenting as mothers are able to get updates straight from their children. And since they are directly updated by their children, they are also able to manage the challenges to the tactile dimension of parenting as they can personally tackle their children’s needs even through communicated parenting. Aside from these, as sharing of affection and support is part of communicated parenting, friendship also engenders a comfortable environment for the articulation of emotions which also addresses the challenge to the tactile dimension of physically expressing affection and support.

C. Being a Guide

The mothers in this study also see themselves as their children's "guide" as they talk about values, give reminders, and impose discipline, which are all manifestations of their function to control. As guides, these mothers attempt to safeguard the goal of securing their teenage children's well-being. This is consistent with Parreñas' (2001) definition of moral care or "the provision of discipline... to ensure that dependents are raised to be good "moral" citizens of society" (p. 117).

1. Guiding their welfare and safety

Based on the interviews, while teens tend to enjoy greater independence, they are still subject to constant monitoring and reminders from their mother and caregivers as well as reprimands from them if needed. It is also common for these children to ask their mother for permission before they go out and to be expected to follow their mother's response even if their mother is miles away from home. It can be gathered from the interviews that mothers tend to be more lenient in granting permission when their teens go out for school-related activities and stricter in granting permission when children go out with friends.

Consistent with the findings of Medina (2001), when it comes to gender, mothers in this study are likely to be more protective of daughters than they are of sons. As such, these mothers are usually stricter with their daughters when it comes to granting permission when they ask to go out with friends. On the other hand, while mothers are generally more permissive of their sons when they go out with friends, they are more likely to remind them about their behavior when they hang out with their peers and to remind them to avoid drinking and smoking.

2. Guiding their education

Aside from their natural interest on what is happening in their children's lives which typically gravitates around school, these mothers are also interested if their investment towards their children's education is returned. It is of no surprise then that the mothers interviewed

frequently discuss school matters with their children and their caregivers. Aside from getting updates about school matters, there are also mothers who tutor their teens even across distance. If they cannot do so, they find others who may be able to assist their children.

3. Guiding their initiation to romance

These mothers' stand about their teens engagement in romantic relationship varies, while some are open to it, others are outright in discouraging it. Whatever their position is, what is common among these mothers is their encouragement of their children to open up about their crushes, courtship, and romantic relationship and these mothers are also careful in imposing their position, especially if it leans towards the negative, so that their children will always be comfortable in sharing their romantic experience with them.

For mothers who are amenable to their teens engaging in romantic relationship and those with teenage children who are already in a relationship, they always remind their teens of their limitations. Mothers who discuss these limitations focus on reminding their teens of the consequence of early pregnancy and its subsequent effect on finishing their studies and on their future. As a precaution to avoid pregnancy, only Mother 30 reported alluding to safe sex and such was even subtly done. This is not surprising in the predominantly conservative Roman Catholic culture of the Philippines as there is no such thing as safe sex among teens since they should not be practicing premarital sex in the first place. As such, even if a discussion on safe sex could address the issue of avoiding early pregnancy, mothers may be cautious as such could be misinterpreted as tolerance towards premarital sex behavior. Hence, it is understandable that they tend to focus their discussion on the consequences of early pregnancy and to observe their limitations which could be interpreted as abstaining from premarital sex. In addition, none of the mothers reported mentioning the possibility of contracting sexually-transmitted diseases with their children since they tend not to discuss safe sex with them.

When it comes to gender, mothers are also more cautious with their daughters as they entertain suitors and engage in romantic relationship. What appears to underscore the reason for these mothers' protectiveness is their desire to ensure their daughters' safety, both from harm and early pregnancy. Moreover, while they are also more permissive of their sons in engaging in courtship and romance, reminders that they should observe their limitations always come up. As with daughters, mothers also do this to protect their sons from harm and to avoid early pregnancy.

4. Being a guide and overcoming the challenge of physical distance

The visual and tactile dimensions of parenting are challenged during migration as the migrant mothers are not around to personally see what is happening in their children's lives and to guide their children in person. Through communicated parenting, however, these mothers are still able to monitor what is happening with their children through their conversations with them and to guide them accordingly through talks about values, reminders, and discipline.

Then again, with regard to administering reproof themselves, there are mothers interviewed who admitted that they are more careful now that they are abroad as such could lead to misunderstandings and that they are not around anymore to work things out with their children. Aguilar (2009) similarly found that migrant parents tend to be "hesitant disciplinarians" (p. 262). For example, Mother 2 explained that she does not want to create emotional distance between her and her daughter given that there is already physical distance between them. To avoid such gap, Mother 18, on the other hand, makes sure that her daughter understands where she is coming from to circumvent untoward misunderstandings.

While Mother 4 said that she stretches her patience with her teens and has come to learn how to be more understanding of them, she also admitted that she is experiencing hardship disciplining her eldest. She described her 16 year old daughter as being difficult at this stage. She also talked about her daughter's emotional volatility so she is careful in dealing with her

because she is unsure of how her daughter will react to more aggressive forms of admonishment.

Meanwhile, it is interesting to note the strategy employed by Mother 1, the mother who sometimes feels that her relationship with her children has been reduced to financial provision. Because her children are very dependent on her remittance, she then threatens them that she will withdraw giving them allowance and gifts if they do not behave well.

Aside from dealing with the children themselves, these mothers also engage in communicated parenting through their children's caregivers. As these mothers' co-parents, having good communication with their children's caregivers enables them to have easy consultation with each other about daily parenting affairs to matters such as granting permission, imposing discipline, and handling sticky situations.

In fact, even if some mothers in this study are separated from their children's father, if they have good communication with them, they can consult with each other thus making co-parenting easier. For example, when Mother 2's daughter told her that she already has suitors but was afraid of her father finding it out, Mother 2 assured her daughter that she will be mum about it. But in spite of this assurance, Mother 2 wanted her daughter's father to know about it so that he would be able to keep an eye on things since she is not around to personally monitor the situation. Given that she has maintained good communication with her daughter's father even if they have separated, she was able to discuss the matter with her daughter's father. In doing so, they were both able to monitor the romantic aspect of their daughter's life, with the father monitoring on site and she monitoring through her conversations with their daughter, and provide guidance.

On the other hand, Mother 4 does not have a good relationship with her children's father. As a result, her difficulty in disciplining her daughter is exacerbated by her estranged relationship

with her daughter's father as she is not able to synchronize co-parenting with him. Then again, Mother 1 has a good relationship with her own mother, who is also her children's caregiver, but she feels that her mother is very lenient with her teenage children and does not impose strict discipline on them. When she confronts her mother about this, her mother reasons that her children are already old enough.

Long-Distance Parenting

Chapter 7: Addressing the Third Research Objective

This chapter presents the long-distance parenting that is being performed by the Singapore-based Filipino working mothers who participated in this study as it addresses the third research objective: To discover how Singapore-based Filipino working mothers, across demographic, social, and technological locations, parent their Philippine-based teenage children.

In Chapter 4, the proposed Integrated Model of Communicated Parenting (IMCP) advances that, aside from the migrant mother's parenting role, family goals, and communication environment, her **long-distance communicated parenting** is influenced by her **choice and use of CMT**. The proposed model also suggests that her **choice and use of CMT** for long-distance parenting is associated with her recognition of the **potential of mediated communication to enable long-distance parenting**, her **technological profile**, and her experienced or perceived **capacities and limitations of CMT**. The proposed model also posits that her long-distance communicated parenting would lead to certain **gratification** that she is able to parent her teens despite the physical distance.

The two previous chapters tackled the first two objectives of this thesis: Chapter 5 uncovered the communication environment of the migrant mothers who participated in this study and Chapter 6 investigated how these mothers view parenting and their parenting roles as the said chapter discussed these mothers' family goals, the challenges imposed by physical distance on their parenting and on achieving their family goals, and their attempt to overcome the transnational distance as they realign their parenting roles in the context of migration. In addressing the third research objective, this chapter describes the long-distance parenting being carried out by Singapore-based Filipino working mothers where an integral part is communicated parenting, the communication media and technologies (CMT) that they use in

their long-distance parenting, and their assessment of these CMT in enabling them to parent despite the distance. Using the proposed model, Figure 6 below presents this study's key findings on long-distance parenting in the context of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers with Philippine-based teenage children:

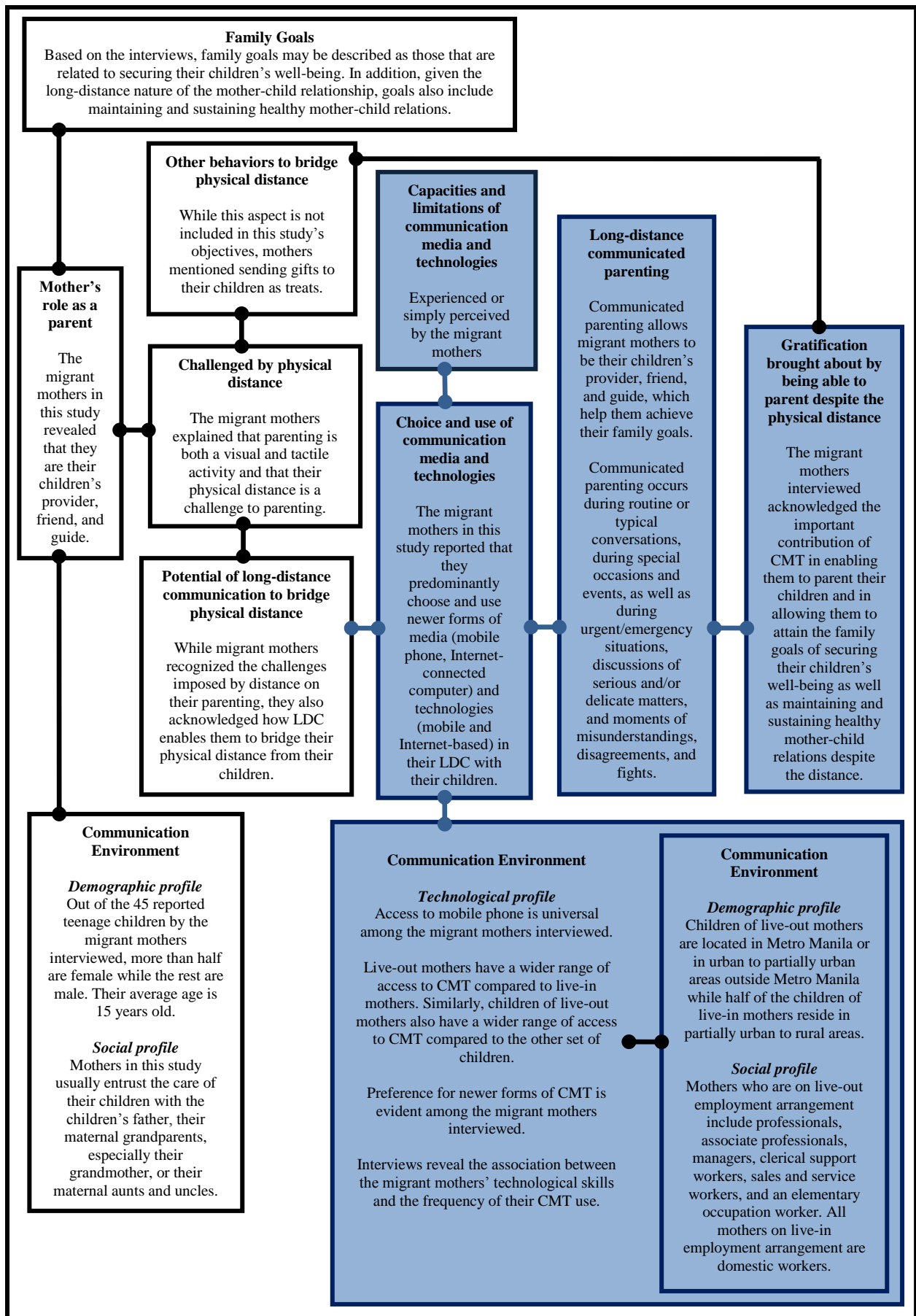


Figure 6. Long-distance parenting in the context of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers with Philippine-based teenage children

CHOICE AND USE OF COMMUNICATION MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGIES

Long-distance communicated parenting is made possible through the use of CMT. Figure 6 shows that the migrant mothers in this study choose and use newer forms of CMT in their long-distance communication (LDC) with their Philippine-based teenage children. The next two sections will discuss the association of communication environment and capacities and limitations of CMT with choice and use of CMT.

A. Communication Environment and Its Association with the Choice and Use of Communication Media and Technologies

Based on the proposed IMCP, communication environment is associated with the choice and use of CMT through its link with the migrant mother's technological profile. The proposed model suggests that technological profile, which is influenced by the migrant mother's employment classification and the geographic location of her children in the Philippines, is defined by her and her Philippine-based children's technological access, her technological attitude, and skills. This discussion on choice and use of CMT is an extension of the discussion on Chapter 5 about Technological Profile.

Table 7 summarizes the association of the technological profile of this study's migrant mothers with their two predominantly chosen and used communication media. The interviews reveal that, while live-out mothers choose between mobile phone and Internet-connected computer in their LDC with their teens, live-in mothers, more often than not, only rely on their mobile phone for their LDC.

Table 7. Technological profile and its link with the frequently chosen and used communication media

Medium: Mobile phone			
Live-Out Mothers		Live-In Mothers	
Usage	<p>Almost all of these mothers employ a complementary use of mobile phone and Internet-connected computer in their LDC with their families.</p> <p>About a third of these mothers appear to employ an equal use of mobile phone and Internet-connected computer in their LDC with their families.</p> <p>Only three mothers (Mothers 2, 14, and 18) appear to use their mobile phone more frequently than they use Internet-connected computer.</p>	Usage	<p>All these mothers usually only depend on their mobile phone for their LDC with their families.</p>
Rationale for media choice	<p>Access Universal ownership among the mothers.</p> <p>Teenage children also have access to a mobile phone.</p>	Rationale for media choice	<p>Access Universal ownership among the mothers.</p> <p>Teenage children usually have access to a mobile phone.</p>
	<p>Attitude In terms of usefulness, these mothers value the capacity of the mobile phone in enabling them to be in what Katz and Aakhus (2002b) refer to as “perpetual contact” with their families back home.</p> <p>In terms of ease of use, aside from the simple user skills required, these mothers also value their personal ownership of the medium which delivers convenient and direct contact anytime and anywhere, offers them privacy of communication, and supports easier budget management.</p>		<p>Attitude In terms of usefulness, these mothers give high value for mobile phone given that this is the only medium that they have ready access to. They also value the capacity of the mobile phone in enabling them to be in what Katz and Aakhus (2002b) refer to as “perpetual contact” with their families back home.</p> <p>In terms of ease of use, aside from the simple user skills required, these mothers also value their personal ownership of the medium which delivers convenient and direct contact anytime and anywhere, offers them privacy of communication, and supports easier budget management.</p>
	<p>Skills Universal skills.</p>		<p>Skills Universal skills.</p>

Medium: Internet-Connected Computer			
Live-Out Mothers		Live-In Mothers	
Usage	<p>Almost all of these mothers employ a complementary use of Internet-connected computer and mobile phone for their LDC with their families.</p> <p>About a third of the mothers appear to employ an equal use of Internet-connected computer and mobile phone in their LDC with their families.</p> <p>Six mothers (Mothers 4, 7, 9, 25, 26, and 30) appear to employ a more frequent use of Internet-connected computer than mobile phone in their LDC with their families.</p>	Usage	<p>Only four mothers (Mothers 11, 21, 22, and 27) reported that they use Internet-connected computer every now and then in their LDC with their families.</p> <p>Five mothers (Mothers 5, 6, 17, 24, and 28) reported that they have once experienced using Internet-connected computer in their LDC with their families.</p> <p>One mother (Mother 21) reported that she used to have frequent LDC with her family using Internet-connected computer.</p>
Rationale for media choice	<p>Access Almost all mothers personally own an Internet-connected computer.</p> <p>Only one mother (Mother 3) reported that she does not personally own an Internet-connected computer.</p> <p>The families of these mothers also have ready access to Internet-connected computer.</p>	Rationale for media choice	<p>Access Only one mother (Mother 24) personally owns an Internet-connected computer.</p> <p>The rest of the mothers who have accessed an Internet-connected computer at least once or who access every now and then for their LDC with their families reported that they have used/use their employer's computer to do so.</p> <p>The families of these mothers also generally do not have ready access to Internet-connected computer.</p>
	<p>Attitude In terms of usefulness, these mothers value the availability of relatively free Internet technologies for LDC which allows them to have frequent and lengthy text, audio, and/or audio-visual conversations with their families.</p> <p>In terms of ease of use, these mothers have the necessary skills to operate a computer and use the Internet. Moreover, they personally own a computer</p>		<p>Attitude In terms of usefulness, these mothers, even those who have not yet been able to experience using Internet-connected computer, recognized the value of the Internet's video call capacity which enables audio-visual interaction.</p> <p>In terms of ease of use, however, these mothers do not feel comfortable in using a computer that they do not personally own. Besides, a number of them</p>

	<p>which they can use for frequent and lengthy LDC with their families. Besides, almost all of these mothers' families also have ready computer access at home.</p>		<p>reported that they lack the necessary computer skills.</p> <p>Also in terms of ease of use, most of the families of these mothers also do not personally own a computer. For those mothers who engage in LDC with their children every now and then through an Internet-connected computer, their children still have to go to Internet shops downtown to access a computer.</p>
	<p>Skills Universal computer and Internet skills.</p>		<p>Skills Not all mothers have computer skills.</p>

Based on the interviews, mothers on live-out employment arrangement do not significantly differ from mothers on live-in employment regarding their use of CMT during work-hours. Both sets of mothers reported that they typically engage in personal communication only during their free time although there are instances when they can squeeze in a brief LDC session during their work-hours if need arises or when circumstances are favorable for such a brief session.

As they normally engage in LDC only during their free time, the defined work-hours, break time schedule, and days-off of live-out mothers facilitate easier time-blocking for LDC with their children. Besides, their regular and longer days off from work also enable them greater freedom for overseas communication.

In contrast, while there are live-in mothers who also have set breaks during the day, most of their daily free time depends on their workload and not all of them have the privilege of a weekly day-off. As such, their time for LDC is more limited than those of live-out mothers.

1. Mobile phone

It is not surprising that the mobile phone is the most basic communication medium used by the migrant mothers in this study in their LDC with their teenage children as these mothers have repeatedly extolled the value of the mobile phone's accessibility, usefulness, ease of use, and the simple user skills it requires. Also, given the wide telecommunications coverage for mobile phone connectivity in the Philippines, it is common for families back home, even for those who are residing in rural areas, to have ready access to mobile phone. In fact, the mobile phone appears to be the only medium for LDC which the live-in mothers and their families generally depend on.

The migrant mothers in this study disclosed that they discipline themselves in their use of mobile phone. While there are live-in mothers with employers who allow their house-help to use their mobile phone anytime, most of these mothers still observe that work-time should be devoted to their chores and, therefore, they discipline themselves on their use of their mobile phone. For instance, Mother 19 explained that she does not want to compromise her job by using her mobile phone anytime, even if she has her employer's permission, since her family depends on her overseas employment income. In fact, Mother 10 was recently issued a memo by her employers directing her to regulate her frequent use of mobile phone. When asked about her reaction to this, she said that she is okay with it and will simply adjust the frequency of her mobile phone use.

Besides, consistent with the findings of Parreñas (2005b), the social location of a migrant mother has a bearing on her conduct of LDC. As live-in mothers usually only depend on their mobile phone for LDC, they tend to spend more for their overseas communication given that the cost of mobile-based technologies is relatively higher than those of Internet-based technologies. And since these mothers also have to budget their income, the frequency and length of their conversations with their teenage children are more limited than those mothers on live-out employment arrangement. Thus, these live-in mothers experience the double-

whammy effect of their social profile – their live-in arrangement means that they are employed in semi-skilled work that inherently commands lower salary compared to live-out mothers, and their lower salary is even spent for comparatively more expensive forms of communication than what is spent by the other set of mothers. Thus, some live-in mothers feel that, even if their LDC is not as frequent or as lengthy and even if they only engage in LDC during their free time, this is not a concern since they have to consciously observe their limited overseas communication budget.

2. Computer with Internet

The regular use of Internet-connected computer for LDC is more apparent with live-out mothers than with live-in mothers given that live-in mothers and their teenage children generally do not have ready access to it and live-in mothers also generally do not have the necessary skills to operate it. Based on the interviews, only one live-out mother, Mother 3, appears to sporadically use an Internet-based computer for her LDC with her teenage children while the rest are active users of the medium. In fact, about six live-out mothers appear to depend on Internet-connected computer more than their mobile phone for their LDC, while about a third appear to employ an equal use of both Internet-connected computer and mobile phone. The primary reason for the prevalent use of personal computer among these mothers is the virtually cost-free LDC it offers through Internet-based technologies which allow them to have frequent and lengthy text, audio, and/or audio-visual conversations with their families.

As with their use of mobile phone, mothers with access to an Internet-connected computer also actively use it for LDC during their free time. Then again, as live-out mothers usually work in front of an Internet-connected computer, they can easily multi-task by working as well as engaging in chat or exchanging e-mail with their teens from time to time or by simply standing-by online the whole time. This is in contrast with live-in mothers who do not have such ready access to an Internet-connected computer given that the nature of their job is not in

front of a computer and carrying out their household chores does not allow them to sit in front of the computer the whole day.

While Internet subscription is not free, it is common for live-out mothers to share their home-based subscription with the other residents in their flat. As such, even if there is subscription cost involved, it is still reasonable given the range of free technological options that the Internet offers, which then allows them to frequently and lengthily spend online with their families, at no added cost.

Actually, if live-in mothers personally own a computer and if they have the necessary skills to operate it, their employer's home-based Internet access would instantly and conveniently provide them with a network to hook online. Connecting through their employers' home-based network may even be free-of-charge if these employers could offer Internet access as part of the live-in mothers' salary package or bonus privilege. This way, live-in mothers could also benefit from the range of free LDC technologies that the Internet offers.

The proposed IMCP pointed out that the geographic location of the migrant mother's family in the Philippines is also associated with the migrant mother's technological profile as she will communicate with her family through CMT that they have access to. Thus, for the live-out mothers interviewed, aside from having greater resources to invest in Internet-connected computer, their families back home also reside either in Metro Manila or in urban to partially urban areas outside Metro Manila where the necessary telecommunications infrastructure are in place compared to half of the live-in mothers with families who are located in partially urban to rural areas. Hence, the children of live-out mothers have the advantage of access to Internet-connected computer at home since their family can afford it and their location also permits it. In contrast, the children of most live-in mothers in this study still have to go to Internet shops downtown to be able to access the Internet because they do not personally own a computer and they also do not have home-based Internet subscription.

B. Capacities and Limitations of Communication Media and Technologies and Its Association with the Choice and Use of Communication Media and Technologies

Based on the proposed IMCP, the capacities and limitations of CMT is also associated with technological choice and use. The migrant mothers in this study identified the capacities and limitations of CMT that they have experienced, and for some live-in mothers, have simply perceived based on what they know about the CMT. These identified capacities and limitations reflect the principles of Information and Media Richness Theory (IMRT) as well as other factors that count in these mothers' choice and use of CMT, such as cost, temporal, spatial, and situational considerations. Table 8 summarizes these capacities and limitations:

Table 8. Capacities and limitations of CMT and its link with technologies chosen and used for LDC

Technology	Identified Capacities and Limitations	
	Capacities	Limitations
SMS	<p>Asynchronous nature allows reading and responding to messages at receiver's own convenience.</p> <p>Relatively cheaper than mobile and/or land-based voice call.</p>	<p>Asynchronous nature is not ideal for urgent or emergency situations.</p> <p>Effort involved in keying-in characters to compose messages.</p> <p>Subject to per-message international SMS charges.</p> <p>Sending and receiving messages are subject to strength of network signal.</p>
Mobile Voice Call	<p>Easy to use.</p> <p>Synchronous nature allows immediate exchanges in conversation.</p> <p>Ideal for urgent or emergency situations.</p> <p>Uses the natural form of voice communication.</p> <p>Gives more non-verbal cues.</p>	<p>Subject to per-minute international call charges.</p> <p>Making and receiving calls are subject to strength of network signal.</p>
Internet Chat	<p>Not subjected to per-minute or per-message charges.</p>	<p>Exchanges in conversations may not necessarily be immediate.</p>

	<p>Possibility of both synchronous and asynchronous exchange.</p>	<p>Effort involved in keying-in characters to compose messages.</p> <p>Not handily available and ready to use if Internet is accessed through a computer.</p>
Internet Voice/Video Call	<p>Synchronous nature allows immediate exchanges in conversation.</p> <p>Uses the natural form of voice communication.</p> <p>Video call offers the most non-verbal cues among the CMT.</p> <p>Not subjected to per-minute overseas call charges.</p>	<p>Making and receiving calls are subject to strength of network signal.</p> <p>Not handily available and ready to use if service is accessed through Internet-connected computer.</p>
E-mail	<p>Asynchronous nature allows reading and responding to messages at receiver's own convenience.</p> <p>Messages may be saved or filed.</p> <p>Not subjected to per-minute or per-message charges.</p>	<p>Asynchronous nature is not ideal for urgent or emergency situations.</p> <p>Effort involved in keying-in characters to compose messages.</p> <p>Not handily available if e-mail is accessed through Internet-connected computer.</p>
Facebook	<p>Offers a variety of forms of contact (wall post, private message, comments, chat, photo and video uploads).</p> <p>Has the capacity for both synchronous and asynchronous communication.</p>	<p>Asynchronous nature is not ideal for urgent or emergency situations.</p> <p>Not handily available if Facebook is accessed through Internet-connected computer.</p>
Land-based Phone Call	<p>Easy to use.</p> <p>Synchronous nature allows immediate exchanges in conversation.</p> <p>Ideal for urgent or emergency situations.</p> <p>Uses the natural form of voice communication.</p> <p>Gives more non-verbal cues.</p>	<p>Subject to per-minute international call charges.</p> <p>Not handily available.</p>
Postal Mail	<p>Asynchronous nature allows reading and responding to messages at receiver's own convenience.</p> <p>Messages may be saved or filed.</p>	<p>Takes days to be received.</p> <p>Asynchronous nature is not ideal for emergency or urgent situations.</p>

		<p>Effort involved in composing a letter.</p> <p>Sending of mail is not free of charge.</p>
--	--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

1. SMS

As the mobile phone is a portable medium for communication, these mothers noted the ease of being able to send and receive SMS anytime and anywhere. Moreover, the asynchronous nature of communication enabled by the SMS technology frees these mothers from temporal constraints by enabling them to receive messages anytime, to respond during their convenient time, or to send messages during their time-off even if the recipient may not be free to immediately read or respond to them. This asynchronicity benefits the mothers as they discipline themselves and generally engage in personal communication only during their free time. Besides, this asynchronous nature is also ideal for their teenage children who cannot readily access their mobile phone. For example, live-in Mother 17 explains, “When my daughter is in class, she can’t respond to calls. But I can still reach her by sending SMS.” Then again, the asynchronous nature of SMS does not make it ideal during urgent or emergency situations.

There are also migrant mothers who observed that it is relatively cheaper to send international SMS than to make overseas mobile phone call. Moreover, live-out Mother 7 noted that, “Mobile phone call gets expensive if talk-time can’t be limited, unlike text.” Then again, SMS is still subjected to per-message international SMS charges. As such, migrant mothers try to avail of promotions that would reduce the cost of sending international SMS.

2. Mobile voice call

As with SMS, these mothers noted the ease of being able to make and receive calls anytime and anywhere given that the mobile phone is a portable medium. In addition, the migrant mothers in this study mentioned that mobile phones are easy to use for international calls.

Based on the interviews, the primary advantage of mobile voice call is its capacity for synchronous exchange of information. Mothers also observed the advantage of talking instead of typing during conversation. These factors make mobile voice call ideal during urgent or emergency situations.

However, the mothers in this study expressed that the per-minute overseas call charges is the primary disadvantage of international mobile voice call. Then again, some mothers prefer voice calls explaining that it is more cost-efficient as both parties can express and hear more both verbally and non-verbally in a minute of voice call than in one SMS. According to live-in Mother 29, “It’s hard to explain by typing a message. Calling is easier and you can say a lot more.”

Besides, some mothers argued that their teenage children will not be able to reply to their mother’s SMS if they do not have enough prepaid load credits. Since it is expensive for these children to initiate phone calls, their mother just calls them to get immediate feedback if they need to talk to them. As live-in Mother 28 explains, “Sometimes my kids don’t have load so they can’t reply. It is faster if I just call them.”

3. Internet chat

Based on the interviews, the primary advantage of Internet chat is its capacity to enable both synchronous and asynchronous exchange at relatively no cost. This way, mothers and their teenage children may talk to each other and get immediate feedback when both are actively engaged in online conversation or they can also leave offline messages when the other party is unavailable. For example, Mother 7 narrated that she leaves offline messages to her children if she gets home late and is not able to catch them online. Besides, Internet chat is not subjected to per-minute charges unlike mobile voice call and per-message charges unlike SMS. There are also mothers, like live-out Mothers 9 and 25, who resort to Internet chat when signal is erratic for Internet voice/video call.

Then again, Internet chat involves more effort as it requires typing characters to be able to compose messages. It is also not handily available anytime and anywhere if the service is accessed through an Internet-connected computer.

4. Internet voice/video call

The interviews reveal that the primary strengths of Internet voice/video call are its capacity for cost-free synchronous conversation and its ability to transmit rich verbal and non-verbal information. Furthermore, as it is not subjected to per-minute international call charges, it is ideal for extended audio-visual conversations. Moreover, it is also easy to use as it involves talking instead of typing.

However, Internet voice/video call is dependent on the strength of network signal. A number of live-out mothers admitted being frustrated when they have difficulty connecting with the other party or when their calls get choppy. Besides, as with Internet chat, it is also not handily available if the service is accessed through an Internet-connected computer unlike mobile phone calls

5. E-mail

The interviews uncover that while the asynchronous nature of e-mail allows reading and responding to messages at the receiver's own convenience, its asynchronous nature is not ideal for urgent or emergency situations. Besides, it involves more effort as composing messages entails typing characters. Then again, live-out Mother 30 mentioned that she regularly sends e-mails to her children as these messages can be saved and filed so that they can refer back to the messages when needs arise.

6. Facebook

Aside from being a technology for entertainment, the interviews reveal that Facebook also enables the migrant mothers in this study to engage in both synchronous and asynchronous

communication through a variety of forms of contact such as wall post, private messages, comments, chat, as well as photo and video uploads. Then again, Facebook may not be handily available if the service is accessed through Internet-connected computer.

7. Land-based phone call

It can be summarized from the interviews that land-based phone call has the advantages of mobile phone call in terms of ease of use, synchronicity of exchange, and its capacity to transmit rich verbal and non-verbal information. However, while its voice technology makes it ideal for urgent or emergency situations, its land-based technology makes it not handily available for mothers and children on-the-go.

8. Postal mail

Similar to e-mail, the interviews reveal that the postal mail's asynchronous nature allows receivers to read and respond to messages at their own convenience. Moreover, mailed letters may also be saved for sentimentality or filed for posterity. Then again, its asynchronous nature is not ideal for urgent or emergency situations. Mothers also noted that composing and posting a letter entail a lot of effort and mailing a letter is not free of charge.

LONG-DISTANCE COMMUNICATED PARENTING

Communicated parenting is a means for these migrant mothers to manifest what Pertierra calls as their "absent presence" (as cited in Uy-Tioco, 2007, p. 259) through what Parreñas (2001) refers to as "technological management of distance" (pp. 130-131). The proposed IMCP in Chapter 4 suggests that, in addressing the parenting needs of her teenage children so as to be on the track of achieving family goals, the migrant mother engages in long-distance communicated parenting. The proposed IMCP also posits that long-distance communicated parenting is the culmination of influence as the migrant mother brings in her parenting role, which is influenced by both her family goals and aspects of her communication environment, as well as her choice and use of CMT, which is influenced by her recognition of the potential

of LDC to bridge her physical distance from her children, her technological profile, and her experienced or perceived capacities and limitations of CMT.

Figure 6, which was presented in the early part of this chapter, summarizes the various situations when communicated parenting occurs: during the migrant mothers' routine or typical conversations with their teenage children, during special occasions and events, and during situations that bring stress to the achievement of family goals such as during urgent, emergency, serious, delicate, and tenuous circumstances. These various situations are parallel with the situations listed by Trevino, Lengel, and Daft (1987). This section will describe how communicated parenting transpires in the context of Singapore-based Filipino working mothers.

A. Communicated Parenting During Routine or Typical Conversations

In their communicated parenting, the migrant mothers in this study typically talk with their teenage children once a week at the very least. While most of them do not follow a strict schedule of communication, they have more or less developed a routine on what day and time such conversation is likely to occur. In fact, with the ownership of mobile phone and for others, even ownership of an Internet-connected computer, these mothers and their teens are able to manifest what Katz and Aakhus (2002b) refer to as being in "perpetual contact" with each other which relaxes the strict schedule that was followed by some mothers prior to ownership of mobile phone and access to Internet service. Table 9 summarizes the technology used by these mothers in their routine conversations with their teenage children:

Table 9. Frequency of technological use

Technology	Frequency of Use	
	Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
SMS	<p>At least once a day: 9 mothers (Mothers 2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 14, 26, 30, and 32)</p> <p>At least once a week: 1 mother (Mother 25)</p> <p>About once a month: 3 mothers (Mothers 8, 18, and 20)</p> <p>Rarely: 2 mothers (Mothers 4 and 31)</p>	<p>At least once a day: 11 mothers (Mothers 5, 6, 11, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, and 27)</p> <p>At least once a week: 1 mother (Mother 10)</p> <p>Only when needs arise: 4 mothers (Mothers 1, 24, 28, and 29)</p>
Mobile Voice Call	<p>Daily: 5 mothers (Mothers 2, 12, 13, 14, and 20)</p> <p>At least once a week: 9 mothers (Mothers 4, 7, 8, 9, 18, 25, 30, 31, and 32)</p> <p>As needed: 2 mothers (Mothers 3 and 26)</p>	<p>Daily: 2 mothers (Mothers 15 and 21)</p> <p>At least once a week: 14 mothers (Mothers 1, 5, 6, 10, 11, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, and 29)</p>
Internet Chat	<p>Daily: 3 mothers (Mothers 7, 8, and 25)</p> <p>Daily and in combination with voice/video call: 7 mothers (Mothers 4, 9, 12, 13, 20, 26, and 30)</p> <p>At least once a week: 1 mother (Mother 2)</p> <p>At least once a week and in combination with voice/video call: 3 mothers (Mothers 14, 31, and 32)</p> <p>About once a month: 1 mother (Mother 18)</p>	<p>About once a month: 1 mother (Mother 22)</p> <p>About once a month and in combination with voice/video call: 1 mother (Mother 11)</p> <p>Every now and then: 2 mothers (Mothers 21 and 27)</p> <p>Tried once: 3 mothers (Mothers 5, 17, and 28)</p> <p>Used to be frequent when family still has home-based Internet connection: 1 mother (Mother 21)</p>
Internet Voice/Video Call	<p>Daily: 8 mothers (Mothers 4, 7, 9, 12, 13, 20, 26, and 30)</p> <p>At least once a week: 5 mothers (Mothers 2, 14, 25, 31, and 32)</p> <p>About once a month: 1 mother (Mother 8)</p> <p>About once in 3 months: 1 mother (Mother 18)</p>	<p>At least once a month: 1 mother (Mother 11)</p> <p>Every now and then: 1 mother (Mother 21)</p> <p>Tried once: 2 mothers (Mothers 5 and 24)</p> <p>Used to be frequent when family still has home-based Internet connection: 1 mother (Mother 21)</p>

<p>E-mail</p>	<p>Daily: 3 mothers (Mothers 7, 9, and 13)</p> <p>At least once a week: 1 mother (Mother 26)</p> <p>About once a month: 2 mothers (Mothers 4 and 8)</p> <p>As needed: 4 mothers (Mothers 12, 14, 30, and 31)</p> <p>Sometimes: 2 mothers (Mothers 20 and 25)</p>	<p>Every now and then: 1 mother (Mother 21)</p> <p>Rarely: 2 mothers (Mothers 17 and 27)</p>
<p>Facebook</p>	<p>All mothers have contact with their children through Facebook.</p>	<p>Only 2 mothers (Mothers 17 and 21) have contact with their children through FB.</p> <p>One mother (Mother 6) views her children's Facebook account through her employer's Facebook account.</p>
<p>Landline Phone Call</p>	<p>Every now and then: 1 mother (Mother 25)</p> <p>When mobile top-up runs out: 1 mother (Mother 31)</p> <p>Rarely: 1 mother (Mother 4)</p> <p>Only during initial months in Singapore: 2 mothers (Mothers 9 and 30)</p>	<p>Once a day: 1 mother (Mother 15)</p> <p>Once a month: 2 mothers (Mothers 17 and 27)</p> <p>During urgent situations: 1 mother (Mother 11)</p> <p>During urgent situation when mobile top-up runs out: 1 mother (Mother 19)</p> <p>When mobile top-up runs out: 1 mother (Mother 10)</p> <p>Tried at least once: 1 mother (Mother 28)</p> <p>Only during initial months in Singapore: 3 mothers (Mothers 5, 24, and 29)</p>
<p>Postal Mail</p>	<p>At least once a month: 1 mother (Mother 30)</p> <p>At least once: 1 mother (Mother 25)</p> <p>During initial months in Singapore: 1 mother (Mother 13)</p>	<p>About once in 3 months: 1 mother (Mother 19)</p> <p>At least once a year: 1 mother (Mother 1)</p> <p>At least once: 1 mother (Mother 5)</p> <p>During initial months in Singapore: 1 mother (Mother 17)</p>

1. Migrant mothers' parenting role during routine or typical conversations

During ordinary conversations, these mothers reported that they typically talk to their teenage children about school, their welfare and safety (i.e. updates about how they are, how their day/week has been, updates about the family, reminders about their health, safety, values, discipline, behaving well, household chores and responsibilities, and their practice of religion), as well as their romantic interest. As discussed in Chapter 6, when mothers engage their children in such conversations, they are attempting to address the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting that are being challenged by their transnational labor migration. It was also explained in Chapter 6 that these matters are associated with the achievement of the family goal of securing their teenage children's welfare and safety and when migrant mothers discuss these matters with their children, they are performing their role as provider, friend, and guide.

Aside from these topics, these mothers also give constant reassurances of their care, love, and concern for their teens through affective statements of emotions which then safeguard the attainment of the family goal of maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations. Also discussed in Chapter 6, by articulating their care, love, and concern to their teens, these mothers are also attempting to address the tactile dimension of physically expressing their care, love, and concern for them through communicated parenting. And when mothers take care of their teenage children's emotional welfare, they are performing their role as their children's friend and provider of care.

Table 10 summarizes these migrant mothers' communicated parenting during routine or typical conversations in relation to their parenting role, the associated teen-related concerns discussed during ordinary conversations, the associated family goals addressed by such conversations, and the CMT that they predominantly use.

Table 10. Communicated parenting during routine or typical conversations

Parenting Role	Associated Conversation Topics	Associated Family Goals	Predominant CMT Used	
			Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
Provider	School; Welfare (including emotional welfare)	Securing teenage children's well-being	SMS, Internet chat/voice/video call, Mobile voice call, Facebook	SMS, Mobile voice call
Friend	Emotional welfare	Maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations		
	Welfare and safety; Romantic interest	Securing teenage children's well-being		
Guide	School; Welfare and safety; Romantic interest	Securing teenage children's well-being		

2. Migrant mothers' choice and use of CMT for communicated parenting during routine or typical conversations

Live-in mothers who depend on their mobile phone usually send daily SMS to get updates, offer reminders, and give love while they customarily call at least once a week. Some live-in mothers noted that they tend to call more frequently if they have top-up and frequency dwindles as this runs out. The frequency of calls also appears to be negatively related with the length of conversation such that live-in mothers who call more frequently spend shorter conversation time while mothers who call less frequently spend longer conversation time. This way, live-in mothers keep within their allotted monthly top-up budget.

On the other hand, while live-out mothers also usually engage in mobile voice call at least once a week, they usually have daily conversations with their teens through Internet voice/video call which allows them longer communication time. Also, while more than half of the live-out mothers SMS their teens at least once a day, others are not as frequent. In a sense, Internet voice/video call replaced the need for daily SMS and for some, even regular mobile voice call.

Castells' (2008) concept of "timeless time" is exemplified when technology enables these mothers to do other activities while engaged in LDC. However, it appears that the dimension of "timeless time" is more pronounced with live-out mothers. For instance, there are live-out mothers who mentioned that they e-mail or chat with their children from time to time while in the office as their work set-up entails using the computer. On the other hand, the nature of live-in mothers' work does not enable them to sit in front of a computer while working even if they could have ready access to it. In this case, being spatially-tied in front of a computer helps live-out mothers to intersperse work with LDC.

Then again, some live-in mothers engage in mobile voice call while working, as in the case of Mother 11 who noted that she talks to her family using her earphones while doing her chores. While these mothers experience Castells' (2008) concept of "space of flows" as they can move around while talking, the cost of international mobile voice calls imposes limits to the dimension of "timeless time" that they experience as such conversations would be expensive if carried out long or even frequently.

In contrast, live-out mothers' access to Internet technology gives them greater opportunity to experience the dimension of "timeless time" as Internet technology allows for frequent and longer talk time at relatively no cost. As such, some conversations of live-out mothers and their teens run for hours and are inevitably combined with doing other activities. For example, there are some live-out mothers, like Mother 30, who multi-task as they do their house chores while on Internet voice/video call with their teens. There are also live-out mothers, like Mothers 2 and 12, who mentioned that their children also sometimes do their homework or other things online while they are on Internet voice/video call with them. In addition, live-out mothers with access to a smartphone experience both concepts of "timeless time" and "space of flows" as they can engage in extended Internet-based communication even while mobile.

As such, the relatively cost-free technologies of the Internet allows both parties to frequently experience each other's presence across borders and to spend longer time together even if it is just online. As some of these live-out mothers explained, they do not hang up their Internet call, most especially video call, even when they are not talking the whole time as such call is a way for them to spend time together and experience each other's "absent presence" (term used by Pertierra as cited in Uy-Tioco, 2007, p. 259).

Aside from Internet voice/video call, live-out mothers also use Internet chat and e-mail to connect with their teens. For instance, Mother 8 regularly uses Internet chat simply because her son is more comfortable with typing than with talking. Even if she personally prefers voice call, she said that she adjusts to be able to talk to her son. Meanwhile, Mothers 7 and 20 send forwarded and inspirational e-mail messages to their teens while Mother 30 sends e-mail when she lists important reminders and guidelines for her children so that they can revert to the messages anytime.

Aside from these, Facebook provides mothers, especially those on live-out arrangement as they have ready access to Internet-connected computer, another means of connecting with their teens. Besides, Mothers 4 and 8 mentioned that, since their children are usually logged-in on Facebook whenever they are in front of the computer, they are most likely to catch their children online through it than through *Yahoo Messenger* and *Skype*.

On one level, Facebook reinforces friendship ties between mothers and teens. On another level, it provides a tool for mothers to conveniently monitor and guide their children. For instance, Mother 26 mentioned that she regularly checks on her daughter through her Facebook page and Mothers 7 and 14 narrated that they manage to learn about matters that their teens forget or intentionally leave out in their conversations through their Facebook page. Mother 3 also reported that she posts comments when she feels the need to give reminders based on what she finds from her children's page.

Facebook also provides mothers a convenient way of viewing and exchanging photos. Pictures are important for these mothers as photos can provide them visual updates about their teens. For instance, live-in Mother 6, who is able to view her children’s photos through her employer’s account, mentioned that her children sends her SMS whenever they upload new pictures in Facebook. Mother 17, another live-in mother, explained that, through Facebook, she is updated with how her daughter currently looks since she has not been home for three years.

B. Communicated Parenting During Special Occasions and Events

Communicated parenting also transpires during special occasions like birthdays and holidays as well as during special events like school competition and graduation. Table 11 presents these migrant mothers’ communicated parenting during special occasions and events in relation to their parenting role, the associated teen-related concerns which conversations during special occasions and events address, the associated family goals dealt with by such conversations, and the CMT that they predominantly use.

Table 11. Communicated parenting during special occasions and events

Parenting Role	Associated Conversation Topics	Associated Family Goals	Predominant CMT Used	
			Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
Provider	Emotional welfare (i.e., greetings, expressions of support, compliments)	Securing teenage children’s well-being	Mobile voice call, Internet voice/video call, SMS	Mobile voice call, SMS
Friend		Maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations		

1. Migrant mothers’ parenting role during special occasions and events

While birthday and holiday greetings figure during special occasions, words of encouragement and congratulations dominate conversations during special events. When mothers convey such expressions, they are attempting to attend to the visual and tactile

dimensions of parenting through communicated parenting by substituting their physical presence with felicitations and articulations of support and compliments. As explained in Chapter 6, these affective expressions boost the emotional welfare of teenage children, which then addresses the goals of securing their well-being as well as maintaining and sustaining their relationship with their mother. Likewise, as discussed in Chapter 6, these affective expressions also reaffirm these mothers' roles as their children's friend and provider of care over and beyond their role of being their financial provider.

2. Migrant mothers' choice and use of CMT for communicated parenting during special occasions and events

Mothers usually talk to their children through mobile voice call on the special day itself. Mother 12 even calls her children on their birthdays at the stroke of midnight. These mothers agree that being able to personally greet their children on such occasions makes the greeting special. Aside from the paid nature of the phone call, the richer verbal and non-verbal content of voice call increases its charm. As such, mothers who are prepaid subscribers make sure that they have enough top-up during special occasions and events to be able to make the call. Meanwhile, live-in Mother 23 even leaves SMS so that her children will wake up with a greeting from her aside from calling them later in the day.

Live-out Mothers 2 and 31 reported that they were also able to participate when special occasions or events are celebrated with a gathering by engaging in Internet video call. These live-out mothers thus benefit from the opportunity to synchronously participate in the celebration of events with their families at no extra cost given that Internet video call is free.

Documenting special occasions and events became even more important as photos and even videos are not only taken for posterity but also for the mothers to get to see the event and vicariously experience it. Again, live-out mothers are the ones who largely benefit from the easy sharing of photos and videos being afforded by the online channel. Facebook, for

instance, is the popular choice for such sharing as uploads can be customized into private or public viewing. On the other hand, live-in mothers, like Mother 19, are able to get copies of pictures through postal mail or through friends who are returning from their vacation leave. As expected, online sharing is more immediate, cost-free, and allows both photo and video sharing compared to postal mail that takes weeks, allows fewer photos as printing can be costly, and its paid-per-gram nature discourages inclusion of heavy content.

C. Communicated Parenting During Urgent or Emergency Situations

Communicated parenting does not only occur during typical conversations and celebratory moments. As earlier pointed out, communicated parenting also transpires during situations that bring stress to the attainment of family goals. In order to keep the achievement of family goals on track, these mothers' communicated parenting addresses these stressors when they talk to their teenage children during urgent or emergency situations, when they discuss serious and/or delicate concerns with them, and when they handle misunderstandings, disagreements, and fights.

Table 12 summarizes the communicated parenting performed by the migrant mothers in this study when their families back home experienced urgent or emergency situations. The table also shows the related parenting role, the associated teen-related concerns discussed during such situations, the associated family goals addressed by such conversations, and the CMT that they mainly used.

Table 12. Communicated parenting during urgent or emergency situations

Parenting Role	Associated Conversation Topics	Associated Family Goals	Predominant CMT Used	
			Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
Provider	Welfare and safety (i.e., health, finances)	Securing teenage children's well-being	Mobile voice call	Mobile voice call, Land-based call

Parenting Role	Associated Conversation Topics	Associated Family Goals	Predominant CMT Used	
			Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
	Emotional welfare (i.e., death in the family)			
Friend	Emotional welfare (i.e., death in the family)	Securing teenage children's well-being		
		Maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations		
Guide	Welfare and safety (i.e., health, misbehavior); Romantic interest	Securing teenage children's well-being		

1. Migrant mothers' parenting role during urgent or emergency situations

While not all mothers in this study were able to experience handling urgent or emergency situations while they are away from their families, there are mothers who experienced the need to talk to their children right away about matters which affect their welfare and safety such as health concerns, romantic engagements, financial matters, and misbehavior as well as situations that affect their emotional welfare like death in the family. As explained in Chapter 6, when these mothers address such matters or situations through communicated parenting, they are able to perform their role as provider, friend, and guide. Also explained in Chapter 6, communicated parenting gives them the opportunity to attend to the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting that are being challenged by their physical distance in order to safeguard the goal of securing their teenage children's well-being as well as the goal of maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations.

For example, these mothers attempted to address both the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting when they monitored their children's condition when they got sick and when these mothers tried to extend their care and concern for their children even from a distance. To illustrate, live-in Mother 1 repeatedly called her daughter when she experienced tremendous headache. Mother 1 narrated, "I advised her to take herbal remedy and I called every 30

minutes to ask how she is feeling. I used up all my top-up. I felt restless and couldn't sleep as long as my daughter wasn't feeling well." This is consistent with Aguila's (2006) findings that the frequency of calls increases when there is a family concern that needs addressing. In the case of Mother 13, being a nurse herself, she even called her daughter's doctor to get direct updates about her daughter's condition. She even laughingly commented that, "Sometimes, I think my daughter's doctor feels like I'm the one issuing the doctor's order!"

2. Migrant mothers' choice and use of CMT for communicated parenting during urgent or emergency situations

Urgent matters and emergency situations almost always necessitated phone calls from these mothers. Consistent with the IMRT, these mothers explained that the capacity of phone calls for simultaneity and the opportunity it offers for immediate clarification and resolution of issues make phone call the likeliest choice when there are urgent matters to be addressed or during emergency situations. For instance, Mother 17 recounted that she was surprised when her 19 year old daughter's boyfriend sent her an SMS asking her for her daughter's hand in marriage. She then immediately called her daughter to clarify this SMS and was immediately reassured by her daughter that she will not get married before graduating from college, which she promised to her mother, and that she will discuss the matter with her boyfriend.

These mothers also explained that phone call can be picked-up by their teens even if they do not have prepaid load credits in their mobile phone but in order to respond to SMS, a minimum amount of load credit should be available. Besides, the asynchronous nature of SMS deterred these mothers from using it during urgent cases.

These urgent phone calls were usually done through the mobile phone because it is handily available and ready to use. There are times though when live-in mothers did not have enough mobile phone prepaid load credits and the urgency of the situation did not give them enough time to purchase top-up so they used their employer's landline phone instead. Meanwhile,

Internet voice/video call, which is usually conducted through the computer, is not as handy as the mobile phone or as ready to use as the mobile and land phone so it was not typically used during such situations. Moreover, Internet voice/video call would only work if both parties are online. While smartphones are handy, ready to use, and with Internet technology for cheaper voice call, its use for Internet voice call during urgent situations would also depend on the other party being online as well. Then again, all types of mobile phone depend on network signal which may be erratic in Philippine rural areas and during weather disturbances so it is not eternally dependable.

However, not all urgent or emergency situations may be addressed through mediated communication. There are also cases when mothers took an emergency leave when they felt that LDC was not enough to address the concern. For instance, when her children got seriously ill, Mother 7 went home to personally attend to them. Being a tactile activity, she recognized the therapeutic effect of a mother's touch. Meanwhile, live-in Mother 21 also went home to talk to her husband in person when her son got his partner pregnant because she felt that she would be able to handle the situation better through face-to-face conversation.

D. Communicated Parenting During Discussions of Serious Matters or Concerns

Communicated parenting also encompasses the need to discuss serious matters or concerns with their teens. Table 13 summarizes the communicated parenting performed by this study's migrant mothers who experienced the need to discuss serious matters or concerns with their teenage children. The table also shows the related parenting role, the teen-related concerns discussed, the associated family goals addressed by such conversations, and the CMT that they predominantly used.

Table 13. Communicated parenting during discussions of serious matters or concerns

Parenting Role	Associated Conversation Topics	Associated Family Goals	Predominant CMT Used	
			Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
Provider	School	Securing teenage children's well-being	Mobile voice call, Internet voice/video call, Internet chat	Mobile voice call, Land-based call, SMS
Friend	Emotional welfare (i.e., relationship with caregivers, mother's relationship with their father); Romantic interest	Securing teenage children's well-being		
		Maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations		
Guide	Welfare and safety (i.e., going out with friends, vices); Romantic interest	Securing teenage children's well-being		

1. Migrant mothers' parenting role during discussions of serious matters or concerns

Again, not all mothers reported that they were able to discuss serious matters or concerns with their teenage children. For those who did, they talked to their teens about romantic relationship, their teen's relationship with their caregivers, their mother's relationship with their father, matters about school, reminders about going out with friends, and reminders not to start with vices. As earlier explained in Chapter 6, these matters can be summarized to relate to the achievement of the family goals of securing their teenage children's well-being and maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations. It was also discussed in Chapter 6 that these mothers engage in communicated parenting when they discuss these matters with their teens and through this, they attempt to attend to the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting that are being challenged by migration. Through communicated parenting, they are able to perform their roles of being provider, friend, and guide.

For example, Mothers 7 and 31 considered discussing with their teens their college plans as a serious matter. As completing education is regarded as a means to secure one's well-being, these mothers took talking about college plans with their teens seriously.

2. Migrant mothers' choice and use of CMT for communicated parenting during discussions of serious matters or concerns

Different mothers have different technological choices when it comes to discussion of serious matters or concerns. Some of them mentioned that they have chosen voice call because of the immediacy of feedback and they could hear and take note of their children's non-verbal cues and react accordingly. Also for the same reasons, other live-out mothers prefer Internet video call because of the presence of visual non-verbal cues aside from oral cues.

Matters that are both urgent and serious always necessitated phone calls. However, for Mother 17 whose daughter's boyfriend asked her for her daughter's hand in marriage, she resorted to sending SMS to her daughter's boyfriend after repeated attempts to contact him through phone calls which were not picked-up. She sensed that her daughter's boyfriend may have felt apprehensive to pick-up her calls. This could be a case when phone call, on the part of the boyfriend, might be an intimidating method of communication because of its high information and media richness. Through SMS, however, Mother 17 was still able to get her sentiments across. While she preferred phone call, the asynchronous nature of SMS still enabled her to reach her daughter's boyfriend on a less intimidating channel.

Mother 19 also dealt with an urgent and serious matter with her daughter when her daughter found out that her father already has another family. She then ignored her mother's phone calls and refused to talk to her mother even when her mother tried to reach her through other family members' mobile phone. As with Mother 17, through SMS, Mother 19 was able to explain her side to her daughter. The asynchronous nature of SMS enabled her daughter to read the messages when she felt up to it and this enabled Mother 19 to reach her daughter without actually talking to her.

Then again, there are also times when live-out mothers preferred Internet chat primarily because it gives away lesser non-verbal cues and yet, at the same time, allows them to have

synchronicity in the exchange. For instance, Mother 2 said that when a discussion on a serious matter becomes emotional to her, she resorts to chat because she easily buckles and she does not want her daughter to hear and see her emotions.

E. Communicated Parenting During Discussions of Delicate Matters or Concerns

Communicated parenting also includes times when mothers discuss delicate matters with their teenage children. Table 14 summarizes the communicated parenting performed by the migrant mothers in this study who experienced discussing delicate matters or concerns with their teens. The table also shows the related parenting role, the associated teen-related concerns discussed, the associated family goals dealt with by such conversations, and the CMT that they predominantly used.

Table 14. Communicated parenting during discussions of delicate matters or concerns

Parenting Role	Associated Conversation Topics	Associated Family Goals	Predominant CMT Used	
			Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
Provider	Welfare and safety (i.e., finances, puberty); School	Securing teenage children's well-being	Mobile voice call, Internet voice/video call, Internet chat	Mobile voice call
Friend	Emotional welfare (i.e., relationship with family members); Romantic interest	Securing teenage children's well-being		
		Maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations		
Guide	Welfare and safety (i.e., going out with friends, vices); Romantic interest (i.e., romantic attraction and relationship)	Securing teenage children's well-being		

1. Migrant mothers' parenting role during discussions of delicate matters or concerns

For migrant mothers who have experienced talking to their teenage children about delicate matters or concerns, they have talked to them about romantic interest, finances, school,

family, and even about puberty. This way, they were still able to reach out to their children and to parent them despite the distance. As discussed in Chapter 6, when these mothers take part in such discussions with their teens, they engage in communicated parenting and perform their roles of being provider, friend, and guide as they attempt to address the family goals of securing the well-being of their teenage children and maintaining and sustaining healthy relationship with them. This way, these mothers are still able to attend to the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting that are being challenged by their transnational labor migration.

2. Migrant mothers' choice and use of CMT for communicated parenting during discussions of delicate matters or concerns

According to Mother 17, through LDC, she was able to discuss the limitations that her daughter should observe in her relationship with her boyfriend and she said that such talks were usually more comfortably done through voice calls. She explained that voice calls offer her greater comfort in expressing sensitive words that may be quite queasy when typed or read. Besides, the additional non-verbal cues allowed her to not actually say sensitive words and yet still be understood.

Some mothers reported that when they discuss delicate matters, they sometimes opt for technology that excludes others from overhearing their conversation with their teens. For example, when Mother 19 reminded her daughter of her limitations when it comes to relating with boys, she made the call to her daughter through her daughter's mobile phone, made sure that her call was not on loud speaker, and timed her call when her younger son was not around to ensure privacy in their conversation. Meanwhile, Mother 7 and her daughter opted to use Internet chat when they talked about her daughter's romantic interest to remove the possibility of being overheard by her daughter's father. Some mothers also shared that when delicate topics were discussed through Internet call, their teens sometimes used earphones for greater privacy.

F. Communicated Parenting During Moments of Misunderstandings, Disagreements, and Fights

Communicated parenting also happens during moments of misunderstandings, disagreements, and fights. When asked about having disagreement with their teens, there are several mothers who said that they did not have any. While this may truly be the case, this revelation may also be due to mothers not having major disagreements with their children and as such, are not significant enough to be remembered or recounted. On the other hand, mothers may simply not recognize such misunderstandings as disagreements.

Table 15 summarizes the communicated parenting performed by the migrant mothers in this study who experienced tense moments with their teens. The table also shows the related parenting role, the associated teen-related concerns discussed, the associated family goals dealt with by such conversations, and the CMT that they largely used.

Table 15. Communicated parenting during moments of misunderstandings, disagreements, and fights

Parenting Role	Associated Conversation Topics	Associated Family Goals	Predominant CMT Used	
			Live-Out Mothers	Live-In Mothers
Guide	Welfare and safety (talking about values, giving reminders, imposing discipline)	Securing teenage children’s well-being	Mobile voice call, Internet voice/video call	Mobile voice call, SMS

1. Migrant mothers’ parenting role during moments of misunderstandings, disagreements, and fights

Moments of tension challenges the goal of maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations especially since the relationship does not have the advantage of face-to-face resolution as well as the opportunity for physical reassurances of love and remorse. Hence, there are mothers, like Mother 2 for instance, who reported that they avoid having disagreements with their teens as their distance makes patching things up challenging. It is not

surprising then that migrant mothers also tend to stretch their patience and become more understanding of their teens to avoid such. There are also mothers, like Mothers 7, 12, and 31, who said that they strive to resolve tensions within that communication episode.

There are also mothers who mentioned that their children are likewise conscious of maintaining harmony in their relationship. For instance, Mothers 9, 15, 16, 20, and 30 have observed that their teens also do not want to have emotional gap with them so their kids are ready to apologize when chastised.

Some mothers who experienced having disagreements with their teens mentioned that such concerns are about common and minor issues. There are also others who reported that such moments typically revolved around talking about values, giving reminders, and imposing discipline which are consistent with these mothers' role to guide their teenage children in order to safeguard the goal of securing their well-being. These matters include discussions about school, money, household chores and responsibilities, behavior, and going out.

Fights are quite uncommon. Mother 1, the mother who sometimes feels that her relationship with her children has been reduced to financial provision, shared that it is actually her daughter who confronts her and not the other way around especially when it comes to remittance matters.

2. Migrant mothers' choice and use of CMT for communicated parenting during moments of misunderstandings, disagreements and fights

During moments of tension, some mothers preferred voice call to address disagreements right away. Meanwhile, Mother 24 opted to send SMS to enable her to phrase her message more diplomatically. Still, others like Mothers 11 and 21 stayed out-of-touch for a while either to allow themselves to temper down or to make a statement.

G. Synthesis: Communication Environment, Choice and Use of Communication Media and Technologies, and Communicated Parenting

It is evident from earlier discussions that the areas of parenting concern of both live-in and live-out mothers are not entirely different. What sets them apart in their communicated parenting is the wider array of technological choices available for live-out mothers to use in their remote parenting. Besides, since routine or typical communication occurs more frequently than the other situational needs for communication (i.e., during urgent or emergency cases, during discussions of serious matters, delicate matters, instances of misunderstandings, disagreements, and fights), it also means that their technology of choice during regular communication is the one frequently used. While both live-in and live-out mothers generally use their mobile phone to call home at least once a week, the pattern of difference between them appears to be in their choice of technology for daily communication which is SMS for live-in mothers and Internet voice/video call for live-out mothers.

As live-out mothers frequently use Internet technologies to manage the distance, these technologies enable them to have more frequent and longer communication sessions with their teenage children at no extra cost unlike the use of SMS and mobile voice call. This opens opportunities for more communication, either in terms of the range of topics discussed or the intensity of discussion, without worries about per-minute or per-message overseas communication charges. This also offers more opportunities for both parties to experience each other's "absent presence" (term used by Pertierra as cited in Uy-Tioco, 2007, p. 259).

ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNICATION MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGIES IN ENABLING PARENTING

The migrant mothers in this study acknowledged that being physically around to see, care for, and be there for their children is the ideal setting for families. In spite of this, these mothers recognized that CMT give them the opportunity to address the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting which are being challenged by their migration-led separation. It is noteworthy to highlight that, while these mothers are aware of the scope of parenting that CMT allow them

to carry out, they do not see such boundaries as technological limitation. Rather, these mothers regard that it is the situational limitation imposed by their migration-led separation, not technological limitation, which hinders them from fully parenting their children. Hence, while these mothers are aware of both the capacities and limitations of CMT, they categorically expressed their satisfaction and sometimes, even amazement, with how CMT facilitate reaching out to their children. Figure 6, in the earlier part of this chapter, summarizes these mothers' gratification of being able to parent their teenage children despite the physical distance.

A. Importance of Communication Media and Technologies in Communicated Parenting

The migrant mothers in this study acknowledged the extreme importance of CMT in their lives, more so now that they are apart from their families. Through CMT, these mothers are able to deal with the distance brought by migration by making their presence felt in the lives of their teens, which echoes Parreñas' (2001) notion of "technological management of distance" (pp. 130-131). As Mother 20 articulated, through CMT, "It's like I'm there" which also resonates with the findings of Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997). Because CMT make LDC possible, these mothers are able to engage in parenting by allowing them to perform their roles as provider, friend, and guide to their children, which helps them in attaining the family goals of securing their teenage children's well-being and maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations despite the physical separation imposed by their overseas labor migration.

1. The Contribution of CMT in Attaining the Goal of Securing Their Teenage Children's Well-being

Through LDC, these mothers attempt to address the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting that are being challenged by their transnational migration. As Mother 10 said, "It's hard, but through communication, I can still be a mother to them." This statement neatly captures the researcher's assertion that an integral part of these mothers' long-distance parenting is

communicated parenting. In fact, all the mothers in this study affirm that LDC makes parenting possible.

As explained in Chapter 6, the goal of securing the teenage children's well-being is associated with the parental roles of being provider, friend, and guide. With respect to being a provider, constant LDC aids in expanding the role of these mothers beyond financing their teenage children's education and other welfare needs as LDC allows these mothers to be providers of care and affection as well. On being a friend, regular LDC also helps in facilitating friendship between mothers and children which enhances their emotional welfare and bridges the so-called generation gap. Besides, when there is friendship between mothers and children, their constant LDC becomes opportunities for open and comfortable sharing of experiences, plans, dreams, emotions, and concerns which then allow these mothers to secure their children's well-being. With respect to being a guide, frequent LDC also permits these mothers to continue leading their children towards the path of salubrious growth and development.

2. The Contribution of CMT in Attaining the Goal of Maintaining and Sustaining Healthy Mother-Child Relations

There are mothers in this study who reported that they actually feel closer with their teenage children now that they can regularly talk to them as the communicative nature of their long-distance relationship pushed both parties to open up more. These mothers feel that their openness with each other strengthened the bond between them. This reflects the significant role of communication in the relationship such that openness between mother and children engenders closeness between them which further enhances their openness and deepens their closeness.

Still, there are mothers interviewed who feel that they cannot achieve true closeness because of their physical separation from their children. Similar to the findings of Panagakos and Horst (2006), Parreñas (2001), and Wilding (2006), these mothers expressed that closeness

can only be truly achieved when there is face-to-face contact and that they doubly feel their distance from their children because of the lack of physical expressions of care, love, affection, and support which were previously abundant in their relationship.

But whatever their opinion is on the strength of their relationship with their teenage children now that they are abroad, all the mothers in this study nonetheless acknowledged the contribution of constant LDC in maintaining their connection with their teens and in helping them foster ties with them. While there are mothers who are reluctant in defining closeness without the benefit of physical contact, they nonetheless valued the help of LDC in enabling them to maintain positive relationship with their teenage children. While there are mothers who acknowledged that their positive and strong relationship with their teens was actually established even prior to their migration, they nevertheless credited the support of LDC in helping them sustain such closeness with their children. And while there are mothers who shared that they had tense moments with their teens, they nonetheless appreciated the help of LDC in aiding them to maintain ties with their children. As such, all the mothers in this study expressed that, without LDC, they cannot imagine how their relationship with their children would survive.

B. Managing the Long-Distance Communication Cost of Communicated Parenting

Consistent with the IMRT, the mothers in this study extol the value of being face-to-face with their children to be able to care for them, express love and affection through words and actions, personally monitor and reprimand them if necessary, experience their teenage life with them, and to simply be physically around and within their reach. But given the limitations imposed by their situation, these mothers still make a way to parent and sustain their relationship with their teens.

Maintaining contact, however, entails spending. While these mothers recognized the cost of LDC, they do not mind paying for it because, to them, this is the only way to connect with their teens as staying out-of-touch is not an option.

As such, these mothers engage in strategies to make LDC expenses manageable and within their capability. Live-in mothers, who primarily depend on their mobile phone, budget their expenses through the use of prepaid phone card which is divided into multiple call sessions. They also generally send SMS more frequently than engage in phone call to save. Thus, by using a combination of SMS and phone call, they are able to balance their LDC expense. This in a sense is a manifestation of Madianou and Miller's (n.d.) "polymedia" (as posted in a web log by Geismar, September 30, 2010) though it only involves the complementary use of the mobile technologies of SMS and voice call. And if the researcher could transform the term "polymedia" further and coin another term, "polytechnology" could describe the situation of these live-in mothers as they use different technologies of the same medium which enables them to stay in-touch and be in-touch with their families at a cost that is suitable to them.

As for live-out mothers, they are the classic examples of "polymedia" users since they have access to and can choose from an array of CMT to address their communication needs. Access to a smartphone also gives these mothers more chances for "polytechnology" as the same medium allows for greater range of mobile and Internet technology options. Hence, live-out mothers have greater opportunity to save on the cost of LDC.

As such, for these live-in and live-out mothers, even if the cost of LDC is not cheap, it is not alarmingly expensive as they know the complementary use of mobile technologies and Internet technologies that would fit both their communication needs and budget.

Communicated Parenting in the Context of Filipino Working Mothers in Singapore

Chapter 8: Summary, Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations

As explained earlier, the findings from the interviews, together with the findings from the literature reviewed, led to the development of the proposed Integrated Model of Communicated Parenting (IMCP). The proposed IMCP is evidently a communication model as it draws attention to the importance of communication among the members of transnational families. In particular, the proposed model highlights how long-distance communication (LDC), which is made possible through the use of communication media and technologies (CMT), enables a migrant mother to parent her children back home despite the physical distance that separates her from them. The proposed model features how a migrant mother's communication environment influences, on the one hand, the parenting role that she carries out and, on the other hand, her choice and use of CMT for long-distance parenting. Furthermore, the proposed model echoes the findings from the reviewed literature that the communicative nature of the mother-child relationship is heightened during migration as both parties depend all the more on communicated experiences, activities, care, concerns, emotions, and affections in experiencing family life. And with the support of both literature and actual data, the model accentuates that a migrant mother depends on communicated experiences, activities, care, concerns, emotions, and affections as she addresses the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting that are being challenged by her physical distance from her children. Hence, given all these, the proposed IMCP is a model which asserts that a fundamental part of long-distance parenting is communicated parenting.

The next section will review the findings that provided reasonable evidence sustaining the argument that an integral part of long-distance parenting is communicated parenting. And, as previously mentioned, the said findings, along with the findings from the reviewed literature, are the bases for the development of the proposed IMCP and its basic assertions.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The migrant mothers in this study defined their **parenting roles** as being provider, friend, and guide, and findings reveal that these roles manifest the functions of nurture and control articulated by Le Poire (2006). The findings also demonstrate that these three parenting roles are motivated by these mothers' desire to attain the **family goals** of securing their teenage children's well-being as well as maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations. By being providers, these mothers strive to fulfill their nurturing function of securing their teenage children's well-being not only by financially providing for their education and other welfare needs but also by affectively providing care, concern, love, and affection. Meanwhile, being friends with their teenage children also coincides with the fulfillment of their nurturing function as friendship between mothers and children safeguards their emotional welfare which then secures the goal of maintaining and sustaining healthy mother-child relations. In addition, friendship may also be channeled for migrant mothers to subtly manage control as it enables comfortable sharing of experiences, plans, dreams, emotions, and concerns between them which then allow these mothers to look after their teenage children's well-being. With regard to being a guide, these mothers are able to talk to their teenage children about values, give reminders, and impose discipline, which are all manifestations of their control function in order to secure their teenage children's well-being.

These migrant mothers explained that parenting is both a visual and tactile activity. According to them, parenting is a "visual" activity since they are assured of their children's welfare if they "see" that their children are well and can do something if they "see" that they are not. In addition, these mothers also expressed that parenting is a "tactile" activity as it involves personal caregiving, exchanges of hugs and kisses, and even simple touching. Thus, they admitted that their **physical distance** imposes challenges to the visual and tactile dimensions of their parenting. Nonetheless, they recognized the **potential of LDC to bridge the physical distance** as they attend to the visual and tactile dimensions of parenting that are being challenged by their migration as they engage in regular LDC with their children and their

children's caregivers. In the context of this study on long-distance parenting, **communicated parenting** occurs when communication takes up the dearth that physical separation brings.

The findings in this study also highlight how **communication environment** influences transnational parenting. These mothers' **demographic profile**, defined by the **age, gender,** and **birth order** of their children, outlines the areas of their children's parenting needs which become the concerns of these mothers' parenting roles. These parenting needs, which usually revolve around the areas of their teenage children's general welfare, emotional welfare, safety, school, and romantic interest, are the matters addressed in these mothers' **long-distance communicated parenting**. These parenting needs may be tackled during routine or typical conversations, during special occasions and events, and during situations that bring stress to the achievement of family goals such as during urgent, emergency, serious, delicate, and tenuous circumstances and these various situations are parallel with the situations listed by Trevino, Lengel, and Daft (1987).

As findings reveal that these migrant mothers experience easier co-parenting when they have a good communicative relationship with their children's caregivers, these mothers' **social profile**, determined on the one hand by their **relationship with their teens' caregivers**, also has a bearing on their **long-distance communicated parenting**. This study found how these mothers depend on the help of trustworthy caregivers who can co-parent with them which is consistent with Aguilar's (2009) conclusions.

Another aspect of these mothers' **social profile** is their live-in or live-out **employment arrangement** which is associated with their **choice and use of communication media and technologies** through its influence on their **technological profile**. This study described the double-whammy effect of the live-in mothers' social profile on their choice and use of CMT. This study pointed out how the limited salary inherent in these live-in mothers' work is also

spent for relatively more expensive forms of communication compared to live-out mothers who have relatively higher salary and wider and cheaper options for LDC.

Thus, consistent with the findings of Parreñas (2005b), these mothers' employment arrangement provides a clear demarcation on the array of CMT that they have **access** to which influences their **technological profile**. While there is universal ownership of mobile phone, the live-out mothers in this study do not only depend on the mobile technologies of SMS and voice call to connect with their teens as they also generally own an Internet-connected computer that allows them access to the Internet technologies of chat, voice/video call, e-mail, and *Facebook* which offer cheaper means of LDC. Given their capacity to earn more, they are also the mothers who spend comparatively less considering the amount of time they spend on LDC. In contrast, the live-in mothers in this study have to put up with the cost of sending international SMS and making overseas phone calls since they and their teens usually only have their mobile phone to depend on for their LDC. Therefore, their relatively lower salary has to be spent even more wisely as the means of their contact with their families is not cost-free.

Another **demographic factor** is the **geographic location** of these mothers' children, which also has a bearing on these mothers' **technological profile**. Similarly congruent with Parreñas' (2005b) findings, the children of the live-out mothers in this study have easier **access** to Internet technology because, aside from greater resources to invest in Internet-connected computer, they also reside in urban to partially urban areas where the necessary telecommunications infrastructure are in place compared to half of the live-in mothers with children who are located in partially urban to rural areas. As such, these children still have to go downtown to be able to access the Internet.

Apart from access, findings reveal that these mothers' **attitude** towards technology, or their consideration of the CMT's usefulness and ease of use, also influences their **technological**

profile. In terms of usefulness, these mothers reported that they are primarily dependent on newer forms of media, such as mobile phone and Internet-connected computer, and newer forms of technologies, such as those that are mobile- and Internet-based, as these CMT already sufficiently meet their communication needs. In terms of ease of use, these mothers explained that they are more comfortable using the medium which they personally own. Hence, live-in mothers prefer the use of their mobile phone while live-out mothers can opt to use either their mobile phone or their Internet-connected computer for their LDC. Meanwhile, another determinant of **technological profile** is **technological skills** and findings show that these mothers' proficiency is parallel with the CMT that they frequently use.

Findings also reveal that these mothers' **choice and use of communication media and technologies** for **long-distance communicated parenting** are also associated with the **capacities and limitations of communication media and technologies** that they have technologically experienced or even simply perceived. The findings in this study show how these migrant mothers employ a complementary use of media and/or technologies in addressing their teenage children's parenting needs through **long-distance communicated parenting** as well as in managing their LDC expense as they parent across borders. Thus, aside from adopting Madianou and Miller's (n.d.) term "polymedia" users (as posted in a web log by Geismar, September 30, 2010) to describe these mothers, this study also suggests the labeling and use of the term "polytechnology" users to identify mothers, like the live-in mothers in the study, who utilize the various technologies of the same medium which enables them to stay in-touch and be in-touch with their families at a cost that is suitable to them.

Voice call appears to be the preferred technology for long-distance communicated parenting. Summarizing the migrant mothers' assessment of voice call in terms of Information and Media Richness Theory, the appeal of voice call gravitates on its ability for immediate exchange of information, its higher capacity to transmit verbal and non-verbal cues, and its ease of use as it involves the natural form of talking. Then again, the cost of mobile voice call

is a significant factor which hinders the frequency and length of its use. Hence, as the live-out mothers in this study are the ones with ready access to the Internet, they are also the ones who are able to enjoy the relatively free voice/video call technology of the Internet and can thus engage in more frequent and longer communication sessions with their teens. Then again, if Internet technology is accessed through a computer, it is not as handily available and ready to use as the mobile phone. As such, live-out mothers with access to a smartphone have the greatest advantage of choice as they can choose between paid mobile voice call and relatively free Internet voice/video call anytime and anywhere.

Meanwhile, as the live-in mothers in this study primarily depend on their mobile phone for their LDC with their families, they resort to SMS for their daily contact with their teens while voice call is made once a week or as necessary so that they can budget their communication expenses. In contrast, the live-out mothers in this study can choose from an array of mobile and Internet technologies for their LDC depending on their communication needs and budget.

While these mothers did not deny that the visual and tactile dimensions of their parenting are being challenged by their migration-led separation from their children, these mothers acknowledged the **gratification** that they achieve through the important contribution of LDC via the use of CMT in helping them deal with their physical separation from their children. These mothers recognized that constant LDC enables them to parent their teens and to maintain their relationship with them even when they are apart.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This thesis centered its attention on Filipino mothers who have been separated from their children due to transnational labor migration. Because of this, the researcher was able to concentrate on the perspectives and experiences of these mothers on how they endeavor to parent their children through LDC despite the distance. Nonetheless, the researcher recognizes the pertinence of studying the family in its entirety. This way, perspectives and

experiences of other family members, who are also affected by the mothers' migration, would also be considered.

As this thesis also only focused on the transnational parenting of teenage children, the researcher was not able to analyze how remote parenting transpires for the other age groups. Nevertheless, the researcher understands how analyzing long-distance parenting of the other age cohorts could also be of valuable contribution to the fields of family studies and communication research.

Moreover, as a study on communication and new media, this thesis highlighted the communication aspect of transnational parenting and this thesis was able to provide reasonable evidence from both literature and actual data supporting the IMCP proposed by the researcher. Still, the researcher acknowledges the important contribution of other disciplines in the study of parenting and recognizes how a multi-disciplinary approach could deepen and expand the study on long-distance parenting.

Last but not the least, while qualitative interviews proved to be insightful in learning about the long-distance parenting being performed by the migrant mothers in this study, the researcher also sees the value of integrating survey method in the study of transnational parenting. Doing so would enable the application of quantitative analysis and the statistical generalization of findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings in this thesis are especially significant in the era of globalization and mobility. By describing how migrant mothers are able to parent and maintain their relationship with their teenage children despite the distance, this thesis offers a worthwhile contribution not only to the field of transnational migration and communication studies but also to family communication research.

To the academic community, the researcher was able to synthesize relevant literature, in particular, communication and family theories as well as concepts from parenting, family, communication, and transnational migration literature, and integrate this synthesis with the findings from actual data on long-distance parenting in coming up with the proposed IMCP. As physical separation brought by transnational labor migration becomes increasingly prevalent among families especially in developing countries, the proposed model provides a framework for understanding how transnational families attempt to cope with migration through LDC and CMT use.

As such, the researcher invites other researchers to use the proposed IMCP in their study of transnational families. Applying the proposed model in various family migration situations also widens the opportunity for its further development so that it could better capture the dynamics of family communication in the context of transnational migration. In addition, to further refine the proposed model, the researcher also encourages other researchers to apply the IMCP in quantitative studies so that the model could be tested through statistical analysis. Moreover, while the proposed IMCP is undeniably a communication model, the researcher also invites scholars from other disciplines to bring in perspectives from their field to further enrich the conceptualization of the model.

To the governments of the Philippines and Singapore as well as to non-governmental organizations in both countries involved in migrants' advocacy, this thesis provides strong evidence that communication is an integral part of transnational family life. As such, policies geared towards a healthy communication environment for transnational migrants and their families would greatly help the increasing number of families who are separated by transnational labor migration.

Regarding technological profile for instance, findings from this study point out that, in terms of ease of use, migrant mothers value their personal ownership of communication device as

ownership presents them the liberty to conveniently and directly use their device for LDC. Given the universal ownership of mobile phones among the migrant mothers, these mothers appreciate that their personal ownership of the device enables them to be in what Katz and Aakhus (2002b) refer to as “perpetual contact” with their families. Furthermore, ownership also offers them greater privacy in communication and helps them to easily monitor and budget their LDC expense. With regard to personal computer, however, live-out mothers are the ones who fully enjoy the benefit of personally owning the device compared to live-in mothers who either use their employer’s personal computer, use a rented unit in an Internet shop, or not at all. Hence, it is the live-out mothers who are able to conveniently and comfortably use their personal computer for frequent, lengthy, and relatively inexpensive LDC with their families. Besides, the families of live-out mothers also have ready access to personal computer in contrast with the families of live-in mothers. Moreover, computer skill is universal among the live-out mothers in this study compared to a number of live-in mothers who reported that they lack the skill in using personal computer.

As such, policies that target improving the technological profile of migrant workers would most especially benefit live-in mothers, who appear to be the more disadvantaged group in terms of technological profile. In fact, policies that would have the potential to improve the live-in mothers’ technological access and skills would also have the potential to address the earlier mentioned double-whammy effect of their social profile. For example, as Internet-based technologies offer cheaper forms of communication, policies that would result in an improvement of migrant workers’ access to Internet-connected computer would enable live-in mothers to resort to cheaper forms of CMT for more frequent and longer LDC and thus the limited salary inherent in their live-in work will no longer be unnecessarily spent in more expensive forms of LDC. In addition, policies that would bring about increased computer skills, through free, discounted, or sponsored training programs, would also help live-in mothers to develop the necessary computer and Internet literacy skills.

Then again, to be truly effective, such policies should also cover the workplace environment of those on live-in employment. This would then safeguard a healthy communication environment where they can freely and conveniently engage in long-distance relationship with their families back home.

As for the Philippine-based families, aside from addressing their technological access and skills, specifically their computer access and skills, undertakings that would develop the required infrastructure for geographically expanding dependable Internet coverage would enable these families, especially those residing in rural areas, to also benefit from Internet-based technologies for LDC. Again, as the findings point out that it is commonly the live-in mothers who have families residing in rural areas, such improvements would offer these families greater opportunity to enjoy frequent, longer, and relatively inexpensive LDC with their migrant mother. This way, they could also experience the extended LDC that is now common among live-out mothers and their families.

To hardware and software providers and to the telecommunications sector in the Philippines and in Singapore, this thesis provides a strong encouragement for them to offer affordable technology packages and LDC promotions for transnational families. Doing so would help improve the technological profile of transnational families. Packages and promotions like these should also be widely marketed to give families informed choices in their use of technology that would best fit their communication needs and budget. This is important as transnational families are progressively becoming a significant telecommunications consumer segment in this increasingly mobile society.

References

- Aguila, A.P.N. (2006). *As the wired world turns: How computer-mediated communication is re-shaping Filipino long-distance relationships*. (Unpublished masteral thesis). University of the Philippines, Philippines.
- Aguilar, F.V. Jr. (2009). *Maalwang buhay: Family, overseas migration, and cultures of relatedness in Barangay Paraiso*. F.V. Aguilar, Jr. with J.E.Z. Peñalosa, T.B.T. Liwanag, R.S. Cruz I, & J.M. Melendrez. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Arevalo, E.G.A., Toloza, M.C.L., & Nicolas, K.B. (1997). *The distance between us: A comparative study of the social interaction of adolescents from families with both parents present and families with one parent working abroad*. (Unpublished thesis). University of the Philippines, Philippines.
- Asis, M.M.B. (2006, February-March). Gender dimensions of labor migration in Asia. *High-level Panel on "The Gender Dimensions of International Migration"*. United Nations Commission on the Status of Women 50th Session, New York. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw50/statements/CSW%20HLP%20Maruja%20MB%20Asis.pdf>
- Asis, M.M.B., Huang, S., & Yeoh, B.S.A. (2004). When the light of the home is abroad: Unskilled female migration and the Filipino family. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 25 (2), 198-215. doi:10.1111/j.0129-7619.2004.00182.x
- Balamiento, N.C. (2010). *Parents without borders: OFW online parenting and the self-development of adolescent Philippine-based children*. (Unpublished undergraduate thesis). University of the Philippines, Philippines.
- Battistella G., & Conaco, M.C.G. (1998). The impact of labour migration on the children of left behind: A study of elementary school children in the Philippines. *Soujourn*, 13 (2), 220-241. doi:10.1355/SJ13-2C
- Bavelas, J.B., & Segal, L. (1982). Family Systems Theory: Background and implications. *Journal of Communication*, 32 (3), 99-107. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1982.tb02503.x
- Beltran R.P., Samonte, E.L., & Walker, L. (1996). Filipino women migrant workers: Effects on family life and challenges for intervention. In R.P. Beltran & G.F. Rodriguez (Eds.), *Filipino women migrant workers: At the crossroads and beyond Beijing* (pp. 15-43). Quezon City: Giraffe Books.
- Biddle, B.J. (1986). Recent development in Role Theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 12, 67-92. doi: 10.1146/annurev.so.12.080186.000435
- Bornstein, M.H. (Ed.) (2002). *Handbook of parenting* (Vol. 1, 2nd ed.). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.
- Burman, J. (2006). Migrant remittances as diasporic communication. *Journal of International Communication*, 12 (2), 7-18. Retrieved from <http://libdds.nus.edu.sg/arieldoc/1303.pdf>

- Castells, M. (2008). Afterword. In J.E. Katz (Ed.), *Handbook of Mobile Communication Studies* (pp. 447-451). Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Cheng, S. A. (2004). Right to mothering: Motherhood as a transborder concern in the age of globalization. *Journal of Association for Research on Mothering*, 6 (1), 135-144. Retrieved from <http://pi.library.yorku.ca.libproxy1.nus.edu.sg/ojs/index.php/jarm/article/viewFile/4891/4085>
- Chu, W., & Yang, S. (2006). Mobile phones and new migrant workers in South China village: An initial analysis of the interplay between the “social” and the “technological”. In P. Law, L. Fortunati, & S. Yang (Eds.), *New technologies in global societies* (pp. 221-244). Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd.
- Cobb, N.J. (2007). *Adolescence: Continuity, change, and diversity*. (6th ed.). New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Cox, M.J., & Paley, B. (1997). Families as systems. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 48, 243-267.
- Daft, R.L., & Lengel, R.H. (1984). Information richness: A new approach to managerial behavior and organizational design. In B.M. Staw & L.L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior: An annual series of analytical essays and critical reviews* (Vol 6, pp. 191-233). Greenwich, Connecticut & London, England: JAI Press Inc.
- Daft, R.L., Lengel, R.H., & Trevino, L.K. (1987). Message equivocality, media selection, and manager performance: Implications for information systems. *MIS Quarterly*, 11 (3), 355-366. doi:10.2307/248682
- Davis, F.D., Bagozzi, R.P., & Warshaw, P.R. (1989). User acceptance of computer technology: A comparison of two theoretical models. *Management Science*, 35 (8), 982-1003. doi:10.1287/mnsc.35.8.982
- Devasahayam, T.W., & Yeoh, B.S.A. (Eds.). (2007). *Working and mothering in Asia: Images, ideologies and identities*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Fransisco, M.L.M. (2000). *Descriptive study on different communication tools as lifelines of long distance love relationships*. (Unpublished thesis). University of the Philippines, Philippines.
- Galvin, K.M., Bylund, C.L., & Brommel, B.J. (2004). *Family communication: Cohesion and change* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Gerris, J.R.M. (Ed.) (2001). *Dynamics of parenting*. Leuven-Apeldoorn: Garant.
- Go, S. (1998). Towards the 21st century: Whither Philippine labor migration? In B.V. Cariño (Ed), *Filipino workers on the move: Trends, dilemmas and policy options* (pp. 9-39). Philippine Migration Research Network.
- Gustafson, D.L. (Ed.) (2005). *Unbecoming mothers: The social production of maternal absence*. Binghamton, New York: The Haworth Clinical Practice Press Inc.

- Herbert, M. (2004). Parenting across the lifespan. In M. Hoghughi & N. Long (Eds.), *Handbook of parenting: Theory and research for practice* (pp. 55-71). London; Thousand Oaks, California; & New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Hoghughi, M. (2004). Parenting: An introduction. In M. Hoghughi & N. Long (Eds.), *Handbook of parenting: Theory and research for practice* (pp.1-18). London; Thousand Oaks, California; & New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, P., & Avila, E. (1997). I'm here, but I'm there: The meanings of Latina transnational motherhood. *Gender & Society*, 11 (5), 548-571. doi:10.1177/089124397011005003
- Huang, S., Yeoh, B.S.A., & Lam, T. (2008). Asian transnational families in transition: The liminality of simultaneity. *International Migration*, 46(4), 3-13. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2008.00469.x
- International Labor Organization. (n.d.). Resolution concerning updating the International Standard Classification of Occupations. Retrieved from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/docs/resol08.pdf>
- Internet World Stats Website. (n.d.). Asia Internet usage and population. Retrieved from <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm>
- Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc. (2007). *Fast facts on Filipino labor migration*. Quezon City: Kanlungan Centre Foundation, Inc. Retrieved from http://www.kanlungan.ngo.ph/Resources/Fasfact_2007%20Final.pdf
- Katz, J.E., & Aakuhus, M. (2002a). Conclusion: Making meaning of mobiles – a theory of Apparategeist. In J.E. Katz & M. Aakuhus (Eds.), *Perpetual contact: Mobile communication, private talks, public performance* (pp. 301-318). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Katz, J.E., & Aakuhus, M. (Eds.) (2002b). *Perpetual contact: Mobile communication, private talks, public performance*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Katz, E., Blumler, J.G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and gratifications research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509-523. doi:10.1086/268109
- Laursen, B., & Collins, W.A. (2004). Parent-child communication during adolescence. In A.L. Vangelisti (Ed.), *Handbook of Family Communication* (pp. 333-348). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence, Erlbaum, Associates, Inc.
- Lee, A.S. (1994). Electronic mail as a medium for rich communication: An empirical investigation using hermeneutic interpretation. *MIS Quarterly*, 18 (2), 143-157. doi:10.2307/249762
- Lengel, R.H., & Daft, R.L. (1988). The selection of communication media as an executive skill. *The Academy of Management Executive*, 2 (3), 225-232. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.libproxy1.nus.edu.sg/ehost/pdf?vid=3&hid=102&sid=3338b839-2aa0-4875-b53e-b2d66080d598%40sessionmgr110>
- Le Poire, B.A. (2006). *Family communication: Nurturing and control in a changing world*. Thousand Oaks, California; London; & New Delhi: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Littlejohn, S.W. (2002). *Theories of human communication*. (7th ed). Belmont, California: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Madianou, M. M. (2006, June). New communication technologies and the mediation of transnational relationships. In J. de Bruin (Chair), *Networking new media in studies of ethnicity, race and national identity*. Conference session conducted at the International Communication Association Annual Conference, Dresden, Germany. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.libproxy1.nus.edu.sg/ehost/pdf?vid=7&hid=105&sid=62204178-c4d5-425f-990d-2df3eaa4e409%40sessionmgr104>
- Madianou, M., & Miller, D. (n.d.). Polymedia. Posted in a web log by H.L. Geismar (September 3, 2010). Retrieved from <http://blogs.nyu.edu/projects/materialworld/2010/09/polymedia.html>
- Markus, M.L. (1994). Electronic mail as the medium of managerial choice. *Organizational Science*, 5 (4), 502-527. doi:10.1287/orsc.5.4.502
- McQuail, D., & Windahl, S. (1993). *Communication models for the study of mass communication* (2nd ed.). New York: Longman Publishing.
- Medina, B.T.G. (2001). *The Filipino family*. (2nd ed.). Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press.
- National Commission on the Rights of Filipino Women. (n.d.). Statistics on Filipino women overseas employment (posted on February 24, 2009). Retrieved from <http://www.ncrfw.gov.ph/index.php/statistics-on-filipino-women/14-factsheets-on-filipino-women/71-statistics-fs-filipino-women-overseas-employment>
- National Statistical Coordination Board. (n.d.). Philippine Standard Geographic Code (as of March 2011). Retrieved from <http://www.nscb.gov.ph/activestats/psgc/listprov.asp>
- Ngwenyama, O.K., & Lee, A.S. (1997). Communication richness in electronic mail: Critical Social Theory and the contextuality of meaning. *MIS Quarterly*, 21 (2), 145-167. doi:10.2307/249417
- Nicolas, J. D. (1993). *Communication as a coping mechanism of Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs) and their families*. (Unpublished thesis). University of the Philippines, Philippines.
- Panagakos, A.N., & Horst, H.A. (2006). Return to cyberia: Technology and the social worlds of transnational migrants. *Global Networks*, 6 (2), 109-124. doi:10.1111/j.1471-0374.2006.00136.x
- Paragas, F. (2005) Migrant mobiles: Cellular telephony, transnational spaces, and the Filipino diaspora. In K. Nyiri (Ed.), *A sense of place: The global and the local in mobile communication* (pp. 241-249). Vienna: Die Deutsche Bibliothek.
- Paragas, F. (2008). Migrant workers and mobile phones: Technological, temporal, and spatial simultaneity. In R. Ling & S.W. Campbell (Eds.), *The reconstruction of space and time: Mobile communications practices* (pp. 39-65). New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Parreñas, R. S. (2001). *Servants of globalization: Women, migration, and domestic work*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

- Parreñas, R. S. (2005a). *Children of global migration: Transnational families and gendered woes*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Parreñas, R. S. (2005b). Long distance intimacy: Class, gender and intergenerational relations between mothers and children in Filipino transnational families. *Global Networks*, 5 (4), 317-336. doi:10.1111/j.1471-0374.2005.00122.x
- Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. (n.d.). OFW deployment per country and skill-new hires (Full Year 2010). Retrieved from <http://www.poea.gov.ph/stats/2010%20Deployment%20by%20Destination,%20Occupation%20and%20Sex%202010%20-%20New%20hires.pdf>
- Rice, R.E., & Shook, D.E. (1990). Relationships of job categories and organizational levels to use of communication channels, including electronic mail: A meta-analysis and extension. *Journal of Management Studies*, 27 (2), 195-229. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.1990.tb00760.x
- Ruggiero, T. E. (2000). Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st century. *Mass Communication and Society*, 3 (1), 3-37. doi:10.1207/S15327825MCS0301_02
- Rule, R.B.C. (2009). *Connected in separation: A study on the family dynamics and long-distance interpersonal communication relationships of Manila-based OFW families*. (Unpublished masteral thesis). University of the Philippines, Philippines.
- Sobritchea, C.L. (2007). Constructions of mothering: The experience of female Filipino overseas workers. In T. W. Devasahayam & B.S.A Yeoh (Eds.), *Working and mothering in Asia: Images, ideologies and identities* (pp. 173-194). Singapore: NUS Press.
- Steinberg, L., & Silk, J.S. (2002). Parenting adolescents. In M.H. Bornstein (Ed.), *Handbook of Parenting* (Vol. 1, pp. 103-133, 2nd ed.). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers.
- The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines. Retrieved from <http://www.chanrobles.com/philsupremelaw2.html>
- Thomas, M., & Lim, S.S. (2009, October). On maids, mobile phones and social capital: ICT use by female migrant workers in Singapore and its policy implications. *Mobile Communication and Social Policy: An International Conference*, New Jersey, USA.
- Trevino, L.K., Lengel, R.H., Bodensteiner, W., Gerloff, E.A., & Muir, N.K. (1990). The richness imperative and cognitive style: The role of individual differences in media choice behavior. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 4 (2), 176-197. doi:10.1177/0893318990004002003
- Trevino, L.K., Lengel, R.H., & Daft, R.L. (1987). Media symbolism, media richness, and media choice in organizations: A symbolic interactionist perspective. *Communication Research*, 14 (5), 553-574. doi:10.1177/009365087014005006
- Uy-Tioco, C. (2007). Overseas Filipino workers and text messaging: Reinventing transnational mothering. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 21 (2), 253-265. doi:10.1080/10304310701269081
- Vertovec, S. (2004). Cheap calls: The social glue of migrant transnationalism. *Global Networks*, 4 (2), 219-224. doi:10.1111/j.1471-0374.2004.00088.x

White, J.M., & Klein D.M. (2002). *Family theories* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California; London; & New Delhi: Sage Publication, Inc.

Wilding, R. (2006). 'Virtual' intimacies? Families communicating across transnational contexts. *Global Networks*, 6 (2), 125-142. doi:10.1111/j.1471-0374.2006.00137.x