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Challenges of New Media Technology in Reshaping Parent-Child Communication

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Abstract
This study aims to determine the importance of new media and its effectiveness in communication between parent-child. These findings demonstrate that new media technology is essential nowadays between parent and child communication. Responses from the survey indicate that communicating with family members is very effective with smartphones using applications to converse with each other. The importance of communication towards family is prioritized over individual needs. In family communication, new media has helped parents and children connect in some way or another and allows a closer connection among them.

Keywords: new media, communication

1.0 Introduction
Each family has their way of communicating with one another. Some families prefer the traditional way of communication, which is communicating face-to-face. Due to hectic work schedules or children studying away from their parents (vice-versa), other families prefer the modern way of keeping in touch, communicating via technology. In today's era, technology has become a necessity for us all. Technology is a medium of interaction, whereby it lets us communicate with just about anyone in this world. It also acts as a guide, which assists us in human interactions. In terms of family communication, communication technology refers to using technology to communicate with family members.

New media technology has helped us in many ways. The Internet, digital applications, social media, and social networking websites have changed the way people keep in touch. Family communication via new media technology means communicating with smartphones or computers and Internet access; through online chat, E-mail, Video calls, and Facebook to converse. With the birth of the Internet and later smartphones, new media has made it easier for us to gain information quickly, but it has also helped us connect with other people. In family communication, new media has helped parents and children connect. New media technology also helps during the conflict between family members; sometimes, the children feel uncomfortable discussing emotional or sensitive issues with parents, so they turn to new media where communicating indirectly helps children express their feelings better. Dominick (2011) stated that the new technology might affect people negatively in the field of communication. Some of the significant family communication problems through technologies affect the parent-child relationship. Therefore, when both parties rely extensively on communication technology, as a long-term result, it can draw both parties away from each other rather than bring them together (Dominick, 2011). Both parties will feel uncomfortable engaging in face-to-face communications, resulting in less/no non-verbal interaction between the members. New media technology alters family life; however, it will result negatively for some who misuse them.

2.0 Related Literature
The new media technologies have assisted parents in monitoring children's activities even when they are geographically separated. Children now have a smartphone, which allows them to communicate with parents through voice notes, texts, or email messages. Turkle (2007) coined the term "tether", which describes smartphones that always connect the parents and children. Parents who are up to date with the latest technology or application can benefit from being "closer" to their children because it will make the children think that their parents are tech-savvy just like them. Thus this creates a connection between them.

2.1 Benefits of New Media Technology for Family Communication
Studies have shown that families in a 'network', meaning they are digitally connected through the new media technology, are constantly finding new ways to connect and share their content. It has allowed family members to interact with each other when they are not physically together. Families can stay connected during the day; what they do is they can send links to an exciting website and coordinate with activities, meaning that they are constantly sharing (Davis, Weigel, James & Gardner, 2009). A parent or child can send links to pages that they find interesting, allowing them to share what they are currently reading or looking at. Parents who find good articles about health topics or sports topics can share the content.

Families who use new media technology as an additional communication form a kind of "virtual hearth" coined by St. George (2008). This can be further explained when at the end of the day, the family would get together in the living room and gather themselves around a computer using a webcam to "visit" with their extended family members who are abroad. Instead of watching TV, they can stream online any live sports matches together or watch health tips on YouTube. It has been suggested that the new media technology alters how family members interact with each other. Belch, Krentler and Willis-Flurry (2005) suggested one way interaction between family members may be changing is due to the presence of the Internet at home. There are many benefits of new media technology that can be useful for most families in their efforts to be healthy. For instance: how much distance has been travelled, how much is the running speed, how many calories are lost, and some devices inform the heart rate. Nowadays, many people are using new media technology in sports activities in the midst of other activities. Therefore, information and communication technology has been rapidly designed for the health sector to promote sports and health activities (Adriani, Irwandy & Christina. 2019).

2.2 New Media Technologies between Parent and their Adult-Child Relationship
Adult-Child or as Schon (2013) calls it; the 'middle years' are children who are usually 18 to 30 years old; whereas it is different to the term "young adult", their classification are individuals aged 18-28 years old. Based on Schon (2013), communication between parents and their adult children is essential. Before the establishment of new media, parents and adult-child would communicate the traditional way, such as through telephone calls, letters, and visits. But today, the Internet has opened many opportunities for communicating especially communicating through the existence of the smartphone. Now the family members have a lot of media options to choose from.

There is a need for communication satisfaction between members of the family, especially towards enhancing the parent-child relationship. Communication satisfaction can be defined as communication interaction that fulfils people's expectations (Hetch, 1978). Communication and relationship satisfaction are influenced by several communication variables beyond the medium of choice. Because smartphones are portable and can be accessed anywhere and at any time, it has resulted in young people desiring a constant connection with those to whom they are close (Ling & Ytttri, 2002). They can easily access text messaging and communicate through social networking sites. However, based on previous research, it has been stated that parents are the ones who utilize less new media technology than their adult children so, and as a result, they are not as connected as they should be with their parents.

2.3 Students' Electronic Communication with Parents
According to Hofer, Souder, Kennedy, Fullman, & Hurd (2009), those who live abroad or away for their studies have relied on communication that is usually in the form of weekly phone calls using landlines, letters and cards arriving at their mail. As technology has shifted and changed over the past few decades, it has emerged new opportunities for children to connect with their parents instantly at any time through any electronic technology, whether it is cellular phone calls, text messaging, emails, video chat, and social media such as Facebook. Students use this instant means of connection to talk to their parents about problems they face, such as issues with roommates, difficulties in choosing their courses, how to do the laundry and what medicine to take when they are not well (Hofer & Moore, 2010). The social media king, "Facebook", has impacted individuals in many ways. For parent and their student child relationship, parents who are connected to their college child on Facebook may also gain other access to their child's activities and social life. Parents get to see who their children's friends are and what they are up to.

2.4 Parent-Children Relationships Benefit from Multiple Communication Channels
According to Cheng (2014), the relationship between parents and children can benefit when both parties use similar communication channels. Connection using phone, emails and even social media websites can boost the relationship satisfaction between the two parties. In a study conducted by Cheng, they gathered 367 participants to complete a survey about how they would communicate with their parents and how often they use technology and how their satisfaction with their relationship with their parents was. The results shown were that communication channels were phones, cell phones, texting, instant messaging, Snapchat, email, video chat, social networking websites and online gaming sites. The results shown were that the average number of communication channels preferred by the participants with

their parents was only three. And as a result, by using this kind of medium of communication, there was an increased level of satisfaction in the relationship.

3.0 Theoretical Framework and Methodology
The theoretical framework is the foundation for this study. Meanwhile, to meet the purpose of the study, two independent variables have been developed by the researchers. This study shall discover parent-child communication on how new media technology has reshaped in their family communication. Within that, the study will focus on two main concepts, which revolve around on what is the importance of new media technology towards parent-child communication and what is the effectiveness of new media technology on parent-child communication. Communication refers to conveying information, and New Media refers to device technology and application.
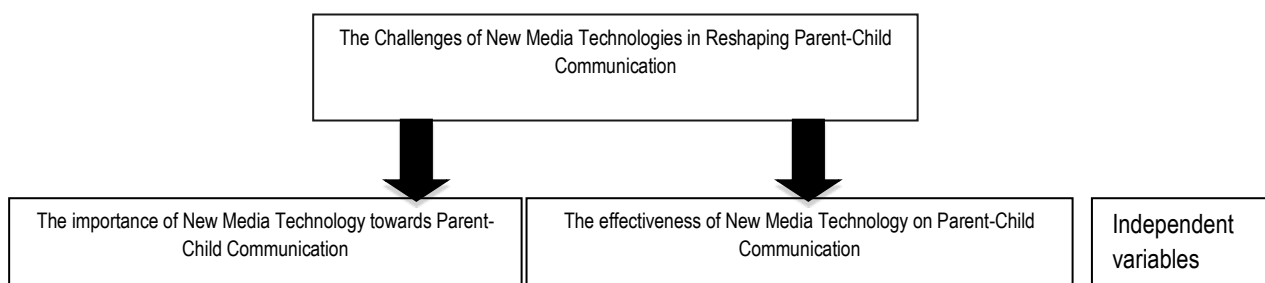

Fig. 1. Theoretical framework

This study employs a qualitative research method. The researcher has used a questionnaire to gather first-hand data through an online survey focusing on parent-child living within the Klang Valley, an area of continuous rapid urbanization. Respondents are selected randomly using a simple random sampling technique. Individuals are surveyed regarding the importance and effectiveness of new media technologies among family members. An equal set of questionnaires was given to the child(s) and parent(s) and asked to fill in an online survey regarding this study. Therefore, there is an equal amount of data to analyze the survey. This will give an accurate analysis to the researcher of both parents' and children's views. It is conducted in an online environment where the researcher submitted a link to the survey, either through email, WhatsApp or social media websites, to the respondents, and they have answered them online either through their smartphone or computer.

All the data collected throughout the research were then analyzed using *Google Form*. It allows users to create their own survey and collect information in an easy and streamlined way. It provides an effective alternative to creating an online survey, and the results collected will be laid out in an online spreadsheet. It also allows the researcher to view each response in a single row of a spreadsheet, in which each question is shown in a column; hence there is better precision in calculating the results of the respondents.

4.0 Results
To determine the main factors that made the importance of new media technologies toward parent-child communication and identify how the effectiveness of new media technologies on parent-child communication, the researcher has used the mean of all questions in an individual independent variable. The total score of all questions is first summed up, and using a descriptive statistic, the mean for individual variables was calculated.

Table 1. Independent variables mean

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Importance	50	7.00	28.00	18.7600	3.60870
Effectiveness	50	6.00	19.00	12.2933	3.46712

The table above illustrates that negative related factors do not have a significant effect on the importance of new media communication between parent-child. Based on the findings, communicating with family members is significant to the individual's well-being as they prefer a more effective form of communication. There have been a lot of judgments made that new media only drifts families apart instead of bringing them closer, but this is, in fact, a false accusation because new media technology allows a closer connection between parent and child. In addition, satisfaction is more remarkable when parents act more in line with a connected mode of communicating and when they are more communicatively competent. This further emphasizes the importance and significance of the new media communication.

Table 3. Mean of each attribute

Parent-child communication	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Importance of New Media Communication				
When doing work	3	7	5.89	1.073
Away from home	3	7	6.03	.870
Inform activities	1	7	3.72	1.729
Effectiveness of New Media Communication				
WhatsApp	1	7	5.88	1.803

Facebook	2	7	3.55	1.314
Video Call	1	7	3.95	1.777
Email/SMS	1	7	5.39	1.162

According to Hofstede's theory (1994), the family is the most essential in-group in collectivist cultures and whatever happens in or to the family affects the individual. Based on Table 3, as the responses indicate, the importance of communication between parent-child remains unaffected despite the pressures and demands associated with everyday life. Nonetheless, respondents will still contact family members when they are doing work and when family members are away from home. The majorities of the respondents always feel a need to communicate with family members and will contact them even when they are away from home. In fact, most of the respondents said that they communicate with their families to inform activities.

The effectiveness of new media communication between parent-child indicates that communication effectiveness does take place between family members through various methods. Most of the respondents strongly agree that they often communicate with family members through WhatsApp and through Facebook. Communicating through online chats is a popular method; similarly, communication between family members via video call and email is also high. The result indicates that most of the respondents prefer to communicate with family members through new media. These findings show that new media communication is the preferred method of communication among family members. According to Macionis (2001), family living offers an opportunity for intimacy. Family members share activities and build emotional bonds. Therefore, communication among family members is significant and vital to the well-being of the individuals, just as reflected in the responses to the survey for this study. Most of the respondents mentioned that they prefer to communicate by new media apps using a smartphone. SMS is also another preferred method among the respondents, followed by email. Most of the respondents prefer to use technology when communicating with family members. Respondents mentioned that it is important to communicate often with members of their family, while others mentioned that they feel anxious if they don't communicate with family members.

As Levin and Currie (2010) stated, there is an association between communication and satisfaction. The family remains the focus of a life worth living. It functions as a desirable remain, a sense of belonging and nurture, being there for each other, as well as numerous voluntary contributions to the common good of a society without which we cannot do. Communication helps tighten family bonds. As illustrated, most of the respondents mention that it is necessary to be updated on what is going on within the family. Therefore, communication among family members is important for their mental well-being, as the respondents indicate. Harmony within the family is important for society to function. Communication is important and healthy to an individual's well-being, especially for an individual's sense of being within the family, as the respondents indicate that they will feel anxious if they do not communicate with family members. As such, they agree that it is important to often communicate with members of their family and be updated often on what is happening within the family, as they indicated that they are always concerned for the well-being of family members.

5.0 Discussion

Based on the findings, it can be said that new media technology plays a significant role in helping assist parent and child communication. Why are new media technologies important per say? According to Yarosh et al. (2009), these researchers claims that society cannot view new media technology as something undesirable but look at the helpful ways it can help create new opportunities for parents and child to talk to each other. Suppose the societies view new media between parent and child communication as an unhealthy way of communication. In that case, they need to re-evaluate because new media not only allows spontaneous sharing of media but it also allows instant feedback between members. This can be supported by the survey whereby all the respondents answered that they are aware of new media technology, and all the respondents also own a smartphone (100%). Subsequently, 90% of the respondents communicate with their parent/child "daily" through new media technology. This can be further supported by Goyer (2010), who agrees that much of today's technology helps families communicate positively; the reason is that technology has changed the platform where family connects with each other. As we live in the world today, new media technology is needed and is important to improve communication between parent and child; most of the respondents answered that they "agree" with this statement. This can be supported by Schon (2013), communication between parents and children is important. Today the Internet has opened a lot of various opportunities for communicating especially communicating through the existence of smartphones. Almost all the respondents answered parents and children communicate with each other using smartphones. The importance of new media technology for parent-child communication can further be distinguished when more than half of the population answered they could not live without new media technology.

6.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, new media technology gives support or, in other words, aids parent-child communication. Technology today may cause harmful effects on family members where the family may become anti-social and lose face-to-face communication that can result from excessive use of new media technology. However, straying away from the negativity, new media technology does provide support, like an extension of the parent and child relationship. And this can be proven by the survey result. Technology today is always evolving; it has helped family members to communicate in a positive way because they can access each other easily. New media technology helps with family who doesn't have time with each other to stay connected. This new media technology acts as a second medium. When parents use two or more modes of a medium, the better both will feel about their relationship. Based on these findings, new media technology is important to improve communication between parent and child in the world we live in today. There is a need for communication satisfaction

between members of the family, especially towards enhancing parent and child relationships. Today it is important for parents to stay media savvy, as this would create constant connectivity between both parties. As well as, new media technology is effective in helping parents and children to communicate with each other when they are not physically together. The findings of this research also imply that new media technology effectiveness in parent-child communication.

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