
Reshaping Communication: A Study of How Mediated to Computer-Mediated Communication Exchanges Affects the Relationship among Overseas Filipino Workers Families

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to gain descriptive findings on the experiences on how family communication of Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) families is reshaped using Mediated Communication (MC) to Computer-mediated Communication (CMC). Mediated communication tools are classified as snail mail, voice tape, telephone and mobile phone while CMC tools were the use of internet or computers for communication. The problems they encounter in using MC to CMC; the changes happened in the family connection made by MC to CMC and their adjustments to these changes. The study utilized the qualitative approach to learning and understood the effects of MC to CMC in the family communication of OFW families. Furthermore, it used Case Study to present 7 family cases such as mother-son, mother-daughter, sister-sister, father-son, and couples. Participants were purposively chosen based on the criteria set by the researchers. Results revealed the intervention of CMC in the Family communication of OFWs: 1) Differing choices of tools are considered based on participant's preferences and characteristics of tools. 2) As a communication tool changes, the messages also transformed. Moreover, 3) different communication tools have different characteristics and bring various levels of closeness. Technical problems, availability, cost and process of the medium are factors that affect the communication of OFW families. Problems are dealt accordingly to the possible solutions that participants commonly knew. OFW Families adjust correspondingly to the nature of the tools and regarding the factors such as the time difference, special occasions, emergencies, and threat to weaker family relationship.

Keywords: social science, mediated communication, computer-mediated communication, overseas Filipino workers, long distance relationship, family communication, OFW families, descriptive design, Philippines

Introduction

Working abroad has been sought-after opportunity to utmost Filipinos who desires to have a better-quality family life. Three out of 10 Filipinos are Overseas Filipino Workers or seeking to be one (Asis, 2007) – describing how the widespread migration can necessitate Filipinos to work in foreign countries (Retrieved from: <http://goo.gl/DnSQZp>). Attributed to the April to September assessment of Philippine Statistics Authority, in the year 2013, estimating 2.3 million Overseas Filipino Workers employed around the world. Ninety-six point two per cent of contract workforce from the Philippines composing of 50.3 % males and 49.7% females, statistics presented states that there are yet more male OFWs than women (Retrieved from: <http://goo.gl/8DCXle>). In the year 2008, there are 6 million children left by their OFW parents, growing up and gaining consciousness however deprived of the whole supervision of their fathers or mothers (Retrieved from: <http://goo.gl/STbrDh>). The number of left-behind children is rapidly increasing proportionally as the number of Filipino workers is doubling; the count of OFW families are escalating as they experience geographic distance—a serious threat to every relationship.

Mediated communication is vanishing in the communication exchanges of OFW families since the technological emergence has paved way in the 20th century. Currently, the OFW and their family have no alternative preference, but to depend on the CMC alone (Aguila, 2008) to have a persistent communication and to withstand their intimacy with each other. Long Distance Relationships instantaneously profit and agonize commencing on the usage of such communication tools (Miller, 2009). Reinforced by Epstein et al. (1993), family communication offer importance to the articulated and unarticulated interchange of information among household members even if they are apart. In OFWs' absence of physical intimacy, their loved ones manage with separation using all expedient conceivable way to withstand their close connection and to lessen the loneliness that they experience. Technologically advanced systems of CMC turned out to establish well in the Filipino's daily life, with their predicament to stay compact with their family even when they are not together (Aguila, 2008).

Acknowledging Marshall McLuhan's theory of Technological Determinism, he concluded that the new electronic media have thoroughly transformed the way people think, feel and act. As the technology advances, the society also changes as well as the individuals and therefore reshaping their ways of communication into more practical and easy setup. Enclosing the alterations from old to modern communication, from pen inks to mouse clicks, from papers to screens; it is unavoidably a changing, technology-advancing world. This study's persistence is to understand and see the effectiveness of mediated communication to computer-mediated communication tools in the family connection of OFW families.

Framework

The framework of this study is the integration of two theories, The Family Systems theory of Bowen and the Media Richness theory of Daft and Lengel. OFW families continue to communicate while the communication tool changes to keep in touch with the family members. As the tool changes and advancing, the communication within the family continue to widen and more often. According to Media Richness Theory, different communication tool has different characteristics. Identification and various capacities to provide instant feedback and to transmit message cues– these features distinct from each communication tool to bring more closeness to the family. Also, the theory guides the researchers to identify the communication patterns and preferred communication characteristics of the OFW families. Researchers identified the communication tools depending on their richness snail mail as the poorest followed by the voice tapes, cassette tapes or Betamax that is in both manual processes. Next is telephone followed by the invention and enhancement of cellular phone and the usage of Internet, which is the most recent and advance among the tools.

Objectives

This study aims at ascertaining answers through exploratory method. The research objectives are the following: The researchers aim to know the profile of the participants. Moreover, cite experiences of the OFWs and their families using letters, voice tapes, telephone, cell phone and Internet. To further identify the problems they encountered and ways of dealing with it. As well as to describe changes in the family communication and lastly to determine adjustments made to time difference, special occasions and unexpected incidents.

Methodology

The researchers used the qualitative approach in order to accomplish the necessary material for this study. This study acclimatizes descriptive scheme to delineate the participants entirely in an accurate method. The researchers utilized case study as the tradition of inquiry to deeply interpret respectively the respondent's cases. An empirical research that investigates a current situation in depth and within its real-life perspective, especially when the limitations of phenomenon and circumstance are not clearly evident (Yin, 1994). The study highlighting the usage of CMC among OFW families, the alterations conveyed by the CMC in the family communication and by what expedient manner they would amend to those modifications. Case study is deliberated to be the most pertinent method for the researchers to reconnoiter more about the subject matter profoundly.

To add valid conclusions, the researchers used in-depth interview in accumulating information from the participants of the study. In an in-depth interview, the inquisitor

'gently leads a conversational partner in a comprehensive discussion' (Rubin and Rubin, 2005: 4). It is correspondingly used to acquire individual perspectives of one or few diligently established themes. In-depth interview is an effective method of getting people's personal feelings and thoughts, even experiences comfortably. The foremost research instrument used in this study was an interview guide. The researchers used an interview guide for data collection. The questions are anchored and arranged in a systematic way based on the study's objectives for easier and more organized analysis of data for the upcoming data collection.

The researchers used Purposive Sampling technique to acquire the participants in the study. Purposive Sampling Technique according to Patton (1990), subjects are selected because of some characteristic. Purposive sampling groups' participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant for a particular research question.

To generate and obtain best and valid results, the researchers have set the standards for the selection of participants that includes the following: An OFW family with OFW member with not less than 15 years of working abroad. OFW and their family must have used snail mail, telephone, cell phone and internet to communicate. Moreover, experience not less than 15 years of communication. The researchers chose the above criteria in selecting the participants to gain more profitable responses from them.

Results and Discussion

Inks to Clicks: The Use Of Mediated To Computer-Mediated Tool

Early 60's, letters prevailed the communication scenario among migrant workers and their left-behind families back in the Philippines as it is the only available communication means that time. Alongside, cassette tapes were the alternative tool to turn communication more personal adding the element of voice to the previous written and text-based medium (Madianou & Miller, 2011). Then, telephones and mobile phones slowly complemented the sentimental letter and voice tape tools in the 80's and 90's paving way for another breakthrough in human's communication. The significant period of communication back at the beginning of the 21st century when Internet became widely available and accessible and from that point, doors opened to several developments in technical aspects of the medium. With technological advancement, mediated communication is surpassed by computer-mediated communication, making it as the most preferred means of communication nowadays.

'Richness' of a communication medium is determined by instantaneous feedback, which focuses on the speed of a two-way interaction. Cues, which cover verbally and non-verbally transmitted cues and language variety, which focuses on how language used in communication also determines 'richness' of the medium when performing complicated tasks. Lastly, personal attention that analyzes the emotional needs and feelings that the sender and receiver expressed while utilizing the mediated and computer-mediated tool (Thurlow, Lengel, & Tomic, 2004, p.49).

Matrix 1. Inks to Clicks

Themes	Statement (s)
Cost	<p>(Snail Mail)</p> <p>“Noon, nung 1980s di pa masyadong mahal dahil sa ang standard sa atin, siguro noon mga 5 pesos.” [During 1980’s, the standard cost per letter is roughly 5 pesos]</p> <p>“16 pesos for regular mail. Pag cards naman like birthday cards was 36 pesos.” [16 pesos for regular snail mails, while birthday/ greeting cards were 36 pesos.]</p> <p>(Voice Tape)</p> <p>“...isang cassette tape nun, mga 8 riyals dun...” [8 riyals per cassette tape (Saudi)]</p> <p>(Telephone)</p> <p>“By telephone booth ako tumatawag, 30 Dirham equivalent yun saten nun ng P250.00 mga 12 minutes na yun...” [Through the use of telephone booths, 30 dirham for 12 minutes equivalent to 250 pesos (mid-1980’s)]</p> <p>“Mga nasa 25 to 30 pesos nuon ang per minute ng usapan” [Back then, 1 minute call drops at around P25-30 (1998-1999).]</p> <p>(Cell phone)</p> <p>“yung 100 dirhams, mga nasa 25 o 30 minutes na siguro yun. Depende yun sa pag-uusap namin...” [One hundred dirham for 25 or 30 minutes depending on the conversation.]</p> <p>“yung P 150.00 mga 15-20 minutes nung 2006” [P 150.00 lasts for 15-20minutes way back 2006]</p> <p>(Internet)</p> <p>“Depende sa isang oras ng mga computer shop.” [Depends upon an hour rate of computer shops.]</p> <p>“libre lang to sa amo ko nakikikabit lang akong internet sa amo ko”</p>

[I accessed internet for free, I connects on my employers wifi]

**Content
and
structure**

(Snail Mail)

“yung sa sulat kasi 'pag ordinary lang konti ako gumastos ... nag-iispeed mail talaga ako mas mabilis yun.”

[In letters, when I use ordinary I spent less but I prefer speed mail because it is faster than regular mail]

(Voice Tape)

“ Mahal 'yun madami pang kelangan, kelangan mo pa ng player ganon iba pa ‘yung mismong tape,”

[It is expensive; it requires components for the cassette player excluding the cassette tape.]

(Telephone)

“tapos ang system nun, may cubicle...hulog-hulog na lang ng pera...barya,”
[before, it was telephone booths ...you insert coins]

(Cell phone)

“yung cellphone mas maganda yun kasi hawak-hawak mo ‘yung cellphone eh medaling dalhin,”

[Cell phone is better; it is handy and more convenient to bring]

(Internet)

“Automatic naman ‘yung computer ngayon kapag naka-log in. Pag-open mo connect mo sa Internet, tapos connect na siya sa YM ko, kung online ka, yun, gagamitin mo na, tapos, makakapag-usap na kayo.”

[Computer nowadays are easier to use, you starts the computer, connect it to the internet it is already connected to my Yahoo Mail account, and then you can start chatting]

Personality

(Snail Mail)

“Habang sumusulat ako, tumutulo talaga ‘yung luha ko,”
[While I am writing, my tears are flowing]

(Telephone)

“...marinig ko lang ‘yung mga boses nila...Masaya na ako”
[...hearing their voices makes me happy.]

(Cell phone)

“...kakausapin mo sya na parang kasama lang, ...,”
[...you talk to her as if she was just there]

(Internet)

“sa Skype, para makita kung ano ba siya okay basiya, kung malusog pa rin siya.”
[I checks her on Skype if she was okay if she was still healthy]

Feedback

(Snail Mail)

“Sa isang buwan dalawang beses kaming nakakatanggap ng sulat pero pag galing dito isang beses lang sila nakakatanggap.”
[In a month, we receive letters twice; however, from here abroad, they receive only once.]

(Voice Tape)

“Yun ay siguro madalas na ‘yung once a month,”
[In voice tapes, we often use it once per month]

(Telephone)

“Kapag wala masyadong problema, sa isang linggo, two times lang ako tumatawag.”
[If there are no much problems, I call twice per week.]

(Cell phone)

“Noong nagkaroon na kami ng cellphone, araw-araw sa text, tapos kada 3 araw, magtawag ako sa kanila.”
[When we already have cell phone, we texts every day, then I call them every 3 days.]

(Internet)

“...everyday naman naka-online sa bahay. Yun tuwing umaga, tuwing hapon, 2 times a day,”
[Every day, we are online at home; 2 times a day, during morning and afternoon.]

The study showed that the OFW families used different mediated to computer-mediated communication tools in order for interaction to take place. From snail mail and cassette/voice tapes, telephone, cellular phone, to Internet, the participants' responses are categorized according to the medium cost spent in message transmission (Katz, 2003). Another one is the content and structure or the information capacity that the medium can hold to provide quality communication and process associated with its usage (Baym, 2010). Additionally, a personality or the handcrafting and effort applied that proves one's devotion and love, and the feedback or the duration of receiving a response (Madianou & Miller, 2011, 2012).

Cost. Economic constraints of the snail mail have unaffectedly enabled users to create the medium's message content as lengthy as they possibly desired (Madianou & Miller, 2012). This advantage is, of course, evident when letters became Overseas Filipino Workers' and their families' "staple" form of communication (Paragas, 2006, p. 137). On the other hand, experiences related to participant's use of telephone showed impracticability because it is expensive that is contrastingly different from mobile phone calls. Mobile phone calls perhaps are highly infrequent unlike texting is what Pertierra (as cited in Lallana, 2004) deliberately noted: texting has become the foremost use of cell phones for most Filipinos. Whereas, it is the evidently cheap and intelligibly efficient way to convey information in terms of text-based mobile communication. National figures support the 'perpetual contact' (Katz, 2003) to mobile phones with multiplying cellular mobile telephone subscribers now ultimately reached more than a hundred million by 2012 (NTC, 2012). At some contrasting points, Internet is still terribly bounded by choices and the digital divide among individuals that National Telecommunication Commission (2012) reported a budding 6.2 million Internet users.

Content and Structure. According to Madianou and Miller (2011), materiality is the ability of the medium to be ubiquitous forms of evidence that can be stored and valued through reading it all again. Content and structure of letters may subjectively diversify as Madianou & Miller (2011) stated that letters carry a "high informational capacity" (p. 269) depending on the user's discretion. Meanwhile, participants' experiences denote voice tape as a tool that could potentially store and scrupulously preserved abundant verbal information from glitches (Madianou & Miller, 2011). However, telephone use showed inconvenience (visiting phone booth) as Strom (2004) explained what resolutely influences phone use of Filipinos particularly varied by 'combination of limited access, high prices' (p.277). Mobile phones became extensively pervasive in the 21st century (Pertierra, 2005), similarly, in the data that strongly shows based on the participant's responses, exchanges of text messages through mobile phones are frequent. Mobility enabled OFW families to communicate at the convenient time possible, which is supported by Caporael & Xie (2004), considering that Internet paved for "anytime, anywhere" communication (p. 229).

Personality. It describes the emotional attachment of the participants they have in the use of communication tools (Baym, 2010; Madianou & Miller, 2011). Voice tapes are “powerful because of the emotional immediacy of the voice” (Madianou & Miller, 2011, p. 265) where recorded information sympathetically captivates the emotions. Letters are also emotionally deemed to be significant ways of sentimentally displaying love and care through the herculean written way of crafting it (Madianou & Miller, 2011).

Feedback. Responses to snail mail showed the overrated disadvantage of their communication experience in terms of speed and made immediacy of feedback a great deal issue (Madianou & Miller, 2012). Madianou & Miller (2011) objectively stated, “time lag between sending and receiving these messages explains how communication often ended up” (p. 270) in their ethnographic study of Overseas Filipino Workers. Frequent use of Internet attributed to the popularization of social networking sites (Madianou & Miller, 2012). Social Networking Websites have sophisticatedly boomed in gratitude in the past few years and were the current “fad” of computer-mediated technology (Thurlow, Lengel & Tomic, 2004). These sites have aggregated numerous forms of messaging as new literature talked about the integration of Internet to emerging phones known as “smartphones” (Madianou, 2014) are more comfortable to use.

Deal or No Deal: Problems Encountered and Dealing With It

“Communication is the answer to healthy family relationships” –Family Times

Inadequate communication can lead to misunderstanding, and that may escalate into conflicts that can affect one’s relationship. It is remarkably reflective on families wherein communication attributed to “indirect, unclear, vague, dishonest, distorted, and incomplete” characteristics (Rasheed et al., n.d.: 141). To keep the communication in long-distance relationships thereby posits a challenge; the use of mediated and computer-mediated communication became present.

However, the use of MC-CMC has its limitations technical, accessibility and cost problems arise as experienced by the participants. For every problem addressed, there is an alternative solution at least to ameliorate the burgeoning impact of the discussed problem. For all their limitations, Filipinos here and abroad offers them no choice than to depend on computer-mediated communication for the survival of their long-distance relationships (Aguila, 2008-2009: 101).

Matrix 2. Deal or No Deal?

Problems encountered in using MC-CMC tool	Statements
Technical	<p data-bbox="532 401 678 428">(Snail Mail)</p> <p data-bbox="630 464 1049 491"><i>“Matagal dumating ang message mo.”</i></p> <p data-bbox="532 499 992 527">[Messages takes too long to be delivered]</p> <p data-bbox="532 562 683 590">(Voice Mail)</p> <p data-bbox="630 625 1260 653"><i>“Napakatagal din nun, 1 month bago mo rin matanggap”</i></p> <p data-bbox="630 661 1211 688">[It also takes 1 month before you receive voice tapes]</p> <p data-bbox="630 724 1102 751"><i>“...Putol-putol, garagal ‘yung mga boses...”</i></p> <p data-bbox="532 760 829 787">[...the voices are choppy...]</p> <p data-bbox="532 823 683 850">(Telephone)</p> <p data-bbox="532 886 1390 949"><i>“...kahit malinaw may nasasagap kang ibang salita siguro may cross lines...”</i></p> <p data-bbox="532 957 1308 1020">[...even the communication is clear, we experienced cross line interruptions]</p> <p data-bbox="532 1056 678 1083">(Cellphone)</p> <p data-bbox="532 1119 1349 1182"><i>“...pag-umuulan nawawalan ng signal. So nagcho-choppy choppy sila...”</i></p> <p data-bbox="630 1190 1344 1218">[...when it is raining the signal is weak, voices became choppy...]</p> <p data-bbox="532 1253 656 1281">(Internet)</p> <p data-bbox="532 1316 1357 1379"><i>“Kung minsan talagang siguro sa dami ng gumagamit ng Internet application, minsan mahina ‘yung signal.”</i></p> <p data-bbox="532 1388 1357 1451">[Sometimes, due to many internet users the internet connection is weak]</p>
Accessibility	<p data-bbox="532 1486 667 1514">(Snail Mail)</p> <p data-bbox="532 1549 1357 1644"><i>“...minsan hindi makarating...binubusisi yan sa post office kapag medyo makapal minsan ‘yung iba binubuksan akala nila may laman...hinohold nila”</i></p> <p data-bbox="532 1652 1357 1715">[...some letters do not arrive... When the letter is thick post office personnel opens their letter... they hold the letter]</p> <p data-bbox="532 1751 683 1778">(Telephone)</p> <p data-bbox="532 1814 1382 1877"><i>“...gigising ka ng madaling araw kasi iba oras eh. Tapos tatawag ka sa opisina tulog pa sila...”</i></p>

[... due to the time difference, it is needed to wake up first thing in the dawn and go to the office to make a call but they are often asleep at that time...]

(Cellphone)

“Mahirap ang signal sa bukid. Malayo pa sa siyudad...”
 [The signal is weak in rural places, away from cities]

(Internet)

“yung computer shop na malapit sa amin mabagal lalo na pag may papalapit na bagyo”
 [...the internet in the computer shop near us is slow especially when bad weather is coming]

Cost

(Voice Mail)

“Disadvantages...mahal, napakamahal...not afford ng tao.”
 [Disadvantage of voice tape is very expensive... not affordable for the users]

(Telephone)

“...madaming service charge ang landline...”
 [...there are many service fees on phone]

(Cellphone)

“...yung 100 pesos mga 10 minutes na yun. Mahal ang tawag pag sa cell phone.”
 [...a 100 peso load lasts for only 10 minutes, cellular phone calls are expensive]

(Internet)

“Hindi ako bumibili ng sariling computer kasi mahal eh”
 [I do not buy my computer because its expensive]

Solution to the problems encountered
Technical

Statements

(Snail Mail)

“Pina-follow-up namin dun sa nagpapadala”
 [We follows-up the letters]

(Voice Mail)

“Hinahayaan na lang namin”

[We just let it be]

“...Para kasi siyang film, nakabaluktot daw yun kaya garagal ang ginagawa namin inuunat naming pilit...”

[...The film-like inside bend and the voices are unclear, we force to straighten it]

(Telephone)

“As time passes by lumakas ng lumakas naman ang mga teknolohiya ang technology naaddress naman nila ‘yung problem na ganito para malinaw ang dating ”

[As time pass by, technology addressed the problems in using the telephone to have a clearer communication between the users]

(Cellphone)

“...pag naputol, saka ka tatawag ulit...”

[..when the call cuts, I dial again]

(Internet)

“Hinto ko ‘yung pag-iinternet ”

[I stop using the internet for the meantime]

Accessibility

(Snail Mail)

“Bawat padala ko na lang lagi kong ireregister dun sa kartero or to dun sa door to door para sure na makarating sa pamilya ko ”

[Every letter I send, I register the letters to the courier to have the assurance that it is delivered to my family]

(Telephone)

“Nung nagumpisa na ‘yung cellphone non yun na ‘yung ginamit na pantawag”

[When the cell phone technology started, we replaced landline phone calls to cellular phone calls]

(Cellphone)

“Kapag walang signal wala talaga.... Aakyat pa kami talaga sa puno ng niyog”

[When there is no signal, we climb on coconut trees]

(Internet)

“Sa city na lang kami magkocomputer don mabilis-bilis na ”

[We rent a computer in the city where the internet is faster]

Cost

(Voice Mail)

“Hindi naman lagi yun ginagamit ...”

[We do not use it often...]

(Telephone)

“Pina-cut na lang ‘yung landline namin tapos cellphone na lang na malaki dati”

[We opt to cut our landline, we replaced the use of telephone into early cellphones]

(Cellphone)

“ Kung maubos man ‘yung load bili o paload ng bago”

[When we run out of load, we buy another or reload again]

(Internet)

“Sa opisina ako gumagamit ...o kaya nagrerent ako sa mga computer shop”

[I use the office computer...Instead, just rent from computer shops]

Each family described and shared their encountered problem and experiences in using MC to CMC; it shows that problems experienced are technical, accessibility and cost in using communication tools. In line with these problems, corresponds their solutions; participants discussed the actions they executed to counteract the effect of these problems using mediated and computer-mediated tools.

Within 40 years, the modes of communication between migrants and their families have evolved from sending correspondence by post to voice tapes to multi-media, real-time communication (International Labor Organization, 2013: 121).

Technical. The study showed experiences pertaining to the signal for the CMC and time taken or speed for mediated communication, “Real-time” response is ideal for an interactive medium wherein the response or lag time is unnoticeable. It also talks about the speed of communication tool to transfer messages in a synchronized situation (Lombard & Synder, 2001) and the process of communication in mediated tools like snail mail and voice mail became time-consuming. In the telephone usage and cellular phone, problems are blamed for the transmission signal and technological failure. It became the economical and competent way to convey information, as statistics supports the continuous adoption of mobile phones with accumulating cellular mobile telephone subscribers (CMTS) now reached 101.9 million (NTC, 2012). In contrast, according to the International Labor Organization (2013: 121) the access and immediacy afforded by mobile phones can have a downside when constant communication becomes more like an instrument of control and surveillance. Patrick and Metcalf (2001) study viewed that the

intervention of internet as communication tool, when it became affordable and simple enough to operate that critical mass can be reached, but can reduced its efficiency.

Accessibility. The uncontrollable factors that obstructed the receiver to acquire messages such as process of the tool, the device's location used for communication, and weather disturbances are the problems addressed. Manual process versus computerized process tends to have more critical errors because of the use of technological interface. According to James (2013), accessibility of phones to those without ownership of this mode of communication varies, in turn; availability depends on the number and location of the available tool.

Cost. The affordability of participants in acquiring the communication tool, sending voicemails is very expensive likewise, the use of international telephone and cellular phones every minute rates. According to Katz and Aakhus (2004), fewer phone uses of Filipinos typically varied and is determined by combination of limited access, high prices, and a number of cultural and practical aspects. In the acquiring new technologies, the currency determines the market value of the communication tool.

Solutions. According to Wright and Webb (2011), geographic separation requires partners to communicate via some technological medium, which affected loss of nonverbal cues present in face-to-face communication leading to task-reacted, impersonal communication. Early views on CMC technology particularly in the internet have gained negative remarks according to Kraut et al. (1988). Early studies about internet show negative comments, some of the most prominent CMC scholars pointed out that the substantial use of the internet relating with declines in the participant's connection with family members. In the family contexts, decreases in the extent of their sociability and increase in their depression and loneliness. As the problem in the use of computer-mediated communication arose, the search for an alternative solution was conducted. The introduction of new technology into the lives of these migrant workers provide an alternative to the old ones instead of replacing them, resulting in new ways and increased frequency of communication (Wilding, 2006). Limitations of the communication tools lead users to look for alternative to reduce the problem's effect; solutions made by the participants are adapting new technologies, DIY techniques, resume or pause the activity and location shifting.

The impact of new technologies in bridging relationships analyzed in various studies, presenting arguments for and against the effectiveness of these techniques (Aguila, 2008). While the new media allow time-space compression between family members by providing "virtual presence," they are also stark reminders of separation (Madianou & Miller, 2012).

The Start of Something New: Changes in the Family Communication

A diversity of communication media has been developed to support in the task of upholding relationships with others over distance and across household margins. Commencing with the handwritten letters, to the telegraph and telephone, to email and instant messaging, innovative technology has altered the way people communicate (Patrick and Metcalf, 2001).

People interconnect with each other not only to request and share information and organize activities, but also to create and preserve social relationships (Bonvillain,1993). Since the invention of computer-mediated communication arose, it correspondingly had been used as a tool to keep interpersonal relationships and have communication with distant friends, family still or loved one. According to the study of Sigrid and Kirk (2008), computer-mediated communication (CMC) contrasts from Face-to-Face (FTF) in numerous ways such as deficiency of social cues, expression of response and others. It views to reason that different mediums have divergent effects on interpersonal manners such as social influence and transformation. From the use of mediated to computer-mediated, Overseas Filipino Workers' families still able to continue send their love abroad despite physical distance.

According to Wilding (2006), the introduction of new technology into the lives of these migrant workers provide an alternative to the old ones instead of total replacement. Resulting in new ways, and increased frequency of communication, most recent and frequent communication tool preferred by migrant's workers is according to this Benitez (2006) migrant workers use different mediated communications. It varies from using transitional mass media like mobile phones that serve as mediated interaction international time-space context and global media such as the Internet that allow communication with global audiences.

Matrix 3. The Start of Something New

Themes	Statements
(Family closeness)	<i>“Parang iba na, nag-iiba na yung relasyon namin...”</i> [It has changed, our relationship changed]
	<i>“Syempre iba yung close na magkalayo pa kami sa close na magkasama na kami.”</i> [Our closeness is different when we are together than we are away]
	<i>“Ganon pa din. Lahat naman ng anak ko close sa aking eh.”</i> [Nothing changed my children are still close to me]
Family bond	<i>“...Parang lalong sabik sa isa’t isa, ganun</i> [It is like were longing for each other more]
	<i>“kahit umalis ako pag bumalik ako parang umalis ako kahapon lang walang</i>

difference.”

[Even I left when I came back nothing changed it was like yesterday]

**(Family
closeness)**

“Ang akin lang hindi ko man sila maalagaan ako naman yung naging tatay at nanay sa kanila...”

[Even I am not the one who took care of them, I have been both mother and father to them]

“Lagi namin syang minemessage.”

[We always message her]

**Expressing
love**

“sasabihin mo mahal mo sila.”

[I tell them that I love them]

“...Sasabihin mo sa kanila... hindi ka naman nag-abroad para sa sarili ko kundi para rin sa kanila”

[I always tell them that I decided to work abroad not for myself but them]

“sabihin ko lang ‘Mag-ingat sya lagi dun na wag papabaya.’ And miss na rin sya. Yun lang sa salita lang.

[I tell him ‘Always take care and don’t be negligent’ and we miss him, by the use of words]

“Tiwala lang, tsaka, maganda yung may contact, paniwalaan ka nila, at mas masuportahan mo sila ng masyado sa kanilang pangangailan”

[Trust, maintain contact with them, and they’ll believe you and I support their needs]

**Family
relationship**

“Oo, nakapag-establish kami ng matibay na relasyon ng anak ko sa pamamagitan ng pakikipagkomunikasyon. ”

[Yes, we have established stable mother and son relationship through communicating]

“Malaki naitulong ng mga kagamitan na to para mag-communicate kami, di namin narating yung kung ano kami ngayon kung wala kaming ganong communication. Mas matibay.”

[Communication tools are a big help for our family relationship, we will not have what we have right at this moment if we do not ensure constant contact. We had a stronger family]

“Parang lumayo, malayo talaga compared mo nung nandito pa siya”

[We become distant, compared before he decided to go abroad]

“kahit malayo sila dahil sa communication dahil sa internet parang malapit na din yun nga lang hindi mo nga lang kasama pero alam mo yung mga ginagawa nila”

[Even they were away through the use of internet as communication tool it is like he is just by your side even not physically present, but you know their activities]

In the study, the researchers were competent to discover the changes in the family communication after the intervention of MC-CMC through comparing their family bond before the OFW had gone abroad and today. According to the participants' responses, they faithfully remained close through the use of mediated and computer-mediated communication, and they long for physical reunification. In thoughtfully expressing love and care, to work hard, constant messaging, saying I-love-you's and caring words, sacrifices, and continuous support to each other are their individual ways to bridge their geographical distance earnestly.

Berg and Clark (1986) explain "closeness" as a point to which behaviors of 2 people are mutually co-dependent; individuals' choices dictate whether or not the connection will be seriously close based on influences. Such as the insight of the other person's availability, receptiveness to past actions, and apprehension for their necessities.

In order to have communication, Overseas Filipino Worker family's uses computer-mediated communication to maintain or to strengthen the bond of their relationships. It is evident how Filipino family values family communication and relationship. With this assumption, extended family relation is evident in many households. One of the primary antagonistic effects of being an OFW is they sought him as a material provider or financial provider of the family; preventing this, they must set goal standards to have better family ties. Some of the participants thoroughly shared their experiences on the differing outcome of their family relationship. After the long-year working abroad for their family member these are established strong family ties through communicating, communication tools played a crucial role in the family relationship. Expressing affection to prevent the absence of communication, the role of the use of internet is reasonably emphasized because of its real-time interaction.

Kauffman (2000) cited in his study that some of his respondents revealed long-distance relationships as a challenge to overcome and as they conquered the problem, they become closer to each other. The researchers asked the Overseas Filipino Worker participant on how they maintain their closeness despite geographic distance through the use of communication tools. The respondent answered that constant sharing and continuous messaging of both the left-behind and the OFW no matter how meaningful or random the message it is, an act of remembering each other even distance puts them apart.

According to International Communication Association (2013), long-distance relationships can form stronger bonds than face-to-face ones. Jiang and Hancock (2013) found out in their study that closeness among long-distance couples is likely to be significantly higher than with non-long-distance couples. Moreover, this greater intimacy is determined by 2 tendencies: long-distance couples revealed their personalities more, and they idealized their partners' actions. These 2 tendencies become more confirmed when they communicated in text-based, has no timing requirement (asynchronous) and mobile means because they set more efforts to control the media limitations. Some surveys even designate that long-distance couples have equal or better relationship qualities than geographically near couples.

Adjusting Time and Space: Adjustments to the changes in the family communication

Upon reaching the destination country of the Overseas Filipino Workers, one thing that pops up in their mind is how to get along into the different environment and do the customary activities. Especially enabling communication with others or just taking adjustments. In social science, it is the linking personal experiences that with, and consequence from tries at adaptation and that also inspire further adaptation (Matsumoto, Leroux, & Yoo, 2005).

Notwithstanding from the cultural adjustment that OFWs undertake, they also go to communicative changes, as well as the family, left behind in order to handle the separation and distance. It required them synchronize the space and time inadequate intended for the perseverance of communication. Through the extensiveness of current progressive tools, the general public can “Repetitively work out the utmost appropriate time and place to meet” (Ling & Campbell, 2009, p. 2).

Matrix 4. Adjusting Time and Space

Themes	Statements
Time difference	<p>“<i>Yung ini-schedule ko na yan...</i>” [“I make it a schedule...”]</p> <p>“<i>Sacrifice. Kahit antok na antok na ako gigising ako, o ganon din sya.</i>” [“Sacrifice. Needs to wake up early even if still very sleepy; he does the same.”]</p> <p>“<i>Tinatimingan ko lang kung libre sila sa oras ... na wala akong maistorbo</i>” [“I’ll suit the time to their free time...Moreover, when no one is disturbed.”]</p>
Special occasions	<p>“<i>...habang sine-celebrate naka-skype para kitang-kita. Parang magkasama din kayo.</i>” [“While celebrating; we are on Skype to clearly see (each other). As if being together.”]</p> <p>“<i>Sa sulat, malayo pa lang birthday, sasabihin na nila.</i>”, [“In snail mail, a month away the birthday, they would say it in advance.”]</p> <p>“<i>...bumabati ako sa mga anak ko sa Facebook ng mga edited na picture</i>” [“I greet my children through edited pictures of them and post it on</p>

Facebook.”]

“Mag-usap-usap na lang kami sa telepono or magsend na lang kami ng mga message, ganon lang yung celebration.”

[“We’d talk over the telephone or send a message, that’s just how we celebrate.”]

Unexpected incidents

“Di namin talaga sinasabi lahat, parang dahan-dahan.”

[“We do not usually spill it all; we give pieces of detail.”]

“...hindi na namin pinapaalam kapag may sakit, kami na bahala don. Para hindi na siya mag-alala.”

[“We do not tell her when we are sick, we handle it. So that she will not worry.”]

“...tinatawagan ko yung mga kamag-anak ko minsan, para sa tulong,”

[“I call relatives to ask for some help.”]

“Kakausapin ko, kakamustahin ... aalamin ko kung ano na sitwasyon nya, kung sino kasama, basta lahat inalam ko.”

[“I’ll talk to him, ask how he’s doing...I’ll know what he’s at, to whom he is with; all the details I ask for answers.”]

“Nadengue yung bunso ko; siyempre tawag ako ng tawag importante yun,”

[“My youngest got infected by dengue; I called many times—it is important.”]

The study showed that OFW family participants adjusted communicatively to the following challenges associated with their communication: time difference, special occasions, and unexpected incidents.

The in-depth interviews with the participants revealed significant results corresponding to the responses of the OFW families that confided their stories to the researchers. The discussion covered the themes, and the participants’ answers validate the time-difference comprising of planning schedule, timing, and sacrifices. Addressing special occasions consisted of real-time video chatting, advanced greetings, sending pictures, and mobile phone/telephone calls. International phone calls are used to comprehend the news when unpredicted occurrences transpire.

Time difference. Availability is one factor considered by the participant in relating to adjustments in the varying time zones. Katz (2004) discussed the possibility of being able to call at any time from a mobile phone is in conflict with potential availability of the call’s receiver. It means that the caller has to identify the person he wants to communicate if

available. According to Katz, (as cited in Aakhus, 2004), study communicative changes are undertaken by respondents, with either collectively or individually created solutions. Collective patterns include planning, making opportunities for cooperative planning and courteous, tolerant communication. Moreover, establish a schedule, better face-to-face, respect/ courtesy/ consideration, know each other's schedule, find a mutual time, better asynchronous communication). In the study, the time difference was treated with mostly collective measures. *Planning a schedule* to meet in the social space is one of the ways stated by a participant. Licoppe (2003) compared landline with mobile phones; he notes that an important distinction includes de-contextualization in space (there is no fixed setting associated with the use of the mobile phone). Likewise, the time (expected in most cases that users handle their mobile phones with them all the while, calls can be made, at least in principle, anytime). He noted that users prefer communication tool that suits their availability to contact their loved ones quickly. Finding a mutual time resembles in *proper timing* (Caporael & Xie, 2003). The mobile phone breaks the boundaries of time and space, exploring how people redesign time and space with two emerging technologies. Its "anytime/ anywhere" characteristic enables the blurring of public and private space/ time, and with it, the blurring of one's identities. OFWs and their family's coordination with their time in communicating are desirable for each convenience. According Country Migration Report the Philippines, (2013 p.121) the *sacrifices* thru in the name of financial security were no lengthier as overpowering as they were beforehand the existence of Internet and [the] cellular phone. As new technologies for communication were available time management could be easier for OFWs and their families.

Special Occasions. Filipinos are fond of unifying families when celebrations came. Different occasions were celebrated by Filipinos in a particular and many distinct ways. These reminds how to be a family and brings each member closer to each other. In the study, one participant used snail mail, because of the long period interval it takes, expressing greetings in advanced for a month or a few before the actual birth date. Katz (2004) stated that most of the occasions that involved more than three people were planned or scheduled in advance. Usually a couple of weeks ahead, so that the participants would have enough time to adjust their plans.

Unexpected Incidents. According to Ma Fe Nicodemus (personal communication, July 14, 2014), communicating this kind of messages take time for left-behinds to express. Because what left-behind think or perceive of the message he sends, is not the same as OFWs perception when they receive it, so left-behinds must be delicate and put extra care in divulging details. She also said a simple negative message could trigger distraction among OFW in his/her work abroad. In the study, left-behind participants significantly considered the OFWs perspective. Often, they minimize details of incident messages. More or less, other respondents chose not to share a piece of adverse information relating to health and wellness. Nicodemus (personal communication, July 14, 2014) described OFWs as sensitive people to this kind of messages most especially; this significantly affects them. Similarly,

also left-behind experience anxiety upon hearing bad news from a distant OFW family member. They are likely to be more inquisitive when it comes to investigating the incident that OFW family member encountered. Getting informed is important for other participants. It could either be real-time or asynchronous way. Awareness of an event reduces feeling of uneasiness. According to Barnes (2008), mediated tools helped raise awareness among interpersonal communication and relationships. Additionally, Polkosky (as cited in Neumann, & Strack, 2000), stated that: "Vocal cues may even causally induce a speaker's emotional state in a communicative partner. Also without awareness by the partner."

Conclusion

The researchers attained the following interpretations upon accumulating the result consequential from the findings: Overseas Filipino Workers and their families, who consume 15 years and above dealing with the detachment caused by migration work, necessitate both sides to invest in acquiring communication tools. Like letters, telephones, cellular phones, Internet and others such as cassette tapes and Betamax. Furthermore, numerous mediated tools have attributes that accommodated the inevitability of the OFWs and their families. The advanced the beneficial characteristics of the said device; it is expected to be used and anticipated by the participants. In each mediated form used, problems are unavoidable experienced and were enumerated by the participants. Enumerated issues and disadvantages were dealt accordingly to the possible solution. Communication through the mediated tools among OFW families, if properly utilized and maximized, a likely positive family relationship may result. However, some of the cases directly revealed that tools are not the primary factor for weak relationships, instead the influences and actions of the user. Nevertheless, difficulties in the communication motivate the OFWs, and their family comes up with different resolutions to withstand their communication. In the case of letters, they attuned by writing in advance, and selected acquired the fortitude in waiting for a message to reach them. In telephones, they are accustomed to monitoring its usage due to its high-cost call charges. In cellular phones, the concern was the available time, and this one was responded by taking into consideration of the time difference at which to converse. On the Internet, adjustments were reduced as it covers the way for the management of space and time.

Recommendation

Future study ought to anticipate exploring some of the insufficient areas of this research with apprehensions about the context and scope of CMC and OFW's. In the light of the results, findings, and conclusions drawn, the researchers presented the succeeding recommendations: A study of the experiences and difficulties encountered by OFW parents in encouraging their unintentionally forsaken child. More researches concentrating on the complications of Long distance setup of OFW couples' relationship. Additionally, another

study that could upkeep the idea of when communication shifts to a more forward-looking technological tool, the messages also reconditioned. Lastly, researchers recommend setting effort to a study that can establish an approach in which to adapt the global medium tools to be available in the local market for the purpose of OFW families' communication, at a reasonable and cheap value.

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For inquiry, comments or reactions to the thesis conducted you may contact the researchers to their official e-mail address at rpbernarte@pup.edu.ph.

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