

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNET USAGE BEHAVIOR AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES IN VIETNAMESE FAMILY**DOI: 10.26758/12.1.14**

Dung Thi Kim LE

University of Social Sciences, Hue University

University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work.

Lan Thi Thai NGUYEN, VNU University of Social Sciences and Humanities

Address correspondence to: Lan Thi Thai Nguyen, Department of Social Work, Faculty of Sociology, VNU University of Social Sciences and Humanities; E-mail: lanctxh@ussh.edu.vn**Abstract**

Objectives. As a country with a high percentage of Internet users, the Internet plays a vital role in personal and family life in Vietnam. However, the abuse of the Internet has becoming a concerning issue with visual consequences. Therefore, this study reviews and examines relevant International and domestic publications to provide scientific evidences and foundation for the research on the influence of Internet use behaviour upon communication Vietnamese families and provides recommendations for improving parent and children communication via proper Internet usage.

Material and methods. This study is based on the synthesis and analysis of documents related to communication and the behaviour of using the Internet in Vietnamese families. Seventy-six valuable studies related to the research topic were selected to provide important qualitative and quantitative data for making an appropriate and relevant assessment, ensuring the science and reliability of the research.

Results. Internet use has relationships with communication in the family—Internet influences communication in the family positively and negatively. The positive change in communication manifests in diversifying forms of communication, the flexibility and convenience of communication is also increased. Negative changes focus on the limitation of direct interaction and chat that grows the generation gap and changes communication structure. In addition, the Internet is also linked to mental health problems.

Conclusions. Internet utilization closely relates to the quality and effectiveness of communication between Vietnamese family members. Internet is ordinary and necessary in the current globalization context, but using the Internet effectively, is required to understand and master it. Family members need to properly understand the needs, purpose, and ways of using the Internet and its impacts on their family communication.

Keywords: internet, internet usage behaviour, communication, vietnamese family, communication in the family.

Introduction

With the fast development of technology, the Internet has become popular and significantly outbroke in the past five decades and played an indispensable role in almost all areas of modern social life. Living in a world of the Internet, vitally, it is a crucial source of information and means of communication, and the absence of the Internet makes someone considered outdated (Nguyen,

2015). The Internet as a communication technology will likely enhance people's connections with friends, family, and the functioning of groups (Kraut et al., 1999). Seen as an essential tool in communication Internet has a multidimensional impact on social life in general and communication activities in every family in particular. However, in many cases, communication problems in the family are also considered to be the reasons that motivate individuals to use the Internet more. Hence, research on Internet use behaviour and communication activities in the family is a topic that attracts the attention of many scholars internationally and locally.

Many authors, such as Baumrind (1967, 1971), Moore & Moschis (1981), Moschis(1985), Barnes & Olson (1985), Moschis, Prahasto & Mitchell (1986), Fitzpatrick & Ritchie (1994), Koesten & Anderson (2004), Punyanunt-Carter (2008), Schrod, Ledbetter et al., (2009), DeVito (2019) focused on models and theoretical frameworks that characterize the interactions that occur within families, the role of family communication and the impact of the family communication environment with personal communication competence. These studies also focus on analyzing the issues on subjects, roles, and measuring communication tools in the family.

In recent decades, with the development of technologies, studies on the impact of the Internet on the family, and different family-related aspects, including interpersonal communication were conducted. These can be counted in the works of Kraut, Mukhopadhyay et al. (1999), Hughes & Hans (2001), Livingstone and Bober (2004), Mesch (2006), Lee&Chae (2007), Lei & Wu (2007), Ling & Haddon (2008), Moawad & Ehrahem (2016). Studies show that since the 1990s, the Internet has quickly become a popular home technology. The Internet can be used for very different purposes, and its development and social impact are unpredictable. The Internet can become an "information superhighway" to libraries and schools, its virtual shopping mall, or the centre of home entertainment" in the future (Kraut et al., 1999: 287). Studies have also proven the indispensable role of the Internet in communication and connectivity objectives today. Internet supports communication across space and time in the age of globalization, but it is also undeniable that the adverse effects of the Internet on family communication.

In Vietnam, the Internet usage rate soon becomes popular shortly after its introduction in 1997 and is ranked high in the region and the world. The number of Internet users is increasing significantly over time. The Internet plays an essential role in most aspects of personal life; the influence of Internet usage on users is also multidimensional. In recent years, due to the remarkable increase of Internet access in Vietnam, many studies have mentioned aspects of the Internet's impacts on family culture and sustainable family development and interpersonal communication in families. The research on the effects of the Internet, science, and technology on Vietnamese families today includes the works from many authors, namely Dang & Nguyen (2013), Nguyen (2017), Pham (2017), Le et al. (2017), Nguyen & Chu (2017), Dang (2018), Hoang & Doan (2019). Despite positive involvement of the Internet in personal life, these studies have pointed out different consequences of Internet abuse, such as the low quality of communication from families using technology equipment entirely; not spending adequate time for children leading to a loose and distant parents-children relationship; negative impact on health and mental health, education, and social interaction of adolescents. Thus, it is essential to have a comprehensive literature review on Internet use and how it impacts family life and children's wellbeing. This paper presents the main results from these research works.

Material and methods

Seventy-six selected papers related to the keywords "Internet", "Internet usage behaviour", "communication", "Vietnamese family", "Communication in the family" have been reviewed as

secondary data sources for the analysis of related content. Materials searched include both online database and documents stored in traditional libraries.

The synthesized documents are divided into groups of related content and used NVIVO software for processing to facilitate analysis and illustrative citation. All of the data collected was converted into a Microsoft Word file and analyzed by themes through NVIVO software. NVIVO software supports synthesizing related words, phrases and sentences to perform the inductive process to find meaningful units (Padgett, 1998). The general limitation of the studies is that they were performed on the single approach of a particular discipline such as Psychology, Sociology, Education, and Economics; meanwhile, Internet use and its consequences relate to both economic aspects, physical health, mental health, behavioural and psychological aspects of users. Although there are a few limited aspects, the collected data sources play an essential role in referencing, illustrating, and verifying the points made in the research content. The documents on the same topic were compared for the researcher to have a basis for making appropriate and objective judgments and assessments on the relationship between the behaviour of using the Internet and communication activities between individuals in Vietnamese families in recent years.

A chronological approach to be applied throughout the article to show the results of the review.

Results

The role of family communication on family cohesion and sustainability

Interpersonal communication is defined by the way in which how individuals make and maintain interactions with other individuals in social life. Interpersonal communication is a unique form of human communication determined not only by the number of people involved but also by the quality of communication (Beebe et al., 2002). Interpersonal communication happens not when you simply interact with someone else but when you treat others as unique people. Interpersonal communication refers to exchanging verbal and non-verbal messages between people regardless of the relationship they share. Interpersonal communication involves exchanging information in all types of relationships, from casual to intimate. Therefore, communication is focused on interpersonal information exchange (Guerrero et al., 2017) and includes two-way communication in which two individuals play the roles of the information sender and the receiver and are connected to each other through everyday activities that make sense (Trenholm & Jensen, 2008). DeVito (2019) argues that interpersonal communication is the verbal and nonverbal interaction between two (or sometimes more than two) interdependent people. Accordingly, the essential elements of interpersonal communication include recipient, encoding - decoding, messages, communication channel, background noise, context and morality.

Family is the first environment in which people perform communication; through communication between members, the family conducts the socialization function, helping each shape personality and integrate into society (Le, 2021). A family communication environment is a set of rules that govern the trade-off between informational and relational communication goals (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990). Family communication can be described as a collaboration between family members to balance and control informational purposes and relational goals. Communication in the family is a nature shared both cognitively and emotionally among members. This is a fundamental activity in building family relationships, creating conditions for the family to perform its functions, and at the same time enriching and healthy psycho-social life of the individual (Le et al., 2017).

Moreover, communication plays a critical role in establishing and maintaining family relationships. The cohesion between parents and their adolescent children presents a longitudinal slice through a series of family functional activities. This cohesion develops and strengthens in the process of interaction and communication. Also, the family's ability to adapt - such as conflict resolution, conflict management, and listening - to children's change during this period reflects their cohesion (Joh et al., 2013). Family cohesion helps children learn, get on well and live well in society, strengthens trust, feels safe and happy (Le, 2013), at the same time helps reduce the risk of adolescents having deviant behaviours at school (Luu, 2008) and oriented towards higher self-worth. Children can better manage emotions of sadness or conflict when living in a well-cohesion family (Dinh, 2013). It is evidently observed that family communication determines family cohesion. As a result, if this cohesion is well reached, that will be an essential factor promoting positive dimensions for children's development.

Not only determines the cohesion between parents and children, but communication in the family also plays a vital role in developing a sustainable family. Recently with an increasing focus on issues such as divorce, child abuse, domestic violence and mental health issues, scholars and therapists have begun to realize that these problems are actually rooted in communication problems. Via better understanding the forms, functions and processes of family communication, it helps to understand how and why these problems exist, and perhaps begin to put more effort to prevent these problems from happening in the future (Greenwalt & Nieponski, 2006)

Besides, communication in the family is also vital in the development of the young children communication capacity (Barnes & Olson, 1985). Children can learn to communicate through the context of the family communication environment. There is a significant relationship between parents' perceptions of the family communication environment and their children's perceptions. The family communication environment strongly influences the interpersonal motivation of both parents and children. The differences in communication environments are related to marked differences in parents' motivations when talking to their children (Barbatoet al., 2003). Interpersonal communication competence is expressed in a conceptual framework that identifies appropriate communication behaviours and sets communication goals (Fitzpatrick and Ritchie, 1994) and is characterized by two components: relevance and conversation (Ritchie and Fitzpatrick, 1990). The importance of family conversation orientations is further emphasized in fostering healthy and competent behaviours in young children (Schrodt et al., 2009). Appropriate family-oriented communication emphasizes maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships. Children are encouraged to avoid controversy and persecution. Families' conversation-driven are characterized by an open expression of ideas and an environment that values and promotes self-expression. Children are stimulated to share their thoughts, even when they disagree with others (Barbatoet al., 2003). Conversations that do not fit the direction are related to communication satisfaction (Punyanunt - Carter, 2008); therefore, the ability to communicate can predict the psychological adjustment of adolescents. Parents' point of view will influence children's communication, affecting how they communicate with others. Some family communication models can significantly foster or hinder a young person from developing interpersonal communication skills (Koesten and Anderson, 2004).

The emergence of the Internet in Vietnam

In Vietnam, the number of Internet users is significantly increasing over time, and the effects of the Internet are also multidimensional. Vietnam officially joined the global Internet in November 1997, and up to 2021, Vietnam has become one of the countries with the highest growth in the number of Internet users worldwide. Compared with the Internet usage of Vietnamese

people, by mid-2015, the rate was 48%, higher than the world average of 45% and the rate of the region 38.8%. Vietnam became the 6th country in Asia and ranked 4/10 in Southeast Asia in the number of Internet users, and ranked 17/20 countries with the highest Internet users in the world (Tran et al., 2017). By 2020, Vietnam will be one of the top 20 countries with the highest number of Internet users globally. The percentage of households with Internet access in Vietnam reached 71.3%, while the world average was only 57.4%. On average, each Vietnamese person spends about 6 hours 42 minutes on the Internet every day, spends 2 hours and 33 minutes on social networks; 94% of Vietnamese Internet users access the Internet every day (Lan, 2020).

Among Internet users in Vietnam, children and adolescents account for a high proportion. A national survey on adolescents conducted by the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund in 2005 showed that 50% of adolescents in urban areas and 13% of adolescents in rural had used the Internet. The majority of adolescents in this study (69%) said they use the Internet to chat, 62% said they use it to play online games. The Internet has become a new space in Vietnam, where adolescents can communicate quite freely (Ngo et al., 2008). Meanwhile, a study by the Center for Research on Culture, Education and Social Life (2014) on families of 1800 children from 3 to 12 years old shows that up to 19% of children under three years old and 59% of children from 3 to 5 years old use digital devices for an average of 30-60 minutes a day. It is worth mentioning that many parents see this as a babysitting method (Le et al., 2017)

The influence of Internet use behaviour on family communication activities

Family is seen as one of the primary institutions of society; science and technology have a pretty comprehensive impact on the life dimensions of forming and developing a family (Hoang & Doan, 2019). The term "digital generation" has been used to name the group of young people who heavily depend on the Internet and is defined as the generation of "nothing rather than Internet culture, laptops and mobile phones" (Greenfield, 2014). This is a common issue in many other countries shown in the studies of Giedd (2012), Duggan & Smith (2013), Livingstone et al. (2013), not only in Vietnam. The existence of computers and the Internet within families create a big contrast between the past and the present: in the past, it was the image of the family gathering around the television, watching and talking; now, each member is in their world with networked computers, mobile phones and video games. Psychologists have different views on the impact of Internet use on family communication. While many studies have shown that inappropriate use of technology devices is associated with many negative indicators of home atmosphere and individual mental health, a few other studies suggest that using technology can help separate families (Le et al., 2017). The following sections pictures in details the positive and negative aspects of Internet utilization on family communication.

The positive aspects

Research works show families have attained benefits from Internet in several ways. First, families have attained positive effects from the Internet such as educational information, technical knowledge, the world situation, connecting with friends. The survey "Assessment of the impact of the use of technology on family relationships" in 2015 conducted by the Institute for Family and Gender Studies with a sample of 200 showed that the positive effects of technology included maintaining communication between parents-children, controlling children's time and diversifying forms of parent-child entertainment. The result of the study also revealed that technology helped maintain existing relationships and strengthen surrounding relationships (Nguyen, 2017). Le et al. (2017) also conducted another survey of the influence of the Internet on family communication

based on a study of 199 parents in families with children aged 1 to 10 years. Second, research results indicated that the Internet played a positive role in family communication. In a research conducted with the participation of total 199 study subjects, close to 70% responded they used technology devices to connect with family and friends, proving that the most prioritized purpose of using technology is to communicate with relatives. A promising sign was 71.4% of them evaluated the communication activity in their family as average or above, 28.6% said that the quality of communication in their family was below average, 25% rated the quality of family communication very high (Le et al., 2017). The results of the study reflect that communication in the family is not influenced by how much or how little members use technology or whether they use them for entertainment or not. Communication in families using technology that considers the purpose of communication is of better quality than those in families that do not use technology for this purpose. This finding seems contrary to many studies that have suggested that the use of technology would reduce the quality of family communication. This can be explained that the crux of the problem is not whether the individual uses the technology device, what it is used for; more or less, it depends on whether the individual shares this activity with their family (Le et al., 2017).

Other studies confirm that the Internet can become a communication technology between family members. Ballagas et al. (2009) emphasize that technology helps connect the family better. The Internet serves to connect members and strengthen close relationships through texting, seeing pictures, and activities of relatives. With the support of the Internet, individuals can supplement their face-to-face interactions with family and friends with computer interactions (Pénard et al., 2013). Social networking sites that support making friends are good, where parents and children can become friends, have many opportunities to interact and share. On the positive side, this type is helpful for everyone in life, especially in communication between family members (Ha, 2014). In traditional families, the use of information and communication technologies, such as the Internet, can be associated with high family cohesion because the Internet facilitates the preservation of family boundaries by providing a communication tool between parents and children (Hughes and Hans, 2001). In this case, instead of blurring the boundaries of the family, the Internet contributes to their preservation, facilitating information sharing between parents and children through texting, image and information exchange. Young people use technology to connect or communicate, and this is positively helping them organize and maintain relationships with friends, family, and other social relationships. Therefore, face-to-face family communication is replaced not by the total time spent on the Internet but by online activities that are functionally equivalent (Lee & Chae, 2007). In addition, if children in the family are oriented to use the Internet appropriately, a family environment with good educational skills will increase the child's ability to learn, increase creativity and understanding (Ha, 2014).

The above studies have proved that if the Internet is used for the proper purposes to exploit communication support, it will be an effective tool to promote communication in the family and help connect the family better (Ballagas et al., 2009). The outstanding utilities from the Internet have made an essential contribution to convenient communication with time flexibility and breaking space limitations. Blaschke et al. (2009) gave a summary of the tools and benefits of Internet access technology related to communication includes (1) Email, potentially improved communication with family and friends, supporting stronger intergenerational bonds (Adler, 2006; White & Weatherall, 2000); (2) Chat rooms and discussion groups can enhance communication channels (Novak, 2006); (3) Voice, webcam, and video telephony technologies add audio and video dimensions that enhance communication and social support with families (Marziali & Donahue, 2006). Internet becomes the communication bridge that helps maintain the relationship

between parents and children when away from home because families with a high frequency of face-to-face communication may want to keep this need even when their relatives are far away (Le et al., 2017). Therefore, the Internet creates conditions for family members, especially parents and children, to remove distances and connect (Dang, 2018). This is good because communication plays an important role and is a platform for forming activities in the relationship between family members besides cohesion and flexibility (Clark & Shields, 1997; Olson et al., 1989). Promoting communication activity and achieving communication goals is a key factor in maintaining and strengthening relationships in the family. Through influential communication family, cohesion and flexibility are appropriately adjusted (Smith et al., 2009), so individuals have the opportunity to become happier, healthier and have higher levels of life satisfaction (Jackson et al., 1998). Hence, one of the positive points when using the Internet for the proper purposes of family members is the strengthening and tightening of the parent-child relationship.

Adverse effects on family communication

Besides the benefits of the Internet, it is essential to pay attention to the harmful effects on individual users, family life, and society. International study results have demonstrated that Internet abuse is common in many countries and negatively impacts users. At the same time, family members also have to suffer threats and risks of a communication channel.

The data analysis and connection show that the Internet's threats to users include mental health problems, personal relationships, and communication difficulties. As early as the 1990s, researchers have pointed out the adverse effects of the Internet, such as many consequences on users' lives over time for being complained about late for work and deadlines (Egger and Rauterbeg, 1996). In the United States, a study with 563 teenagers who recorded using the Internet 19 hours a week has had real-life difficulties due to mental health problems (Brenner, 1997). Greenfield' work in 1999 pointed out that many services on the Internet created separation, time deviation, and affect life (Widyanto & McMurrin, 2004).

Kraut et al. (1998) found that the Internet is associated with a decrease in the frequency of communication with other members, narrowing of social relationships, and increased levels of depression and feelings of loneliness. This statement is consistent with the research results of Subrahmanyam et al. (2000) argued that the use of digital technology reduces communication time in the family, increasing social isolation.

In Vietnam, Internet users are very diverse; anyone, particularly children and adolescents can use smartphones to access the Internet and be influenced by it. The Internet has become a significant concern due to its harmful effects, especially for juveniles (Pham, 2017). Adolescents are more affected because their ability to control user behaviour and select content accessed from the Internet is limited. Children will be assessed as "excessive Internet abuse" when there are continuous and uncontrollable behaviours. This will cause harmful mental effects on the child as an adult (Nguyen, 2017). Young children, especially those who access the Internet via smartphones too early (under two years old), are prone to autism, vision loss, and concentration problems (Khuong, 2016). Problems of autism and concentration are directly related to a child's ability to communicate. For secondary school students, studies have predicted that the higher the level of Internet use, the higher the level of mental health problems and vice versa (Dang, & Nguyen, 2013). Children are in solid personality formation and development at middle school age, so the need for communication is high. Children's use of the Internet to a degree of "social neglect" is likely to lead to mental health problems. There is a positive correlation between the level of Internet use and general mental health problems among students (Dang, & Nguyen, 2013).

Therefore, Internet users should be under educators' close guidance and supervision; if not, excessive Internet use can impact adolescents' health, education, and social interactions (Pham, 2017).

In addition to mental and behavioural disorders, Internet abuse and online game addiction can also be related and lead to problems with ego, personal identity, and the social interaction of adolescents (Tran & Bui, 2013). Many studies have confirmed that spending too much time on the Internet means gradually withdrawing from genuine social relationships to go into the virtual world, with many virtual connections on the network (Hart et al., 2009), reduce the frequency of communication with other members, narrow social relationships as well as increase the level of depression and feelings of loneliness (Kraut et al., 1998) and impede the development of skills correlation with others in preschool children (Subrahmanyam et al., 2000). Even for adults, excessive Internet use leads to neglect of work, a distraction from daily activities, and gradual separation from social relationships. Lack of control over Internet use increases the risk of mental health problems in general. Ha (2014) believes that many people, including adults and children, are increasingly cold, distant, dependent on the Internet from the harmful effects on users.

Along with the problems of users' mental health, the generation gap in families is being challenged by the influence of the Internet on parent-child links. Ling and Haddon (2008) demonstrated that using Internet-connected devices negatively as phone dependence negatively affects relationships. Technology makes individuals more inclined to spend less time communicating in the family, increasing social isolation (Subrahmanyam et al., 2000). As technology advances, the easier it is to access the Internet, personal isolation is greater. Family members will gradually tend to use technology devices alone instead of together. Studies showed that playing video or computer games was individual behaviour and was less intergenerational; it meant less involvement of multiple generations in the same family (Le et al., 2017). Children will play video games alone or with friends, rather than with parents or even siblings (Pasquier et al., 1998). While teenagers spend a lot of time using the Internet, parents lack exposure and knowledge, so it can be hard to connect with their children. In addition, social media activities of both parents and children are also limited to individuals in their world, which means traditional family entertainment spaces (watching TV, reading stories, etc.) are narrowed down, even eliminated. Teenagers and adults tend to focus on their world and forget about the presence of the person next to them, reducing communication time and communication quality, ignoring people's sayings, and thus affecting relationships (Kim, 2016). There is a negative inverse correlation between the number of times children see a phone every day and the level of communication between parents and children (Nguyen & Tran, 2017). The survey "Characteristics of using technology devices in Hanoi families and influencing factors" in 2017 demonstrated the influence of Internet use on the relationship between generations in the family. From the original 12 factors, the survey results showed two factors related to Internet use behaviour: 1) generational conflict and 2) reduced interaction time between parents and children. Thus, Internet abuse causes generational differences, many conflicts; children share little with their parents. At the same time, it is hard to control family relationships and reduce parents' time - children interact directly with each other. Children's use of the Internet to access technology devices beyond their parents' permission will lead to anxiety and penalties that parents can apply to solve the situation.

On the other hand, when parents abuse the Internet and do not spend time with their children, the parent-child relationship is loose and separated (Nguyen, 2017). Parents who are passionate about the Internet will distract their children's education in the family. In contrast, children need to feel that their parents are always around and cared for by their parents. Children

need to communicate directly and play with their parents to be praised and do things they can learn. Science has proven that children who are not allowed to talk to their parents when they start learning to speak will have delays in their speech and difficulty expressing their thoughts and may even be autistic or depressed (Ha, 2014). In addition to separating generations in the family, Internet has also been negatively affecting husband and wife relationships. There were 25.9% of divorces due to adultery and 27.7% of divorces due to lifestyle conflicts.

Similarly, only 10.4% of couples were dissatisfied with their marriage due to adulterous husbands or wives, 8.5% due to physiological dissonance, and 45.3% due to discord behaviours (Nguyen, 2014). In reality, the conveniences of modern technology are also gradually making the distance of relationships more distant (Dang, 2018). The benefits of social networks and communication features make people passionately believe that it helps to shorten the distance, to bring people closer together regardless of space and time; however, technology is more modern, the human relationship becomes more and more distant, lonely, and empty if people misuse it and without control. Communication in the family is mainly done via text message, email, or video call, causing the sharing of feelings to be interrupted. The use of technological devices to access the Internet in the family is an agent capable of profoundly influencing communication between members (Le et al., 2017).

In addition to the impact on mental health and the generation gap, accessing the Internet from mobile devices is changing how people communicate. The participation of the Internet in personal life makes each person form new habits that reduce face-to-face communication between family members or create new methods of communication (Nguyen, 2016). The Internet can change the formula, content, and meaning of communication between family members. *Today, our communication structure is being disrupted by technological devices (Nguyen, 2020).* Huynh (2014), in his study on the influence of the Internet on the communication of Vietnamese users, has confirmed the type of concurrent multitasking, that was, people working on the Internet tend to do many things at the same time. The most common pattern was working - entertaining - and communicating. At the same time, it has caused quite complex consequences for social communication behaviour, such as body language, facial expressions, intonation, and other nonverbal signals is significantly lost. This disrupted the overall human connection through communication and often frustrated involved people. Additionally, people used to this type of communication were often afraid of having eye contact with others in communication; they felt discomfort with their eyes; they were quickly perceived as disinterested or disrespectful by others (Huynh, 2014).

On the other hand, traditional communication has had many changes affecting the quality of communication and belief in oneself and others in communication relationships. Individuals can use virtual nicknames to communicate with anyone, including strangers, but find it difficult to talk to family members. Direct emotional expressions to enhance interaction efficiency are also gradually replaced by default icons. New means of communication with many features allow us to use any means of transmission messages, but the more options people have, the poorer the expression of emotions. Icons in online communication cannot transmit the expression of touch, eye contact, smiles and subtle expressions of facial expressions, and the actual emotional state of face-to-face communication. Connections and communication seem easier to establish, but individuals feel more alone and insecure. We wonder why people are afraid to communicate directly with each other and do not want to let the communicator know about their identity? Is it because people lose faith in others, become more defensive, encounter many events. Hence, they are vulnerable, lack confidence, no longer believes in themselves, and others should choose the

style "no name - no face" of communication to feel safe and equal (Nguyen, 2020). This type of communication causes individuals to have more and more mental health problems because they lose two important communication links: communicate with themselves and communicate with the people around them. When disconnected from self, the individual becomes weak and lacks energy, internal strength decreases. Hence, it is easy to panic, not calm, lose insight, and lack the ability to solve problems when encountering them. Lost connection with themselves causes all problems causing relationship breakdown and disconnection with others (Nguyen, 2020).

Discussions

Literatures show that perspectives on the influence of the Internet on family communication are multidimensional and evaluated from many angles in different fields. Different approaches lead to diverse judgments about the influence of the Internet on communication. However, the consensus is that the Internet has brought both benefits and consequences on communication in the family. On the one hand, researchers have proven that the Internet is a new communication tool that helps diversify communication channels in the family. Hence, the communication moment becomes flexible, the limit of space in communication is broken, and the ways of communication expression are diverse. As a result, family members have increased opportunities to interact and share. On the other hand, the Internet brings many consequences for communication in the family, in which the decrease in interaction time and face-to-face communication between family members is the most worrying. The reduction of face-to-face communication time is not simply that people talk less face-to-face. Still, it also contains problems related to cultural practices in the family, bonding, and nurturing affection between family members. The increase in mental health problems, the increase in feelings of loneliness, and the increase in the generation gap are typical examples of the Internet's influence on family communication.

The important thing is how family members perceive the influence of the Internet on family communication. Suppose people consider Internet utilization is necessary (even mandatory due to work, study, diplomacy, connection, and entertainment). In that case, the awareness of the need for usage and its influence on them and other family members is meaningful. It is essential to check users' needs and how the Internet responds to those needs. Suler (1999) argues that understanding such needs can clearly show how and why some people become poor/misbehaved because of the Internet, leading to negative aspects of personal life, including communication. Along with understanding the needs, individuals must be accurately aware of Internet use behaviour consequences on family communication to have a reasonable adjustment method. Therefore, we can only foresee the social impact of the Internet if we understand how people use it (Kraut et al., 1999).

Nowadays, the participation of the Internet in all areas of social life is an inevitable trend. The only way that an individual can catch up is to learn how to adapt. It is clear that the Internet has influenced individual user and family communication, but whether the effect is positive or negative depends a lot on the users. It is worth mentioning that this is a double effect, both positive and negative, simultaneously. Using the Internet for the proper purposes and with appropriate control will better promote the benefits and limit the harmful effects of the Internet.

On the contrary, using the Internet for improper purposes and without control will lose many life values. Author Greenfield (2014) emphasizes that as long as the Internet is used wisely and reasonably, we can fully enjoy the great benefits of virtual life and overcome the negatives. He lists a range of disadvantages resulting from excessive Internet use, such as sensory disorders,

attention retention issues, lack of deep thought and critical thinking. In fact, it is paradoxical that the more connected users are on social media, the more lonely they feel (Turkle, 2017), and the messages from online have no value in emotional support, compared to other verbal communication means (Seltzer et al., 2012).

Do we wonder if Internet users in Vietnam are the exception to the boundaries of influence that the Internet has brought? Vietnamese Internet users share the same benefits and challenges. However, it should be noted that Internet abuse has a more substantial impact on the cohesion of traditional families. The current problem is that the individual adjusts the behaviour of using the Internet or adjusts communication to enhance the effectiveness of communication between family members. Users use the Internet for personal purposes, but sometimes communication and family relationships issues are also leading to an increase in the children's usage of the Internet (Nguyen & Chu, 2017). Children also encounter difficulties in real life, so the Internet becomes a substitute for children to avoid those difficulties, leading to increasingly "social neglect" (Dang, & Nguyen, 2013). To solve this problem, studies show that when children use technology devices, parents will tend to control the time and content of their children's use. However, the duration of not the most important issue. The length of time using the Internet is not enough to say whether children have problems related to online behaviour (Nguyen, 2017). Parents should be proactive and exemplary in using the Internet for communication purposes, increasing the time to share with their children to help them truly feel their parents' companionship for the problems children encounter. Besides, the changing social conditions should be considered to change how the family communicates. The Internet can be regarded as an effective means of communication, but it does not mean that direct forms of communication lose their essential role. The diversity and convenience of communication via the Internet cannot transmit the emotions of communication participants. Meanwhile, the transmission of emotions in family communication plays an essential role in bonding and strengthening family affection. Therefore, parents need to have good communication strategies based on face-to-face communication and communication via the Internet to achieve communication effectiveness in the family.

Conclusions

With the development and application of technologies on humans' life, the Internet has brought many changes in our society and become indispensable means family communication. Williams and Rice (1983) and Fulk and Ryu (1990) have stated that no field is more affected by the Internet than the way people communicate with others. In this modern technology age, it is hard for individuals to choose a life without the Internet. Especially in the context of the Covid-19 epidemic, Internet has become a salvage in all areas of life for many individuals and families. However, besides the positive values of the Internet, Internet abuse has caused many individuals and families to face many serious problems. Internet is not addictive, but some specific Internet applications, especially those with interactive functions, appear to contribute to the development of pathological Internet use (Chou et al., 2005). Even if Internet utilization is not yet pathological, it has a multi-dimensionally affected communication in Vietnamese families. Internet shows a close relationship with the quality and effectiveness of communication between family members. Excessive Internet utilization reduces communication time and increases the risk of mental health problems in individuals. Consequently, generation gaps and conflicts are created that affects the way family members communicate, especially among adolescents. Therefore, having an accurate understanding of the role of the Internet and appropriate control of user behaviour is a vital element in balancing the demand for use and communication in the family.

Although many parents know that too much Internet usage at home will affect communication between family members, balancing these two behaviours is not easy. Moreover, it is more challenging with children and adolescents who are not well aware of the harmful effects of excessive Internet use on communication activities in the family. We cannot eliminate the Internet from daily life, so the immediate solution is to limit its consequences by determining the extent and use of the Internet appropriately in each situation with each specific target group. This suggests the necessity of conducting an in-depth and systematic study on the influence of the Internet on communication between parents and children in Vietnamese families to have clear directions and practical solutions to strengthen the role of the Internet while improving effective communication in the family.

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