

# Intergenerational Struggles in Asian Households: The Role of Mobile Communication

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## ABSTRACT

*Mobile communication devices have become essential in daily life, significantly influencing interpersonal connections and family dynamics. This study examines the impact of mobile communication on Asian families, highlighting challenges such as intergenerational conflicts and cultural tensions. While mobile phones have enhanced communication access across Asia, they have also disrupted traditional family interactions. A key issue identified is "techno-reference," where excessive device use undermines face-to-face communication and fosters alienation. Younger generations are navigating the digital era while striving to preserve cultural traditions, whereas older generations struggle to adapt to rapid technological advancements, leading to conflicts and a weakening of traditional family values. To address these challenges, the study emphasizes the importance of digital literacy and open communication within families. Practical solutions include setting limits on device use, creating "device-free" zones, and encouraging in-person interactions to strengthen family bonds. Employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, the research offers a comprehensive analysis of these dynamics and provides actionable insights. It serves as a valuable resource for scholars and practitioners seeking to understand and address the complexities of mobile communication's impact on family relationships in Asian cultural contexts.*

**Keywords:** *Mobile Communication, Intergenerational Struggles, Asian Households, Role of Mobile Communication, Mobile users.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Human connections have undergone a profound transformation in today's digital age, where mobile devices seamlessly integrate into nearly every facet of daily life. Smartphones, in particular, have evolved beyond mere communication tools to become extensions of our identities and gateways to diverse virtual experiences. While these advancements offer unmatched connectivity and convenience, they also introduce complex challenges that reshape personal relationships. One notable issue affecting traditional family dynamics is "technoference," a term combining "technology" and "interference," which highlights the subtle but persistent intrusion of mobile devices into social interactions. Despite families embracing the convenience and allure of mobile communication, they often encounter a paradox: the very devices designed to connect and enhance relationships can inadvertently create friction and barriers within family bonds.

## LITERATURE SEARCH

In recent years, the proliferation of mobile communication devices—especially smartphones has drastically reshaped human interaction, particularly within the family unit. As mobile devices have evolved into multifunctional tools, offering everything from instant communication to virtual experiences, they have also become central to how individuals connect with one another. This shift has been both celebrated for its capacity to enhance connectivity and criticized for the challenges it poses to traditional social dynamics, especially within families. The Rise of Mobile Technology and its Role in Family Communication Mobile devices are now ubiquitous in daily life, offering unparalleled convenience and access to information (Shklovski et al., 2008). The ability to stay connected across distances has been particularly beneficial for families, allowing members to maintain communication despite geographical separation (Nie, 2001). Research has shown that mobile technology facilitates real-time communication, fostering closeness and providing emotional support, particularly in cases where family members are geographically dispersed (Campbell & Tsurusaki, 2020). However, this connectivity also comes with a significant trade-off. While technology allows families to stay in touch, it has also been noted that the constant presence of mobile devices can sometimes undermine the quality of these interactions. Studies have highlighted that the overuse of mobile devices may result in decreased face-to-face communication and greater distractions during in-person family interactions (Turkle, 2015).

In this way, technology may unintentionally lead to social isolation despite its potential for enhanced connectivity (Rosen et al., 2013) *Technoference: The Concept and Its Impact on Family Interactions* A growing body of literature has focused on Technoference, a term introduced by McDaniel and Coyne (2016) to describe the disruption caused by mobile devices in interpersonal interactions. Technoference occurs when technology, particularly smartphones, intrudes upon the quality of family relationships, often leading to neglect or disengagement during face-to-face interactions. This can manifest in various ways, from parents checking their phones while engaging with their children to partners being distracted during conversations due to the lure of digital notifications (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016; O’Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011).

Research has demonstrated that Technoference can have negative consequences for family members’ emotional well-being and relationship satisfaction. A study by Coyne et al. (2018) found that the presence of mobile phones during family time is linked to increased conflict and decreased relational satisfaction. The interruption of shared moments can foster feelings of neglect, frustration, and disconnection, particularly among children, who are especially sensitive to their parents’ distracted behaviors (Padilla-Walker & Coyne, 2011). Furthermore, Technoference can disrupt family routines and hinder effective communication. Families that experience high levels of Technoference may find it more difficult to engage in meaningful conversations, which are critical for emotional bonding and relationship development (Hiniker et al., 2015). This is particularly troubling as the home is often viewed as a space for nurturing and emotional support, and technology’s intrusion can alter the fundamental dynamics of these relationships.

*The Paradox of Technology: Bridging and Widening Gaps* While mobile technology has the potential to foster closeness by enabling communication and connectivity, it also poses challenges that may lead to interpersonal friction. The paradox of technology is evident in the way that these devices, which are designed to bring people together, can also create barriers between them (Turkle, 2015). Studies have found that the perceived quality of family interactions often declines in environments where mobile devices are regularly present, especially when they interfere with shared activities like meals or recreational time (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016).

The complexity of this relationship is underscored by findings from studies on digital media use in family contexts. For example, a longitudinal study by Roberts and David (2021) suggested that while mobile technology can serve as a bridge for distant family members, excessive use within the home can erode face-to-face communication and intimacy among immediate family members. This paradox highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of how families interact with technology and the potential for balancing its benefits and drawbacks.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

- ❖ Investigate the impact of mobile communication on Asian family dynamics.
- ❖ Examine the effects of "technoference" on traditional family interactions.
- ❖ Analyze cultural influences like traditional values and intergenerational tensions on mobile device use.
- ❖ Explore generational approaches to balancing technological adaptation with cultural preservation.
- ❖ Propose strategies for improving family relationships through digital literacy and device boundaries.

### **THE METHODOLOGY**

*A Review of Current Research.*" Its purpose was to provide a thorough analysis of existing studies exploring the complex relationship between mobile communication and family dynamics across various Asian contexts. Through synthesizing and evaluating a wide range of research, this review sought to identify key patterns, trends, and insights that deepen our understanding of how mobile communication technologies influence family relationships in diverse Asian societies. The research methodology for this study was primarily qualitative, centered on a systematic review of the literature. The main goal was to gather and analyze a broad selection of peer-reviewed articles, academic papers, reports, and other relevant sources that examine the intersection of mobile communication and family dynamics in Asian countries. This qualitative approach enabled a detailed exploration of the multiple factors shaping the complex nature of family relationships within the context of mobile technology.

### **DIGITAL COMMUNICATION DOMINANCE**

Social networking platforms, video conferencing tools, messaging applications, and other digital communication methods have augmented and in some cases completely supplanted traditional face-to-face contact. This change has changed how people engage with each other. Dr. K.R. Subramanian (2017) asserts that three major concerns about how social media affects people's communication patterns are coming to light. According to his investigation, when we initially communicate via social media, we are more likely to trust the person on the other end, which leads to more candid remarks. Second, we tend not to deepen our relationships; instead, they tend to remain in the status quo since our social connections are not as enhanced through social media as they are in person. Finally, we aren't receiving the same diversity of opinions as we have in the past since we prefer to follow and engage with people who share our opinions. As with most previous communication technologies, social media will only becoming more and more

ingrained in the everyday experience of people. Human communication will continue to grow in volume, and we will continue to learn how to use them both well and poorly (Dr. K.R. Subramanian 2017).

### **RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS**

The ability to be alone was positively correlated with family functioning, whereas loneliness and smartphone addiction were adversely correlated; Loneliness and the ability to be alone were adversely correlated; Addiction to mobile phones and loneliness were strongly correlated. Muhammad Shabit and Ahsan Bhatti (2021:192) claim that because mobile phones are heavily used during family socialization times, they are adversely harming family life. The study's quantitative analysis revealed that more than 85% of participants use their mobile phones to communicate with persons other than their family members when they are spending time with them; more than 50% make calls to others during this time; 83% send SMS messages; and 75% feel that they disregard their family because of their phones; 86% believe that this has negatively impacted their face-to-face socialization at family time; and 91% reported that they have at least once or more had heated arguments with family members as a result of using their phones during family time. According to the survey, men in traditional households are more likely than female members to use cell phones at family gatherings and disrupt customs. Parents are still somewhat worried, though, that their teenage daughters may misuse their cell phones. The majority of the time, seniors in the family were upset with the younger generation for changing in a way that was detrimental to the traditions of the family. The prevalence of social media has given rise to a new type of influencer culture. People across Asia look up to social media influencers for lifestyle choices, fashion trends, product recommendations, and more. This has led to changes in how marketing and advertising are conducted.

### **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY-CENTRIC COMMUNICATION**

In order to provide the greatest results for the patient and the family, family-centered care include medical experts, the patient, and the family cooperating as a healthcare team. To achieve the goals of family-centered care, effective communication is crucial. The advent of mobile computing devices, such as tablet computers and smartphones after the initial release of personal digital assistants (PDAs), has had a significant impact on numerous industries, including medical. Nowadays, healthcare workers utilize smartphones or tablets to perform tasks that once required a pager, phone, and PDA. Smartphones and tablets make it simple to access and use technology at the point of care by combining computer and communication capabilities into a single, portable device that can be carried in one hand or pocket. In addition to voice and text, new mobile device models offer more advanced features, such as web searching, global positioning systems (GPS), high-quality cameras, and sound recorders. With these features, as well as powerful processors and operating systems, large memories, and high-resolution screens, mobile devices have essentially become handheld computers. Despite the shift to digital communication, the importance of family and community remains prominent. Many Asians use technology to stay connected with family members living abroad, strengthening familial bonds across distances.

### **MOBILE-FIRST COMMUNICATION**

Asia is known for its mobile-first approach, given the widespread accessibility of smartphones. Mobile apps and platforms have become the primary means of communication, shopping, and accessing information. Given the enormous availability of smartphones, Asia is renowned for its mobile-first communication strategy. The principal means of communication, commerce, and information access are now mobile apps and platforms.

### **IX. SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

In the context of an Asian cultural background, the rapid integration of technology has brought forth significant social and psychological implications that merit consideration. Traditionally characterized by collectivism, strong family bonds, and a deep-rooted sense of community, the advent of technology has both enriched and challenged these cultural dynamics. On one hand, technology has allowed for greater connectivity and global interaction, enabling Asian communities to maintain ties across borders and generations. Social media platforms facilitate the sharing of cultural practices, fostering a sense of unity and pride. However, the influx of digital communication has also prompted shifts in interpersonal relationships. The shift towards virtual interactions can potentially impact the depth of face-to-face relationships and hinder nuanced communication, raising concerns about emotional connection and understanding.

Psychologically, the pressure for academic and professional excellence commonly valued in Asian cultures can be intensified by the constant exposure to curated online portrayals of success. Additionally, the rapid pace of technological change can contribute to generational gaps, potentially leading to feelings of alienation or misunderstandings between older and younger family members. Moreover, as technology reshapes cultural norms, mental health considerations become vital. Cultures that traditionally avoid discussing mental health issues may find digital platforms as outlets for seeking support, yet simultaneously face challenges in balancing public image with personal struggles. In navigating these implications, a balanced approach is key. By integrating technology in alignment with cultural values, fostering open discussions about its impact, and nurturing offline connections, Asian societies can

harness the benefits of technology while preserving their social fabric and addressing potential psychological challenges.

In "Mobile Communication and Family Relationships: A Comparative Study of Chinese and South Korean Immigrant Mothers in the U.S." Ryu, S. (2018) points out the brings out the comparative analysis of mobile phone influence in the communities of Chinese and South Korean Immigrants in the United States. According to this study, these two groups are very much influenced by the latest mobile technology. The study also agrees that there is a lot of social change brought in the families of the American-born South Korean and Chinese groups. "Mobile Communication and Family Bonding: A Study of Indian Families in Urban Areas" by Sharma, N., & Bajpai, S. (2016) highlights that though the families are divided due to modern mobile technology yet the families have not fully been lost in the modern gadgets due to family and cultural set up.

The Smartphone Addiction Scale: Creating and Endorsing a Condensed Version for Teens The purpose of Min Kwon, Dai-Jin Kim, Hyun Cho, and Soo Yang's study was to examine the validity of the shortened and updated version of the smartphone addiction scale among adolescent users. Furthermore, it proposed severing the values based on gender in order to identify smartphone addiction and provide further details on the features of teenage smartphone use. It also highlights how important cellphones are to the dynamics of family relationships. Linking Psychological Attributes to Addiction and Improper Use of the Mobile Phone Among Adolescents in Hong Kong is the title of another study conducted by Louis Leung in October 2007. An analysis of earlier research (Beard, 2002; Beard & Wolf, 2001; Chak & Leung, 2004; Griffiths, 1998, 2000; Katz & Akhus, 2002; Leung, 2004; Ling, 2004; Scherer, 1997; Young, 1996, 1998, 1999) revealed that a small percentage of Internet users were developing Internet addictions in a similar manner to those who developed drug, and alcohol addictions. The teenagers' addiction distanced them from their families' cultural ties in numerous ways.

### **BALANCING VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS**

In today's connected world, striking a balance between virtual and in-person interactions is essential, particularly for those with Asian ancestry where interpersonal ties, respect, and in-person interactions are valued highly. The following are some things to think about and methods for striking this balance: Sensitivity to Culture: Recognize the subtle cultural differences between you and the Asian background. Asia's many nations and areas may have different tastes when it comes to virtual versus in-person connections. For example, in some cultures, face-to-face encounters are quite important for developing rapport and trust.

It has been observed that the smartphone subsumes within a single device a wide range of technologies. It can simultaneously satisfy the need to make a phone call, take a photo, pay a bill, listen to music, watch a video, use the Internet, chat through social networks and, more generally, be entertained. All these functions have substantially improved and simplified life. However, the very fact that these activities can be carried out anywhere, has made this technology more intrusive than any other (Andrew, Elis, Shaw & Powell, 2015). Anecdotal evidence and experimental studies reveal that people frequently ignore those with whom they are physically interacting in favor of indulging in their smartphone and connecting with "online others," despite claims that smartphones have made it easier for people to maintain their interpersonal relationships and fulfill their obligations (Cho, 2015; Derks et al., 2015; Kossek and Lautsch, 2012).

### **LIMITATIONS**

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this methodology. The study's reliance on existing literature could potentially introduce biases inherent in the original research. Additionally, language barriers and regional publication preferences might have influenced the selection of sources, potentially leading to gaps in the review's scope. The methodology employed in the study "Unravelling the Complexities of Mobile Communication and Family Relations in Asia: A Review of Current Research" aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing knowledge regarding the intricate relationship between mobile communication and family dynamics in Asian contexts. Through a systematic review approach, the study sought to capture the complexities of this relationship while recognizing the limitations inherent in relying on previously published research.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the comprehensive exploration of the intricate interplay between mobile communication and family relations in Asia underscores the profound transformations occurring in the social fabric of the region. The reviewed research illuminates how technological advancements have reshaped traditional familial dynamics, offering both opportunities and challenges. While mobile communication has facilitated greater connectivity across distances, fostering emotional closeness and shared experiences, it has also introduced complexities such as digital divides and privacy concerns. The evolving landscape calls for continued interdisciplinary research and nuanced interventions that consider cultural nuances, socioeconomic factors, and generational differences. As Asian societies continue to navigate

these changes, a balanced approach that embraces the benefits of mobile communication while safeguarding the core values of family cohesion will be pivotal in shaping the future dynamics of family relationships in the region.

The research undertaken delves into the intricate interplay between mobile communication technologies and family dynamics in Asia, with a particular focus on the phenomenon of Technoference. The study's objective was to thoroughly investigate the challenges posed by mobile communication in Asian families, explore cultural influences on these challenges, and provide practical recommendations to mitigate negative impacts on family relationships. Through a systematic review of existing literature, the study employed qualitative methodologies to analyze a wide range of peer-reviewed articles, academic papers, and reports. The literature search was comprehensive, covering publications from the late 1990s to the present day, across various academic databases and repositories. Inclusion criteria ensured the selection of studies focusing on the impact of mobile communication on family relationships in Asian countries, while exclusion criteria filtered out non-peer-reviewed sources and studies conducted outside the Asian context.

Thematic analysis emerged as the primary analytical technique, revealing overarching themes within the data. These themes highlighted commonalities, differences, and nuances in how mobile communication influences family interactions across different Asian societies. Specifically, the study examined the evolving parent-child relationships in the digital age, emphasizing the challenges and opportunities presented by technology integration within the framework of traditional cultural values. It also explored the concept of Technoference, illustrating how excessive phone use can disrupt family dynamics and erode interpersonal connections. The findings of the research underscore the complex nature of mobile communication's impact on Asian families. While technology offers unprecedented connectivity and convenience, it also poses significant challenges to family cohesion and communication. The phenomenon of Technoference, in particular, has emerged as a major disruptor of traditional family interactions, affecting in-person encounters, emotional ties, and overall family well-being.

Moreover, the study highlights the need for proactive measures to address these challenges and promote healthy mobile device usage within Asian families. Recommendations include fostering open dialogues about digital etiquette, setting boundaries for screen time, and cultivating a balance between digital engagement and face-to-face interactions. Additionally, the research emphasizes the importance of digital literacy and parental modeling in guiding younger generations towards responsible technology use.

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