

# Family Communication Through Social Media Among Students Of Batangas State University, Philippines

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**Abstract:** The study was about family communication through social media among students of Batangas State University. Descriptive and quantitative methods were used and survey questionnaire served as the researchers' data gathering instrument. 100 students from Batangas State University Pablo Borbon Main I and II were chosen randomly through purposive-quota sampling. The statistical tools utilized in treating the data were percentage, ranking, weighted mean, independent t-test, and one-way ANOVA. Results revealed that most of the respondents are male, five to six are the common number of households and facebook is the frequently used social media. Moreover, the family members discuss a variety of topics through social media. It was also found out that there are no significant differences on the topics discussed online and the respondents' profile variables. However, there were communication problems that occur during family communication through social media, categorized into physical, semantic, and psychological barriers.

**Keywords:** family, communication, social media, barriers, physical, semantic, psychological

## Introduction

Family is the basic unit of the society. It is significant because it is the primarily agent of socialization. According to the Article XV, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, the State recognizes the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation [1]. Accordingly, it shall strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development. In addition, Filipino families are said to have close family ties. Everything centers on the family: religion, daily activities, etc. This is the reason why they consider holidays and Sundays as family day. They are unique due to their closeness and care for their family which is seldom observed and practiced in other countries. In a recent study, the Philippines is leading in the world with the most of internet users – sixty-seven million hits. Filipinos spent an average of 3 hours and 57 minutes per day on social media sites, primarily on facebook [2]. There were 67 million Facebook accounts in the Philippines, and 10 million users are in Instagram. Other countries which are close to the number of Filipino social media users are Brazil, Indonesia, Thailand, and Argentina. Internet usage in the Philippines remains growing, with seven million users added last 2017. It stands at around 63 percent out of 105.7 million Filipinos. In addition, 62 million Filipinos access internet through mobile device [2]. Parents want to give their children a good quality education. Some live in rural areas which most of the schools offer only until high school level. They are forced to send their children to universities. Even if they didn't want to be separated from their family, they need to do that just to

learn new things and to finish their studies to achieve their dreams. Batangas State University is one of the higher education institutions in Batangas where most students are far from their home and chose to board near the university. Since they live away from their family most of the students in Batangas State University always find time to go home to their families. But there are some instances that they have a bulk of school requirements that needs to be accomplished ahead of time, they would be busy and wouldn't have time to go home. They would just stay in their boarding house and finish the said requirements. In that case, they prefer social media in communicating and bridging gap between their families. They also used social media in school activities because most of it is posted online. Furthermore, they stay connected with their families and friends through communicating online. Meanwhile, they want to get in touch with each other wherever they go and whatever they do, social media may be the most effective and fastest way. It is easier to connect in social media sites because most of the telecommunication companies offer free mobile data wherein you can utilize social media without internet connection. It is helpful but social media affects the relationship. However, when they are communicating, it is uneasy for some to share their feelings and problems since it must be discuss personally. There are instances, some teenager student that has a problem prefer to post it in social media rather than to tell it personally to their parents. A basis for all healthy familial relationships is a good communication among family which helps both members come to a strong and good understanding. Moreover, too much online socializing

among teenagers creates a generation who tend to do things online rather than face to face. They have to be connected in the internet to know what's happening; though it offers kids opportunities to be creative. Social media allows the user to hide from each other, which causes conflict [3]. Family members may not be aware of what is happening to one another and to their family relationship. A teenager said that family is the most important thing, but in the present time social media tends to be a barrier in keeping in touch with them personally. Family communication is the exchange of information between family members. It involves attention to family members' thoughts and emotions. It highlights not just the importance of talking, but more importantly, listening. Communication is extremely important among families so that they could share their thoughts and express themselves. Open and honest communication is an avenue for family members to be able to express their differences, love and care for each other. Through communication, families were able to resolve and understand some unavoidable problems among them [4]. On the other hand, social interaction is an essential function of human experience. It is natural to us to communicate every day.

### Research Objectives

The study aimed to determine the communication between family members through social media. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: present the profile of the respondents in terms of gender, number of household members, frequency and utilization of social media; determine and analyze the topics discussed by family members through social media; analyze the difference on the communicated issues and concerns of family members through social media when they are grouped according to their profile variables; and identify and assess the communication problems that occur during family communication through social media.

### Materials and Methods

The main purpose of this study was to know how students of Batangas State University communicate with their family through social media. The researchers used the descriptive type of research in a quantitative approach. The respondents of the study were the students of Batangas State University Main Campus I and II from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), College of Teacher Education (CTE), College of Accountancy, Business Economics and International Hospitality Management (CABEIHM), College of Nursing and Allied Sciences (CONAHS), College of Informatics and Computing Sciences (CICS), College of Engineering, Architecture and Fine Arts (CEAFA), and College of Industrial Technology (CIT). Purposive and quota sampling were used, since the study needed 100 respondents from Batangas State University Main Campus I and II who stay in boarding houses and use social media in communicating with their families. The researchers conducted a pre-survey to those students who stay in boarding houses in Batangas City and use social media in communicating with their families. The gathered data served as a guide or basis in designing and improving the survey questionnaire, the major data-gathering instrument of the study. Statistical tools like T-test, weighted mean, percentage, ranking, and one-way ANOVA were used in treating the research data.

## Results and Discussion

**Profile of the Respondents.** This part shows the profile of the respondents according to their gender, number of households, utilization of social media and frequency of social media utilization. As per gender, there were 51 males (51%), 47 females (47%), 1 lesbian (1%), and 1 bisexual (1%), for a total of 100 respondents (100%). In terms of number of households, most of the participating respondents were composed of 5-6 members (34 or 34%), followed by 3-4 members (30 or 30%), 9 and above for 23 or 23%, and last was 7-8 for 13 or 13% for a total of 100 respondents or 100%. In terms of frequency and utilization of social media, the respondents disclosed that they always use Facebook (3.53). They seldom use Twitter and Instagram evinced by the weighted means 1.79 and 1.90 respectively. On the other hand, they never use other remaining forms of social media like Snapchat, Skype, Viber, Tumblr, Myspace and Wechat (1.29, 1.23, 1.20, 1.19, 1.04, 1.06). It was shown that the most used form of social media among the respondents is Facebook. This could be possible because it is easy to access Facebook; it could be easily downloaded and almost all networks today offer free data in order for them to update, post and use this social media as long as they have good signal. Other social media they use were Twitter and Instagram. They seldom use these applications because in terms of features, Facebook has greater and is friendly to use applications. In summary, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were the top three social media applications the respondents use because they are familiar with these and they find it convenient to use. Moreover, Snapchat was not used by the respondents because this application is more on taking pictures and adding filters on it. Skype, Viber and Wechat may require a better internet connection which is not available in the boarding houses where they stay. These boarding houses also do not offer a free Wi-Fi or internet subscription for them. Tumblr's major feature is blogging; their parents don't write blogs so they end up most in using Facebook. The practical reason why they don't use the aforementioned social media is the respondents and their parents were unfamiliar to it. This could be supported by the study that focused on the Social Media and its impact on families; it showed that almost a third of people are now using mobile phones email and even social network websites to talk to their loved ones, instead of sitting down to have a conversation [3]. Furthermore, the study is similar to the study saying that concentrated on the Internet, cellphones, and family communication, found out that Internet is a key tool for young people to communicate, meet new friends and keep in touch with old ones. It has the greatest positive impact on the quality of communications with the family members living elsewhere [5].

**Topics discussed by the family members through social media.** The respondents revealed that they often inform their family members about the future activities and or programs that the school will conduct to enhance the quality of education they experience (3.01). One of the educational strategies in the curriculum is to attend seminars, participate in trainings which is incorporated likewise in the syllabus and that specific educational scenario is implemented by the instructors and professors of the particular subject they were attending to. Meanwhile, the other topics that are often discussed by the family members through social media are the

following: they request to their parents to send money that will be used for payments like rent in the boarding house and weekly/monthly allowance; they described their friends and the activities they engage with; they asked their parents to send money for payment in tuition fee and finances in school; they updated their family about their school performance; consulting their parents what to when sick; asking permission from their parents when they're going out with their friends of classmate; asking each other how the day was spent and discussing certain family problems which need to be solved as soon as possible. These topics revealed by weighted mean 3.00, 2.94, 2.87, 2.85, 2.78, 2.75, and 2.64 respectively. According to the respondents, they also often discussed these topics through social media because they want to inform their family most especially their parents on what is happening to them and what are the things that they need in the boarding house and school. They tell these updates to their respective families for them to be aware on what is happening in them and to know who the people they deal with. It's also a platform for their parents not to worry about their situation especially that they live far away from them. On the other hand, there were topics that the respondents seldom discuss with their family through social media. They open up about their personal problem in order to seek advice (2.32). Also, they planned of family gatherings like reunions, family outing, etc. and they told to their family the misunderstandings between them and their friends, so that they can help them (2.30 and 2.06). These topics were seldom based from the answer of the respondents because they find it difficult to open up or share their thoughts or feelings to their family. They avoid telling their problems to their family because they didn't want their parents to worry about them while they were away. In addition, they also minimize saying something to their family regarding their friends and in school if they have a problem because they might be scolded by their parents or they are matured enough to handle the situation so they try to solve it on their own for them be independent in every decision they make. As much as possible, they try to keep their problem and solve it without their parents knowing it. Moreover, related to the study of Sponcil and Gitimu who discussed the use of social media by college students: relationship to communication and self-concept. It assessed student's personal use of social media, communication skills with friends and family, and effects on self-concept. The results indicated that all of the sampled college students were using at least one form of social networking website [6]. This could be strengthened by the study of Drusell that focused on social networking and interpersonal communication and conflict resolution skills among college freshmen. It revealed that the college students addressed their daily activities in social networking as well as general attitudes regarding communication and conflict resolution. The findings of this research suggest that individuals consider face-to-face interaction the most effective and preferred means to communicate and resolve conflict with others [7]. Furthermore, the study of Corpuz et al. that focused on communication patterns through social media of selected Far Eastern University mass communication students distant with their families, conducted a study that involves students who are using social media as a medium to communicate with their families in provinces. The frequency of their communication depends on the emergence of the discussion

as well as the relationship of the student to the family member they are communicating with [8].

Topics	WM	VI
1. Family problems	2.64	Often
2. Personal problems	2.32	Seldom
3. How the day was spent.	2.64	Often
4. Asking permission	2.75	Often
5. Planning of family gatherings	2.30	Seldom
6. Consulting your parents when sick.	2.78	Often
7. Friends and the activities you engage with	2.94	Often
8. Misunderstanding between you and your friends	2.06	Seldom
9. Requesting parents to send money	3.00	Often
10. Payment of school finances	2.87	Often
11. Future school activities and programs	3.01	Often
12. School performance.	2.85	Often

#### **Difference on the communicated topics of family members through social media when they are grouped according to their profile variables.**

It shows that gender doesn't affect the topics that they communicate online. Most of the topics discussed in social media were school related. Gender does not have significant difference with the communicated topics online because whatever the respondents' gender is, they have the same reason why they have to live away from their parents and that is to pursue their studies. Furthermore, regardless of the number of households the topics communicated online were also the same. Therefore, their family size does not have something to do with their family communication through social media. Their gender and number of households did not differ when grouped accordingly. It means that the profile variables of the respondents did not affect the topics that discussed by family members through social media. The p-value are higher than 0.05 therefore, the decision was failed to reject; there were no significant differences on the values computed.

Profile Variables	Computed Value	p-value	Decision on $H_0$	Interpretation
Gender	0.848	0.471	Accept	No significant difference
Number of Household	0.651	0.628	Accept	No significant difference

#### **Communication problems that occur during family communication through social media.**

Most of the respondents agreed that they encountered these communication problems. One of it is the expensive cost of internet services. They also need to have a good and fast internet connection for them to have a smooth and clear conversation with their family. The physical barriers they least encountered are: some people may have access in the same account and he or she may read the conversation; their parents doesn't know how to use social media and they live in different time zones (28, 30 and 38). The respondents clarified that these communication problems are the least for them because nowadays, most of their parents know how to use social media. They also make sure that they give an update to their family on what is going on in them even if their parents are in the province or abroad. They didn't mind how far their distance with each other because social media serves as a communication platform and bridge to fill in the

gap. The respondents disclosed that when they send a message to their family, they experience late reply due to different schedule of time (85). It had the highest frequency under physical barriers. This could be possible because of the availability of time; there are also some instances when they have paper works in school that they need to finish, they tend to forget to reply on the messages from their family. In addition, the other communication problems that occur during family communication through social media under physical barriers are: the message that they sent are received late due to slow internet connection and the line could be "choppy" due to poor internet signal when they call through social media sites (80 and 77). Furthermore, there were communication problems that the respondents experienced averagely; there were times that they're left behind on the discussed topic because during that time were offline, when using mobile data some messages were not sent or seen, the person they're trying to reach was offline, internet subscription was expensive and lastly one of them doesn't have an internet connection at boarding house or at home (73, 64, 61, 53 and 51). According to the respondents, they can't stay online for a long time. They just check their online messages daily and logout immediately when nothing may be important. They don't have much time to stay in different social media sites due bulk of school work that they have to finish ahead of time. Mobile data requires a good signal to view photos and posts. There were some places in Batangas wherein the signal is weak. To be able to view and send photos they should have a load credit to access the internet, as a student their allowance were just exact for their daily needs. They rarely spend money to load credits or prepaid cards since they can use free data to send messages. Spending money on internet subscription is another expense which may not be included in the respondents' allowance.

Physical Barriers	Frequency	
	Yes	No
1. The person you're trying to reach is offline.	61	39
2. You live in different time zones.	38	62
3. When sending a message to your family, you may experience late reply due to different schedule of free time.	85	15
4. There are times that you're left behind on the discussed topic, because during that time you were offline.	73	27
5. Some people may have access in the same account and he/she may read the conversation.	28	72
6. Internet subscription is expensive.	53	47
7. One of you doesn't have an internet connection at boarding house or at home.	51	49
8. When using mobile data, some messages are not sent or seen.	64	36
9. The message will be sent late due to slow internet connection.	80	20
10. When calling through social media sites, the line is "choppy" due to poor internet signal.	77	23
11. Your parents don't know how to use social media.	30	70

Moreover, under semantic barriers, they encountered misuse of punctuation marks that may cause different tone of the message. This had the highest frequency of 67. It was followed by the other two communication problems that also had a high frequency. These were the wrong choice of words that may lead to misinterpretation of the message; their explanation may not be heard and this may cause a conflict between them and their parents. It was disclosed by frequency 65 and 56, respectively. Most of them encountered these communication problems because they sometimes click

accidentally the wrong letter or punctuation marks that lead to misunderstanding and sometimes, a different interpretation to the message. One factor also is the slow and poor internet connection can affect your conversation. For example, your intention is to play a joke but the person who receive it get offended, it will lead immediately to conflict. They should be very careful on the constructions of sentences, words and signs that they will use to avoid problems. The following were the least problems the respondents encounter. These were situations based on their chosen words and statement that they construct. Their difference in values or attitudes with their family result to difference in message interpretation; they use new terms which are not familiar to your family. (eg. waley, ganern, charot, keribells, etc.); they use jargons that hinder effective communication with their family and the different moods that hinder their communication with family member. These were evinced by frequencies 47, 37, 39 and 49, respectively. The respondents least experience these communication problems because their family didn't use unfamiliar words when they talk that's why they understand each other easily. Due to age gap, there were things that the parents don't understand in today's generation. They control their emotions as much as possible to avoid conflict that's why they are not affected by their mood when they communicate with their family.

Semantic Barriers	Frequency	
	Yes	No
1. Different moods hinder your communication with family member.	49	51
2. Your explanation may not be heard and this may cause a conflict between you and your parents.	56	44
3. Wrong choice of word/s may misinterpret the message.	65	35
4. You use new terms which are not familiar to your family. (eg. waley, ganern, charot, keribells, etc.)	37	63
5. Misuse of punctuation mark/s may cause different tone of the message.	67	33
6. Your difference in values/attitudes with your family result to difference in interpreting the message.	53	47
7. You use jargons that hinder effective communication with your family.	39	61

The last group of communication barriers was psychological barriers. The respondents revealed that the highest communication problem that they encountered under this barrier is that their mood is affecting the way they communicate with their family (80). It was followed by their some messages have double meaning that may lead to confusion and message is misinterpreted; they may jump into conclusions without clarifying things and thinking that your family won't understand you affects your way of communicating to them with frequency 67, both with 58 and respectively. These communication problems are mostly encountered because sometimes, they don't think what their message is all about or wrong construct of sentence. Parents may misinterpret it because they are practically not aware of it, they will just realize it later after rereading and reanalyzing the message. Every message has a meaning and all people have different perspectives or way of interpreting the message. It's better to analyze and make the message right, practical and easy to understand before you send or share it with other. Also, there were physiological barriers that the respondents don't encounter when using social media as a form of communication with their families.

Physical disabilities that may cause difficulties in understanding the message; when making a call, their family may think that they are arguing with them due to the tone of voice and they are hesitant to open their thoughts and feelings with their family, 30, 48 and 54, respectively. The respondents know that these were the least communication problem that they encounter because they their parents do not have physical disabilities. They also seldom call to their family because they prefer to just text or chat them and lastly, they didn't want to talk about their thoughts through social media because they think that it may not be clearly understood by their family if they do so. They like better to tell it interpersonally to lessen the hindrances or barriers.

Psychological Barriers	Frequency	
	Yes	No
1. The message is misinterpreted and they may jump into conclusions without clarifying things.	58	42
2. When making a call, they may think that you are arguing with them due to your tone of voice.	48	52
3. Some messages have double meaning that may lead to confusion.	67	33
4. Your mood affects the way you communicate with your family.	80	20
5. Physical disabilities that may cause difficulties in understanding the message.	30	70
6. Thinking that your family won't understand you affect your way of communicating to them.	58	42
7. You are hesitant to open your thoughts and feelings with your family.	54	46

## Conclusion

It is really undeniable nowadays that social media utilization is part of man's everyday life. Whether in business, education, government, and politics, social media plays an important role in achieving its respective works. Social media is an advantageous communication platform because in as much as you have a good internet connection, one could advertise, connect with clients, be informed about the news and current events, do online transactions or registrations, and get updates about politics and many more. More importantly, social media is truly very helpful in connecting families, not just internationally but also locally. It feels like our relatives or loved ones are just so near even though we know that they are miles way or abroad, through different social media. It serves as an instant and effective link or communication platform in staying connected with them. However, no one can overpower the essence of interpersonal communication. It is more intimate; you will feel the real warmth, and reactions and emotions are more real. But then again, because our environment constantly changes or undergoes paradigm shift, we can appreciate and embrace the role played by the social media at the present moment.

## Recommendation

Amidst social media's useful and advantageous effects to men, the respondents and all social media users should be well-knowledgeable in using this phenomenal communication technology platform. Social media may also have its disadvantages if improperly used. Family communication might be negatively affected if not addressed at once. To avoid these possible disadvantages or problems, social media users shall continue to educate them on what is true and what is fake. Very particularly today, trolls are dominating social media, trying to brainwash people, lead them to believe what is incorrect, and even trying to inflict

harm to their fellow social media users. Knowledge enhancement through being aware of good values, families' support, and participation communication platforms whether interpersonal or public could be ways for you not to be caught unaware of things to come. As for the respondents who are students of Batangas State University staying in boarding houses in Batangas City and who could be kilometers away from their families, they may get involve and participate in the advocacies of Devcom, behavior change communication and responsible and ethical utilization of social media to name a few. They may enhance their perspectives to be more open about their thoughts and opinions to their parents to minimize the communication barriers. Students are sometimes hesitant to tell their parents about their need because they know that there are still other problems like expenses at home. In addition, they may take seriously participating in the seminars and workshops of Devcom so that they may get updates on becoming more responsible and ethical social media users.

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