The Impacts of Internet Upon Chinese Immigrants' Family Communication

Wei-wei Vivian Huang Ph. D.

Professor in the department of Radio and Television
College of Communication
National Chengchi University
vhuang@nccu.edul.tw

ABSTRACT

In the trend of the e-society, family, school, peer and media alternately influence the formation of individual concepts and social and cultural values. Among them, media plays the role of communication and cultivation that shouldn't be disregarded. Discussions on family education and management however focus mainly on the individual member's personal interaction during socialization. (Primitive family, school, peers etc) The field of media delivering family concepts and value formation, especially the influence of internet on Chinese immigrant family communication or interpersonal relationship has been left out.

As families with internet access rapidly become universal, internet has changed many families' life styles including purchase habits, parent-son relationships and the balance between family and work. Considering this, this research uses the depth interview, interviewing 51 Chinese immigrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China to Vancouver, Surrey and Richmond and probe into these questions:

1. What are the family communication networks of the Chinese immigrant family?
2. What is the Chinese immigrant family's relationship between parents and children?
3. What are the effects of the internet to the communication networks of Chinese immigrant family?
4. What are the effects of the internet to Chinese immigrant family's relationships between parents and children?

Research background and objectives

German scholar Kant pointed out that family is an epitome of society. It's the smallest society that has the ability of spontaneously maintainability （Chang, 1996）.Family is often viewed as the basic unit of human society. The sequence of ideas of family being the organized unit of the clannish rules system can be traced in the history of Chinese legal institutions （Chen, 1936）.Marriage and family's main function seems to be increasing descendants of large families. Among them, the changes in marriage ceremonies and forms reflect the regulations the society set for marriage and the power relationships behind them （Chu and Chang, 2002）. Cultural anthropologist Chen （1985） indicated that if we imitate Freud's points of views, America and most western countries are typical "sex-centered" societies, while the eastern Chinese society is a "home-centered" one. This shows that family can be seen both as a basic unit of the society and as a biological unit （Chang, 1996）.

Although the concept of family differs through time and space, family still plays an important role in most countries' society system and the shaping of individual values. The United Nations has named 1994 the year of international family year in order to remind people that family is the basis of the society, and if family collapses, it will cause crisis more serious than the expansion of nuclear weapons （ Chang, 1996 ; www.cfe.ntnu.edu.tw/librs/librs-22.htm）.

In the last decade, according to scholars' classification （Chu and Chang, 2002）, discussions about Taiwanese family values can be mainly sorted into two categories: family ethic (Yeh, 1997; Chou, 1998) and family relationships. The latter is observed through taking care of the parents （Wen, 1989; Chu，1993; Chang, 1993; Chan, 1989; Yang and Tseng, 2000; Sun, 1991）,marriage relationships （Lu, 1983; Chen, 1988; Chen, 1988; Hu,1988，Li, 1993）, contact between relatives （Wen, 1991; Chu, 1991）,and raising and cultivation of children （Chu, 1994）.

Scholar Huang （1998） discovered that the factors that influence parents' raising and cultivation of children in the family communication patterns in Taiwan include: 1. Original family---meaning the family one is from, for example original family's parents, brothers and sisters all influence the interaction in family communication. 2. Husband and wife relationships---including husband and wife affections, characters, emotions or psychological empathy effects. 3. Characteristics of children--- family communication patterns are also influenced by children's gender, age and temperaments. 4. Family's social and economic status---including parents social and economic status, parents' professions, etc. 5. Cultural values---society's common practice, philosophy of life, traditional culture,

and religious beliefs etc.

In the trend of the e-society, family, school, peer and media alternately influence the formation of individual concepts and social and cultural values. Among them, media plays the role of communication and cultivation that shouldn't be disregarded. Examining the documents on family communication that are based on communication theories, more researches are on advertisement effects or consumption research （William，2001）, political socialization or media use (Huang, 1997) .Discussions on family education and management however focus mainly on the individual member's personal interaction during socialization. (Primitive family, school, peers etc) The field of media delivering family concepts and value formation, especially the influence of internet on Chinese immigrant family communication or interpersonal relationship has been left out.

As families with internet access rapidly become universal, internet has changed many families' life styles including purchase habits, parent-son relationships and the balance between family and work. According to the survey in July,2002 by RBC Financial Group/Ipsos Reid, a Canadian family surfs on the internet 1600 hours a year in average,(32 hours a week) indicating that the internet has become a part of Canadian family life （Liu, 2002）.

Considering this, this research uses the depth interview, interviewing 51 Chinese immigrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China to Vancouver, Surrey and Richmond and probe into these questions:

5. What are the family communication networks of the Chinese immigrant family?
6. What is the Chinese immigrant family's relationship between parents and children?
7. What are the effects of the internet to the communication networks of Chinese immigrant family?
8. What are the effects of the internet to Chinese immigrant family's relationships between parents and children?

Literature Review

The most famous early stage researches on family communication are Chaffee and Mcleod's series studies on family communication patterns and communication behavior in Wisconsin's Mass Communication Research Center(McLeod and O'Keefe, 1972:121). Their basic point is that family communication patterns are important factors of children's development of cognitive framework and learning of external things. A person's family communication pattern in the childhood may influence the degree his concerns for public affairs and media use. The effect can even last to adulthood （Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin,1971:133）.

The family communication pattern developed by Chaffee and Mcleod is based on

Newcomb's "strain toward symmetry model". The Newcomb theory's basic hypothesis is that the relationship of every composition in a system that will gradually tend to a state of balance （Chaffee and Tims,1976）. He uses the A-B-X model to analyze interpersonal relationships (as Figure 1):
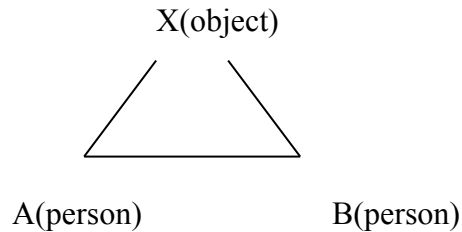
X(object)

A(person)　　　　　B(person)

Figure 1　A-B-X model　(Chaffee and Tims, 1976)

Newcomb's model deals with two people and the communication between them. He labels them A and B and retain X to represent the object of their attitudes. He assumes a human need for consistency, which he calls a "persistent strain toward symmetry." If A disagrees about X, the amount of this strain toward symmetry will depend on the intensity of A's attitude toward X and A's attraction for B. AII increase in A's attraction for B and an increase in A's intensity of attitude toward X will result in an increased strain toward symmetry on the part of A toward B about their attitudes toward X, the likelihood that symmetry will be achieved, and the probability of a communication by A to B about X.(Newcomb,1953)

According to Newcomb's A-B-X model, Chaffee and McLeod subdivided socio-oriented and concept-oriented family communication structure. A represents children, B represents parents, X represents conversation issues or communication points. The direction which the arrow points to represents the relationship the type of family focus on. Socio-oriented communication structure emphasizes interpersonal relationship (A-B), and concept-oriented family communication structure emphasizes the relation between man and issue. (A-X) The two orientations can compose four family communication patterns: consensual, pluralistic, protective and Laissez-faire.
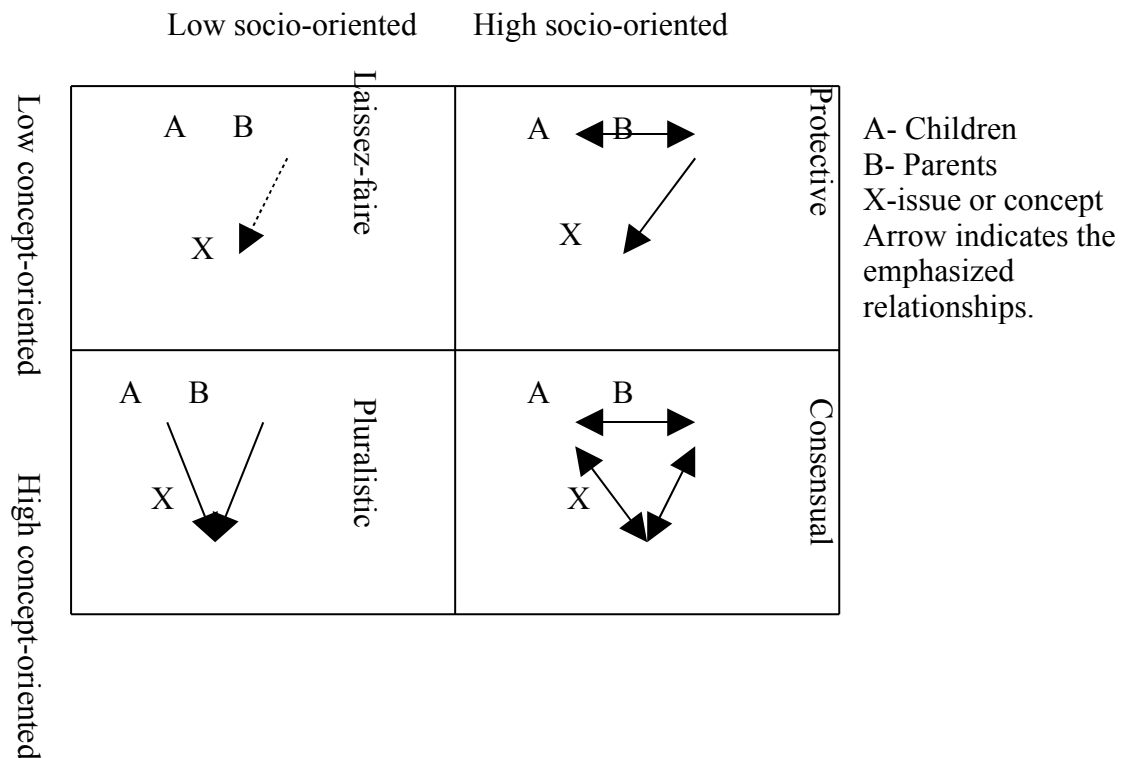
Figure 2:   Analyze four family communication patterns from the A-B-X model

These types of family have the following features:

1. Consensual (high socio-oriented, high concept-oriented)

This kind of family emphasizes both the harmony between parents and children (A-B) and the children's concern to issues. Therefore, in this kind of family, children seem to face a conflicting situation and lack principles to follow. On one hand, children are encouraged to express their own opinions when facing an issue of debate, but on the other hand, they are restricted to reject parents' opinions and have to adapt the same standards as their parents.

2. Pluralistic (low socio-oriented, high concept-oriented)

This kind of family emphasizes the children's concern to issues. The parents don't emphasize a blind worship of authority, and the children are encouraged to have their own points of view and be brave to express and try new concepts. Parents often teach their children not to be afraid to have different opinions or offend others.

3. Protective (high socio-oriented, low concept-oriented)

This kind of family concerns the harmony between parents and children. Children are taught to avoid controversial issues to prevent unhappiness with others. They not only forbid children to express different thoughts but also give them little chance to approach information that can help form their own viewpoints.

4. Laissez-faire (low socio-oriented, low concept-oriented)

This kind of family doesn't emphasize parent-child interaction (A-B) nor the child's concern to issues (A-X). Although it's not forbidden for children to show doubts for parents' opinions, they are not encouraged to express their own opinions and are not trained to independent thinking at the same time.

Family communication patterns are applied widely in communication studies. At present the research approaches are in three aspects (1) the influence to child's media exposure (2) the influence to child's political socialization (3) the influence to child's consumer learning.

In the media use aspect, some scholars begin from the influence of family communication patterns to media choice, for example, the favor of media contents （Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin,1971 ； Wu,Chien-Kuo,1981 ； Chien,Li-Hua,1988） Some discusses the influence of access to media circumstances （Chaffee and Tims, 1976）.

Kuo （1986） （Kuo,Chen,1994:102）, in the research on the consumption socialization of American and Taiwanese teenagers had applied this theory framework. The paper points out that concept-oriented parent-son communication not only improve teenagers' judgments of news but also make them and their peers notice the discussion of consumption issues.

Chaffee, McLeod and Wackman （Chaffee, McLeod, and Wackman, 1973, Chang, 1988: 20-23） interviewed American junior high students and their parents and discusses the topic" family communication and teenager's participation in politics." They found out that: (1)in Laissez-faire families, parents have low degree of influence on children's political socialization.(2)in protective families, because of the constraint of socio-oriented concepts, the children has low interest in politics and lower participation. (3) in a consensual family, children have high interest and participation in politics but are not specialized. (4) in pluralistic families, children have more average performances, meaning that they have well development of political socialization and higher degree of political knowledge, interest and participation.

Wu （1981） investigated Taipei city's junior high school students and found out that different family communication patterns do affect the children's concern for public affairs. In these four kinds of family communication patterns, children of pluralistic and protective families have remarkable variation in the concern for public affairs. The parents of pluralistic families train their children to express their independent opinions and challenge authority in every day lives, while the parents of protective families want children to be obedient and avoid conflicts with others. The two different kinds of communication patterns caused the children of pluralistic families to have more concern for the political issues in society than children of protective families.

In fact, when we get in touch with different families, we can discover that different families have different communication patterns when interact with other families. The behavior of every thing in life, such as making decisions, sharing affections, and dealing with conflicts differs due to every one's individual experiences. Every family's unique meaning system provides people regulations in dealing things.

Researchers developed a complicated model of marriage and family system. This model connected family theory, research, and practice. （Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell, 1979；Olson, Russell, and Sprenkle, 1983；Lavee and Olson, 1991）The two main compositions of family behavior is the core of the model, including family coherence and family adaptation.

Over the past ten years, this model has developed three dimensions （Thomas and Olson, 1994）1)Family coherence 2)Adaptation 3)Communication. Two of the main dimensions are still family coherence and family adaptation, this is the main shaft of the intersect. The third is family communication. This is a facilitating dimension, in order to let the family and couple to progress along the first and second ones.

However, there are only coherence and adaptation being mentioned （Thomas and Olson, 1994）. Coherence implies the level of independence of the family and individual that is combined by the relations （Pistole, 1994）.

In other words, each family tries to deal with the level of intimacy.

Family researchers regard "distance regulation" as a main family function, (Kantor and Lehr,1976) Family therapists(Minuchin,1974) discuss about enmeshed and disengaged families. Some sociologists (Hess and Handel,1959) also claimed that a family should construct a mode with separateness and connectedness. There are four levels of this power, from the lowest to the highest （Carnes, 1989）:

(1) Disengaged--Family members that are extremely separated and un-intimate to their family belonging or loyalty;

(2) Separated-- Family members those are independent from the connection and intimacy from their family;

(3) Connected--Family members that shows effort on their intimacy and loyalty with others;

(4)Enmeshed--Family members that are extremely intimate and loyal that there even might be no individuality.

Families that are highly united usually are considered as enmeshed. Members are related very closely that there is almost no independence or possibilities of self-content or goal achieving. "Disengaged" is the other side of the family strength, indicating that the family members lack the intimacy or unity. Each member is highly independent and characterized. They are highly separated on their emotions, and these members are not related closely.

Adaptation could be considered as a force under situations and elicitation pressure. That could change the power structure of a family or marriage and role relations, and relation rules (Thomas and Olson, 1994)

There are four levels of adaptation, from low to high:

(1)Rigid--Family members are controlled by autocratic and severe roles and rules.

(2)Structured--Family members are under authority and partly equaled leading and stable roles and rules.

(3)Flexible--Family members can discuss and make decisions, and roles and rules are quite changeable.

(4)Chaotic-- There are no true leader in the family, and there are disordered ways of making decisions and changeable roles and rules.
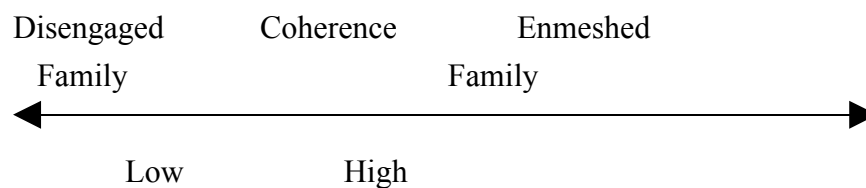
    Disengaged   Coherence   Enmeshed
      Family   Family

          Low   High

Figure 3：family coherence relationship

Every human system comes to the process of promoting stability and change. In order to function, this system needs a period of time to stabilize and extensive change. Family with stable and extensively change may be viewed as disordered. Being unpredictable and with pressure, they have a few chance to develop relationships and establish the importance of generality. Radically speaking, family with the characteristic of rigidness suppressed change and growth. (Figure 4)

    Rigid   Adaptation   Chaotic
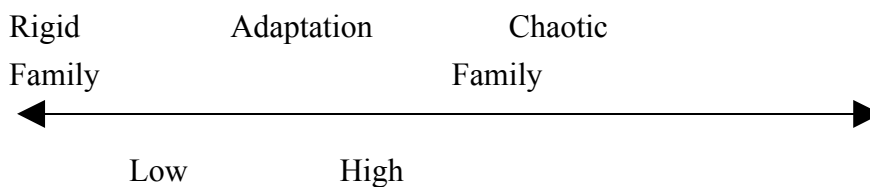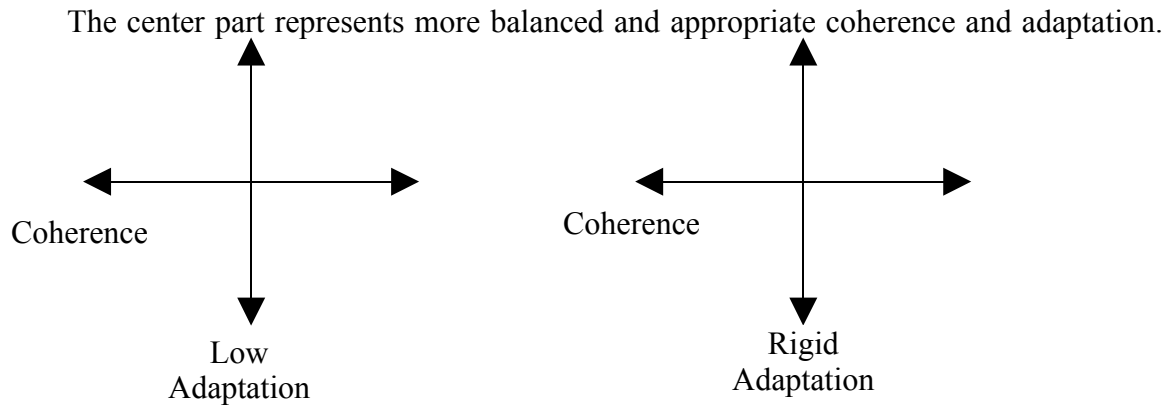   Family   Family

          Low   High

Figure 4：family adaptation relationship

To the adaptation function of every family, communication is a core. Any effective adaptation depends on the family messages' degree of meaning sharing. Through communication, family lets their members have more clear ideas of how to adjust. Variables that influence family functions include: family power structure, consultation model, role relationship, relationship regulations and feedback. Olson and his colleagues assumed that there is a balance between change and stability, which will be a more positive communication model of each other, balanced leadership, successful consultation, role sharing and an open establishing and sharing of regulations.

Researchers further discuss the mutual influence of adaptation and coherence (Olson, 1997). As seen in Figure 5 and 6.

Figure 5, 6：Family Coherence, Adaptation Relationship Axle

The center part represents more balanced and appropriate coherence and adaptation.

It's considered a highly communication model to individual and family development. The fringe part represents extreme coherence and adaptation, which has little help to communication in long terms. This research will deliberate Olson's （1997） family communication model and discuss the change of family communication patterns in Taiwan over the past 50 years, focusing on the interaction model between family members, for example husband and wife, brother-sister communication patterns.

Family communication network is like the channel of family members establishing mutual communication. (Galvin and Brommel, 2000:96) The communication channel of the family members differs by the roles and acceptance degree into horizontal (equal) or vertical (authority) forms. Horizontal communication happens when parents and children are in an equal position and power situation and can interact with each other reciprocally. Vertical communication happens when family members have power distance and these differences influence mutual interaction with one's position in the family tree. (Galvin and Brommel)

Both horizontal and vertical communication reflects the process of communication between family members, which indeed reflects the interaction relationship between them. As to the channel of interaction among family members---family communication network has the following types (Galvin and Brommel, 2000)：

1. The Chain Network---The communication network between family members is like the form of a rope. Member A tells member B, member B delivers to member C, and then member C to member D. When member D has an opinion, it follows the same form going the opposite way, member D sends to member C, C to B, and B to A. The interaction between family members is only restricted between the two members that deliver information to each other, no third person communication.
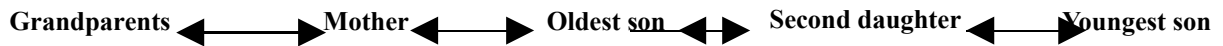
Grandparents ←——→ Mother ←——→ Oldest son ←——→ Second daughter ←——→ Youngest son

Figure 7：The Chain network

2. The Y- Network---A key member of the family is responsible for the connection of other members' opinion and relationships. For example, if the daughter tells the mother her opinions, and the step father tells the mother his opinions, the mother can coordinate between them.
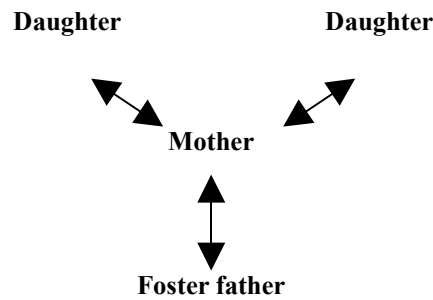
Daughter   **Daughter**

Mother

Foster father

Figure 8：The Y-network

3. The Wheel Network---A specific member of the family is placed in the center of the wheel and connects the other members separately. The central member holds power and control over others. He or she can mobilize all the family members or reconcile the stressed relationships within the family.
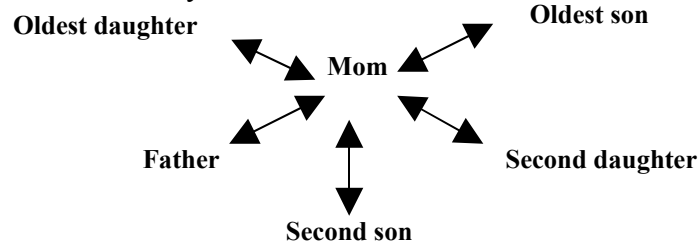
Oldest daughter   **Oldest son**

Mom

Father   **Second daughter**

Second son

Figure 9：The Wheel Network

4. The All Channel Network---Any member of the family can participate in a mutual interaction process. The communication network flows freely between family members. They can share directly and give immediate responses. Every member has their equal positions. There will be no particular member or "matchmaker".
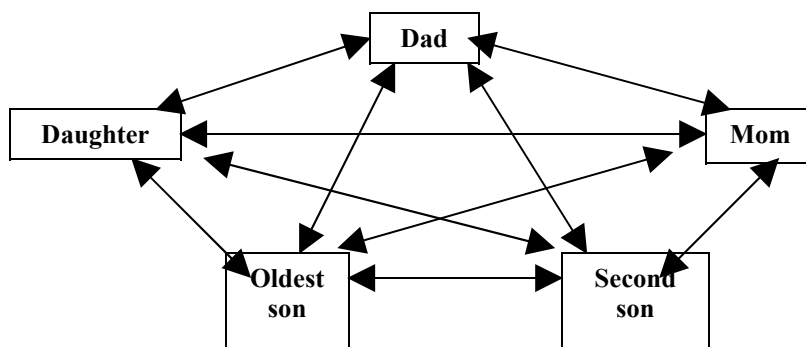
Dad

Daughter   **Mom**

Oldest son   **Second son**

10

Figure 10：All channel network

Research Design

This research tries to discuss the communication network and parent-son relationship of the Chinese immigrant families, interviewing 51 Chinese immigrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China to Vancouver, Surrey and Richmond. (17 in each area)

The interview questions include:

1. Please introduce your family, do you live together or not?   If not, why?

2. What are the similarities and dissimilarities between a Chinese immigrant and a Canadian family? How is the communication situation between family members? Please use examples to illustrate.

3. Do you use the internet? Do your family members use the internet? If yes, what are their motivations, such as looking up for information or send e-mails?

4. Does your family have a different way of communication after the use of internet? Please describe.

5. If we observe it from the aspect of family connection and intimacy, how do you feel about the parents-son relationship among the Chinese immigrants? Please use examples to illustrate.

6. If we view it from the aspect of family members' regulation and accommodation, how do you think Chinese immigrant family get along? Please use examples to illustrate.

7. Does the appearance of the internet have any influence on the parent-son interaction in Chinese immigrant families? Please use examples to illustrate.

8. Any further opinions?

Research Findings

According to the depth interview of 51 immigrants, the compositions of Chinese immigrant family are:

1. Host family--- student or occupational immigrants who live with relatives.

I live in my aunt's house and make a living by myself here. (H2)

2. A separated family-the husband and wife lives in two separate nations and both live with different children. Or the wife and children lives in immigrate countries while the husband still live in the original country and visits once in a while.

My husband does business in Taiwan and China, the children and I emigrated first. (T1)

I came as a visiting scholar, found a job and applied for citizenship. After every thing settled, I had my family here.(M2)

3. A single parent family- after divorce, one side and the children moved to the immigrate country.

When dad and mom divorced, I came to Canada with mom.(T12)

I got a job here and applied citizenship for my mother.(H3)

4. A grandparent family---Children live with their grand parents in the immigrant country and do not live with their parents.

Uncle handled my grandparents' citizenship and then he helped me get mine to live here with them.   (T17)

My home is in the east coast, later I studied in the west coast found a job here and lived here ever since.   (M11)

5. three-generation family---A family with the grandparents, parents, and children living together.

I had children after marriage, so I had my mom here for help.   (M5)

I was so busy after divorce, so my parents came from Taiwan to help.   (T8)

6. three-generation family living in the neighborhood---Grand parents live near the family and interact closely.

We had our parents here after marriage, and it happened that the house next door was in auction.   (T14)

After my job was stable, we moved next to my wife's parents' house.   (T13)

7. core family---The parents live with children.

My daughter got us here after she got a job.   (H15)

Our family moved here three years ago.   (H12)

The most common family communication networks of Chinese immigrant families include:

1. The Chain Network-the elders of the family delivers information and care according to one's position in the family tree. For example, the grandparents communicate directly with the parents, and the parents communicate with the oldest son or daughter, and the older son or daughter communicates with the younger ones in the family. Members of the three-generation family and three-generation family living in the neighborhood have the Chain network communication pattern.

My grandfather is very traditional, when grandma understands his meanings and she will tell dad, dad tells mom, mom tells my older brother, then I know.   (M5)

Our family immigrated here first, and then my parents come. They like to live by themselves without the noise of children.   (T13)

2. The Y-Network ---The key member (often the mother) of the family as the center of communication and communicate with the children. Children express their feelings to other family members through this key member.

The Y-network is often seen in adopted family, separated family,or a single parent family.

My aunt asks me a few things while others are often busy on their own.   (H2)

My daughter is very happy living with me. Her dad is too serious to communicate with and is often busy at work.   (T1)

3. The Wheel Network—often happens in families with more children. The children and other parents communicate through a key parent, who is the center of communication. For example: separated family 、core family 、three-generation family 、three-generation family living in the neighborhood.

Mom is the head of our family, every one depends on her.   (T12)

Whatever my wife says, every one listens. She has more free time.   (H12)

4. The All Channel Network—the characteristics of this kind of family communication network is that all family members can interact with other members on equal rank. Even the parents interact with children on equal standing. It's often seen in core familyor separated family 。

Coming to a foreign country, we should learn to communicate in a democratic way.   (H5)

I hate the way my parents used to be, so authoritative. So I want my family to communicate with each other more often.   (M2)

5. The Wineglass Network—mother plays the key role of the whole family. Children may know about father's opinions through the transmission of mother, but children interact with each other as well as their mother very well. The Wineglass network exists in some adopted families, separated families, single-parent families, three-generation families, or three generations live nearby families.
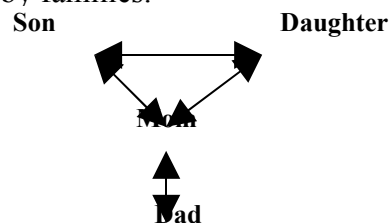

Figure 11：The Wineglass Network

We always hear about him from mom, he doesn't give us any attention.   (H7)

My wife tells us how her mother thinks. (T2)

6. The Button Network---it often happens in families which the parents and children have poor communication. The parents change opinions with each other and the children communicates on their own but the parents and the children have their own lives and lack interaction between them. It's often seen in grandparent families or core families.
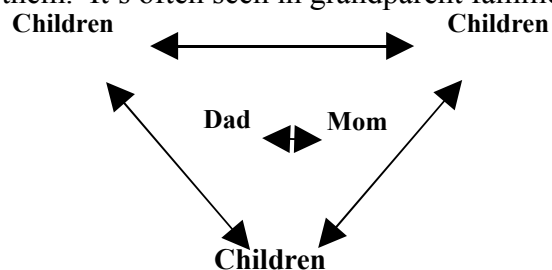
Dad always wants us to be like him. That's impossible! It's not the way we interact with friends at school.   (T8)

7. The Bow Tie Network---three-generation family, the grandparents interact fine with the parents but not enough interaction with the other members of the family.

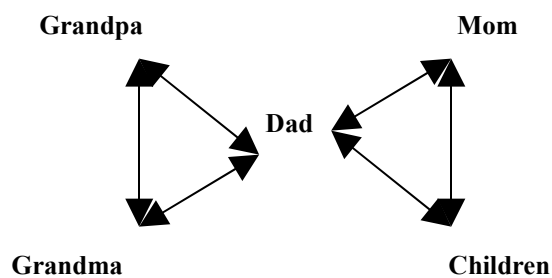Some three generations live nearby families have similar communication networks.

Grandpa   **Mom**

Dad

Grandma   **Children**

Figure 13：The Bow Tie Network

Dad is the head of the house, we all listen to him, mother hasn't the right to speak and my grandparents don't accept our opinions.   (H17)

Observing the relationship of the Chinese immigrant family, take the Chain network, for example, its family coherence is at the disengaged level and adaptation is at the rigid level. The Y-network's family coherence is at the separated level and adaptation is at the structured level. Families with the wheel network communication are at separated level in coherence and rigid level in adaptation. Families with the all channel interactions are at enmeshed level in family coherence and chaotic level in adaptation. The Wineglass network's family members are at separated level in family coherence and structured level in adaptation. Families using the button network are at the disengaged level in family coherence and flexible level in adaptation. The bow tie network families are at the connected level in family coherence and structured level in adaptation.

Analyzing the influence of the internet on Chinese immigrant families' communication network a step further, family members adopting the Chain network communicates face to face according to one's position in the family tree. Because of the computer, family members who know how to use the internet can forward emails and jokes to each other. This often happens among children, their increase their interaction through the net, and sometimes turn the chain network into the goblet network.
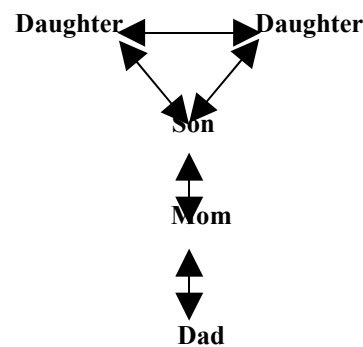
Figure 14：The Goblet network

At first I only listen to my sister, and she got my parents' orders form my brother, but now my brother sends jokes to my sister and me through the internet. He pays more attention to us than before.(H9)

　　Family members with Y-network interaction used to have the key parent as the axis of communication. There aren't much interaction between brothers and sisters. But when internet joins the family communication network, the interaction between children through the internet turns the network into the wineglass network, or because the parent that wasn't the key parents' use of emails develop the network into the all channel network.

　　My father is more like a father after he sends us emails from Taiwan. (T1)

　　Family members adopting the wheel network, the key member of the family(father or mother) used to be powerful and important when communicating face to face. Once the internet joins the family communication network, different members interacts through the internet and turn the network into the amoeba network.
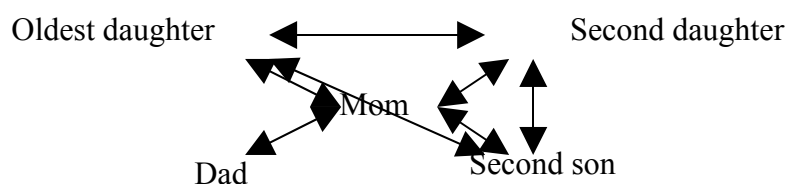

Figure 15：The Amoeba Network

The family members of the all channel network are less influenced by the internet. But when certain members want to a specific member, the mobilization is very fast. For example, surprise a family member on her birthday.

You know, my sister has the most ideas, last time through email, she surprised my mom. (T4)

The family members of the wineglass network will also turn into the all channel network or maintain the network at present (when only the children have internet access) because of the internet.

The connecting network of the button network depends on the internet access of the parents for change. Once the parents join the children on the internet, the interaction of "one-side, one-nation" will change. If only one parent uses the internet and interact with children, the network will turn to the kite network. If both parents use the internet and communicate with children, it will turn into the all channel network.
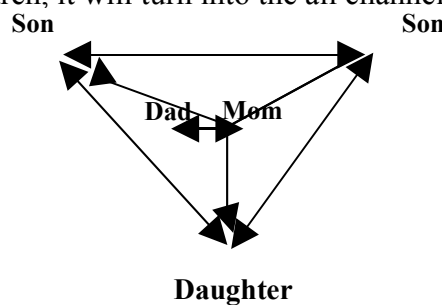

Figure 16：The Kite Network

In the opposite, some people feel that the internet has no effect on real life, it's used only to discussing homework with classmates, connecting clients or to kill time.

After he came back from school, he always surfs on the internet the whole night.We don't ask him much until one day I received an expensive porno telephone bill. (H10)

I surf the internet for information and chat with people, there is nothing much talk about with my family any way. (M16)

The interaction of family members with the bow tie network used to be effected by one's position in the family tree or blood relationship. For example the grandparents interact frequently with the parents and the parents communicate with the child. The existence of the internet doesn't have impact on the bow tie network.

As to whether the internet effects Chinese immigrant family's parent-son relationship, according to the depth interview, the internet can promote the adjust on parent-son

relationship coherence, but has little impact on adaptation. This is because coherence involves perceptual intimate relationships and adaptation involves the power structure of the family system. The latter is harder to fluctuate in comparison.
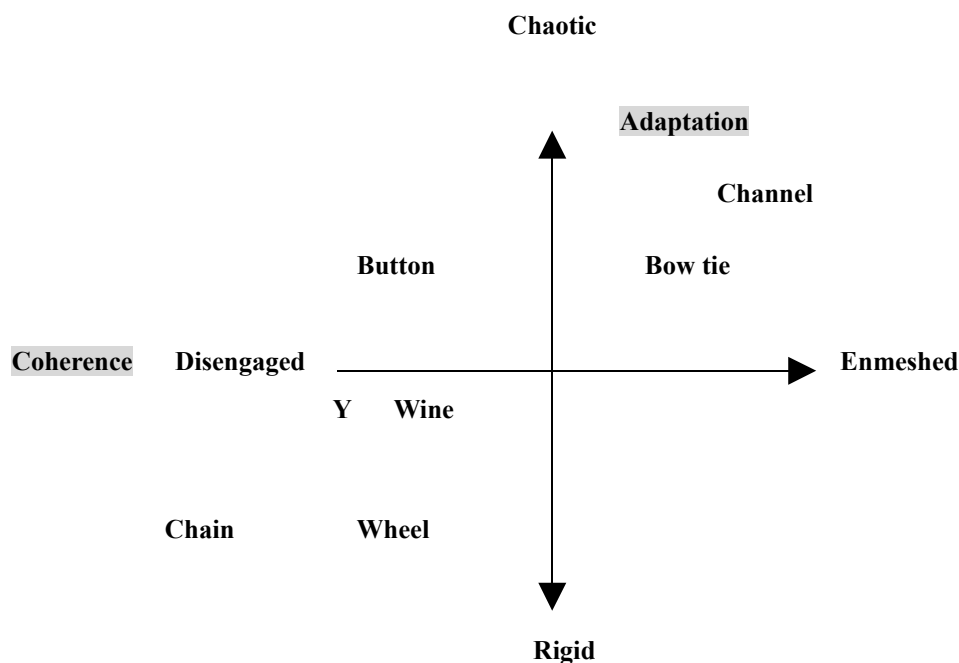

Figure17：Family Coherence, Adaptation Relationship Axle

Conclusion, Discussions and Suggestions

As scholar Zu and Zheng said (2002), the change of family structure is universal. The trend of family members live the way of "shared lives" isn't the characteristic of Chinese families any more. This research discusses how internet influence Chinese immigrant families' communication networks and their relationship and found out that the internet does play the role of mediating, connecting and releasing homesickness. According to the depth interview of 51 Canadian Chinese immigrants, we come to the conclusion:

1. The Chinese immigrant families' family communication networks include the Chain network, the Y-network, the wheel network, the all channel network wineglass network, the button network and the bow tie network. Among them, host families often adopt the form of Y-network and wineglass network. Separated families often adopt the Y network, the wheel network, the all channel network and the wine glass network. A single

parent family often adopts the Y network or the wine glass network. Grandparent families often have the communication pattern of the button network. Three-generation families often have the chain network, the wheel network, the wineglass network and the bow tie network. Core families often adopt the wheel network, the all channel network and the wineglass network.

2. The family relationship of Chinese immigrant families mostly lies between the mid-low coherence, mid-low adaptation sector, for example the Y-network and the wineglass network. Families with the Chain network communication have lowest family coherence and adaptation, the wheel network's family relationship's adaptation is the lowest. Second, the family relationship of Chinese immigrant families adopting the all channel network and the bow tie network lies between mid-high adaptation and coherence sector. The families with the button communication have lower coherence but higher adaptation.
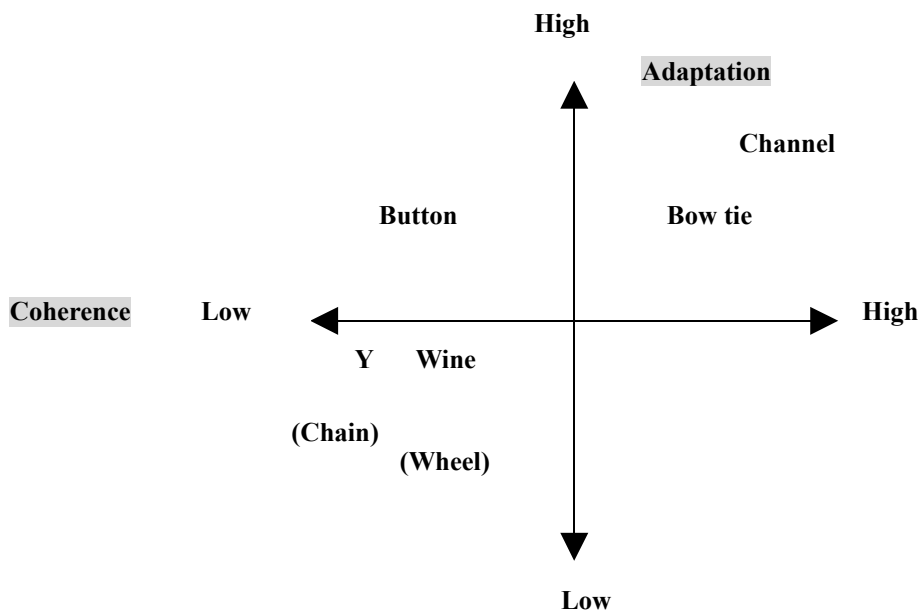
High

Adaptation

Channel

Button   **Bow tie**

Coherence   **Low**   **High**

Y   Wine

(Chain)

(Wheel)

Low

Figure 18：Family Coherence, Adaptation Relationship Axle

3. The influence of internet on the Chinese immigrant family network apparently occurs in the families adopting the Chain network, the Y-network, the Wheel network, and All Channel network. For example, the families adopting the chain network communication may transform into the goblet network. The families adopting the wheel network may develop into the amoeba network. The Y-network or the wineglass network families may turn into the all Channel network. The button network families may turn into the kite network or the all channel network. Of course, the internet may not always be influential. If family members only use the internet to interact with non-family members such as friends and colleagues, then it will not influence Chinese immigrant families'

communication networks.

4. The influence of the internet on Chinese immigrant family relationship is mostly on the adjustment of coherence, the influence on adaptation is not evident. If family members use the internet only to look up information or contact non-family member friends and colleagues, they may have internet addiction or information anxiety. According to the survey by RBC Financial Group /Ipsos Reid in July 2002, a Canadian family surfs on the internet 1600 hours a year in average, indicating that the internet is gradually changing many families' lifestyle including time arrangement, parent-son relationships. This research observes the interaction among Canadian Chinese immigrant family members and the results show that the internet does influence family communication network, the track of parent-son relationships, and does not have negative sequelas such as addictions or anxiety.

It can't be denied that the internet is constantly influencing modern family's life and communication. Researchers who have concern on family communication should continue the research on the influence of the internet on family intimate relationships, family communication patterns, family conflicts and family ceremonies. Take a step further to survey and to test and verify related theories.

The concepts of internet literacy and internet safety have been promoted around high school and primary school campus in Taiwan. However, those who emmigrate from Taiwan to foreign countries may not have these knowledge. It is important for adults and people who immigrate into foreign countries to know about these concepts.

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