

EFFECTS OF FACEBOOK INTERACTIONS ON FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIP AND  
TIE-STRENGTH: A CASE OF AMERICAN FAMILY COMMUNICATION



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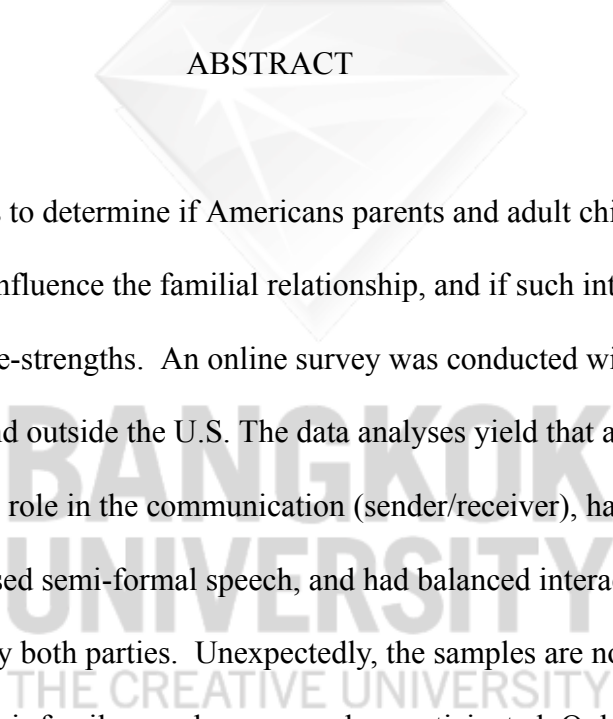
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## ABSTRACT

This study seeks to determine if Americans parents and adult children's Facebook interactions positively influence the familial relationship, and if such interactions increase or help maintain their tie-strengths. An online survey was conducted with 150 American samples living inside and outside the U.S. The data analyses yield that a majority had an equal distribution of the role in the communication (sender/receiver), had a shallow degree of interaction, used semi-formal speech, and had balanced interactions, indicating similar effort is put in by both parties. Unexpectedly, the samples are not using Facebook to communicate with their family members as much as anticipated. Only the degree of interaction had significant effect on both the familial relationship and the tie-strength, the balance of the interaction was only significant to tie-strength, while role and tone of interaction had no insignificant impact on both familial relationship and tie strength. Future research should focus on other rising digital platforms, communication practices of more specific types of families and how a family's culture and morals influence how they communicate.

*Keywords: Family Communication, Tie-Strength, Familial Relationships, Facebook Interaction, American*



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This study explores the impact of family communication through Facebook on the familial relationship and tie-strength between parents and adult children. Communication between families can be complex and is becoming increasingly so with the addition of more channels to communicate through like social media platforms. This chapter covers rationale and problem statements, objectives of study, scope of study, and research questions. In addition, significance of study is described, together with definition of terms.

#### 1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement

Parents and their children have always had different ways of communicating, verbal, nonverbal, et cetera. As the digital landscape continues to expand people, including families, are introduced to new technologies and ways to communicate with others. Parents and their adult children may not interact as often as when the child was an adolescent and Facebook offer a way for them to keep in better contact. The various new ways of communicating have allowed people to better manage their relationships and be more selective about what kind of information they share with others through multiple outlets.

### 1.1.1 The Modern American Family

The average American family is made up of 3.15 people (US Census Bureau, 2022). The census does not differentiate what kind of family members this includes (i.e., parents, children). Also, the modern American family can greatly differ on what it looks like, like same sex parents, single parents, et cetera. Parents can also be divorced and live in different places.

### 1.1.2 Familial Relationships

A familial relationship is unique to every person. There are ones that are parasitic in nature, ones that are symbiotic, and one's that are barely maintained. "Familial means relating to families in general, or typical of a family" (Collins, n.d.) and relationship means "The relationship between two people or groups is the way in which they feel and behave towards each other" (Collins, n.d.).

### 1.1.3 Facebook and Social Media Dependency

Facebook has close to 3 billion monthly users as of the end of quarter three 2022 (Dixon, 2022). People have taken to using Facebook to stay up-to-date on their friends and family in this ever-connected digital age. College students stay in touch with their families through social media while they are away at school. Exchange students use social media to maintain their relationships with foreign friends once they are back in their home country. People share big announcements through Facebook, like an engagement or a birth. We are getting more dependent on technology's assistance in maintaining relationships as the world becomes more globalized and we travel further from our origin points.

#### 1.1.4 Tie Strength

Tie strength is the level of intensity of a social relationship between individuals. It plays a unique part in understanding relationships in the modern day. It allows us to assess the strength of something intangible like relationships. Applying it to a familial relationship will create a better understanding of how Facebook as a social media and communication medium affects family relationships. Other studies such as Wykoff, 2019 and Vitak, 2014 examined ties in different contexts. They cover tie strength in different relationship demographics. This seemed to be the case for many studies.

However, this study uses tie strength to explore how families use Facebook to interact with each other as part of their family communication. The Family Communication Patterns Theory is used to explain how a family communicates within itself in normal life. These determinations are used to assess how this translates to the digital format of Facebook and if there is any difference. By looking at tie strength through the lens of familial relationships via digital media platform such as Facebook, this study seeks to fill a research gap by answering interesting questions such as 1) If Facebook helps maintain the quality of family communication that has become more dependent on Facebook for family interaction; 2) If the family continues to communicate in a way that they feel is representative of their real-world communications?; and 3) If the family communication on the digital landscape positively or negatively impacts the familiar relationships and tie-strength?

## 1.2 Objectives of Study

This study aims to achieve the following three objectives:

- 1) To find out how American parents and their adult children communicate on Facebook in terms of role, degree, tone, and balance of interactions
- 2) To determine if Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children positively influence their familial relationship
- 3) To determine if Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children increase or maintain their tie-strength

This study methodically researches the ways in which American parents and adult children interact on Facebook. Examples would be, but not limited to, likes, comments, posts and sharing photos. This also includes the frequency and depth of the interactions.

The study also investigates if the Facebook interactions positively influence the familial relationship. It will also consider the negative influence as well and if and how Facebook has contributed to it.

## 1.3 Scope of Study

The study focuses on family communication. Applying a quantitative approach, it uses an online survey to examine how American parents and their adult children communicate on Facebook, whether their Facebook interactions influence their familial relationship, and whether their Facebook interactions increase or maintain tie-strength

between parents and their adult children. This study focuses on American family communication on Facebook in terms of role, degree, tone, and balance of interactions.

The target population of this study is American parents and adult children aged 18 and older. The primary data will be collected via online questionnaires distributed on Facebook.com. Data collection is scheduled during January through early March 2024.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

The study would like to answer three research questions and sub-questions as followings:

RQ#1: How do American parents and their adult children communicate on Facebook in terms of role, degree, tone, and balance of interactions?

RQ#1.1: How do American parents and their adult children communicate on Facebook in terms of interaction role?

RQ#1.2: How do American parents and their adult children communicate on Facebook in terms of interaction degree?

RQ#1.3: How do American parents and their adult children communicate on Facebook in terms of interaction tone?

RQ#1.4: How do American parents and their adult children communicate on Facebook in terms of interaction balance?

RQ#2: Do Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children positively influence their familial relationship?

RQ#3: Do Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult child[ren] increase or maintain their tie strength?

### 1.5 Significance of Study

There is a lot of research on parents and adolescent children's interactions online as well as the interactions between adolescents and their friends but there is a lack of research on the effect of communication between parents and their adult children that takes place online. This study will focus on a different demographic and relationship status, there are different circumstances between family members than friends. The familial relationship has differences when compared to platonic relationships and romantic relationships. There are many other relationships to examine and this study will provide more insight to that between parents and adult children. This can be used to better understand the relationship between modern parents and children, starting from the effect of Facebook on their relationship when the children are, in theory, mostly independent from their parents.

As for therapists and psychiatrists, this study could be useful to therapists or psychiatrists that are trying to understand/navigate one of the complex components to the relationship between family members. This could be a common topic for patients to vent about to their care providers. Because of this, mental health care practitioners should be

well educated on the importance social media has currently. This study could help fill a small part of that criteria.

As for Facebook users, this study benefits Facebook users as well. By better understanding the different kinds of impacts Facebook has on different parts of people's lives, people can choose better responses to situations. In the case of this study, family members can choose to limit, extend and maintain the amount of interaction they have with their parent[s]/child[ren] on Facebook. This could also be applied to other digital relationships they have.

## 1.6 Definition of Terms

This section provides an operational definition of the important concepts of this study.

### 1.6.1 Family Communication

This term refers to the mixture of verbal and non-verbal communication that a family constructs over time, fits specifically to the family.

### 1.6.2 Parent[s]

This term is defined as one or more adults that have guardianship over an adolescent at some point, either through birth, adoption, or legal guardianship and maintain a parental role in the child's life.

### 1.6.3 Adult Children

This term refers to a child who has reached the age of majority, 18 years old  
(Merriam-Webster)

#### 1.6.4 Facebook

This term is defined as a popular social media platform that allows people to stay connected with others in multiple ways, including messaging and interacting with each other's content. Facebook has over one billion users total and hundreds of millions of daily users (Hall, 2021). Interactions occurred on Facebook include various forms such as liking someone's post, commenting, mentioning them in a post and direct messaging.

#### 1.6.5 Facebook Interaction

This term is defined as any social action a Facebook user makes in the platform such as, but not limited to, liking, commenting, and sharing other's posts, replying to comments, using Facebook messenger for instant messaging, and audio and video calls. For this study, it is operationalized in four dimensions:

##### 1.6.5.1 Role of Interaction

This term is defined as what part of communication the user fulfills, either the sender or the receiver. Facebook users can perform the role of message sender or message receiver, or both roles.

##### 1.6.5.2 Degree of Interaction

This term is defined as the frequency at which people interact with others on Facebook including the type of interaction they participate in. These interactions

range from a shallow degree (e.g., liking a post), to intense degree (e.g., using Facebook messenger to send instant messages and audio/video calls). Variation of interactions among Facebook users can be divided into three levels -- shallow, medium, or intense.

#### 1.6.5.3 Tone of Interaction

This term is defined as the type of language that the Facebook user uses on the platform in comments and posts. Facebook users can have either “formal,” “semi-formal,” or “informal” tone of interaction with other users.

#### 1.6.5.4 Balance of Interaction

This term is defined as the relative amount each person in the relationship communicates with the others. Facebook users can have either “equal balance” or “unequal balance” of interactions.

1.6.6 Family Member: In this study, family member refers to the opposite roles discussed (adult child and parent). If a person is the adult child, their family member refers to their father or mother, and vice versa.

#### 1.6.7 Familial Relationship

This term refers to the way members of the same family are connected. This often results in familial love and a sense of belonging in the nuclear family unit. According to Fox, Allen, David, & The Awakening Team (2014), this term consists of three dimensions -- Cohesion (support), 2) Expressiveness (expression of opinions), and 3) Conflict (angry conflict within a family). Familial relationship can be subdivided into three levels – weak, medium, and strong.

#### 1.6.8 Tie-Strength

This term is defined as “the strength of any kind of relationship between two individuals lies on a spectrum” (Mattie, Engø-Monsen, & Ling, 2018). Tie among family members can be subdivided into three levels – weak, medium, and strong.



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## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter addresses and reviews previous research which is related to the topic. Family communication patterns theory, relational dialectics theory, social penetration theory, and uses and gratification theory were also reviewed to develop a conceptual framework and research hypotheses for this study.

#### 2.1 Review of Related Literature and Previous Studies

Facebook is a, if not the most, prominent social networking site. With 2.85 billion monthly users as of March 2021 (Facebook Inc., 2021), Facebook is the largest social media platform in terms of how many people use it on a monthly basis. In previous literature studying various aspects of communication between individuals, it is often stated that Facebook has become a supplemental form of communication for those who cannot engage in regular face-to-face communication (Vitak, 2014). “[...] Users may be relying on the site as the primary form of communication to stay in touch with more geographically distant and weaker ties” (Vitak, 2014).

This could be due to geographical distance and more recently, the Coronavirus 19 pandemic (Abel, Machin, & Brownlow, 2020). Regardless, in this developing digital landscape, families have relegated themselves to using Facebook to communicate in order to make up for the otherwise lack of communication.

### 2.1.1 Facebook

Facebook was founded in 2004 as TheFacebook.com by a group of Harvard students, including Mark Zuckerberg, who is the chairman, CEO, and controlling shareholder (Hall, 2021). The website was originally for Harvard students and when they signed up they would be able to “post photographs of themselves and personal information about their lives, such as their class schedules and clubs they belonged to” (Hall, 2021). The website grew quickly and by June of 2004, the website had amassed a usership of over 250,000 students from 34 universities (Hall, 2004). The website has grown massively over its close to two decades of long existence. Facebook had more than 2.91 billion monthly users during quarter four of 2021 (Statista, 2022). Overtime, Facebook’s user demographic has diversified and grown to be international, with users from all over the world. This audience expansion is what has made it a way for people to communicate with their friends, family, or really anyone they want. This is a drastic change of direction from the original intention of connecting classmates and the student population of Harvard and then American universities in general. Facebook has also expanded their capabilities as technology has developed, allowing different ways of interacting with others.

### 2.1.2 Facebook Interactions

“Facebook interaction refers to communication conducted between two or more people on the proprietary online platform and may consist of wall posts, tagging photos, leaving comments on others’ posts, sending private messages, or communicating via private groups” (Wykoff, 2019, p.13). Messaging, sharing photos, and interacting with

posts are some of the most common methods of communicating on Facebook (Abel et al, 2020). These different communication methods can range in tone, role and degree.

#### 2.1.2.1 Role

Role refers to the position each person plays in the communication process. There are senders and receivers. The sender refers to “the person (or people) who “sends out” a message. This message could be written or verbal, electronic or paper-based, formal or informal” (Wofford, 2013). In the instance of communication on facebook, the message is always in a digital format. Facebook provides every user with the ability to be a sender on their platform. The sender “the person (or people) to whom a message is communicated and who, in many cases, provides feedback concerning the message” (Wofford, 2013).

#### 2.1.2.2 Feedback

The priorly mentioned feedback can be in the form of comments, likes, reactions, as well as other offered options on the platform. This sender feedback can range in degree and tone.

#### 2.1.2.3 Degree

The degree can be determined by how much effort or time is taken to produce said feedback. The amount of time required for liking/reacting to a post and commenting on the post can differ greatly, Even the amount of effort involved for commenting can greatly differ. There is the option to simply write a quick response such as “love this!” or “great picture”, which would take all of a few seconds. However, users can also write as

much of a response as they choose, within the about 8000-character limit on Facebook comments.

Users can send their messages through the separate messenger app on smart phones and devices and through the Facebook website on computers. This app also allows for audio calls and video calls. It allows for flexibility in telecommunication, allowing for people to use a WiFi based app instead of cellular data from their phone network plans. People can also post photos and videos to the website. Photos allow for the viewer to feel more included in the poster's life and have a better understanding of what the poster is experiencing. Facebook also allows for users to interact with the content individuals post. People can like the post and have different options when doing so, including love, care, anger, and other emoticons that represent different emotions.

### 2.1.3 Family Communication

Each family creates their own methods of communicating, this has always been true, but as time and technology has progressed, the way a family unit communicates has also adjusted to the changing times. Family communication depends on simultaneous intrapersonal and interpersonal processes (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). A family member has to communicate and regulate with themselves as well as their family members. This means that “family communication needs to consider intersubjectivity and interactivity” (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002, p. 73). Intersubjectivity is the shared meaning and creation of meanings between people. Intersubjectivity can be seen in family systems through ongoing family jokes that only the family members understand, inside jokes. Interactivity is a similar concept.

As communication evolves to incorporate more technology into it, so does family communication. It is fairly common now-a-days for even younger children to have cell phones in the United States and this can help them become technologically literate at a younger age than previous generations. Family communication has had to morph and conform to the new times they are living in.

#### 2.1.4 Familial Relationships

Families have complicated dynamics that can influence how they communicate. Some families are closer knit than others. Each family is affected by their environment and experiences. Families also differ in their makeup, how many parents, how many children, if people are adopted, et cetera. There are many external and internal forces that can dictate how a family communicates. Families mold themselves unconsciously to adapt to the situations they are presented with. Events, such as deaths, can change the way families interact. Some might become closer, looking for support from their family, while the other can also be true, creating strained relationships. This has to do with the interpersonal communication of each individual.

Another influence on familial relationships is how hierarchical they are. American society is made up of many different cultures, all having their own influences on parenting. Family communication patterns theory discusses some of these family dynamics: pluralistic, protective, consensual, Laissez-Faire (Shorey, 2022).

Acculturation can impact the way these families operate. “There tends to be disparity between immigrant parents and their children in the cultural and psychological changes that take place in the acculturation process” (Fleck & Fleck, 2013, p. 14) There

are a lot of families with immigrant parents or the first generation of American parents. These families also have their own dynamics. For example, language barriers are very common in such families, meaning that the children of immigrants are often translators for them. “According to the Pew Hispanic Center, 68.2% of first-generation Hispanic immigrants and 39.1% of the Asian population speak little to no English (P. Taylor, Lopez, Martinez, & Velasco, 2012 as cited in Bush et al., 2021). As the children in the family become educated in the American public school system, they acquire English language skills.

#### 2.1.5 Tie Strength

Tie strength can be described as the level of closeness between two individuals and “combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and reciprocal services which characterize the tie” (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1,361). This can be based on various factors and family members already had a somewhat predetermined tie strength due to the familial proximity, though this is not absolute as families can have a strained dynamic. Previous studies have explored various methods for measuring tie strength and it tends to break down to acquaintance, good friend and very close friend in a digital context (Wykoff, 2019). This thinking has to be revised in the context of families and their vulnerability, trust, and level of comfort with each other.

“Ledbetter [...] has examined differences in communication across variations in ties, finding that frequency of communication (both on Facebook and through more traditional channels) positively predicted relational closeness” (Vitak, 2014). The importance of ties when examining relationship maintenance over digital communication

cannot be forgotten. Tie maintenance can be done in person and online. Vitak mentions in their 2014 publication, *Facebook makes the heart grow fonder...* that “users can keep in contact from a distance through passive strategies, which also helps foster the maintenance of weak ties”.

Tie strength describes the level of closeness of a relationship. People have weaker and stronger ties to different people depending on various things, including how much they communicate and what kind of information is shared between the two people.

## 2.2 Review of Related Theories

Theories that were consistently brought up in previous literature were those on family communications. This study reviews the Family Communication Patterns Theory, and three communication theories -- Uses and Gratification, Social Penetration Theory, and Relational Dialectics Theory, which are reviewed to explain why and how a family communicates.

### 2.2.1 Family Communication Patterns Theory

The Family Communication Patterns Theory was originally developed by Mcleod and Chaffee to develop consistent ways for communicating with one another (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006).

Family communications patterns theory was originally a model examining “how families create a shared social reality through the process of co-orientation and the subsequent reformulation of the model” (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006). The different

types of families outlined by this theory are: consensual, protective, pluralistic, and Laissez-Faire. Each different type contains either low or high conformity and low or high conversation. (Shorey, 2022)

Physical distance and a lack of opportunity to interact face-to-face can disturb these consistent communication patterns and technology has come up with new ways to combat this issue.

### 2.2.2 Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

“The UGT explains how people use the media for their own need[s] and get satisfied when their needs are fulfilled” (Mass Communication, 2018). Social media and other technology have allowed for almost instant gratification in many aspects. It was more difficult to keep in close contact with people, especially those far away prior to social media and email. At present, social media allows people to keep tabs on their friends and family in today’s ever evolving digital landscape. “This theory has a user/audience-centered approach” (Mass Communication). It addresses the different needs a person has, such as cognitive needs, affective needs, and personal integrative needs (Mass Communication, 2018). Social media has become one of the ways people can quickly fulfill some of their needs. One such need is the need for human interaction. Though it is not face-t-face, people are able to communicate with other people via the internet. In the instance of this study, the need is to be able to stay in communication with family members, even if it’s not in-person. The interactions can help to fill a video that would be left empty without the interference of digital communication. “Social connectedness, defined as “the depth and breadth of interpersonal relationships an

individual entertains with other people” (Zwier, Araujo, Boukes, & Willemsen, 2011), is one of the most fundamental of human needs and desires” (Zwier, Araujo, Boukes, & Willemsen, 2011 as cited in Wykoff, 2019, p. 2).

The Family Communication Patterns Theory and the UGT lead to the development of the first research hypothesis regarding family communication via Facebook in terms of role, degree, tone, and balance of interactions.

HP#1: American Facebook users communicate with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook in terms of role, degree, tone, and balance of interactions.

In order to examine each dimension of Facebook interactions, the sub-hypotheses are also proposed as followings:

HP#1.1: American Facebook users communicate with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook by performing both sender and receiver roles.

HP#1.2: American Facebook users communicate to an intense degree with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook.

HP#1.3: American Facebook users communicate in an informal tone with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook.

HP#1.4: American Facebook users communicate in an equal balance with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook.

### 2.2.3 Social Penetration Theory

Social penetration theory states that as people communicate more, they form a closer, more intimate relationship (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Considering the relationship

parents and their children have from birth, there is a slight difference from that of the communication between complete strangers. Even when considering this, the relationship between families is not guaranteed to be close and positive. Therefore, Facebook can hypothetically still have an impact on the intimacy level of communication between parents and children. Accordingly, this theory leads to the development of the second research hypothesis regarding positive influence of Facebook interactions on users' familiar relationship:

HP#2: Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children positively influences their familial relationship.

#### 2.2.4 Relational Dialectics Theory:

Relational dialectics theory is an interpersonal theory that discusses the contradictions in communications between people (Griffin et al., 2018). Relational dialectics theory dictates that “interpersonal relationships are created through the interplay of discourses” (Baxter & Makhail, 2018). We build up relationships depending on the frequency and type of communication we engage in with other people. We create different levels of relationships, in terms of the quality of them, based on the type of information we share with each other, such as our emotions and opinions as well as personal information (Wykoff, 2019, p.40). This closeness of the relationship can be referred to as tie strength. The more we interact with a person and the more we disclose about ourselves, the stronger the tie strength.

“Relational dialectic theory argues that closeness in relationships occurs not because a preconceived notion of ourselves is put forward, but the selves are given shape

by the relationship” (Wykoff, 2019, p.40). This study uses relational dialectics theory as a guiding thought process to discern a starting point for relationships between parents and children. The study will examine the effect of communication through Facebook on the relationship between parents and their adult children and if this type of interpersonal communication is positive or negative for the relationship. The ways families communicate evolve as everyone ages. Children grow into adults and often develop more mature ways of communicating their wants and needs to their parents. The relationship also evolves. The relationship can often change to the adult children becoming the caregiver to their parents as they age. These changed dynamics might lead to a change in communication patterns. This theory leads to the development of the third research hypothesis regarding impact of Facebook interactions on users’ tie-strength:

HP#3: Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children increases or maintains their tie strength.

### 2.3 Research Hypothesis

Review of literature and previous studies, together with review of relevant theories lead to the development of the three research hypotheses and sub-hypotheses as followings:

HP#1: American Facebook users communicate with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook in terms of role, degree, tone, and balance of interactions.

To investigate four dimensions of Facebook interactions, four sub-hypotheses are proposed as followings:

HP#1.1: American Facebook users communicate with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook by performing both sender and receiver roles.

HP#1.2: American Facebook users communicate to an intense degree with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook.

HP#1.3: American Facebook users communicate in an informal tone with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook.

HP#1.4: American Facebook users communicate in an equal balance with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook.

HP#2: Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children positively influences their familial relationship.

HP#3: Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children increases or maintains their tie strength.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

The review of literature, previous studies, and relevant theories provide ground for developing a conceptual framework of this study. The framework examines the relationship between a Facebook user's interactions on Facebook with their family members and their familial relationship and tie-strength.

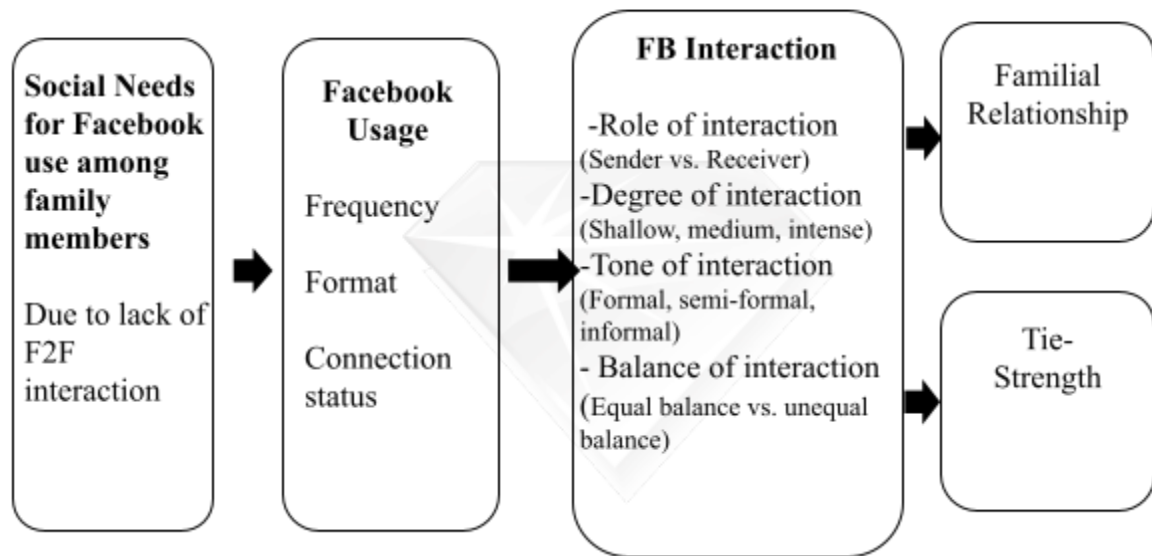
There are various reasons that family members may not interact often such as physical proximity, COVID-19, and busy schedules. Facebook can fill the gap in communication. Each family member may have a different level of dependency on Facebook. Their interactions may differ in how they communicate on Facebook in terms of performed role (sender vs. receiver), degree (shallow, medium, intense), tone (formal, semi-formal, informal), and balance (equal balance vs. unequal balance) of interactions.

Facebook offers many ways for users to interact, and users may favor certain interactions such as liking and commenting on others posts. Some users may not create their own posts and only view other's.

Users also have their own unique online language and tone, some more formal and others with many typos and filled with slang. Their consistency with interacting can also play a part on the overall effect that Facebook plays on familial relationships.

It is expected that the Facebook interactions in terms of role, degree, tone, and balance would create a stronger familial relationship, or help maintain or increase tie-strength between parent(s) and their adult child(ren).

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter will cover the methodology of this study. It includes seven sections which are research design, population and sample section, research instrument, and instrument pretest. In addition, data collection procedure, data analysis, together with validity and reliability of the study are explained.

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study is a single shot study, which utilizes data from an online survey that can be used to draw conclusions about family communication via Facebook. The research is designed in a way to target the correct population, Adult Americans on Facebook. The survey's goal is to investigate respondents' Facebook use and interactions, familiar relationships, and tie-strength.

##### 3.1.1 Research Approach

A quantitative approach is being utilized because this study aims to establish a base level understanding of the adult American experience on Facebook and how it pertains to their family relationships through numerical data.

Quantitative approach also allows us to test whether the hypotheses stated in the previous chapter are supported or not; 1) American Facebook users communicate with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook in terms of role, degree, tone, and balance of interactions, 2) Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children

positively influences their familial relationship, and 3) Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children increases or maintains their tie strength. Furthermore, this approach is optimal to compare the survey responses as well as offer statistical figures for future reference.

### 3.1.2 Research Method

A survey is being used as the research method because the other possibilities would not be able to provide the same kind of data. It would be difficult to find a wide variety of writing to textually analyze as well as not providing a lot of specific examples of the user experience and how it applies to different people. A survey has the possibility of being far reaching and being filled out by a large group of people from various demographic groups. It would also be difficult to interview such a large number of individuals or have focus groups to have enough data to form a well-rounded conclusion. It also would not fit the quantitative approach to this study as well as a survey.

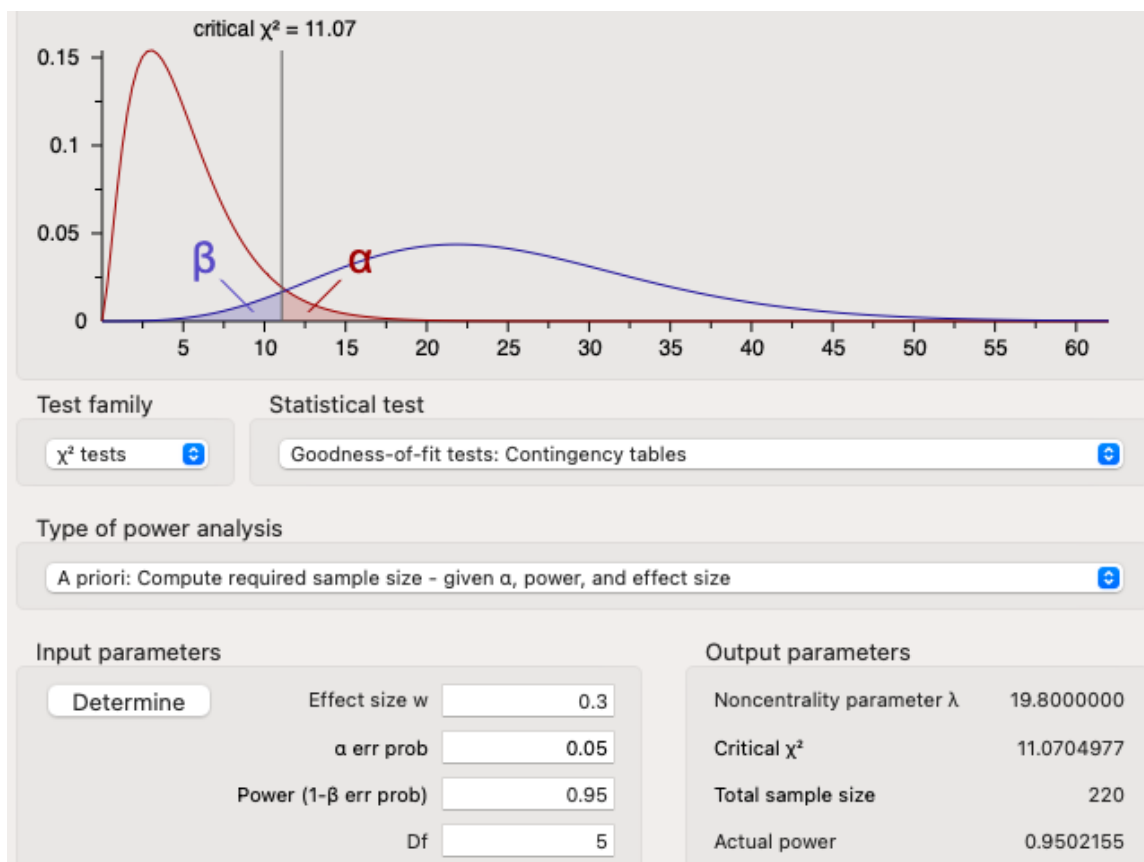
The link of the online survey was posted on Facebook, the social media platform at the center of this survey, and was shared by respondents so that more and more people have the opportunity to participate. The questions using various types of measurement including Likert scale also allow for the quantification of the data. The answers are given numerical values, and analyzed with the use of descriptive and inferential statistics.

### 3.2 Population and sample size

According to the United States Census Bureau the estimated population of the United States of America is 331,893,745 people, with 258,327,312 (77.8%) of the people being over the age of 18 (Bureau, U. S. C.). This is considered the population of this study. It is also estimated that there are 239.15 million Facebook users in the USA (Statista, 2022), though it can be assumed that an unknown percent of those users is under the age of 18, thus ineligible for this study. The overlap between the two groups, those over 18 years old in the USA and Facebook users in the USA is unknown.

The estimated sample size is 74. This is calculated with a confidence level of 95 percent and a 5 percent margin of error. The sample size was calculated using the online software G\*Power (G\*Power, 2020). The program uses a confidence level of 0.95 and a margin of error of 0.05.

Figure 3.1 Sample Size Calculator



### 3.3 Research Instrument

The survey was conducted via an online platform, using Google Forms as a self-administered questionnaire, which was posted on Facebook from January 21, 2024 to February 23, 2024. The survey provides basic information of respondents, with demographics such as age, gender, nationality (if they identify as being American), state, and level of education. The collected data were used to analyze whether and how much Facebook has impacted the familial relationship between parents and their adult children. This includes the amount of impact and if it was in a positive or negative way. It will also

find out the connection status of family members (parents and adult children) on Facebook. Questionnaire contains screening questions and five sections as followings:

### Screening Questions

Prior to the first section of the survey, screening questions were asked to ensure that the participants are qualified to participate in the study. Two questions are 1) Do you use Facebook to communicate with your parent(s)/adult child(ren)?, and 2) Are you an American?

### Section A: Respondents' Demographics

Respondents are requested to indicate their basic demographic characteristics in the form of multiple-choice questions regarding their age, gender, nationality, state, and level of education.

### Section B: Facebook Usage

Respondents are requested to indicate their Facebook usage in terms of three dimensions -- connection status, frequency, and format.

As for “connection status,” respondents were asked to determine whether they are Facebook friends with their family member by selecting answers based on two answer choices: 1 = No, and 2 = Yes.

As for “frequency,” respondents were asked to determine how frequently they use Facebook on a weekly basis by selecting answers based on answer choices of a

5–point rating scale with the following five points: 1 = Never, 2 = Hardly, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, and 5 = Always.

As for “format,” respondents were asked to determine whether they use each of the five formats (text, picture, video, audio call, and video call) on Facebook by selecting answers based on two answer choices: 1 = No, and 2 = Yes.

### Section C: Facebook Interactions

The measurement of the independent variable includes four dimensions of Facebook interactions: 1) role of interaction (sender versus receiver), 2) degree of interaction (shallow, medium, intense), 3) tone of interaction (formal, semi-formal, and informal), and 4) balance of interaction (balanced versus unbalanced).

#### Role of Interactions

Respondents will be asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following eight statements regarding the role of interactions with their family member(s) by selecting the provided answer choices of a 5–point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

Table: 3.1 Indicators for Role of Interaction

| Role of Interactions | Statements                                                                                              |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sender Role          | I usually post photos and/or text posts on my Facebook wall.                                            |
|                      | I normally comment on my parent(s)/adult child(ren)'s posts on Facebook.                                |
|                      | I mostly react to my parent(s)/adult child(ren)'s posts with "like, care, sad, et cetera"               |
|                      | I initiate messages and/or calls on Facebook messenger with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) all the time. |
| Receiver Role        | I mostly read posts of my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on their Facebook timeline.                        |
|                      | I often watch video clips on the timeline of my parents/adult child(ren).                               |
|                      | I generally listen to audio clips on Facebook Messenger.                                                |
|                      | I see pictures posted by my parents/adult child(ren) on my timeline all the time.                       |

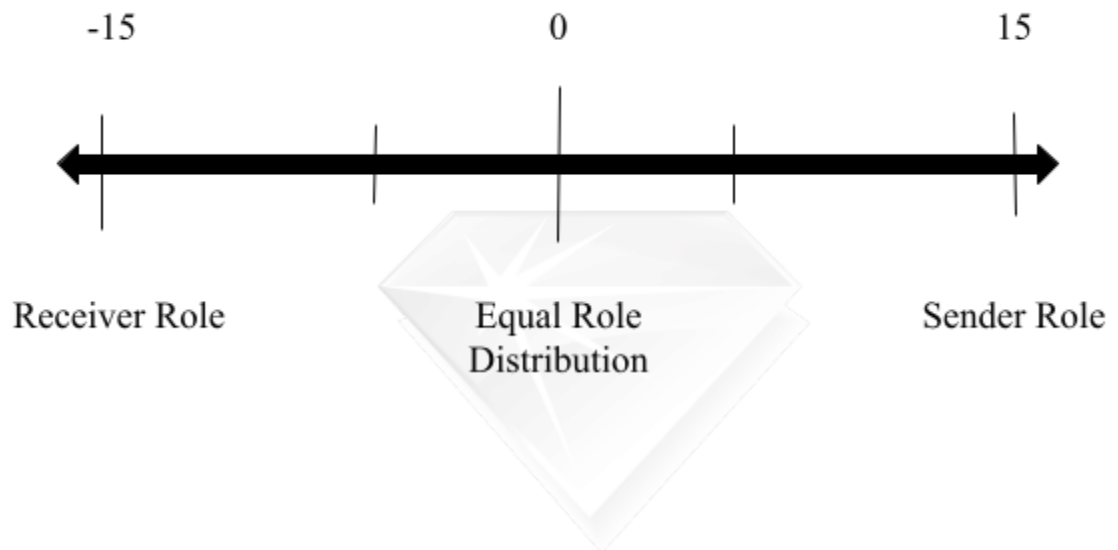
These questions' score will be calculated separately as receiver role and sender role questions and then compared to each other, so see which one describes the respondents' role more accurately. Of course, there may be a balanced score between being the receiver and the sender. A low score in both would suggest that there is not a lot of communication and interaction in general between the family members.

Each statement has a possible high score of 5 points and low score of 1 point., allowing for a total of 20 points for receiver and 20 points for sender.

The statements are written so that high agreement (strongly agree, 5 points) responses will add to a higher score. A high score means that the respondent fits that role. For example: 16 points total for receiver statements means that the person often is the recipient of communications. The same respondent could also get a high score for the sender role. The roles are not mutually exclusive.

The two total scores will be subtracted from each other, (sender score - receiver score). A large negative score (-15) indicates that the respondent fits the sender receiver role more, while a higher positive score indicates that the respondent is the sender the majority of the time. This also allows for a middle range for the respondents that have a balance as both the sender and the receiver.

Figure 3.2: Sender/Receiver Score Code Visual Aid



#### Degree of Interactions

Respondents will be asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following six statements regarding the degree of interactions with their family member(s) by selecting the provided answer choices of a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 3.2 Indicators for Degree of Interaction

| Statements                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I click the “like, love, or care” button on my parent(s)/adult child(ren)’s Facebook posts. |
| I share posts with my parents/adult child(ren).                                             |
| I send frequent messages to parent(s)/adult child(ren) via Facebook messenger.              |
| I make video calls with my parents/ adult child(ren) via Facebook Messenger.                |
| I make long calls via Facebook Messenger with my parents/adult child(ren).                  |
| I leave long comments on my parent(s)/adult child(ren)’s Facebook timeline.                 |

The degree of interaction section is divided in three levels: shallow, medium, and intense, with two statements for each. The scores from six items were combined to determine the degree of interaction. The possible lowest total score is 6 points and highest total score is 30 points. Accordingly, scores are interpreted based on three levels (low vs. middle vs. high) as follows.

Table 3.3 Interpretation for Degree of Interaction Scores

| Score   | Range of Score | Interpretation      |
|---------|----------------|---------------------|
| 6 - 13  | Low range      | Shallow interaction |
| 14 - 21 | Middle range   | Medium interaction  |
| 22 - 30 | High range     | Intense interaction |

#### Tone of Interactions

Respondents will be asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following six statements regarding the tone of interactions with their family member(s) by selecting the provided answer choices of a 5–point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 3.4 Indicators for Tone of Interactions

| Statements                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I use one-word expressions such as “cute!” when communicating with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on Facebook. |
| I generally use colloquial/casual language when communicating with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on Facebook. |

(Continued)

Table 3.4 Indicators for Tone of Interactions (Continued)

|                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I write short sentences/phrases when communicating with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on Facebook. |
| I use emojis and emoticons when I communicate with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on Facebook.      |
| I mostly use slang when communicating with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on Facebook.              |
| I don't use proper punctuation when I communicate with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on Facebook.  |

Tone of interaction has been arranged into three possible tones, including formal, semi-formal, and informal. Each tone has two statements, similarly to the degree of interaction section. The scores from six items were combined to determine the tone of interaction. The possible lowest total score is 6 points and highest total score is 30 points. Accordingly, scores are interpreted based on three levels (low vs. middle vs. high) as follows.

Table 3.5 Interpretation for Tone of Interaction Scores

| Score   | Range of Score | Interpretation   |
|---------|----------------|------------------|
| 6 - 13  | Low range      | Formal tone      |
| 14 - 21 | Middle range   | Semi-formal tone |
| 22 - 30 | High range     | Informal tone    |

#### Balance of Interactions

Respondents will be asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following three statements regarding balance of interactions with their family member(s) by selecting the provided answer choices of a 5–point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 3.6 Indicators for Balance of Interaction

| Balance of Interactions | Statements                                                                     |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         | My parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I both have a similar amount of interaction. |

(Continued)

Table 3.6 Indicators for Balance of Interaction (Continued)

|  |                                                                                                           |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | I generally receive the same amount of interaction as I give to my parent(s)/adult child(ren).            |
|  | I feel that my parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I have quite a good balance in interacting with each other. |

The total score from the Likert scale (1-5 ranking; 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) will be divided into two levels based on the score. The top half is considered to have “equal” balance on communication and the bottom half is considered to have “unequal” balance of communication. The statements are written from the point of view of someone who has an equal balance of communication so that the strongly agreed (5 point) answer will add to a higher score. This is matched with the two levels: higher score = balanced communications; and lower score = unbalanced communication.

Each statement is worth 5 points, with a total of 3 statements, allowing a possible high score of 15, and 3 as the lowest possible score. As each statement is at least 1 point, this leaves 12 possible points to be added to the score. The remaining 13 points are broken up into two-point ranges. Accordingly, scores are interpreted based on two levels (low vs. high) as follows.

Table 3.7: Interpretation for Balance of Interaction Scores

| Score  | Range of Score | Interpretation  |
|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| 3 - 8  | Low range      | Unequal balance |
| 9 - 15 | High range     | Equal balance   |

#### Section D: Familial Relationship

This study adopts the Brief Family Relationship Scale (BFRS) by Carlotta Ching Ting Fok, James Allen, David Henry, and People Awakening Team (2014). The scale was adapted from the 27-item Relationship dimension of the FES by Moos and Moos (1994), consisting of 19 items with 3 sets of sub-scales -- 1) Cohesion (support), 2) Expressiveness (expression of opinions), and 3) Conflict (angry conflict within a family).

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements regarding familial relationship by selecting the provided answer choices of a 5–point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree. The following are statements used to measure the familial relationship between family members:

Table 3.8 Indicators for Familial Relationship

| Familial Relationship | Statements                                                          |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cohesion              | In our family we really help and support each other.                |
|                       | In our family we spend a lot of time doing things together at home. |
|                       | In our family we work hard at what we do in our home.               |
|                       | In our family there is a feeling of togetherness.                   |
|                       | My family members really support each other.                        |
|                       | I am proud to be a part of our family.                              |
|                       | In our family we really get along well with each other.             |

(Continued)

Table 3.8 Indicators for Familial Relationship (Continued)

|                      |                                                                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cohesion (Continued) | In our family we do things for each other without being asked.          |
| Expressiveness       | In our family we can talk openly in our home.                           |
|                      | In our family we sometimes tell each other about our personal problems. |
|                      | In our family we begin discussions easily.                              |
|                      | In our family we are usually careful about what we say to each other.   |
| Conflict             | In our family we work out our problems. (R)                             |
|                      | In our family we argue a lot. (R)                                       |

(Continued)

Table 3.8 Indicators for Familial Relationship (Continued)

|                      |                                                          |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Conflict (Continued) | In our family we are really mad at each other a lot. (R) |
|                      | In our family we lose our tempers a lot. (R)             |
|                      | In our family we often put down each other. (R)          |
|                      | My family members sometimes are violent. (R)             |
|                      | In our family we raise our voice when we are mad. (R)    |

*Note.* Items with (R) are reverse-keyed.

Each statement is worth 5 points, with a total of 19 statements, allowing a possible high score of 95 and 19 as the lowest possible score, since each statement is at least 1 point. This leaves 76 possible points to be added to the score. The remaining 76 points are broken up into three ranges.

The statements are written from the point of view of someone who falls into the high level of familial relationships so that the strongly agreed (5 point) answers will add to a higher score. Accordingly, scores are interpreted based on three levels (low vs. middle vs. high) as follows:

Table 3.9 Interpretation for Familial Relationship Scores

| Score   | Range of Score | Interpretation               |
|---------|----------------|------------------------------|
| 19 - 44 | Low range      | Weak familial relationship   |
| 45 - 70 | Middle range   | Medium familial relationship |
| 71 - 95 | High range     | Strong familial relationship |

#### Section E: Tie-strength

This study utilizes the virtual tie-strength scale (VTS scale) created by Andrea Petróczi, Tamás Nepusz and Fülöp Bazsó (2007) in *Measuring tie-strength in virtual social networks*. The VTS scale uses on 11 measures as indicators of tie strength: frequency, intimacy/closeness, voluntary investment in the tie, advice given/received, desire for companionship, multiple social context (breadth of topics), long period of time (duration), reciprocity, provide support/emotional intensity, mutual confiding (trust), and sociability/conviviality (Petróczi, Nepusz, & Bazsó, 2007).

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding tie-strength by selecting the provided answer choices

of a 5–point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree. The following are statements used to measure the tie-strength between family members:

Table 3.10 Indicators for Tie Strength

| Tie Strength                                   | Statements                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Frequency                                      | My parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I communicate multiple times a week.                        |
| Intimacy/<br>closeness                         | My parent(s)/adult child(ren) are very easy to talk to and I feel comfortable with them.      |
| Voluntary investment in<br>the tie             | I frequently think about and want to communicate with my parent(s)/adult child(ren).          |
| Advice given/received                          | I can go to my parent(s)/adult child(ren) for advice and vice versa.                          |
| Desire for<br>companionship                    | My parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I seek each other out for companionship.                    |
| Multiple social context<br>(breadth of topics) | There are numerous topics my parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I can talk about, ranging widely. |

(Continued)

Table 3.10 Indicators for Tie Strength (Continued)

|                                           |                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Long period of time<br>(duration)         | I can speak with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) for an hour or more.                                                     |
| Reciprocity                               | My parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I both frequently initiate communication.                                             |
| Provide<br>support/emotional<br>intensity | My parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I offer each other support frequently.                                                |
| Mutual confiding (trust)                  | My parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I tell each other personal information in a mostly equal exchange without hesitation. |
| Sociability/<br>conviviality              | Communication with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I is almost effortless.                                            |

Figure 3.3: Tie Strength Measurement Categories and References

| Measures                                    | Category  | References                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Frequency                                   | Indicator | Benassi et al., 1999; Blumstein & Kollock, 1988; Granovetter, 1974; Lin et al., 1981; Marsden & Campbell, 1984; Mathews et al., 1998; Mitchell, 1987; Perlman & Fehr, 1987 |
| Intimacy/Closeness                          | Indicator | Blumstein & Kollock, 1988; Marsden & Campbell, 1984; Mathews et al., 1998; Mitchell, 1987; Perlman & Fehr, 1987                                                            |
| Voluntary investment in the tie             | Indicator | Blumstein & Kollock, 1988; Perlman & Fehr, 1987                                                                                                                            |
| Advice given/received                       | Indicator | Mathews et al., 1998                                                                                                                                                       |
| Desire for companionship                    | Indicator | Blumstein & Kollock, 1988; Perlman & Fehr, 1987                                                                                                                            |
| Multiple social context (breadth of topics) | Indicator | Blumstein & Kollock, 1988; Granovetter, 1973; Marsden & Campbell, 1984; Perlman & Fehr, 1987                                                                               |
| Long period of time (duration)              | Indicator | Blumstein & Kollock, 1988; Granovetter, 1973; Marsden & Campbell, 1984; Perlman & Fehr, 1987                                                                               |
| Reciprocity                                 | Indicator | Blumstein & Kollock, 1988; Friedkin, 1980; Granovetter, 1973; Mathews et al., 1998; Perlman & Fehr, 1987                                                                   |
| Provide support/emotional intensity         | Indicator | Blumstein & Kollock, 1988; Granovetter, 1973; Mitchell, 1987; Perlman & Fehr, 1987; Wellman, 1982; Wellman & Wortley, 1990                                                 |
| Mutual confiding (trust)                    | Indicator | Granovetter, 1973; Marsden & Campbell, 1984; Mathews et al., 1998                                                                                                          |
| Sociability/conviviality                    | Indicator | Mitchell, 1987                                                                                                                                                             |

Source: Petróczi, A., Nepusz, T., & Bazsó, F. (2007). *Measuring tie-strength in virtual social networks*. Connections 27(2) 2007. Retrieved March 23, 2024, from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/38175499\\_Measuring\\_tie-strength\\_in\\_virtual\\_social\\_networks](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/38175499_Measuring_tie-strength_in_virtual_social_networks)

The total score from the Likert scale (1-5 ranking; 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) will be divided into three levels based on the score. The top third will be considered to be very close members, the middle third will be considered close members, and the bottom third will be considered acquaintances. Each statement is worth 5 points, with a total of 11 statements, allowing a possible high score of 55 and 11 as the lowest

possible score, since each statement is at least 1 point. This leaves 44 possible points to be added to the score. The remaining 44 points are broken up into three ranges.

The statements are written from the point of view of someone who falls into the high level of tie-strength so that the strongly agree (5 point) answers will add to a higher score. Accordingly, scores are interpreted based on three levels (low vs. middle vs. high) as follows.

Table 3.11 Interpretation for Tie Strength Scores

| Score   | Range of Score | Interpretation      |
|---------|----------------|---------------------|
| 11 - 25 | Low range      | Weak tie-strength   |
| 26 - 40 | Middle range   | Medium tie-strength |
| 41 - 55 | High range     | Strong tie-strength |

### 3.4 Instrument Pretest

The pretest of the survey consists of 30 participants. They took the survey as a trial so that the survey can be edited for convenience and clarity as well as any mistakes in the text. It was also used to interpret a small set of data to see if it is easily usable or if the questions are unclear, or measurement scales need to be revisited and modified. To avoid any bias, the pretest participants were not asked to take the final version of the survey.

After the pretest, a few issues were fixed for easier comprehension and possible unviable responses. The screening question “Do you have Facebook?” was replaced with “Do you use Facebook to communicate with your family?” to dissuade responses that could skew the results. The words “Please select only **one (1)** answer.” were added to the directions of each section to mitigate people selecting multiple answers on purpose.

After checking the pretest data with Cronbach’s Alpha, two sections were adjusted. Both degree of interaction and tone of interaction were reformatted so that the questions were more consistent. The statements for degree of interaction were rewritten so that high range responses would indicate an intense degree of interaction. The statements were reworded to remove ambiguous wording.

The revisions for tone of interaction were reworded in the same way and high range responses would indicate an informal tone. The wording was also edited so that it would be less ambiguous.

The changes were necessary following the less than 0.700 results for the Cronbach’s Alpha scores. Only the two previously mentioned sections, degree of interactions and tone of interactions, scored lower than 0.700.

The last change that was made was switching out the use of ‘family member(s)’ for parent(s)/adult children to make sure that respondents aren’t considering siblings of family members outside of the nuclear family unit.

### 3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was developed by looking at the various variables and research hypotheses. Then, different sections were developed to collect the necessary data for analysis. The theoretical framework was referenced when making these topics to insure that all of the different variables were covered, such as Facebook interaction, tie-strength, and familial relationship. After the questionnaire was pretested, the adjusted version was used for the real data collection.

Samples were recruited via Facebook posts and a link sharing. The questionnaire was shared publicly and the text accompanying the post encouraged respondents to share the post. The text also included a brief explanation of what the questionnaire was for. The introduction prior to starting the questionnaire covered this in more detail as well as explained what the questionnaire was testing.

The questionnaire was also able to be shared via web link. The screening questions included two questions asking “Do you use Facebook to communicate with your parent(s)/adult child(ren)?” and “Are you an American?” before continuing to the main questionnaire.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

The data will be analyzed to see what the sample's experience is on Facebook and make an inference with the target population of the study. The descriptive statistics in terms of frequency, percentage, and mean will be used to draw a conclusion of the

majority of respondents' answers. The data was sorted by response to find the majority percentage of the responses. This also allowed a visual representation of the data. It allowed for consideration if the majority was held by only a slim margin.

Independent T-Test, One-way ANOVA, and Linear Regression Analysis will be used as the inferential statistics to track the indirect impact of the respondent's Facebook usage on their familial relationship and tie-strength through their Facebook interaction.

A Cronbach's Alpha reliability test was performed on the pretest with a result of 0.851, deeming the sample reliable as it is above 0.70.

Figure 3.4 Cronbach's Alpha SPSS test results

| Variable              | Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N  |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------|----|
| Role                  | .755             | .758                                         | 8  |
| Degree                | .813             | .801                                         | 6  |
| Tone                  | .679             | .690                                         | 6  |
| Balance               | N/A              | N/A                                          | 3  |
| Familial Relationship | .755             | .764                                         | 19 |
| Tie-strength          | .959             | .959                                         | 11 |

### 3.7 Validity and Reliability

#### 3.7.1 Validity

This study assures that its measurement of familial relationship has content validity by adopting the Brief Family Relationship Scale (BFRS) from Fox, Allen, Henry, and the Awakening Team (2014), and scale of tie-strength from Virtual Tie-Strength Scale (VTS cale) created by Andrea Petróczi, Tamás Nepusz and Fülöp Bazsó in (2007).

#### 3.7.2 Reliability

All scales used in this study were tested with the Reliability Analysis. The Cronbach's Alpha of the scales are higher than .70, which are considered to have an acceptable level of reliability.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

This chapter will cover the findings of the survey. This includes the results of the descriptive statistics on both the samples' characteristics and the examined variables. It will also address the results of the hypothesis testing and any conclusions that were made.

#### 4.1 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Samples' Characteristics

#### 4.2 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Examined Variables

#### 4.3 Results of the Hypothesis Testing

#### 4.4 Conclusions

#### 4.1 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Samples' Characteristics

This section will cover the results of the samples' characteristics as well as how they use Facebook. The demographic characteristics that were covered are gender, location, and education level. The Facebook usage characteristics covered are how often they use Facebook, what methods they use to communicate on it, and connection status. Connection status refers to if they are 'friends' with their parent(s)/adult child(ren) or not.

The survey originally collected 258 responses but a large number of respondents did not pass the security questions. The first security question asked if the respondent is friends with their parent or adult child on Facebook. This survey had 258 responses but 105 answered that they are not Facebook friends with their family member. The

secondary security question asked if the respondent was an American and of the 153 that answered, three said that they are not. This left 150 responses to the survey.

Table 4.1 Screening Questions Results

| Results of Security Questions                                               |           |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Do you use Facebook to communicate with your parent(s) or adult child(ren)? |           |         |
| Answer                                                                      | Frequency | Percent |
| Yes                                                                         | 105       | 40.7%   |
| No                                                                          | 153       | 59.3%   |
| Are you an American?                                                        |           |         |
| Answer                                                                      | Frequency | Percent |
| Yes                                                                         | 150       | 98.0%   |
| No                                                                          | 3         | 2.0%    |

#### 4.1.1 Demographics

Table 4.2 shows the results for the gender demographics. There were more female respondents than males. Females made up 67.3% (101 people), while males accounted for 30.7% (46 people) of the sample. Two percent of respondents (three people) preferred to state their gender.

Table 4.2: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Gender

| Gender               | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Male                 | 46        | 30.7%   |
| Female               | 101       | 67.3%   |
| Other                | 0         | 0.0%    |
| Prefer not to answer | 3         | 0.2%    |
| Total                | 150       | 100.0%  |

Table 4.3 looks at the geographic region respondents reside in. The largest portion of the sample identified as residing in the west part of the United States, 51.3%. The second greatest portion was the southeast with 16.7%. The southwest accounted for 10.7%, the northeast 8.7%, the midwest 6.7%, and the non-continental US, Alaska/Hawaii/US territories made up for 0.7%. 5.3% of the respondents, at the time of taking the survey, resided abroad.

Table 4.3: Frequency and Percentage of Participant's Location

| Location   | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| West       | 77        | 51.3%      |
| Midwest    | 10        | 6.7%       |
| South West | 16        | 10.7%      |

(Continued)

Table 4.3: Frequency and Percentage of Participant's Location (Continued)

|                              |     |        |
|------------------------------|-----|--------|
| South East                   | 25  | 16.7%  |
| North East                   | 13  | 8.7%   |
| Alaska/Hawaii/US Territories | 1   | 0.7%   |
| A different country          | 8   | 5.2%   |
| Total                        | 150 | 100.0% |

Table 4.4 covers the results for education level. The majority of respondents had a Bachelor's Degree (46%) followed by 28% having a Master's degree or higher and 26% of respondents had the education level below a Bachelor's degree.

Table 4.4: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Education Level

| Education Level           | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Below Bachelor's Degree   | 39        | 26.0%      |
| Bachelor's Degree         | 69        | 46.0%      |
| Master's Degree and Above | 42        | 28.0%      |
| Total                     | 150       | 100.0%     |

#### 4.1.2 Usage Results

Table 4.5 reports the amounts of respondents that were friends with their parent(s)/adult. Prior to the first question of the survey there were two security questions.

The purpose of these was to ensure that participants were 1) American and 2) Facebook friends with their corresponding family member. However, the descriptive characteristics section also had a question that asked if they are ‘friends’ and one reported that they are not friends with their corresponding family member. This person's further responses were excluded to try and maintain consistency.

Table 4.5: Frequency and Percentage of Participants’ Connection Status

| Connection status | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes               | 149       | 99.3%      |
| No                | 1         | 0.7%       |

The respondents were also asked about their communication habits on Facebook, like what mediums they use to communicate on the platform. The results were independent of each other, asking the respondents to indicate whether or not they used five different communication media options: Text posts, picture posts, video posts, audio call, and video calls. The majority of respondents utilized text or pictures posts the most. Video posts were fairly evenly split between yes or no, and the majority of respondents did not use audio or video calls.

Table 4.6: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Media Usage

| Media         | Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Text Posts    | Yes      | 125       | 84.5%      |
|               | No       | 23        | 15.5%      |
|               | Total    | 148       | 100%       |
| Picture Posts | Yes      | 136       | 91.3%      |
|               | No       | 13        | 8.7%       |
|               | Total    | 149       | 100%       |
| Video Posts   | Yes      | 73        | 49.0%      |
|               | No       | 76        | 51.0%      |
|               | Total    | 149       | 100%       |
| Audio Calls   | Yes      | 49        | 33.1%      |
|               | No       | 99        | 66.9%      |
|               | Total    | 148       | 100%       |
| Video Calls   | Yes      | 51        | 34.2%      |
|               | No       | 98        | 65.8%      |
|               | Total    | 149       | 100%       |

The respondents were also asked about how frequently they used Facebook. The options were never (0 times a week), hardly (1-2 times a week), sometimes (3-4 times a week), often (5-6 times a week), always (7+ times a week/more than once a day). The

frequency findings were somewhat evenly distributed, with the majority falling in the sometimes, often and always categories.

Table 4.7: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Usage Frequency

| Usage Frequency | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Never           | 3         | 2.0%       |
| Hardly          | 22        | 14.9%      |
| Sometimes       | 34        | 22.9%      |
| Often           | 42        | 28.4%      |
| Always          | 47        | 31.8%      |
| Total           | 148       | 100%       |

#### 4.2 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Examined Variables

The table below displays a sample of the data recorded from the survey.

Table 4.8: Descriptive Statistics of the Examined Variables

| Variable               | N   | Mean   | S.D.  | No. of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|------------------------|-----|--------|-------|--------------|------------------|
| Role of Interaction    | 129 | 1.326  | 2.736 | 8            | .758             |
| Degree of Interaction  | 145 | 16.917 | 5.241 | 6            | .801             |
| Tone of Interactions   | 146 | 19.596 | 3.830 | 6            | .690             |
| Balance of interaction | 145 | 10.345 | 2.470 | 3            | N/A              |
| Familial Relationship  | 138 | 61.913 | 7.869 | 19           | .764             |
| Tie-Strength           | 144 | 41.896 | 9.546 | 11           | .959             |

#### 4.2.1 Role of Interaction

The role of interaction date was calculated a little differently than the following variables. The questions were separated into questions specific for a sender and a receiver role. The totals for these sections were calculated separately and the receiver score was subtracted from the sender score (sender score (12) - receiver score (8) = role (4 - both/balanced)). The scores were broken up into three sections for receiver, sender, and equal roles.

Table 4.9: Role of Interaction Score Range

| Score range | Role Assignment         |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| -16 to -7   | Receiver                |
| -6 ~ 6      | Equal role distribution |
| 7 ~ 16      | Sender                  |

There were a total of 129 usable responses for this section. Many respondents had missing or unordinary data points in this section, which rendered their results unusable. As shown in Table 4.10, the vast majority of respondents had an equal role as both the sender and the receiver, 96.1%. Then the role of sender was the second most common, though significantly less than equal role distribution with only five participants. Lastly, zero participant's results were the receiver.

Table 4.10: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Role of Interaction

| Role                    | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Receiver                | 5         | 3.9%       |
| Equal role distribution | 124       | 96.1%      |
| Sender                  | 0         | 0%         |
| Total                   | 129       | 100%       |

#### 4.2.2 Degree of Interaction

Degree of interaction was calculated by finding the respondent's combined scores for the six questions in the section. There were a total of 30 possible points. They were then separated into low (6-13 points), middle (14-21 points), and high range scores (22-30 points). Low range indicates a shallow degree of interaction, middle range instigates a medium degree of interaction, and high range indicates an intense degree of interaction.

As shown in Table 4.11, there were 145 usable responses to this section. 29.0% respondents' answers indicated a shallow degree of interaction, 51.0% indicated a medium degree of interaction, and 20.0% indicated an intense degree of interaction. The average score was 16.917, which corresponds with the middle range and a medium degree of interaction. A medium degree of interaction accounted for 51.0% of the results.

Table 4.11: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Degree of Interaction

| Degree  | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| Shallow | 42        | 29.0%      |
| Medium  | 74        | 51.0%      |
| Intense | 29        | 20.0%      |
| Total   | 145       | 100.0%     |

#### 4.2.3 Tone of Interaction

Tone of interaction was sorted and calculated in a similar way to the degree of interaction section. The scores were categorized into low, middle and high ranges. The possible tones are formal (low), semi-formal (middle), and informal (high) tones.

As shown in Table 4.12, there were 146 usable responses for this section. The majority of respondents fit the semi-formal tone 66.4% and informal tone was the second most common tone. Only 9 respondents (6.2%) fit into the formal tone.

Table 4.12: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Tone of Interaction

| Tone        | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Informal    | 40        | 27.4%      |
| Semi-formal | 97        | 66.4%      |
| Formal      | 9         | 6.2%       |
| Total       | 146       | 100.0%     |

#### 4.2.4 Balance of Interaction

The balance of interaction section only had 3 questions and a total combined score of 15. The range for these scores was set as an equal balance and an unequal balance of interaction. 3-8 points are coded as the low range and 9-15 points are high range. The low range corresponded with an unequal balance of communication and the high range corresponded with an equal balance of communication.

As shown in Table 4.13, there were 145 usable responses for this section. The majority, 75.9% of participants fell into the high range, or an equal balance of their interactions.

Table 4.13: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Balance of Interaction

| Balance of Interaction | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Equal Balance          | 110       | 75.9%      |
| Unequal Balance        | 35        | 24.1%      |
| Total                  | 145       | 100.0%     |

#### 4.2.5 Familial Relationship

Familial relationships were measured with 19 questions, each worth 5 points. The total combined scores were calculated and then sorted into low, middle and high ranges. Then relationship descriptions were assigned to the various ranges. A low range response

signified a weak familial relationship. A middle range response corresponded to a Medium familial relationship and a low range equaled a strong family relationship.

There were 138 usable responses for this section. As shown in Table 4.14, the majority of responses (85.5%) aligned with a medium family relationship. Only two (1.5%) aligned with a weak familial relationship and then a very small number of respondents (13%) had a strong familial relationship.

Table 4.14: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Familial Relationship

| Familial Relationship        | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Weak Familial Relationship   | 2         | 1.5%       |
| Medium familial Relationship | 118       | 85.5%      |
| Strong Familial Relationship | 18        | 13.0%      |
| Total                        | 138       | 100%       |

#### 4.2.6 Tie-Strength

The questionnaire section on tie-strength had 11 questions, each worth five possible points. The 55 total possible points were separated into a range of low, middle, and high scores. Furthermore, these codes corresponded with an interpretation of weak, medium and strong tie-strengths. A low range score was interpreted as a weak tie, a

middle score was a medium tie, and a high score was a strong tie. The score range was as follows: low - 11 ~ 25, middle - 26 ~ 40, high 41 ~ 55.

As shown in Table 4.15, the majority of respondents (90) fell into the high range, or had strong ties. 31.25% of the respondents had a medium tie and only 6.25% of them had a weak tie.

Table 4.15: Frequency and Percentage of Participants' Tie-Strength

| Tie-strength | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Weak Tie     | 9         | 6.25%      |
| Medium Tie   | 45        | 31.25%     |
| Strong Tie   | 90        | 62.5%      |
| Total        | 144       | 100%       |

#### 4.3 Results of the Hypothesis Testing

Multiple hypotheses about how American parents and adult age children communicate were tested through the questionnaire.

HP#1.1: American Facebook users communicate with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook by performing both sender and receiver roles.

The results of the questionnaire were in concurrence with this hypothesis. The majority of respondents acted as both the sender and receiver when communicating with their family member on Facebook. 124 out of 129 (96.14%) usable responses displayed

an equal role distribution. Of the other two outcomes, receiver and sender, 5 (3.86%) were receivers the majority of the time and zero were senders the majority of the time.

HP#1.2: American Facebook users communicate to a medium degree with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook.

Unlike the previous hypothesis, the results of the questionnaire were the opposite of which was hypothesized. Actually, the minority of respondents displayed an intense degree of communication with their family members on Facebook, with only 29 out of 145 respondents (20.0%). The majority of respondents communicated to a medium degree of communication and shallow degree was 28.9% of the respondents with 42 people that indicated as such.

HP#1.3: American Facebook users communicate in an informal tone with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook.

Similarly to the hypothesis for degree of interaction, the hypothesis for tone of interaction was also disproven. The hypothesis suggested that the majority of respondents would use an informal tone when communicating with their family member on Facebook. However, the results showed that an informal tone was the second most common outcome, with 40 respondents (27.4%). The most common, with 97 respondents (66.44%), was semi-formal. Lastly was a formal tone with only 11 out of 146 respondents, or around six percent.

HP#1.4: American Facebook users communicate in an equal balance with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook.

This hypothesis was proven by the results of the questionnaire. 110 out of the 145 respondents (75.86%) usable responses resulted in an equal balance of interaction between the respondent and their family member. The remaining 35 respondents (24.14%) indicated an unequal balance in the interactions between the respondent and their family member.

HP#2: Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children positively influences their familial relationship.

To accurately test the results of hypothesis 2, the respondents' scores for familial relationship was analyzed using each part of hypothesis one: tone, degree, balance and role. The results were analyzed using either One-Way ANOVA or Independent Sample T-test.

As for degree of interaction (intense, medium, shallow) and familial relationship, As shown in table 4.16, the One-way ANOVA result revealed the significant relationship between three groups. The degree of Facebook interaction has a significant effect on the familial relationship of the respondents ( $F=8.037 (2, 131) = (p < .001)$ ).

Table 4.16: Results of One-Way ANOVA Regarding Degree of Interaction

| Interaction | N   | Mean   | S.D. |
|-------------|-----|--------|------|
| Shallow     | 40  | 1.975  | .28  |
| Medium      | 66  | 2.1212 | .33  |
| Intense     | 28  | 2.3214 | .48  |
| Total       | 134 | 2.1194 | .37  |

| ANOVA          | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Squares | F     | Sig.  |
|----------------|----------------|-----|--------------|-------|-------|
| Between Groups | 1.977          | 2   | .989         | 8.037 | <.001 |
| Within Groups  | 16.112         | 131 | .123         |       |       |
| Total          | 18.090         | 133 |              |       |       |

As for role of interaction (sender, receiver, equal role distribution) and familial relationship, the One-way ANOVA result revealed in Table 4.17 showed that there was a non-significant relationship between these groups ( $F = .403(1, 121), p > .527$ ). The role of Facebook interaction has an insignificant effect on the familial relationship of the respondents.

Table 4.17: Results of One-Way ANOVA Regarding Role of Interaction

| Interaction | N   | Mean   | S.D. |
|-------------|-----|--------|------|
| Sender      | 4   | 2.25   | .5   |
| Balance     | 119 | 2.1261 | .38  |
| Total       | 123 | 2.1301 | .38  |

| ANOVA          | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Squares | F    | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|--------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | .059           | 1   | .059         | .403 | .527 |
| Within Groups  | 17.859         | 121 | .148         |      |      |
| Total          | 17.919         | 122 |              |      |      |

As for tone of interaction (informal, semi-formal, formal) and familial relationship, One-way ANOVA result revealed the non-significant relationship between three groups, as shown in table 4.18. ( $F = 1.332$  (2, 132),  $p > .268$ ). The tone of Facebook interaction has an insignificant effect on the familial relationship of the respondents.

Table 4.18: Results of One-Way ANOVA Regarding Tone of Interaction

| Interaction | N  | Mean   | S.D. |
|-------------|----|--------|------|
| Informal    | 34 | 2.2059 | .41  |

(Continued)

Table 4.18: Results of One-Way ANOVA Regarding Tone of Interaction

(Continued)

|             |     |        |     |
|-------------|-----|--------|-----|
| Semi-formal | 93  | 2.086  | .32 |
| Formal      | 8   | 2.125  | .64 |
| Total       | 135 | 2.1185 | .37 |

| ANOVA          | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Squares | F     | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|--------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | .358           | 2   | .179         | 1.332 | .268 |
| Within Groups  | 17.746         | 132 | .134         |       |      |
| Total          | 18.104         | 134 |              |       |      |

As shown in Table 4.19, the T-test for balance of interaction familial relationship resulted in a non-significant result (  $t(132) = -.941, p < .210$ ).

Table 4.19: Results of Independent Sample T-Test Regarding Balance of

Interaction

| Interaction | N   | Mean   | S.D. | S.D. Error Mean |
|-------------|-----|--------|------|-----------------|
| Unbalanced  | 33  | 2.0606 | .35  | .06             |
| Balanced    | 101 | 2.1287 | .37  | .04             |

(Continued)

Table 4.19: Results of Independent Sample T-Test Regarding Balance of Interaction (Continued)

| Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |       |      | T-test for Equality of Means |        |              |             |                 |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|------|------------------------------|--------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
|                                         | F     | Sig. | t                            | df     | Significance |             | Mean Difference |
|                                         |       |      |                              |        | One-Sided p  | Two-Sided p |                 |
| Equal variances assumed                 | 1.588 | .210 | -.941                        | 132    | .174         | .349        | -.06811         |
| Equal variances not assumed             |       |      | -.964                        | 56.776 | .170         | .339        | -.06811         |

Hypothesis two proposed that familial relationships are positively influenced by Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children. The only part of all of the different tests of the different aspects of facebook interactions and the relationship with familial relationships that showed any significance was the relationship between degree of interaction and familial relationship. All of the other tests of the relationship between familial relationships and the degree of interaction, the role of interaction, and tone of interaction yielded all insignificant results. Degree: ( $F = 8.037$  (2, 131,  $p < .001$ ); role ( $F = .403$  (1, 121,  $p > .05$ ); tone ( $t$  (132) =  $-.941$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis was only partially supported (1/4) and favored that familial relationships were not drastically affected by Facebook interactions.

HP#3: Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children increases or maintains their tie strength.

In terms of degree of interaction, the One-Way ANOVA test was used to analyze the relationship between degree of interaction and tie-strength. Table 4.20 shows the result from the One-Way ANOVA test. It shows the significant effect of degree of interaction on tie-strength ( $F = 6.164 (2, 137), p < .01$ ).

Table 4.20: Results of One-Way ANOVA Regarding Degree of Interaction

| Interaction | N   | Mean   | S.D. |
|-------------|-----|--------|------|
| Shallow     | 40  | 2.3    | .72  |
| Medium      | 72  | 2.6528 | .53  |
| Intense     | 28  | 2.75   | .52  |
| Total       | 140 | 2.5714 | .61  |

| ANOVA          | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Squares | F     | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|--------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 4.316          | 2   | 2.158        | 6.164 | .003 |
| Within Groups  | 47.969         | 137 | .350         |       |      |
| Total          | 52.286         | 139 |              |       |      |

As shown in table 4.21, in terms of role of communication, the One-Way ANOVA was used to analyze the relationship between role of interaction and tie-strength.

Its result showed a non-significant effect of role of interaction on tie-strength ( $F = .380$  (1, 124),  $p > .05$ ).

Table 4.21: Results of One-Way ANOVA Regarding Role of Interaction

| Interaction | N   | Mean   | S.D. |
|-------------|-----|--------|------|
| Sender      | 4   | 2.75   | .5   |
| Balanced    | 122 | 2.5574 | .62  |
| Total       | 126 | 2.5635 | .61  |

| ANOVA          | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Squares | F    | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|--------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | .144           | 1   | .144         | .380 | .539 |
| Within Groups  | 46.848         | 124 | .378         |      |      |
| Total          | 46.992         | 125 |              |      |      |

Table 4.22 shows the results from the One-Way ANOVA for tone of interaction and tie-strength. In terms of tone of interaction, One-Way ANOVA was used to analyze the relationship between tone of communication and tie-strength. Its result yielded a non-significant effect of tone of interaction on tie-strength ( $F = .739$  (2, 138),  $p > .05$ ).

Table 4.22: Results of One-Way ANOVA Regarding Tone of Interaction

| Interaction | N  | Mean   | S.D. |
|-------------|----|--------|------|
| Informal    | 38 | 2.6578 | .53  |

(Continued)

Table 4.22: Results of One-Way ANOVA Regarding Tone of Interaction (Continued)

|             |     |        |     |
|-------------|-----|--------|-----|
| Semi-formal | 94  | 2.5319 | .62 |
| Formal      | 9   | 2.4444 | .88 |
| Total       | 141 | 2.5603 | .61 |

| ANOVA          | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Squares | F    | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|--------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | .558           | 2   | .279         | .739 | .480 |
| Within Groups  | 52.179         | 138 | .378         |      |      |
| Total          | 52.738         | 140 |              |      |      |

As for balance of interaction, the Independent Sample T-Test was used to analyze the relationship between balance of interaction and tie-strength. Table 4.23 shows the results which revealed a significant effect of balance of interaction on tie-strength,  $t(138) = -2.305, p < .001$ .

Table 4.23: Results of Independent Sample T-Test Regarding Balance of Interaction

| Interaction | N   | Mean   | S.D. | S.D. Error Mean |
|-------------|-----|--------|------|-----------------|
| Unbalanced  | 33  | 2.3636 | .74  | .13             |
| Balanced    | 107 | 2.6355 | .54  | .05             |

(Continued)

Table 4.23: Results of Independent Sample T-Test Regarding Balance of Interaction (Continued)

| Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |        |      | T-test for Equality of Means |        |              |             |                 |
|-----------------------------------------|--------|------|------------------------------|--------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
|                                         | F      | Sig. | t                            | df     | Significance |             | Mean Difference |
|                                         |        |      |                              |        | One-Sided p  | Two-Sided p |                 |
| Equal variances assumed                 | 11.184 | .001 | -2.305                       | 138    | .011         | .023        | -.27188         |
| Equal variances not assumed             |        |      | -1.951                       | 42.904 | .029         | .058        | -.27188         |

Hypothesis three stated that Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children increases or maintains their tie strength. This hypothesis was partially supported. Only degree and balance of interaction significantly influenced tie-strength while role and tone of interaction did not significantly influence tie-strength.

#### 4.4 Conclusions

The most obvious finding of this research was that there was a lack of families using Facebook to communicate amongst themselves in this day and age. It could be likely that Gen Z and younger millennials are migrating to other social media platforms to communicate with family members or abstain from digital communication through social networks altogether. Facebook boasts a network of over a billion members, yet

around a third of survey respondents did not use Facebook as a means of communication with their parents or adult children currently. This may be a trend in the United States of America or potentially in other countries as well.

American Family dynamics, like many nationalities' familial dynamics, are evolving and changing as time progresses.

Some things that the survey and the following data showed were the following:

1. American parents and their adult children do communicate by performing both the sender and receiver roles fairly equally.
2. Most people have a shallow degree of communication with the family member on Facebook
3. Most respondents use a semi formal tone with communicating with their family member on Facebook
4. The majority of respondents experience balanced communication with their parents.
5. Of the four different facets of Facebook interactions that were looked at, only degree of interaction had any significant relationship with familial relationship
6. Only half of the four facets of Facebook interactions that were looked at had any significant relationship with the tie strength that people reported.

Overall, the results of the data showed that Facebook isn't playing a large part in how American parents and their adult children are communicating.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This section provides a summary of hypothesis testing, discussions, limitations, and recommendations for further applications and future research.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

#### 5.2 Discussions

#### 5.3 Limitations of the Study

#### 5.4 Recommendations for Further Applications

#### 5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

This study was conducted through a survey that got 150 usable responses. There were 258 responses today but 108 people failed the screening questions to vet if they were able to be a part of the sample population. The screening questions asked if they used Facebook to communicate with their family (parent/adult child) and if they were American.

Around two-thirds of the respondents reported being female (67.3%), around one-third answered male (30.7%) and three people (2.0%) preferred not to answer. Two other demographic questions asked about where they resided, with the majority living on the west coast (51.3%), and about the highest level of education they completed, with the majority being a Bachelor's degree (46.0%). The rest of the results for education were

almost evenly split between 'below a bachelor's degree' (26.0%) and 'master's degree and above' (28.0%).

To test hypothesis one, American Facebook users communicate with their parent[s] or child[ren] on Facebook in terms of role, degree, tone, and balance of interactions; multiple variables were tested to find out about the sample's depicted statistics. The study looked at gender, education, residence, Facebook friend connection status, and what types of media the respondents preferred to use on Facebook.

Further descriptive statistics were calculated on the participants' connection status, their usage rates and what kind of media they use when they communicate on Facebook. All but one respondent reported being Facebook friends with their family members, either their adult child or their parent (99.3%).

Picture and text posts were the most popular, 91.3% and 84.5% respectively, and audio calls were the least used form of communication among the participants (33.1%).

The frequency of use was distributed between all of the five options, never, hardly, sometimes, often and always. Always and often were the most frequently reported (31.8% and 28.4%), while never was only chosen by three respondents (2.0%).

Hypothesis two and hypothesis three were looked at using ANOVA test and two tailed T-Tests. For hypothesis # 2, Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children positively influences their familial relationship, the means and standard deviations are reported.

The possible categories for degree of interaction are shallow, medium, and intense. The mean for shallow degree is 1.98 (S.D. = .23). For a medium degree the mean

is 2.12 (S.D. = .33). Finally, for an intense degree of interaction, the mean is 2.32 (S.D. = .48).

The respondents' role in the interaction between family members and the impact on familial relationships categorized as either the sender, receiver, or balance of sender and receiver (both). No respondents were categorized as receivers so there is no mean or standard deviation to report for it. Senders' mean is 2.25 (S.D. = .50). The mean for balanced is 2.13 (S.D. = .38).

In terms of the tone of interaction results (informal, semi-formal and formal), for informal interaction, the mean is 2.21 (S.D. = .41). For semi-formal interaction, the mean is 2.09 (S.D. = .32). Lastly, for formal interaction, the mean is 2.13 (S.D. = .64). There were 135 total answers for this section.

T-tests were used to test the balance of interaction and the familial relationship. The mean for unbalanced interaction is 2.06 (S.D. = .35) and the mean for balanced is 2.13 (S.D. = .37).

For hypothesis # 3, ANOVA and T-tests were used for the same dependent variables and this time were determining their impact on the tie-strength. Hypothesis # 3 stated: Facebook interactions between American parents and their adult children increases or maintains their tie strength.

The ANOVA test for degree of interaction and ties strength had three different categories, shallow, medium and intense. This is the same as the categories for the test for hypothesis two. Shallow has a mean of 2.30 (S.D. = .72). The mean for medium is 2.6528 (S.D. = .53). Intense degree's mean is 2.75 (S.D. = .52).

For role of interaction and tie-strength, sender had a mean of 2.75 (S.D. = .50). Balanced interaction had a mean of 2.56 (S.D. = .62). There were no respondents indicating that they were in the primary receiver role, so there is no mean or standard deviation to report for it.

The ANOVA test results for tone of interaction and tie-strength are as follows: informal had a mean of 2.66 (S.D. = .53). Semi-formal had a mean of 2.53 (S.D. = .62). Formal had a mean of 2.44 (S.D. = .88).

The T-test for balance of interaction and tie-strength had unbalanced and balanced as the categories. The mean of unbalanced is 2.36 (S.D. = .74). For balanced, the mean is 2.64 (S.D. = .54).

The hypothesis testing for this research showed that a lot of the hypotheses were not supported by the survey's resulting data.

The hypotheses were tested through a survey that asked a series of questions to receive data on how people's Facebook interactions.

There weren't many issues when testing the multiple hypothesis. It took a lot of time to acquire enough responses and a compromise had to be made to either count the responders who failed the security questions or to not. It was a significant number of responses and showed that many American people don't use Facebook to communicate with their family members any more. Having more responses to the later part of the survey could have produced better testing results for the hypotheses.

The hypothesis looking at the relationship between familial relationship and Facebook interactions as well as the relationship between tie strength and Facebook

interactions were both weakly supported. The conclusion is acceptable but also begs to think about what conditions would make the hypotheses true and if it would have been true years ago back when more Americans were using Facebook more actively as social media was still new and many were curious about it.

## 5.2 Discussions

This section will feature discussions in regard to different topics. Discussions are reported based on past research findings, relevant theory, and researcher's expectations. These various aspects were discussed to offer new perspectives and a potentially deeper understanding.

### 5.2.1 Discussion Based on Past Research Findings

This research did not align with the past findings of other researchers that focused on other demographics. Wykoff's 2018 research showed that "All of the informants used Facebook as a platform to perform relationship maintenance strategies with a broad circle of acquaintances or weaker ties, which corresponds to the researcher's expectations." This research focused on a different demographic but yielded results that showed how they use Facebook to foster their relationships with weaker tie relationships. This study focused on families which are predisposed to stronger ties and deeper relationships, though Facebook didn't play a significant part in the relationship maintenance. In regards to Vitak's 2014 study "Facebook Makes the Heart Grow Fonder", this study differs in the same way it did to Wykoff's finding. Vitak stated "the findings provide significant

evidence for the supportive role Facebook plays in maintaining the wide range of weaker connections that comprise the majority of most users' Friend networks" (Vitak, 2014).

The 2014 study also showed favorable results on the impact Facebook played in relationship maintenance. The main difference between both of those studies and this one is that they seemed to target broader relationship dynamics and the maintenance of weaker-ties.

### 5.2.2 Discussion Based on Relevant Theories

Multiple theories were utilized to conduct this research. This section will discuss the findings in relation to family communication patterns theory, uses and gratification theory (UGT), social penetration theory, and relational dialectics theory. All of the theories can be used as a lens to draw various conclusions about the entire research as well as specific aspects of the research.

Family communication patterns theory could be better utilized to decide what family pattern each respondent falls into and then how their communication with their family might be tied to that. There are four outlined patterns in the theory: pluralistic, protective, consensual, Laissez-Faire. How people with each of these patterns interact online would be useful when outlining further research. In this study, it was used to develop questions for tie strength but was as heavily considered as other theories. Respondents all reported differently for their familial relationship, which corresponds with the idea that there are different types of families, as outlined in FCPT's concept of the four family types (consensual, protective, pluralistic and Laissez Faire). It also

explains why the hypotheses are properly supported. The idea that families exist on a spectrum and communicate differently could explain the lack of congruence in the research findings.

It was also helpful for considering how peoples familial relationships impact the way they communicate online with their family member, which is what this research is largely about. The theory is more based on family dynamics but that plays a part in the family hierarchy which then can influence how people interact in person as well as online.

The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) was also utilized. The UGT was used to look at the results of the survey and interpret the findings, specifically of the media usage sections and its relation to the related hypotheses. In chapter 2, it was explained that “UGT explains how people use the media for their own need[s] and get satisfied when their needs are fulfilled” (Mass Communication, 2018). The findings such as that the majority of respondents (~84%) use text posts when communicating on Facebook reflect how users are utilizing the different communication methods available. The results for how the hypothesis testing relationships between the Facebook interactions and tie-strength as well as the relationship Facebook interactions and familial relationship can exemplify the gratification aspect of UGT. Though in this case, the interaction overall had a weak impact on tie-strength and familial relationship. Only certain aspects of the Facebook communication had any impact on either dimension of the dependent variable, so the level of gratification could be considered weak, or not very gratifying. This could reflect why The UGT does not align with the research findings. If people are not finding

gratification in communicating online with their family member, why would they bother to do so, and why would they have more of a reliance, or intense degree of communication on the platform.

The UGT can be used when testing other facets of communication on Facebook as well as other social networks. UGT is a good theory to consider when researching any online communication as it can be used to explain the cause-and-effect relationships that occur through online communication.

The Social Penetration Theory was crucial for understanding tie-strength and outlining a way to quantify a responder's tie-strength with their family members. The section of the questions referring to tie-strength proposed questions that sought to assign a value to something intangible. Using social penetration theory allowed the formation of an understanding of tie-strength and how to apply that to online relationships and communication between the family members. Though this study didn't yield results that indicated that Facebook communications strongly influenced the maintenance and strengthening of American parents and their adult children's tie-strength, it still provided an important part of the framework and structure of the research that allowed it to be tested at all.

Since Facebook is not generally supporting the tie-strength and familial relationship, then the level of social penetration online was not deep, or the tie-strength was not benefited by the online communication.

The Relational Dialectics Theory was considered and utilized when conducting this study. It was considered when deciding how to ask about respondents' familial

relationships. Parts of the data detailed how many respondents had a weak, medium, or strong familial relationship. The majority of respondents reported a medium familial relationship. This theory could be used to better understand those with a strong and weak familial relationship and why if further research was conducted.

In future research, relational dialectics could be more strongly considered to see how opposing and contrary personalities and relationships communicate with each other. Some families may fit this concept but it wasn't really considered when conducting this study besides when looking at what kinds of families exist and how they look and work. Familial communication patterns theory was more applied to that than relational dialectics. However, it could be much better to use when looking at the tension and struggles in communication.

### 5.2.3 Discussion Based on Researcher's Expectation

In regard to the researchers' hypothesis and expectations, the study mostly went against what the research hypothesized. Hypothesis one (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4) weren't very surprising to the researched. It was a little surprising that the majority of respondents displayed a shallow level of communication. However, the researcher found this to be in concurrence with the fact that it seems like less people are using Facebook to communicate with family members in this day and age. Initially the difficulty of finding Facebook users that passed the two security questions was a surprise to the researcher, but upon reflection and consideration of all the other available social media platforms, it became less surprising. Overall, the results of the study were leak-luster to the

researchers. However, it did create more curiosity about other facets of online communication and what works well for some online citizens and what doesn't work well. It also sparked an interest in family dynamics and a deeper interest in family communication. This research did not provide as many answers on what works well for online family communication but rather the opposite.

### 5.3 Limitations of the Study

There are fair amounts of limitations of this study. The study was conducted online through survey and using quantitative data to investigate the variables relationships. Other research methods could yield other results if they focused on other aspects of online communication. However, most researchers have used similar indicators such as frequency of use, though this could look like how much time a person uses Facebook a day like in Wykoff's 2019 study.

There are other aspects of communication that can and should be looked at. If a researcher is considering family communication more than the role technology plays in it, then both in person and online communication should be considered. In a similar vein, if one of the people involved in communicating is a more passive component as opposed to an active sender vs. receiver. If someone isn't actively engaging in the relationship, then their communication could look differently. This could also be influenced by the family dynamic.

The research focused on specifically American parents and adult children. Other possible combinations of people could be romantic partners, friends (2), entire friend groups, extended family, or strictly online friends.

It also focused on only one form of online communication, Facebook. Other social networks could be more popular methods of communication for parents and their children now. The different generations also prefer different communication methods. Furthermore, there was no demographic question about ethnicity. The questionnaire only inquired about age, education level, and geographic region. A person's ethnic background could potentially affect how they communicate with their family members. The 2017 study by Arias and Punyanunt-Carter discusses ideas from a 2013 study by Swartz and colleagues, by stating that "the authors emphasize the role of culture, and acculturation patterns in particular, in understanding the mediating role of family functioning and culture" (Arias, Punyanunt-Carter, 2017). Further research on this could offer better insights into the impact of intercultural communication that multicultural families in the U.S.

#### 5.4 Recommendations for Further Applications

##### 5.4.1 Application for Communication Scholars/Researchers

Other researchers and scholars must consider and look at past research when preparing to conduct a new study. They can use these findings as a way to eliminate facets of communication that have already been studied and proven to be weak or

insignificant to their study. They can learn from what this study lacks or misses and build a better, more comprehensive hypothesis to test.

#### 5.4.2 Application for Governmental Offices and Policy Makers

Social media is a hot topic in American policy making and social media is very political now-a-days. People can easily share their political ideas and spread political content to their followers and friends. The government can look at this study and see how they can either better facilitate strong communication online or do the opposite, depending on their end goals. The idea of the “American Family” is evolving. “Family life is changing” states the Pew Research Center in 2015. “There is no longer one dominant family form in the U.S. Parents today are raising their children against a backdrop of increasingly diverse and, for many, constantly evolving family forms” (Pew Research Center, 2015). If policy makers want to best represent the people they serve, then they should be up to date on how families communicate and work currently. This would include online communication, like what was looked at in this study.

#### 5.4.3 Application for Communication Practitioners

The research results could be used by the group the study focused on. It can help to explain why communication on Facebook isn’t the best way to maintain or strengthen the relationship with their family member. It could be used to influence people to focus on other forms of communication when interacting with their family members.

Unrelated people, either those not on Facebook or those that are not American, can use the study’s findings to better understand that Facebook is not the way families are

maintaining their tie-strength and familial relationships, People from other countries where Facebook is more utilities might be interested in how it impacts other populations, in this case American Families.

Mediators for family members, such as therapists and social workers might be interested in this study if their clients are heavily online and it impacts how their clients communicate with their families. Family therapists deal with many different types of families with varying situations. Social workers might be dealing with underage children but can look at how one aspect of online communication impacts a percentage of American parent/child relationships. This could particulate be true if the child isn't able to communicate with their family member face to face.

### 5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

It can be recommended that there should be further research on the decrease of family communication on Facebook as well as other social media platforms. The difficulty of finding American parents and adult children that communicate on Facebook could lead to new information of how they are communicating amongst themselves, if not on Facebook. Looking into family communication trends, both online and offline could be considered as the United States is culturally diverse and more and more multiethnic children are being born. "More than 33 million Americans — about 1 in 10 — identify as being of two or more races, a number that grew by nearly 25 million people in the past decade, according to the 2020 Census." (Foster-Frau et al., 2021)

Similarly, the impact of a family's cultural traditions and beliefs and how it affects their communication could be studied. This study focused on the degree, role, balance, and tone of communication, but another study could look into why families are communicating this way.

Another aspect of the family dynamic that could be looked into is the difference between groups of people that still live with their family members and those that live a large geographical distance away. This could impact the way these people communicate only, especially those that still live with their family or have very frequent face-to-face communication. Possible these people would rely on Facebook and social media communication significantly less than those that only have digital communication available to them to maintain e these relationships.

Further research could consider what methods of communication are up-and-coming for American families. As Generation Alpha grows older, they will continue to develop their own methods of communication. As previously mentioned multiple times, technology is changing and advancing so the way people use technology to communicate is also changing. There will always be more research needed on this concept.

Also, how younger millennials and Generation Z interact as parents instead of children could be looked into. The generation's role in a nuclear family is changing as they grow up and start families of their own. They are influenced by their upbringing as they form their own nuclear family dynamics.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

Dear Participants,

I am a graduate student of the Masters of Communication Arts program in Global Communication at Bangkok University and am conducting an independent study as part of my degree requirement. I would like to request for your kindness to participate in my research by completing the following questionnaire. This study aims to investigate the impact of family communication through Facebook on the familial relationship and tie-strength between American parents and adult children. The following questionnaire contains 9 sections with 59 questions and it will take approximately 15 minutes of your time to complete it.

Under no circumstances, you are obliged to truthfully answer any of the questions. However, in doing so will greatly assist me in completing my Master's degree study and ensuring the quality of my survey. The data collected will remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes. Thank you very much for taking your time in assisting me with this research.

#### Screening Questions:

Please fill out the following questions to determine if you are qualified to participate in the entire survey.

| QUESTION A: Do you use Facebook to communicate with your parent(s)/adult child(ren)? |                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Your Answer                                                                          | Instruction               |
| Yes                                                                                  | CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE |
| No                                                                                   | STOP -> LEAVE THE SURVEY  |

| QUESTION B: Are you an American? |                           |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Your Answer                      | Instruction               |
| Yes                              | CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE |
| No                               | STOP -> LEAVE THE SURVEY  |

### I. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Please select the answer that best describes you.

1. Your gender

A) Male      B) Female      C) Other      D) Prefer not to answer

2. What region do you live in the USA?

A) West                      B) Midwest                      C) South West  
 D) South East              E) North East                  F) Alaska/Hawaii/US Territories  
 G) I live in another country

3. Your level of education:

- A) Lower than Bachelor degree      B) Bachelor degree  
C) Master's degree and above

## II. FACEBOOK USAGE

4. Connection Status: Are you Facebook friends with your parent(s)/adult child(ren)?

- A) Yes      B) No

| 5. How often do you use Facebook on a weekly basis? | Usage Frequency Level  |                           |                              |                          |                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
|                                                     | Never (0 times a week) | Hardly (1-2 times a week) | Sometimes (3-4 times a week) | Often (5-6 times a week) | Always (7+ times a week/more than once a day) |

6. Do you use these five methods to communicate: text, picture, video, audio call, and video call?

- A) Yes      B) No

| Answer | Methods |         |       |             |             |
|--------|---------|---------|-------|-------------|-------------|
|        | Text    | Picture | Video | Audio Calls | Video Calls |
| Yes    |         |         |       |             |             |
| No     |         |         |       |             |             |

### III. ROLE OF INTERACTION

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement for the following statements regarding your **role of interaction (sender vs. receiver)**. Select the only one answer based on the 5-point scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strong agree.

| Statements                                                                                                    | Level of Agreement/Disagreement |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                                                               | 1                               | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Sender Role</b>                                                                                            |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 7. I usually post photos and/or text posts on my Facebook wall.                                               |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 8. I normally comment on my parent(s)/adult child(ren)'s posts on Facebook.                                   |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 9. I mostly react to my parent(s)/adult child(ren)'s posts with "like, care, sad, et cetera"                  |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 10. I initiate messages and/or calls on Facebook messenger with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) all the time. . |                                 |   |   |   |   |

| Receiver Role                                                                         |  |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 11. I mostly read posts of my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on their Facebook timeline.  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12. I often watch video clips on the timeline of my parents/adult child(ren).         |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13. I generally listen to audio clips on Facebook Messenger.                          |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14. I see pictures posted by my parents/adult child(ren) on my timeline all the time. |  |  |  |  |  |

#### IV. DEGREE OF INTERACTION

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement for the following statements regarding your **degree of interaction**. Select the only one answer based on the 5-point scale: 1 = Strong disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strong agree.

| Statements                                                                                      | Level of Agreement/Disagreement |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                                                 | 1                               | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I click the “like, love, or care” button on my parent(s)/adult child(ren)’s Facebook posts. |                                 |   |   |   |   |

|                                                                                       |  |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 16. I share posts with my parents/adult child(ren).                                   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17. I send frequent messages to my parent(s)/adult child(ren) via Facebook messenger. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18. I make video calls with my parents/adult child(ren) via Facebook Messenger.       |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19. I make long calls via Facebook Messenger with my parents/adult child(ren).        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20. I leave long comments on my parent(s)/adult child(ren)'s Facebook timeline.       |  |  |  |  |  |

#### V. TONE OF INTERACTIONS

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement for the following statements regarding your **tone of interaction**. Select the only one answer based on the 5-point scale: 1 = Strong disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strong agree.

| Statements | Level of Agreement/Disagreement |   |   |   |   |
|------------|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|            | 1                               | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

|                                                                                                                   |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 21. I use one-word expressions such as “cute!” when communicating with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on Facebook. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 22. I generally use colloquial/casual language when communicating with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on Facebook. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 23. I write short sentences/phrases when communicating with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on Facebook.            |  |  |  |  |  |
| 24. I use emojis and emoticons when I communicate with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on Facebook.                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 25. I mostly use slang when communicating with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on Facebook.                         |  |  |  |  |  |
| 26. I don't use proper punctuation when I communicate with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) on Facebook.             |  |  |  |  |  |

## VI. BALANCE OF INTERACTIONS

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement for the following statements regarding your **balance of interaction**. Select the only one answer based on the 5-point scale: 1 = Strong disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strong agree.

| Statements                                                                                                    | Level of Agreement/Disagreement |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                                                               | 1                               | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. My parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I both have a similar amount of interaction.                            |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 28. I generally receive the same amount of interaction as I give to my parent(s)/adult child(ren).            |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 29. I feel that my parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I have quite a good balance in interacting with each other. |                                 |   |   |   |   |

## VII. FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIP

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement for the following statements regarding your **familial relationship**. Select the only one answer based on the 5-point scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strong agree.

| Statements                                                              | Level of Agreement/Disagreement |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                         | 1                               | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. In our family we really help and support each other.                |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 31. In our family we spend a lot of time doing things together at home. |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 32. In our family we work hard at what we do in our home.               |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 33. In our family there is a feeling of togetherness.                   |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 34. My family members really support each other.                        |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 35. I am proud to be a part of our family.                              |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 36. In our family we really get along well with each other.             |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 37. In our family we do things for each other without being asked.      |                                 |   |   |   |   |

|                                                                             |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 38. In our family we can talk openly in our home.                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| 39. In our family we sometimes tell each other about our personal problems. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 40. In our family we begin discussions easily.                              |  |  |  |  |  |
| 41. In our family we are usually careful about what we say to each other.   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 42. In our family we work out our problems.                                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 43. In our family we argue a lot.                                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| 44. In our family we are really mad at each other a lot.                    |  |  |  |  |  |
| 45. In our family we lose our tempers a lot.                                |  |  |  |  |  |
| 46. In our family we often put down each other.                             |  |  |  |  |  |
| 47. My family members sometimes are violent.                                |  |  |  |  |  |

|                                                       |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 48. In our family we raise our voice when we are mad. |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|

### VIII. TIE-STRENGTH

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement for the following statements regarding your **tie-strength**. Select the only one answer based on the 5-point scale: 1 = Strong disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strong agree.

| Statements                                                                                   | Level of Agreement/Disagreement |   |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                                                                                              | 1                               | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49. My parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I communicate multiple times a week.                   |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 50. My parent(s)/adult child(ren) are very easy to talk to and I feel comfortable with them. |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 51. I frequently think about and want to communicate with my parent(s)/adult child(ren).     |                                 |   |   |   |   |
| 52. I can go to my parent(s)/adult child(ren) for advice and vice versa.                     |                                 |   |   |   |   |

|                                                                                                                             |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 53. My parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I seek each other out for companionship.                                              |  |  |  |  |  |
| 54. There are numerous topics my parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I can talk about, ranging widely.                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| 55. I can speak with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) for an hour or more.                                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| 56. My parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I both frequently initiate communication.                                             |  |  |  |  |  |
| 57. My parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I offer each other support frequently.                                                |  |  |  |  |  |
| 58. My parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I tell each other personal information in a mostly equal exchange without hesitation. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 59. Communication with my parent(s)/adult child(ren) and I is almost effortless.                                            |  |  |  |  |  |

Thank you for completing the survey. Your responses are greatly appreciated.

## BIODATA

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