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The Effect of Internet on Family Relationships: Current Theories and Controversies

Saida Sultana
Department of Arts and Sciences, Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology, Dhaka-1216, Bangladesh

Abstract
There is an ongoing debate whether or not introduction of new technologies, such as Internet, into the household can potentially change the quality of family relationships. This paper examines the theoretical frameworks researchers used to understand the effect of modern technology on family relationship. It brings together work from different fields that examine the relationship between Internet usage and family time. Besides, this paper also aims to explore the perception of youth on Internet. To find out the perception of youth, whether Internet is changing their family relationship or not, this study used quantitative method of data collection. The sample consisted of 384 young Internet users of Dhaka city. Questionnaire was employed as a tool of data collection. This research also features different theories from social scientists regarding the usage of Internet, controversies that surround youth participation in these online communities and offer suitable areas for future research.
Keywords: Internet, Family Relationship, Youth, Technology.

1. Introduction

In a world of quiet stunning and rapid technological change, no one can be sure what the future holds. Many see internet as exemplifying the new global order emerging at the close of the twentieth century. The speed of technological changes across the globe has raised important question for sociologists. Internet is transforming the outlines of daily life blurring all the local & global boundaries, and presenting new channel for communication and interaction. Opinions on the effects of the Internet on social interaction fall into two broad categories. On one hand are those observers who see the online world as fostering new forms of electronic relationships that either enhances or supplement existing face-to-face interaction. On the other hand, not everyone takes such an enthusiastic outlook.

Youth of our country most often use Internet to connect with friends and build communities, something they are also doing offline. Nevertheless risks lie in communication with dangerous strangers, lack of face - to - face interaction, and the weakening of family ties. Much research remains to be done in this field before any conclusive assumptions can be made. Most researchers have focused on broad descriptions of trends in the use of the Internet, such as time spent using computers and the Internet (Hughes and Hans, 2001) and the ways in which children and adults use these technologies (Orleans & Laney, 2000). Few researchers have examined the ways in which the Internet has altered family functioning.

1.1. Aims and Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the theoretical controversies regarding SNS use and family relationship of youth.
- To explore youth peoples' perception on internet.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Effects of Internet Use on Existing Relationships

On no issue has research on the social effects of the internet been more contentious than as to its effect on close relationships, such as those with family and friends. One study that received considerable media attention was the large-scale survey reported by Nie and Erbring (2001). This study concluded that internet use led to negative outcomes for the individual, such as increases in depression and loneliness, and neglect of existing close relationships. In the press release, Nie & Erbring (2001) reported data from a U.S. nationwide survey of approximately 4000 people, and concluded from those data that heavy Internet use resulted in less time spent with one's family and friends. On the surface, this would seem to contradict the Kraut et al. (2001) conclusions, but a closer look at the actual findings removes the apparent contradiction. These reveal that over 95% of Nie & Erbring's (2001) total sample did not report spending any less time with family and friends because of their internet use, moreover, even among the heaviest users, 88% reported no change in time spent with close others.

Several other national surveys have found either that internet user are no less likely than non-users to visit or call friends on the phone, or that internet users actually have the larger social networks. Howard et al. (2001:399) concluded from their large random-sample survey that 'the internet allows people to stay in touch with family and friends and, in many cases, extend their social networks'. A sizeable majority of those who send e-mail messages to relatives say it increases the level of communication between family members. These survey results suggest that on-line tools are more likely to extend social contact than detract from it. Nie (2001) has responded to his critics by arguing that time is a limited commodity, so that the hours spent on the Internet must come at a cost to other activities. Nie and Erbing (2001: 423) stated that-

> *We would expect that all those spending more than the average of 10 hours a week on the internet would report substantially fewer hours socializing with family members, friends, and neighbors. It is simply a matter of time.*

However, in the Nie & Erbring (ibid) results, the real and substantial decrease associated with heavy internet use was in watching television and reading newspapers, not in social interaction with friends and family. In one of the few observational studies about computers and family relationships, Orleans and Laney (2000) observed 32 children between the ages of 8 and 17 on at least three occasions each for an hour or more while they did computer work on their own or with others at home. Children and their parents seldom talked to each other while the children were using the computer. Generally, children used the computers independently and were more likely to talk with siblings or peers for help regarding computer problems than they were to ask their parents. About 65% of the time that the children were online, they sent and received e-mail, visited chat rooms, and played interactive games. Boys and girls used the computers in different ways:

> *The girls were more likely to be serious about using the computer. They were more focused on using the computer for particular purposes and their demeanor while using [the computer] was more somber than the boys. The boys seemed more likely to view the computer as a multipurpose toy that was itself fun to use and integrated it into their social lives (Orleans & Laney, 2000: 67).*

2.2. The Internet and Family Relation

Several scholars suggest potential intergenerational conflicts in families that have adopted the internet (Turow and Nir, 2000). One common explanation is the development of expectation gaps between parents and youth. Studies have shown that most parents seem to view the internet as a positive new force in children's lives, and surveys in different countries report that families buy computers and connect their children to the internet at home mainly for educational purposes (Lenhart et al. 2001). Many parents believe that the internet can help their children to do better at school, do more thorough research for homework, and help them learn worthwhile things. Livingstone (2002) found that only 6% of parents were concerned about their children's use of computers and the internet. Parents were far more concerned about illegal drugs (51%), crime (39%), and educational standards (38%). These data suggest that when viewed in the context of other hazards children face, parents perceive that there are more serious threats to children's well-being than their children's computer and Internet use. However, 50% of the parents in Livingstone's (2000) study reported having rules about children's use of the internet. In contrast, children reported about half as many restrictions as their parents. The inconsistency between reports of parents and of their children points to a need for a better understanding of computers and Internet use in family contexts on a day-to-day basis. This may require observational and longitudinal data in addition to self-report by children and parents.

The contextual nature of parents' Internet concerns compared with their concerns about other aspects of life illustrates the importance of studying the Internet in context to provide a more complete understanding of how the technology fits with other aspects of family life. When the internet is studied in isolation, it is easy to misunderstand how it fits with other aspects of family life and to distort its significance and influence. These studies provide a glimpse into the variety of ways that computers and the internet may affect relationships in families. Whether they have a positive or negative impact on family interactions is a complicated question that requires more research and the consideration of how other household technologies, such as cell phones, video games, and television, foster or hinder family communication, When youth use the internet for social and entertainment purposes, parental expectations presumably contradict that kind of use, which increases the conflicts between adolescents and parents. Conversely, using the internet for learning and educational purposes, a use that is highly valued by parents and consistent with parental expectations, will presumably be negatively associated with family conflicts (Mesch, 2003). An explanation is time displacement: It has been argued that internet use is negatively associated with family time. The main contention is that time spent on one activity cannot be spent on another. Internet use is a time-consuming activity, and in families that are connected to the internet, high frequency of use might be negatively associated with family time and positively associated with family conflicts.

In fact, parents and adolescents worry that Internet use might have a negative effect on family communication and closeness. This concern has received empirical support from a recent study, which, based on family time diaries, found that Internet use at home was negatively related to time spent with family. Furthermore, the reduction in family time was higher for the average internet user than for the average TV watcher (Nie et al., 2004). As well as the amount, the quality of family time also appears associated with internet use. Recent studies that investigated the effect of frequency of daily internet use by adolescents on the quality of their relationships with parents and friends found that low internet use was associated with better relationships with parents and friends than was high internet use (Mesch, 2003). Furthermore, adolescents report that internet use does not help them to improve their relationships with their parents and that the internet consumes time they

would spend with their families.

Other studies present different evidence on the effects of the internet on family time and suggest that rather than isolating children from their parents the internet has become a shared household activity. In one study, nearly half the parents reported spending at least some time each week using the internet with other household members, and only a quarter of the adults reported that they never spent time with other household members on the internet.

3. Theoretical Framework

Due to urbanization and industrialization, it has been scrutinized that the family relationship pattern is going through a critical phrase. The theoretical framework is substantiated by a tremendous amount of empirical details found in the literature comprising every essential aspect of the impact of social networking on family relationship. Some theoretical approaches to the study of the social networking sites introduce some of the important recent contributions to the debate. As Giddens (2006: 597) states that-

> *Will the internet societies radically transform society into a fragmented, impersonal realm where humans rarely venture out of their homes and lose their ability to communicate?*

In recent year, sociologists have become increasingly interested on this issue. In this regard some thoughts of prominent theories have been recounted here.

3.1. Theoretical Perspectives on Family

The study of family and family life has been taken up differently by sociologists of contrasting persuasions. Nevertheless it is valuable to trace briefly the evolution of sociological thinking.

3.1.1. Functionalism

The functionalist perspective sees society as a set of social institutions that perform specific functions to ensure continuity and consensus. According to this perspective, the family performs important tasks which contribute to society's basic needs and helps to perpetuate social order. Sociologists working in the functionalist tradition have regarded the nuclear family as fulfilling certain specialized roles in modern societies. With the advent of industrialization, the family became less important as a unit of economic production and more focused on reproduction, child rearing and socialization. According to the American sociologist Talcott Parsons, the family's two main functions are primary socialization and personality stabilization (Parsons, 1952). Primary socialization is the process by which children learn the cultural norms of the society into which they are born. Personality stabilization refers to the role that family plays in assisting adult family member emotionally. In industrial society the role of the family in stabilizing adult personalities is said to be critical. This is because the nuclear family often distanced from its extended kin and is unable to draw on larger kinship as families could prior to socialization. Parsons regarded the nuclear family as the unit best equipped to handle the demands of industrial society (Giddens, 2006).

3.1.2. Feminist Perspective

For many people, the family provides a vital source of solace and comfort, love and companionship. Yet it can be also be a locus for exploitation, loneliness and profound inequality. Feminism has had a great impact on sociology by challenging the vision of the family as a harmonious and egalitarian realm. Many feminist writers have questioned the vision that the family is a cooperative unit based on common interests and mutual support. They have sought to show that the presence of unequal power relationships within the family that certain family members tend to be benefit more than others (Giddens, 2006).

3.2. Technological Determinism

Technological determinism is a variety of functionalism which sees technology as the major cause of social change, while most other perspectives view technology as the product of social change, as well as one of many causes. The theory was developed by William Ogburn (1932:200-213) as the "Cultural Lag Hypothesis". He argued that societies are evolving to a technologically superior form, and that technical progress occurs naturally. Ogburn (1932: 212) stated that:

> *Forces that produce changes are the discovery of new cultural elements that have superior utility, in which case the old utilities tend to be replaced by the new. The slowness of culture to change lies in the difficulties of creativity and adopting new ideas" is compatible with popular conceptions of technological progress.*

Sociology's major theoretical traditions emphasize different aspects of electronic media.

For Durkheimians, point-to-point communications media like telephones reinforce organic solidarity, while broadcast media like radio or television yield powerful collective representations (Alexander, 1988).

Marxists focus upon exploitation of communications media to enhance elite control of both politics and production through cultural hegemony and enhanced surveillance.

Weberians attend to the ways in which point-to-point media advance rationalization by reducing limits of time

and space, and broadcast media provide the elements of distinctive status cultures (Collins, 1979).

Other traditions also offer perspectives on the digital media. Technological determinists suggest that structural features of new media induce social change by enabling new forms of communication and cultivating distinctive skills and sensibilities (McLuhan 196da). In the face of new developments in communications technology, industrial society would yield to the "information society," with consequences in every institutional realm (Machlup 1962; Bell, 1973). Critical theorists problematize the effects of technological change on political deliberation and the integrity of civil society (Habermas, 1989; Calhoun, 1998).

Daniel Bell (1973) appears to have been the first sociologist to write about the social impact of digital communications media themselves. Bell predicted that major social consequences would derive from two related developments: the invention of miniature electronic and optical circuits capable of speeding the flow of information through networks; and the impending integration of computer processing and telecommunications. Anticipating the democratization of electronic mail and telefaxing, as well as digital transmission of newspapers and magazines, Bell explored the policy dilemmas these changes would raise, calling "the social organization of the new 'communications' technology" the most central issue "for the postindustrial society" (Bell, 1973).

The increasing pervasiveness of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has fuelled a major academic controversy about their social consequences. Despite ICTs encompass various technologies which are now widely available, the debate has been crystallizing on the narrower question of the consequences of the Internet on social capital. For some theorists, the advent of cheap access to the Internet has made the dream of the rise of a network society come true (Castells, 1996). The arrival of this "information age" is supposed to disrupt the previous forms of inequalities and of social organization but also to remodel identities. This e-revolution is the premises of the controversy between utopians, who consider that this revolution has positive effects on daily life, and dystopians, who claim the opposite (Wellman et al. 2001): according to the formers the Internet is a new and better way of communication whereas to the latter it is more a passive leisure stealing time to families and communities.

3.3. Social Cognitive Explanations of the Internet Paradox

Social cognitive theory provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding human behavior, social interaction and psychological well-being. The theory recognizes a variety of mechanisms that govern human behavior, including enactive learning (learning through one's own experience), vicarious learning (learning by observing others), self-regulation (the practice of self-control) and self-efficacy (or the belief in one's ability to perform a task successfully). The self-efficacy mechanism pertains since it describes the cognitive processes that relate the acquisition to the performance of new behaviors. This concept may explain the implications of the transition from novice to veteran Internet user for psychological well-being.

Kraut et al. (1998) raised the self-efficacy issue in mentioning the possible impact of Internet use on self-esteem. But they dismissed it on the grounds that they were engaged in a study of social behavior while self-esteem was deemed a separate issue. Although self-esteem (the judgment of one's own self-worth) is distinct from self-efficacy (the judgment of one's own personal capacities), the two terms are often used interchangeably and indeed Kraut et al.(1998) were evidently being dismissive of self-efficacy. However, within social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is an important mediating factor between social behavior and depression. Thus, from the perspective of social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is a pivotal variable that implies a different causal mechanism, and was overlooked.

Dominated by a high degree of division of labor in undifferentiated societies, family solidarity is progressively relying more and more on mechanical principles. Mechanical solidarity means temporal symmetry in daily life (Durkheim, 1984): everybody does the same thing at the same time. Consequently, mechanical solidarity is time together and requires synchronicity. Time together is the new source of family solidarity: through discussion, partners share common principles of vision and division of the world. Yet, the division of labor has not totally vanished, as the gendered division of domestic chores evidence. However, the historic trend in every economically developed country is towards more equity.

In general, family scientists have little to say about the ways in which the physical environment affects families. Family theories are silent about the ways in which technologies for food preparation (e.g., microwave ovens, dishwashers), communication (e.g., telephone, faxes, the Internet), and recreation (e.g., VCRs, televisions, gaming devices) affect family life. Even ecological theories (e.g., offer little guidance about families' technological context and focus primarily on their social ecology. The lack of discussion of these issues makes it difficult to distinguish between important and trivial questions.

The sociology of technology provides some overarching perspective on how to consider the effects of computers on social life. Fischer (1992) described two general approaches to considering the effects of technology on social life. One is a deterministic approach that treats technology as an external force. The other assumes that technology embodies cultural values that shape history. Fischer argued that both of these approaches are problematic because they fail to take into account the ways in which people actively shape the

use and influence of technology. For example, it was not inevitable that telephones would be used primarily as private two-way communication devices; early in their development, they were used as a broadcast medium, much as televisions are now used. Thus, the telephone did not determine how people used it; rather, people's use of the telephone shaped how it influenced them. Fischer suggests a social constructivist approach to studying the impact of technology on social life. Research guided by this perspective would examine the ways in which computers get used and the meanings attached to those uses. Researchers should focus their attention on the ways in which the Internet is used in the context of family life. For example, family scientists will obtain a better understanding of the role of the Internet in courtship by studying both online and offline romantic behaviors rather than focusing only on the online behaviors in the absence of broader social interactions (Fischer, 1992).

3.4. Impact of Social Networking on Family Ties

Another early concern regarding the Internet was that people would abandon face-to-face relationships and live their lives online. In an analysis of the decline of involvement in community and other social activities, Putnam (2000) asserted that this decline was due in part to television and that the Internet would contribute to further loss of social ties.

An early study reporting on new Internet users seemed to confirm the idea that the Internet could lead to withdrawal from social involvements (Kraut et al., 1998). New users who spent more time on the Internet reported less social involvement with both geographically close and distant friends. However, over the next 2 to 3 years, social support and interaction with close and distant network members returned to pre-Internet levels. This study took place when Internet technology was newer and people were less familiar with it than they are now. Thus, participants may have withdrawn from social ties because of the novelty of this new technology and the time needed to master it. Few members of their social network would have had access to the Internet, so they would have been less able to use it to maintain existing social ties than current Internet users would be. In a second study with a new sample, Kraut et al. (2001) added more control variables and a wider range of social network measures. In this study, they found that Internet use was related to increases in the number of close and distant social contacts and face-to-face communication with family and friends, indicating that the Internet had a positive impact on development and maintenance of social network.

3.5. Manuel Castell's View

Manuel Castells' magisterial analytic treatise, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture (2000),* offers a richly detailed sociological account of the informational economy, the process of its globalization, and its articulation in the changing shape of labor organization and social practice. Much of the text is devoted to writing the history of the development of electronic media and the burgeoning growth of the Net over the last two decades, and part of its importance is to assemble exhaustive statistical evidence to show precisely how (and where) that expansion has taken place. Castells' tries to answer all these questions in one complex theory. His profound description of the new information age attempts to show the way out of the theoretical maze of the value driven, strongly prejudiced, intricate information society. He proposes a conceptual model of a network with which the most recent phenomena of modern societies can be explored. His acknowledged social scientific work has been widely acclaimed academically. At the end of the 1990s he finally legitimized the information society as an academic field of research. Manuel Castells' three-volume opus (1996, 1997, 1998), as reflected in the title *(The Information Age),* is the first comprehensive scientific work amply supported by secondary sources, data which originates new concepts. Castells argues that the information society is the new mode of human existence, in which the production, recording, processing, and retrieving of information in organized networks plays the central role.

3.5.1 The Network and Its Socio-Spatial Consequences

Manuel Castells (2000) analyzes how society is moving toward more networked forms of organization in production, power, and experience. Corporations, financial markets, criminal activities, and political groups that were structured as vertically integrated hierarchies in modernity are organized as networks in our own time. The social infrastructure emerging in the global city is augmented by a concentration in network topology. Far from the mythical distributed ideal that ideologists of technology claim it to be, the network has its own physicality, its own material presence. Online social network services such as Friendster and MySpace tap into this increasingly networked culture. Particularly aimed at young people, social network services are generally not composed of static pages but rather are sites of social interaction that are constantly revisited by their active members. Typically, these sites consist of profile pages that contain photos, demographic information, an individual's personal preferences, a blog or link to a blog, and—in sites operating according to the circle of friends model—links to profiles of an individual's friends as well as comments from friends.

3.5.2 Net and Self

Castells (2000: 3) put forward that- "the network has to be seen as part of a bipolar opposition between *the Net and the self,* in which individuals relentlessly try to affirm their identities in a rapidly changing world". This

identity formation increasingly happens within networks that are both physical and virtual of online cultural production.

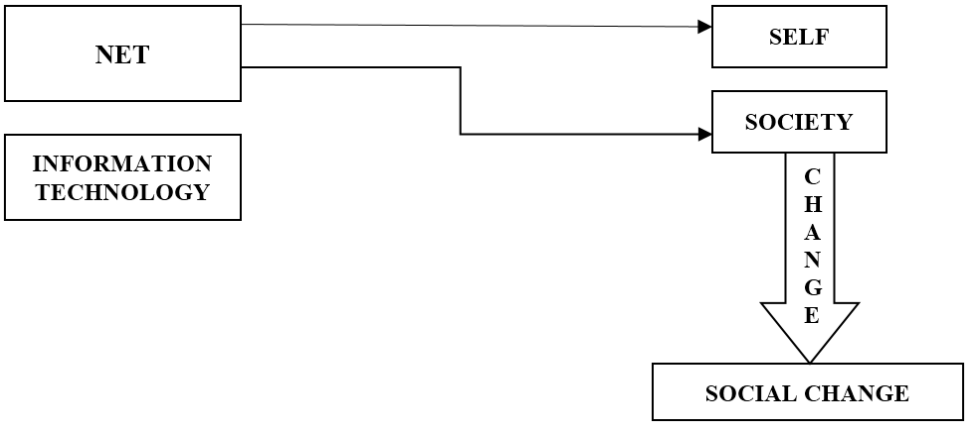

Figure: 3.1: Net and Self

Networking is the new logic, the new organizing principle of society. The rule is simple: those belonging to the network exist, while the network outcasts are non-existent. Since humanity is basically a self-centered entity, with its identity defined by one particular location and culture this process generates immense tension. Individual workers and the human labor force, in general, cannot pursue the constant wandering of capital and hence, job opportunities, on a global level. The tension ignited by the conflict of the Net and the Self serves as a life force for the new society. Real spaces are taken over by the "space of flow" where things of significance and value fluctuate incessantly. This leads to the birth of "real virtuality" in a cultural sense, where the virtual and reality merge and reflect upon each other. The growth of tension is also reflected in social movements. Some of these (religious fundamentalists, for instance, among other reactive movements) withdraw into traditions and religious values regarding stability, and lack of change as something precious. Others, (anti-globalization proactive groups) turn against the network society, ironically enough, exploiting the latter's own means of globalized technology and culture. "Global criminal economy" presents another difficulty that societies have to face, and to make things even worse, in certain countries such crime is entangled with the legal political power. This circumstance in the end is something that poses a threat to the entire globalized world. The workings of the globalized information society eventually have its impact on everyone. However, not every individual participates in the construction of the new mode of living, in the same way as not all of us become part of the network.

3.6. De-humanizing of Social Relationships

The de-humanization of social relationships brought about by computers, as life on line appears to be an easy way to escape real life. Furthermore, rigorous, academic research seems to indicate that, under certain conditions, use of the internet increases the chances of loneliness, feelings of alienation, or even depression. Manuel Castells (2000: 387) argued that:

> *Greater use of the internet is associated with a decline in participants' communication with family members in the household, a decline in the size of social circle, and an increase in their depression and loneliness.*

Many of Internet ties are weak ties. Weak ties are not free of support, but they are important resources to gain information, spending leisure time, communication, civic engagement and enjoyment (Castells, 2000). By contrast, new information is more apt to come through weaker ties better connected with other, more diverse social circles. The lack of status or situational cues can also encourage contact between weak ties. A key distinction in the analysis of sociability is that between weak ties and strong ties. The net is particularly suited to the development of multiple weak ties. Weak ties are useful in providing information and opening up opportunities at a low cost. The advantage of the Net is that it allows the forging of weak ties with strangers, in an egalitarian pattern of interaction where social characteristics are less influential in framing, or even blocking, communication. Indeed, off-line and on-line, weak ties facilitate linking of people with different social characteristics, thus expanding sociability beyond the socially defined boundaries of self-recognition. In this sense, the internet may contribute to expanding social bonds in a society that seems to be in the process of rapid individualization and civic engagement.

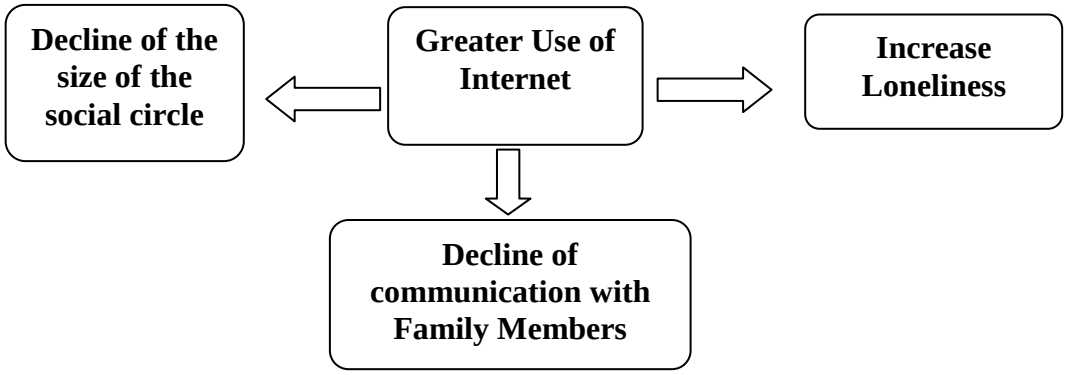

Figure 3.2: Consequences of the Greater Use of the Internet

4. Methodology

A methodology refers to the choices we make about the cases to study, methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis etc. in planning and executing a research study. This exploratory research utilized quantitative method including structured survey to collect data. . The basic drive is to analyze the situation regarding Internet and family relationship from the perception of youth.

4.1. Study Population

This study is to explore the perception of the youth of Dhaka city on the use of Internet. Though the target population indicates all youths of Dhaka city of Bangladesh, however the study specify university students studying in the University of Dhaka, North South University, East West University and college students studying in Mastermind, BAF Shaheen college, Scholastica, Dhaka City College who are Internet users.

4.2. Study Site

The study area represents seven educational institutions of Dhaka city named University of Dhaka, North South University, East West University, Mastermind, BAF Shaheen College, Scholastica, Dhaka City College.

5. Data Analysis & Findings

5.1. Respondents' Perception on Internet

The figure 5.1 indicates that respondents' perception on social networking sites. When respondents were asked **(Do you think increasing internet usage reduce your family time?),** it is found majority of the respondents (77%) reported that, increasing internet usage is decreasing family time where 14% reported that increasing internet usage has not reduced their family time.

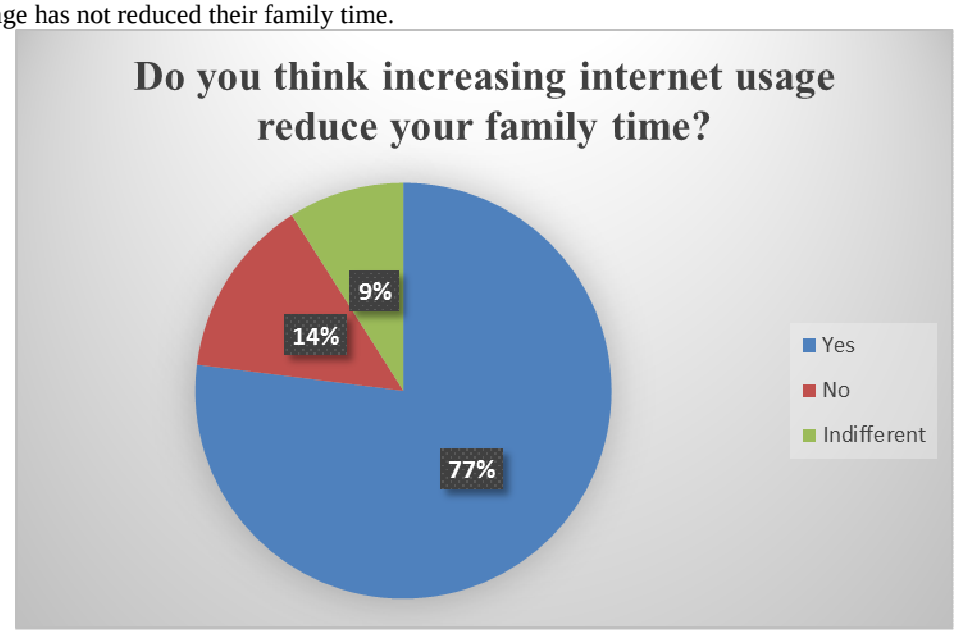

Figure 5.1: Respondents' Level of Agreement that Internet has Changed Amount of Time with Family

The figure 5.2 indicates that, when respondents were asked the statement that (since using the internet you can communicate more with friends)- majority of the respondents stated that since using the internet they

can communicate more with friends. 42 percent respondents agree and 34 percent respondents strongly agree with the statement. A very small portion of the respondents (3%) strongly disagree with this statement. So, it can be concluded that internet has increased the amount of time people used to spend with their friends.

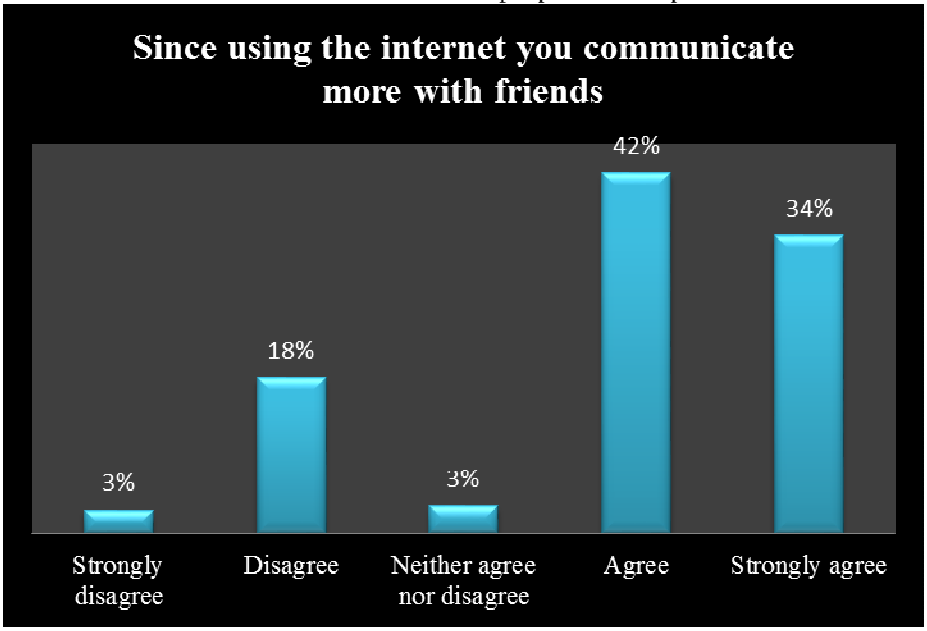

Figure 5.2 Respondents Level of Agreement with that, since using the Internet they can Communicate More with Friends

Table 5.1: Respondents' Preference for Spending Leisure Time

Preference for spending leisure time	**Percent**
By talking over the phone with friends	26
By browsing social networking sites account	36
By participating in a discussion with family members	18
Others	20
Total	100

The table 5.1 depicts that most of the respondents (26%) like to spend their time by talking over the phone with friends and 36 percent respondents like to spend their leisure time by browsing social networking sites account. On the other hand only 18 percent respondents like to spend their time by participating in a discussion with family members. It means that with the technological advancement now people prefer to spend their leisure time with technological devices instead of spending their time with their family.

5.2. Respondents' Preferable Online Activity

From the figure 5.3, it is clearly seen that a considerable proportion of respondents' (63%) reported that they like social networking sites the most among all online activities. On the other hand only 3 percent respondents like music the most among all online activities.

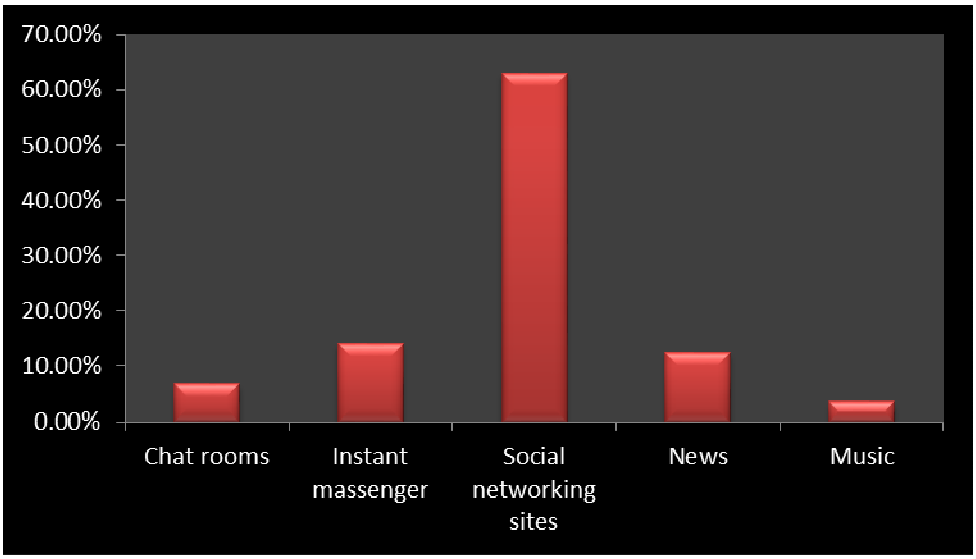

Figure 5.3: Distribution of Respondents' by their Most Preferable Online Activity

6. Conclusion

This paper offers a review of the emerging research surrounding Internet and youth. Internet is fascinating new environment to study because the technology is such an integral part of youth life. Given its popularity, parents and educators have considerable concerns about the effects of Internet on their children and students. These concerns range from youth privacy, safety, psychological well-being, social development, academic performance and family relationship. While there is much theoretical discussion about the effects of Internet on family, the empirical research that informs these popular debates is currently in an exploratory stage. The other finding of the study reveals that above fifty percent of the respondents prefer to spend their time by browsing social networking sites account among all online activities. Around three quarter of the respondents stated that internet has reduced amount of time they used to spend with their family before. On the other hand around two fifth of the respondents stated that since using the Internet they can communicate more with friends. Around one third of the respondents prefer to spend their leisure time by browsing social networking sites account more than participating in a family discussion.

It depicts from the findings that youth Internet users prefer to have online friends rather than real life friends. In one study (Nie et al. 2000) found that, Internet use is seen as an activity that reduces the time parents and children spend together in common activities, consequently facilitating the social isolation of children from adults. People who spend a lot time on the Internet could be seemed to have little interaction with their family members. It was found in many studies that people who do not have good relationships with their parents and often feel depressed resort to establish other relationship on the internet in order to feel better. A recent study by (Lenhart et al. 2001) summarized adolescents' report, that Internet use does not help them to improve their relationships with their parents and that the Internet consumes time they would spend with their families. As a result youth are likely to resort to spend more time on the Internet in order to feel socially involved. If we think of families as social systems having a collective identity, that identity is the result of shared recollections of togetherness that are created as family members spend time together in shared meals, games, and chatting. In Western societies, many families struggle with the concept of family time. So the excessive use of Internet and its impact on family relationship in our country is also a major issue to uncover.

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