The Impact of Cybercafés on the Connectedness of Children Left Behind by Overseas Filipino Workers

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ABSTRACT

This in-depth study looks at the use of cybercafés by children of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). It determines how cybercafés function as an alternative to home internet access in terms of the internet's function to maintain familial connectedness.

The impact of using public access venues (public access venues) in strengthening the connectedness of the child to the parent was explored. The children's public access venue-use was operationalized in terms of both frequency of use and the use of various online applications, both synchronous and asynchronous, to communicate with their parents. On the other hand, connectedness was based on the children's perceived knowledge of their parents' lives overseas, the children's perception of their parents' knowledge about them, and the children's perception of their parents' efforts to know more about them.

SUMMARY

This study looks at the use of cybercafés by children of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). It determines how cybercafés function as an alternative to home internet access in terms of the internet's function to maintain familial connectedness.

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GLOSSARY

- CICT – Commission on Information and Communication Technologies
- CEC – Community e-centers
- CPKP – Child's perceived knowledge of their parent's life
- Cybercafé – A commercial venue for accessing the internet
- ICT – Information and communication technologies
- MENA region – Middle East and North Africa region
- NSO – National Statistics Office
- PAV(s) – Public access venue(s)
- PEK – Parental effort to know the child
- POEA – Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
- PPK – Perceived parental knowledge about the child
- OFW – Overseas Filipino workers (Filipinos who have left the Philippines in order to work in other countries)
- YM – Yahoo! Messenger

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research looked at the impact of cybercafé use by children left behind by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). It studied how cybercafés function as a means for maintaining familial connectedness, focusing in particular on the extent to which children use cybercafé internet access to communicate with their parents and how they are monitored by their migrant parents through it.

Surveys were conducted with children of OFWs in urban and provincial communities. A total of 308 participants were administered surveys via oral interview. They were asked whether they used the internet, and where they were able to access it. The measurements of their internet usage of were based on both the applications they used and the frequency with which they used them to communicate with their parents. The measurements of "connectedness" were based on the children's perceived knowledge of their parents' lives overseas, the children's perception of their parents' knowledge about them, the parents' ability to monitor and control the children, and the children's perception of their parents' efforts to know more about them. Likewise, managers in some venues were also surveyed to determine characteristics of the venues the children frequented most often.

Focused group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted with OFWs who were in the communities at the time of the study, as well as with some children after the survey results were processed.

Impact of Use of internet-Based Communication Applications on Connectedness of Child to Parent

The survey results reveal considerable use of cybercafés among the children of migrant workers who participated in this study. Most of the children surveyed used the internet (92%), even though nearly half of them who used the internet had no access to it at home (47%). Instead, these children relied on public access venues or cybercafés to access the internet. Furthermore, two-thirds (68%, n= 103) of those respondents with home access still frequented cybercafés. This was because of limited facilities at home, better facilities and equipment in the cybercafés, or simply to enjoy the company of their friends.

The importance of using the internet to connect the children with their parents also explains the growing trend toward increased home access among OFW families. Getting home access makes a significant difference in the child's ability to learn more about the parent, and vice-versa. This is because synchronous communication 1) requires more immediate access, 2) allows for more frequent communication, and 3) provides more privacy. It should also be qualified, however, that although cybercafés provide little privacy from strangers, they do offer privacy from family members, a feature that is especially important when the communication of the parent and child is sensitive in nature.

Public Access Venues as Substitutes for Home Access

Coordinating communication between parent and child becomes more difficult when the parent and child live in different time zones, and also when there is absence of home access for either the child or the parent — or in some cases, both. In cases where there is no internet service available at home, and public venues such as cybercafés are the only option, the study shows that distance (and operating times) matter, and that in this, there is a noticeable difference between the urban and rural communities that were studied.

The survey shows that the children's reported knowledge of their parents, their perception of their parents' knowledge about them, and their perception about the use of the internet for parental efforts to know more about them were all significantly higher in their mean scores for those who only used the internet at home, compared with the ones who access it in cybercafés. When children who used the internet only in cybercafés were disaggregated by region, this difference was significant only for the rural sample. This suggests that cybercafé access in urban areas can approximate home access in terms of maintaining connectedness between the parent and child.

Public access appears to approximate home access in urban poor communities with high population density, where access to public internet is more ubiquitous, of better quality, and easier for the children to get to. However, it is a significantly poorer substitute in rural areas, because the travel distance and time it takes to get to the public access venue makes synchronous communication more difficult.

However, not all children who had access to the internet were able to use it to communicate with their parents. In our survey, only 70% of the children left behind by their migrant parents used the internet to communicate with their parents, with an even lower percentage of children in rural areas being able to do so. One hindrance to making their communication possible was the lack of immediate and timely access to cybercafés for those without home access, especially when they hoped to use the internet for synchronous online communication, coupled with their parents' own limitations on access and use of the internet in their country of work.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the *Global Impact Study of Public Access to Information & Communication Technologies* is to generate evidence about the scale, character, and impacts of public access to information and communication technologies. In relation to this objective, this in-depth study looked at the use of public access venues (public access venues), particularly cybercafés, among left-behind children of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). Public access venues are seen in this study as a means for maintaining communication between the Filipino parents who have migrated to work overseas, and their children who have been left behind in the Philippines.

The study was undertaken because the Philippines is an intensely migrant country; about a tenth of its population lives abroad. At the same time, the country is one of the world's leading consumers of telecommunication traffic (Madianou & Miller, 2012). It is considered the "texting capital" of the world, and it has one of the highest per capita Facebook use rates.

In this regard, noting both the Philippines' high migration and high ICT use, this study asks how ICTs, particularly public access venues, are used by families to maintain familial ties. More specifically, this study investigates whether the use of cybercafés among the children these migrant workers leave behind helps the families to stay connected, and whether it also helps the parents to have more "control" in the lives of their children, even if they are living apart.

This is important, as family separation is now recognized as one of the social costs of migration affecting the Global South (Madianou & Miller, 2011). Public access venues provide a medium for families to stay connected. This sense of connectedness is important not only for strengthening social cohesion, but also for the opportunities public access venues can facilitate by making it possible for parents to pursue employment opportunities outside the immediate community, whether overseas or in another part of the country.

Research Objectives

This study explores various descriptive data on internet access and use among OFW families, particularly in public access venues (typically cybercafés), differentiating between urban and rural contexts. It investigates if and how the children of these families use the internet to communicate with their parents, and other things they do in cybercafés. The paper goes on to ask whether the use of the internet in cybercafés by adolescent and young adult children of OFWs compares favorably with home access. Finally, it examines whether the kind of communication used on the internet (text, voice, or video chats; a social networking site; or email) and the frequency of its use are related to parents' and children's knowledge about each other's lives, and to parents' efforts to monitor their children's lives.

It is hypothesized that children's more frequent use of the internet to directly communicate with OFW parents positively influences perceptions of knowledge about each other's lives. Likewise, more frequent communication through the internet is positively associated with perceptions of parents exerting more effort to monitor their children.

Overview of the Report

The report begins with a brief review of the literature on migration in the Philippines, the challenge for parents who leave their children, and the use of various communication technologies to keep them connected. Thereafter, a discussion of the methodology is provided, followed by a presentation of the results. The results are first organized around all the respondents in the study who used the internet, so as to show differences in how the internet is accessed in the communities who participated in the study. The succeeding section of the results then presents only the children who used the internet to communicate with their parents. The last results section focuses on the sub-sample that used the internet only through cybercafés to communicate with their parents. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion of the findings' implications for policy on accessing and using the internet in public access venues that can be designed to help strengthen the ties between parents and children separated by migration.

BACKGROUND

The Philippines is a country with a long history of providing migrant labor around the world (Paragas 2006). During the American colonization of the Philippines (early 1900s–1940s), many workers migrated to the United States to work on plantations, such as the pineapple plantations in Hawaii. In the 1970s, Filipino workers migrated to the Middle East to pursue opportunities opened up by the oil industries there. More recent migrations have seen the rise in the demand for Filipino teachers and nurses. Over the decades, thousands have also migrated as domestic helpers, seafarers, and entertainers.

By the end of 2009, there were already more than 8.5 million Filipinos overseas, many for employment purposes, representing more than 9% of the population. In 2010, the National Statistics Office (NSO) reported that there were 2.04 million overseas Filipinos workers, 95% of whom were contract workers. A little over half were male (52%), and a third were laborers and unskilled workers (32%). The occupation with the highest demand for new hires in 2010 was household service work, and most of these hires were women (98%). The international transfer of caretaking is another dimension to the migrant labor chain (Parreñas, 2000, 2002). As more women enter the labor market in the developed world, Filipino women have responded to fill the resulting care deficit. This has created new Filipino household configurations where one or both parents are separated from their children.

Overseas employment helps to sustain the families these workers often have to leave behind. In fact, as more Filipinos work overseas, the remittances they send back to the Philippines also increase. From 2004 to 2011, remittances grew from US$8.5B to US$20.1B. However, family separation is now recognized as one of the social costs of migration affecting the Global South (Madianou & Miller 2011; Scalabrini Migration Center, 2003). In a country such as the Philippines, where the family is considered "the center of their [Filipinos'] universe" (Jocano, 1998, p.1), and where close-knit family relations are integral to Filipino culture and identity (Medina, 2001), the separation of OFW parents from their children is a persistent concern. A number of studies have reported that 10–12 year-old children of migrant mothers had poorer academic and social adjustment outcomes (Battistella & Gastardo-Conaco, 1996, 1998). Emotional hardships such as sadness, loneliness, and ambivalent feelings regarding parental migration persist among children, even into young adulthood (Parreñas, 2005; Scalabrini Migration Center ,2003). These same studies report that cellphone calls and texting (SMS) have allowed OFW parents to continue to provide input on family matters and childcare and discipline issues, thereby earning them the moniker "cellphone families" (Scalabrini Migration Center, 2003). To the authors' knowledge, however, internet use among OFW parents and their children has yet to be fully investigated. The present study addresses this gap.

ICT Use among OFW Families

Government and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have developed programs to help facilitate the long-distance communication between OFWs and their families by providing non-digital-literate OFWs and OFW dependents basic IT/ICT training (e.g., word processing, internet use, etc.). Such programs assume that, if internet use is dominated by communication among members of OFW families, there is good reason to expect positive social impact (see Kraut et al., 2002). But whether such programs have, indeed, resulted in better connections among families that have to live apart has not been evaluated.

These programs also assume that OFWs have some form of access to the internet in their places of work, and likewise, that the families they leave behind should have access.

Estimates of the size of the Filipino internet user base vary. For instance, it is estimated that internet subscribers grew from less than 500,000 in 2008 to almost 2.8 million by the end of the first quarter of 2010. Globe Telecom and PLDT accounted for almost 96% of these. Much of the growth in subscribers has come from the prepaid segment, and two-thirds of the total subscriber base represents wireless mobile broadband users (i.e., 3G subscribers; Townsend & Alampay 2011). In fact, mobile broadband has shown considerable quarter-over-quarter growth from 2008 to 2010 (Alampay, 2011) This growth was attributed to the growing availability of more affordable prepaid broadband packages, as well as lower personal computer and USB internet modem prices. While penetration rates in the Philippines are low compared with overall world averages, competition was expected to intensify with the rollout of broadband networks among the market players (Townsend & Alampay, 2011). A recent Nielsen study reports that 1 in 3 (or 33%) of consumers in the Philippines already access the internet (Galarpe, 2011). Even assuming that the lower end of the estimates of internet penetration are true, these figures still imply that majority of Filipinos access the internet not at home, but in public access venues, such as schools, libraries, or cybercafés. Furthermore, given that a large portion of OFWs are laborers or unskilled workers, they might be unable to afford home access to the internet and thus require some form of public access to stay connected.

In terms of how they stay connected, a recent survey found that, in the Philippines, social networking is the most popular medium for connecting families, followed by SMS (MSN, 2011). There are also documented cases of economically better-off migrants who invest in broadband internet service and web cameras in order to continue to be present and actively participate in household decision-making (Porio, 2007). Often conducted via mobile phone communication, the interaction is initiated by the migrant, and a regular schedule is set to facilitate coordination (Aguilar, 2009). All in all, it is estimated that 10% of the income of overseas Filipino workers is spent on communications (Thomas & Lim, 2011), and that Filipino families, on average, have 10 electronic gadgets with which to communicate with their relatives in other parts of the world (MSN, 2011).

But even as the MSN survey reported that 28% of Filipino families perceived technology as having a high impact in their family relationships, prevailing research on the impact of ICTs on keeping households connected has been mixed. Some report that such communication technologies as the mobile phone and the internet have been instrumental in easing the anxiety arising from separation (Porio 2007). In Madianou and Miller's (2011) study of long-distance parenting among Filipina migrants in the UK, mothers felt empowered by the mobile phone, as it allowed them to partially reconstruct their roles as parents. Others contend that ICT use can heighten feelings of anxiety because of increased awareness of how different their family situation is from the norm (Miller, 2007). Children of OFWs, particularly of migrant mothers, are more ambivalent about the benefits of transnational communication. Parreñas (2005) describes young adult children's feelings of abandonment and longing for deeper emotional intimacy with their mothers that cannot be appeased by weekly calls over the mobile phone. Moreover, such conversations are typically "commodified," in that the discourse is dominated by the mothers' admonitions that the child achieve in school or behave appropriately in exchange for the mother's sacrifices and economic contributions. However, such negative feelings are diminished when children receive support from extended families and communities, enjoy open communication with their migrant parents, and clearly understand the limited financial options that led their parents to migrate in the first place (ibid.).

Parental Monitoring

A particular aspect of family life that is made more challenging by the overseas work of one or both parents is the monitoring and control of children's behavior. Certainly, OFW parents who are physically distant from the child have diminished control in comparison to parents of intact households. Indeed, a common public perception is that children of OFW parents are at risk for various negative outcomes, such as juvenile delinquency, due to OFW parents' inability to monitor their children from a distance (Parreñas, 2005; Scalabrini Migration Center, 2003). Whereas this perception has yet to be established empirically, the psychology literature has confirmed that parental monitoring consistently predicts positive adjustment and well-being, and also lowers risk-taking and problem behavior in childhood and adolescence (Crouter & Head, 2002; Fletcher, Steinberg, & Williams-Wheeler, 2004). This is because effective monitoring allows the parents to be aware of and reduce the risks in the child's environment, implement appropriate rewards and punishments for the child's behaviors, and adjust their parenting to suit their child's needs (Darling, Cumsille, Alampay, & Coatsworth, 2009). Whether and how OFW parents are able to monitor their adolescent children are therefore worth investigating.

METHODOLOGY

Surveys conducted on adolescent and young adult children left behind by overseas Filipino workers were the primary data source for this research.

Sample

In selecting a community site for the study, an initial consideration was locating a cluster where there was a high concentration of OFWs. Finding a community where a strong migrant chain has been established, or at least where there was a high proportion of families with relatives working abroad was important to the study. This was to have a viable population from which to measure the impact of public access venue use. A number of studies have pointed to this phenomena, and Abrigo and Disierto (2011), for one, has shown that the distribution of migrant workers is not random, but rather, exhibits spatial clustering.

As such, the community where the surveys were conducted had a high concentration of OFWs. The identification of the communities in which the study was conducted was done in consultation with Kanlungan, an NGO that directly works with migrant workers and their families. It was from this consultation that the urban poor communities in Quezon City, the most populous city in metropolitan Manila, were identified. A provincial sample was added, again with the consultation of an NGO working with OFWs, to provide a rural-urban comparison of internet accessibility and its impact on family connectedness. The provincial sample came from Calapan in Mindoro Province.

Drawing 158 respondents from Quezon City and 150 from Calapan, the study included a total of 308 participants. Each were administered surveys via oral interview conducted in the vernacular by a trained research assistant in participants' homes, as well as in 15 frequently visited cybercafés around the communities (7 cafés in Quezon City and 8 in Calapan). Of the respondents, 168 (54.5%) were female. The mean age of the sample was 19.13 (SD=6.85); 75% were between the ages of 13 and 21 (the 25% were technically adults, but they still depended on the remittance of their parents). Similar to the national trend in international labor migration, 50% of the respondents had parents working in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), followed by other Asian countries. In terms of their parents' occupations, 42% (n=128) were domestic workers, 27% (n=82) worked in the service sector, 14% (n=42) were physical laborers, and 7% (n=23) were seamen. Five respondents did not know what occupation their parents were in. The remainder were in various other occupations.

Focus Group Discussions

As part of the process of instrument development, focus group discussions (FGD) were held among OFW adolescent children. Subsequent FGDs were also held with the respondents after the survey results had been processed to probe into emerging findings, as well as with some OFW parents who had just recently returned from their overseas work assignments.

Venue Surveys

Venue surveys were also conducted in 15 cybercafés. Seven cafés in Quezon City and eight in Calapan were identified, based on respondents' reports of the cybercafés they frequented most often. As such,

these venues may not necessarily be typical of all cybercafés in the country, but rather, they may exhibit characteristics that make them more attractive to the respondents' surveyed, and as such, more visited.

Measures

Internet Use: Type of Access, Kind of Communication, and Frequency of Use

Respondents were asked to indicate on a six-point scale (from 1=Never to 6=Everyday) how often they accessed the internet from certain locations, i.e., from home or public access venues (cybercafés). Similarly, the kind of internet communication used by the respondents when interacting with their OFW parent was considered, whether via text chat, voice chat, video chat, a social networking site, or email. Respondents indicated the frequency of each kind of communication on a six-point scale ranging from never to every day.

Parental Knowledge and Monitoring

In the present study, parental monitoring is indicated via the constructs of 1) parents' knowledge of their children's lives, and 2) parents' active efforts to know about their children's lives, with both constructs considered from the perception of the child. Consistent with current studies on monitoring (Stattin & Kerr, 2000; Darling, Cumsille, Alampay, & Coatsworth, 2009), the distinction is made between parental knowledge and parental efforts to know, where the former may be due to the adolescents' voluntary disclosure and communication to their parents, and the latter attributed to parents' behaviors and active attempts to monitor their children. A third construct, the children's knowledge of their parents' lives (overseas), is also measured. All together, these variables indicate the extent of parental monitoring, as well as disclosure and communication, more generally.

As an indicator of parental knowledge, the adolescent and young adult respondents were asked about how well their parents knew about 11 aspects of their lives (e.g., who their friends were, how well they were doing in school/work, their problems), on a three-point scale: 1=Knows Nothing, 2=Knows Some, 3=Knows A Lot. As a measure of parental monitoring or parent-initiated efforts to know, respondents were asked how much their parents exerted effort to know about the same 11 aspects of their lives, also using a three-point scale: 1=Not At All, 2=A Little, 3=A Lot. Mean scores were computed for each variable.

Knowledge of Parents' Lives

As a counterpoint to parental knowledge and monitoring of their children's lives, and to provide a more comprehensive picture of family connectedness, respondents were also asked about their knowledge of their parents' lives overseas. Respondents indicated whether they knew nothing, knew some, or knew a lot about 11 aspects of their parents' lives (e.g., their health, their work and work environment, their living arrangements overseas, etc.).

Analysis

ANOVA. The data was analyzed by comparing whether there were significant differences in mean scores of children's perceived knowledge of their parent's life (CPKP), perceived parental knowledge about the child (PPK), and the child's perception of the parents' efforts to know them (PEK), depending on whether or not they used particular applications or services, or whether their parents were capable of

using these services. However, when testing for this, the respondents who didn't use the internet for communicating with parents were filtered out. The reasons why some were unable to use the internet for communication varied. This may be due to lack of access on the parents' part, or their lack of knowledge to use the internet, or other factors. It is discussed later in the results.

Regression. Furthermore, correlation was tested between CPKP, PPK, and PEK with the frequency by which the various services were used to communicate between child and parent.

RESULTS

The first part considers all the respondents in the study who used the internet to show differences in how they accessed the internet, and in their reasons for using cybercafés. The second part of the results focuses on the sub-sample that used the internet to communicate with their parents. The final part, then, presents results from the sub-sample of children who both use the internet only through cybercafés, and are able to use it to communicate with their parents.

Public Access Venues Provide Children of Overseas Filipino Workers with Access to the internet

It is notable that only 24 respondents, or 8% of the sample, did not use the internet. Among the 284 adolescent and young adult children of OFWs who do use the internet, almost half (47%, n=133) had no access at home and relied instead on public access venues or cybercafés to access the internet. Of the 53% (n=151) who had computers and some form of internet connection at home, two-thirds (68%, n=103) also frequented cybercafés.

As such, the foremost direct impact of public access venues for OFW families is their role in providing internet access to many OFW children. Despite the upward trend in personal access through the home, a friend's home, or cell phones and other gadgets with data access, a huge proportion of internet users in the country remain dependent on cybercafés (see Appendix C).

The primary reasons given by those who used internet cafés despite having some form of access at home were the following: The computer was not "available" at home, since there were multiple users in the household; the venue served as a place to bond and be with friends; and lastly, the venue has better equipment/better internet connection speed than at home (see Table 1). One FGD participant also said that he had been going to cybercafés since his home computer broke down.

Table 1: Reason for cybercafé use among children with internet access at home

Reason	Count/Percentage (N = 103)
No other option for computer access/unavailability since there are multiple users at home	32 (31.1%)
No other option for internet access	15 (14.6%)
To work or be with friends	30 (29.1%)
To get help from venue staff	3 (2.9%)
Better equipment than home	23 (22.3%)

Some children who had home access also clarified that there were things they did in cybercafés that they did not do at home. For instance, one boy said:

> *Nakikipag-chat po sa kaibigan kapag nasa internet shop. Kasi po parang nakakahiya kapag nasa bahay. Yung mga tao sa bahay, magtatanong kung sino ang ka-chat mo.* (I chat with friends

when I am in an internet shop. The reason is because I feel self-conscious doing that in the house. People in the house would ask who I'm chatting with.)

Another boy said:

Pag sa bahay po, Facebook at Skype sa Papa ko. Pag sa labas po games at chat sa mga kaibigan. (When I'm at home, I use Facebook and Skype to communicate with Papa. Outside, I play games and chat with friends.)

These answers suggest some distinction between what is "private" and what is "public." Communication with parents would fall in this private sphere, more suited to the home environment, whereas cybercafé use involves dealing with (to communicate/to play) a different social network.

Internet Access is Essential for Children to Communicate with Their Migrant Parents

Seventy percent (70%) of the surveyed children left behind by their migrant parents used the internet to communicate with their parents.

Figure 1 shows that a larger proportion of respondents in Quezon City communicated with their parents through the internet (using various online applications) compared with respondents from Calapan (Quezon City 74%, n=158; Calapan 66%, n=146).

Figure 1: Communication between parent and child via the internet

The difference is partly explained by the kind of internet access the parent has while working overseas (see Table 2). Overall, a little less than half of the respondents' parents working overseas have internet access at home (43%). A slightly higher proportion of parents from Quezon City working abroad have home access to the internet, compared with those in Calapan. This allows them to coordinate online communication with their children more easily.

In addition, almost a tenth (9%) of the parents were unable to access the internet overseas, even though their children reported that their parent had the capability to use the internet. Also, a larger proportion of the parents' from Calapan were not able to use the internet, either because of a lack of access in their country of work, or because they did not know how to use the internet. One of the children in the focus groups in Quezon City shared that, even though she had internet access at home, she still did not use it

to communicate with her father. Instead, she mainly uses the internet to connect with her friends and classmates. Her father, who has been working in Saipan at a publishing/printing company for five years, still prefers to call her on the phone, since he is not that knowledgeable with computers and the internet. As such, the parents' capability to access and use the internet and quality of access to it are crucial determinants in the use of the internet to communicate between parents and their children.

Table 2: OFW parents' internet access overseas

	QC (n=158)	Calapan (n=146)	Total (n=304)
Home	45%	42%	43%
Work	8%	7%	7%
Friend	4%	7%	6%
Internet café	8%	8%	8%
Multiple venues	10%	3%	6%
Internet capable but unable to access	6%	14%	10%
Non-internet user	19%	17%	18%

One mother who worked in Hong Kong related how she managed to communicate with her kids while she was abroad by going to internet shops there:

> I used YM (Yahoo! Messenger). I always saw my children there. I also do voice chat on YM. Then, when I chat, I see them, and they also see and are able to talk to me. Eventually, after some time, they said, "Why don't you use Facebook Mama? We can also chat there." I said, I don't have an account. They said: Okay, we'll make you one. So they made me a Facebook account and gave me the password. Afterwards, I also did not know how to upload pictures on Facebook. So they still didn't see any of my pictures. So I asked for help. My pictures on Facebook were placed by someone in the computer shop. My children were happy (to see my pictures) even if it's only in Facebook. Every Sunday, we have pictures. They also have pictures. But, they (in the shop) charge me a fee, HK$1 per picture.

Her case is typical of domestic helpers in Hong Kong. Usually, on Sundays, many domestic helpers working in Hong Kong congregate in a particular plaza in the city center. Because of this, some shops specifically cater their services for Filipinos (see Appendix E: Pictures 2 and 3).

Some OFWs are luckier. Their employers provide them with computer and internet access at home. One mother who worked in Israel related her experience:

> I was able to access the internet in my house. My boss allowed me to use a laptop. They gave me a laptop so that I could always see my family, because they noticed that if I don't see them, don't talk to them, I get cranky. My employer didn't want me to leave, so they did everything for me not to get lonely.

It also happens that some OFWs eventually learn about the advantages of using the internet through the computer and learn to use the technology while working overseas. As one former OFW parent from Quezon City related in an FGD:

> *Doon ko sila nakakausap. Tapos nag-aral ako sa computer. Tinuruan po ako. Tapos doon ko sila nakikita at nakakausap. Siguro mga 6 months (ako nanduon bago ako natuto).* (I usually talk to my children through the cellphone. Then I studied to learn the computer. I was taught. Now I can see and talk to them there. It took me about 6 months [after I was abroad to learn].)

But as mentioned previously, not all the children were able to use the internet to communicate with their parents. How this influences their knowledge of each other's lives is reported next.

Use of Internet to Communicate with Parents

internet Use to Communicate with Parents Makes Children Perceive that They Know Their Parents Better

Overall, children who used the internet to communicate with their parents differed significantly from those who did not, in terms of their perceived knowledge of their parent (t(302) = 2.82, p < .01). Those who used the internet reported knowing more about their parents' lives overseas, compared with those who did not use the internet.

Also, it seems that children left behind learn more about their parents' lives through the internet, given the various modes of communication possible online (e.g., sharing photos via social networking sites, video chats, etc.) For instance, in an FGD, some children shared that their use of cybercafés to stay in touch with their relatives abroad was limited to chatting, sending messages, and emails. They did not engage in video chat unless they were using computers in their neighbors' houses. They added that cybercafés weren't that appealing for video chats, because they tend to be crowded and noisy.

But how did use of these different modes of internet communication affect their connectedness to their parents? In the following tables, indicators of respondents' family connectedness are compared for those who used particular forms of internet communication versus those who did not. Tables 3, 4, and 5 present the data for child-reported knowledge of the parent, parental knowledge, and parental monitoring or efforts to know, respectively.

Table 3: Knowledge of the parent based on applications used on the internet

Activity	Yes	No	t	df
Chats with parent online	2.366	2.174	3.973**	306
Sends and receives messages from OFW parent	2.397	2.165	5.067**	306
Parent updates SNS/Facebook	2.343	2.211	2.694**	306
Child sends email to parent	2.393	2.196	4.284**	306
Receives email from parent	2.370	2.222	3.193**	306

Table 3 shows that adolescent and young adult children who are able to communicate with their parents using various online options (chat, email, voice chat, social networking) report knowing their parents better. Only in video chat were users and non-users not significantly different in their knowledge of their parents' lives.

One common medium was communicating through Facebook. A girl from Calapan said that she spends about 80% of her online time on Facebook. Below, she explains how Facebook supplements her regularly scheduled communication with her mother during the weekends.

> *Sa Facebook, nakakapag-communicate din po kami minsan ng Mama ko pag online sya. Nakakapag-chat din po kami sa Facebook eh. Tapos Sabado't Linggo po yung chat namin talaga sa Skype.* (In Facebook, I can communicate with my Mama sometimes when she is online. And then, Saturday and Sunday is when we chat on Skype.)

According to her, sometimes they would talk during weekends for three hours. She says her mother does share with them what her life abroad is like, saying:

> *Halimbawa pag may mga pinupuntahan syang party, lahat naman po sinasabi nya sa amin. (Kahit problema) kagaya po nung nanakawan siya.* (For instance, when she goes to some party, she shares everything to us. Even problems, like when someone stole something from her.)

Another participant said:
> *Nagke-kwento po sya sa amin. Kapag nalulungkot sya, kapag nanaginip po sya nang masama.* (She shares with us her stories. When she is lonely, when she has a bad dream.)

It was also noted that one child who participated in the FGD in Quezon City described how she learned more about her father, albeit passively, through pictures she would find in the Facebook account of her father's friend.

What the child perceives to know about the parent is not always the complete picture, however. Some parents we talked to in the FGDs said that, when they communicated with their children, they preferred not to talk about their problems and hardships in their place of work, and would prefer knowing how their children were doing. As one father related:

Ako, ayaw kong pag-usapan. Halimbawa, pag nahihirapan ako sa amo ko. Mas gusto ko pang pag-usapan, kumustahin sila sa pag-aaral nila. (Me, personally, I do not want to talk about it. For instance, if I'm having a hard time with my boss. I would rather ask my children how they are, how they're doing in school.)

Table 4: Parental knowledge of the child based on applications used on the internet

Activity	Yes	No	t	df
Chats with parent online	2.241	2.076	3.373**	306
Sends and receives messages from parent	2.255	2.086	3.579**	306
Receives email from OFW parent	2.227	2.137	1.903	306
Child sends email to parent	2.225	2.137	1.852	306
Parent updates Facebook/SNS	2.212	2.128	1.673	306

However, overall comparisons in parents' knowledge and parental monitoring of children's lives did not yield any significant differences. This is perhaps due to the ubiquitous use of mobile phones, which, as will be cited later, correlates more strongly than internet use with parental knowledge and monitoring. As mentioned previously, some parents still prefer that, because it is a system they are already more familiar with. But with respect to the children's perception of how well their parents know them, only online chat and leaving/posting online messages made a significant difference. The dynamics surrounding this matter were illustrated by what one boy shared when asked if he could tell problems to his father:

Sa message din po para di agad magalit o kung magalit sya, mawawala na pag nagkausap ulit kami. Pag sinabi ko po kasi nang ka-chat ko sya, baka mapagalitan ako. Pero pag mga problema din lang po sa school, sa video chat po nasasabi ko na rin. (I can tell him my problems through online messages, so that he doesn't get angry immediately, or if he does get angry, it has already dissipated by the time we talk again. If I tell him this during a chat, he might scold me. But for problems in school, I can share those things using video chat.)

Another boy shared:

Kapag chat, kumustahan o tungkol sa school. Kapag private messages po, para sa mga problems tsaka pag may gusto po kaming ipabili na bagay. (When we use chat, it's just to ask how things are going, how's school? But if we use private messages, it's for problems, and if we want them to buy a particular thing.)

Similarly, a daughter who participated in an FGD explained how she chose the medium for telling her mother about problems:

Halimbawa po minsan, nahihirapan akong sabihin sa chat. Mine-message ko na lang po sa kanya. (Pero sa chat) Yung mga masasaya po. (Sometimes, there are things I find difficult to tell over a chat. I message my mother instead. [Over chat] I tell her the happy events.)

Another girl added:

> *Kapag ano lang po may secret na ayaw iparinig sa kapatid o kay Papa.* (I use chat when
> I have a secret that I don't want my siblings or Papa to hear.)

As Stattin and Kerr (2000) have noted, parental knowledge comes mainly from child disclosure. The findings suggest that text chatting and posting messages to and from the parent are forms of communication that permit more self-disclosure and allow some privacy.

In fact, one girl in particular expressed that she didn't think her mom knew her that well. Most of the FGD participants agreed that, despite the attempts of their relatives to know and understand, their parents did not fully understand their situation because of the distance.

Interestingly, some parents actually pick-up on these nuances. As one mother explained her communications with her son:

> *Kasi kadalasan kasi sa aming mag-ina, lalo na yung panganay ko, mas nakakausap ko
> sya nang hindi personal. Nakakausap ko sya sa chat kasi parang lalabas pareho sa amin
> yung ano eh. Kasi kung personal, nagkakahiyaan kami. Sa chat, mas maraming syang
> nasasabi na di nya masabi sa akin nang personal. Dinadaan nya doon.* (Often, between
> me and my children, most especially my eldest, we get to communicate less personal [or
> indirect]. I get to communicate with him on chat, because if we speak in person, we're
> shy and guarded. With chat, he is able to tell me more of the personal things. Hence, he
> prefers that.)

Part of the reason why children and parents cannot always be open can be contextualized by how the communication plays out, especially for voice and video chats. As one child said:

> *Sama-sama po kami. Minsan sabay-sabay, minsan halinhinan. Minsan isa-isang kakausapin,
> ganon.* (We're all together, sometimes all at the same time. Sometimes, one at a time.
> Sometimes, she'll speak with one person at a time.)

As such, these conversations are not necessarily as private as those one might have over a cellphone, since sometimes the communication happens with the entire household present. This explains, once again, why more intimate and personal topics are dealt with through messaging and text-based chats.

Table 5: Parental monitoring or efforts to know the child based on applications used on the internet

Activity	Yes	No	t	df
Chats w/ parent online	2.326	2.166	2.862**	306
Sends/receives messages from OFW parent	2.325	2.195	2.401*	306
Child sends email to parent	2.322	2.212	2.050*	306
Receives email from parent	2.325	2.215	1.982*	306
Parent updates SNS	2.295	2.220	1.311	306

Lastly, chatting, email (by parent and child), and exchanging messages yield significant differences as far as children's perception of the efforts of their parents to know more about them. As with the previous result, these modes of online communication permit the parent to exert more deliberate efforts to obtain information about their children's lives.

In an FGD with OFW children, some participants said they were aware of the efforts their parents made to reach out to them. These parents often sought to be updated about the children's situations, often asking how they were doing in school. When asked whether her parent was able to help in her schoolwork, one participant mentioned that her mother helps her in school by sending money for her allowance whenever it is needed.

But beyond the direct efforts to know and monitor, parents also use some indirect means to know more about their children. These are often conducted through some asynchronous communication applications. An OFW mother returnee from Dubai even mentioned that every time she had the chance to go online, what she always did first was to check the Facebook pages of her daughters to monitor their activities. She explained:

> *(May nalalaman ako sa kanila) Dahil nakikita ko sa mga pictures nila (sa Facebook). Tapos yun, tatanungin ko sila. Kasi at least alam mo yung nangyayari sa kanila eh. Nakikita mo sa picture kung san nagpupunta, yan nalalaman mo. Kasi hindi naman nila itinetext yan eh. Hindi naman nila sinasabi eh.* (I find out things about them because I see their pictures on Facebook. Then, I ask them about it. You could, at the very least, find out what's happening to them. You know where they go, that you can find out. They will not text that to you, they don't tell you that.)

Hence, OFW parents can exert some parental control by being active in the social networks of their children. Another parent related the following:

> I do comment (on their Facebook pages). I really post comments and I call them right away in those cases. I ask them, "What is this photo? Why do you have such photos?" They will respond and explain themselves, "Mom, that's my classmate or that's just a friend." That's because they know that I will not stop (asking them), that I can always call.

She is also updated about her children's performance in school, citing that while she was in Dubai, she knew that one of her daughters failed some subjects. In this regard, the OFW mother views the internet in a positive light, as long as her children use it to connect with her and do better in school.

Home Internet Access Leads to Stronger Child-Parent Connectedness

Table 6 presents the means and standard deviations of child-reported knowledge of parents, parental knowledge of child, and parental effort to know about the child, as well as the results of analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the mean differences in these variables according to type of internet access the child used. It shows that children who have home access to the internet report higher perceptions of their connectedness with their parents and their parents efforts to know them than those with both public access venue and home access and those with public access venue access only. The pattern is repeated in Tables 7, 9, and 10.

The explanation as to why home-only access has more impact than use of both public access venue and home access is connected to the common reasons the children gave for going to cybercafés despite having home access. That is, access at home is shared with multiple users (32%), or their home access is of poorer quality compared to the internet connection in cybercafés (22%). These factors, in turn, affect the frequency and quality of their online interaction with their parents. Hence, those who exclusively use the internet at home tend to have better quality and more dedicated connections, leading to more frequent communication with their parents than those who use the internet in both locations.

Table 6: Means and standard deviation of child-reported knowledge of parents, parental knowledge of the child, and parental effort to know the child

	Access Type			
	Public access venue access only	Home access only	Both public access venue & Home	F
Child-reported knowledge of parents	2.28_a (.39)	2.50_b (.41)	2.34_{ab} (.44)	3.70*
Perceived parental knowledge of child	2.11_a (.39)	2.36_b (.44)	2.25_{ab} (.40)	5.62**
Perceived parental effort to know about the child	2.20_a (.43)	2.39_a (.46)	2.34_a (.48)	3.15*

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means. Means that do not share subscripts (a, b, ab) differ at $p < .05$ in Tukey HSD post-hoc comparisons.

The advantage of home access (for both parent and child) was explained by one boy whose mother worked in Dubai as a teacher. He said his mother could talk to him everyday, and did so before she went to work. When asked when they do so, he said:

> *Sa umaga po kasi, may trabaho pa sya mula 9:00 ng umaga hanggang hapon kaya sa umaga po kami nagcha-chat. Mga 5:00 ng umaga sa kanila hanggang 8:00.* (In the morning [in his mother's timezone], because she has to work at 9 in the morning until the afternoon. That's why we chat in morning. Around 5 am in their time until 8 am.)

This explains why children who accessed the internet at home perceived significantly higher knowledge

of their parents' lives than those who accessed the internet in public access venues. Those who accessed the internet from both venues, on the other hand, did not differ significantly from either of the two groups. The pattern of results is replicated for child-reported parental knowledge of the child.

Likewise, levels of parental monitoring or efforts to know the child differed significantly, depending on the type of internet access. Children who accessed the internet from their homes reported higher levels of parental monitoring, followed by children who used the internet in both home and cybercafé, and then lastly by children who accessed it only in cybercafés. However, based on Tukey's HSD post-hoc comparison, none of the pairwise differences were statistically significant.

Whether there were significant patterns between kinds of internet communication and type of access was also determined. Table 7 indicates that use of all forms of communication, with the exception of email, was higher for those who are able to access the internet in their homes.

Table 7: Kind of internet communication with parents by type of access

Online Applications	Mean Rank			χ^2
	Public access venue access only	Home access only	Both public access venue & Home	
Facebook	95.61	125.33	108.87	6.79*
Text Chat	86.79	128.33	116.01	16.55**
Voice Chat	94.72	119.21	112.32	5.87*
Video Chat	89.26	131.82	112.15	14.62**
Email	109.68	99.13	106.61	.83
Internet (in general)	89.71	130.39	112.33	14.12**

Note: * = $p \leq .05$. ** = $p \leq .001$

Taken together, the foregoing results suggest that home internet access does make a significant difference in family connectedness, whether in terms of parental knowledge of the child, parental monitoring or efforts to know the child, or the child's knowledge of the parents' lives. Home access allows for more frequent communication than public access. Moreover, coordination is easier. For instance, when asked how often he communicated with his child, one participant answered:

> *Kapag naka-online sila sa Facebook.* (When they are online on Facebook.)

This implies that this family does not always set schedules to communicate with each other, and these chance encounters are more likely when one is online more often, which is the case for those with home access.

The home environment also provides the adolescent and young adult respondents more privacy and a

less noisy environment as compared to public access venues. Indeed, many OFW parents have invested in buying personal computers and monthly internet subscriptions for their homes in the Philippines. As related by Quezon City parents in their FGD:

> *Kailangan. Para sa communication, para makita mo sila.* (It is needed. For communication, so I can see them.)

> *Para bawas na rin (sa telepono). (Pangunahin na yung) Communication, yung makita mo sila. Pati background ng bahay nakikita mo rin, kaya medyo naalis ang lungkot.* (Aside from reducing telephone bills, you can see them . . . including the background of the house you can see, and this lessens the feeling of loneliness.)

> *Sa akin naman, ang iniisip ko noon* magka-college na ang anak ko so kailangan din na may computer para hindi na labas nang labas. (For me, I was thinking then that my child was going to college soon and would need a computer anyway so that she doesn't have to keep going out.)

These examples of investing in computers and internet access at home explain why, relative to the Philippine population, home internet access among OFW households is much higher.

Cybercafé-Only Internet Users

In focus group discussions, participants mentioned their use of the internet in cybercafés to keep in touch with their friends, classmates, and relatives in other parts of the country; to play online games; and to research topics for their school assignments/projects. Some of the applications, software, and networking sites they use are Facebook, Friendster, YouTube, and Yahoo! Messenger.

Urban-Rural Distinction: Urban Cybercafés Approximate Home Access with Respect to Keeping Families Connected

public access venues in the Philippines are generally found in urban locations. However, the quality of broadband connections may vary. As such, one of the things this research investigated was whether differences in access and quality of access between a metro-urban sample (Quezon City) and a provincial sample (Calapan, Mindoro Oriental) would yield differences in the use of cybercafés to maintain relationships between parents and their children.

Venue surveys were conducted in cybercafés that were reported in the user surveys as being those most frequented by respondents. Seven such frequently visited cybercafés in Quezon City and eight in Calapan were documented. It was noted that the cybercafés the respondents frequented tended to have bandwidths that range between 1–5 mbps, with more than half having 3 mbps or higher. The rental rates range between Php15–25 per hour of use in Quezon City, and Php15–20 per hour[1] in Calapan.

In terms of quality, it was noted by one boy in Calapan that cybercafés in the town center were better and more reliable than the type of access they could get in their houses. He said:

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[1] This is approximately between US$0.35–0.46.

Sa bayan po (as mas maganda). Kasi pag sa bahay po, kahit DSL, minsan mabilis ang connection minsan mabagal. Eh sa bayan po, palaging mabilis. Pero bihira po akong gumamit doon kasi magastos dahil may internet connection na kami sa bahay. (In the town center, the quality of internet is better. Because at home, even if we have DSL, sometimes it's fast, sometimes slow. In the town cybercafés, it's always fast. But I seldom go there because it's just an added expense considering we already have access at home.)

What sets the two sites apart is that the more popular cybercafés in Quezon City were within walking distance from the respondents, whereas the ones in Calapan were farther; for some, they also required taking public transportation to access. Hence, going to cybercafés in Calapan is more expensive if one considers the additional transportation cost. As a result, cybercafé users in Quezon City were able to use the internet to communicate with their parents more frequently than cybercafé users in Calapan (*U* = 608, *Z* = -2.47, *p* = .013). They also used Facebook, video chat, and email to connect with their parents abroad more often, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Difference in frequency of online communication with parents overseas by location

Online Applications	Mean Rank		*U*	*Z*
	QC public access venue users	Calapan public access venue users		
Facebook	48.61	34.59	581**	-2.70
Text Chat	46.98	37.03	664	-1.88
Voice Chat	45.82	38.76	723	-1.34
Video Chat	48.52	34.72	585.5**	-2.61
Email	50.15	32.28	502.5**	-3.38
Internet (in general)	48.08	35.38	608*	-2.47

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01.

Hence, improved proximity allowed for more frequent parent-child communication among cybercafé users in Quezon City. The effect of this easier access to cybercafés in Quezon City was that child-reported knowledge of parents, perceived parental knowledge of the child, and perceived parental effort to know about the child showed no significant difference whether the child only used the internet in cybercafés, only at home, or at both places (see Table 9). This suggests that easily accessible cybercafés in Quezon City can be an acceptable substitute to private access in maintaining relationships between members of transnational families. When describing these cybercafés as easily accessible, we should be more specific: They may be literally five meters away from one's front door, which is typical in urban slums in the country. They are also informal operations that are not likely to be registered with the local government.

Table 9: Child-reported knowledge of parents, perceived parental knowledge of child, and perceived parental effort to know about the child by access type – Quezon City

	Access Type			*F*	η²
	Public access venue access only	Home access only	Both public access venue & Home		
Child-reported knowledge of parents	2.29 (.44)	2.46 (.54)	2.28 (.45)	1.15	.02
Perceived parental knowledge of child	2.09 (.42)	2.35 (.56)	2.20 (.44)	2.35	.04
Perceived parental effort to know about the child	2.17 (.44)	2.49 (.52)	2.26 (.50)	2.82	.05

Note: Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means.

On the other hand, distance from the child's home to the cybercafé impeded the capability of cybercafés users in Calapan to communicate with their parents more regularly. Unlike in Quezon City, accessing a good cybercafé in Calapan may require the child to take a tricycle and commute some distance. This also cuts into the amount of time the child and parent have to communicate. As one boy shared when asked how often he spoke with mother:

> *Tuwing Friday po, minsan hindi pa. Wala pa pong 1 hour. Dahil kung minsan po, halimbawa, pupunta kamin ng internet shop tapos nauuna si Mama o nauuna kami. E pag natapos na ang time namin sa shop, mapuputol na rin agad yung usapan namin.* (Every Friday, sometimes not even. It's not longer than an hour, because sometimes, I'd go to the internet shop, and Mama's ahead of us, or we're ahead of her. Then when our time at the shop is up [or over], our conversation will also have to end.)

As such, the coordination needs and the limits in terms of time a child could spend in the cybercafé provide less time for the parent and the child to communicate. Hence, there were significant differences in rural parent-child connectedness, depending on the type of access. As seen in Table 10, children who used only public access venues scored the lowest in terms of child-reported knowledge of parents ($F(2, 93) = 4.72$, $p = .013$) and perceived parental knowledge of child ($F(2, 92) = 3.34$, $p = .04$), compared to respondents who accessed only at home and those who accessed in both home and public access venue in Calapan. These differences were also statistically significant as to the family members' perceived knowledge of each other.

Table 10: Child-reported knowledge of parents, perceived parental knowledge of child, and perceived parental effort to know about the child by access type – Calapan

	Access Type			F
	Public access venue access only	Home access only	Both Home & public access venue	
Child-reported knowledge of parents	2.27$_a$ (.34)	2.53$_b$ (.29)	2.41$_{ab}$ (.41)	4.72*
Perceived parental Knowledge of child	2.14$_a$ (.35)	2.37$_b$ (.33)	2.31$_b$ (.34)	3.34*
Perceived parental effort to know about the child	2.24$_a$ (.41)	2.37$_a$ (.41)	2.45$_a$ (.43)	2.22

Note: *= $p < .05$. Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means. Means that do not share subscripts (a, b, ab) differ at $p < .05$ in the LSD post-hoc comparison.

Gender Differences: Males are Online More Often, but not Necessarily to Communicate with Their Parents

In the sub-sample of OFW children who only used cybercafés to access the internet, male children were the more frequent users in internet cafés (U = 1720.5, Z = -2.33, p = .02). Also, they spent considerably longer hours online than their female counterparts (U = 1623, Z = -2.80, p = .005), although not necessarily to communicate with their parents.

Frequent and longer time online, but less frequent communication with their parents among males may be partly explained by their tendency to engage in other leisure activities online, like playing games. A study conducted by the Asian Institute for Journalism and Communication (2009) on internet use by Filipino schoolchildren revealed that 8 out of 10 elementary and high school students who connected to the internet played online games, with more boys engaging in the activity than girls (among older schoolchildren). This was consistent with the venue surveys, where places which had higher proportion of male users also reported gaming as the highest revenue source.

Parents seem to be well aware of this problem. One of the parents who participated in the FGD even said that this had been a common source of argument between her and her sons when she was working abroad.

> *Ako kasi, kaya gusto ko kasama yung asawa ko, yung dalawa di makakapaglaro habang kausap nila ako, pag ka-chat nila ako. Pag hindi kasama ang asawa ko, minsan hindi napapansin yung ano ko, kasi andon sa paglalaro. Kaya yon, napapagalitan ko talaga sila.* (In my case, I wanted my husband to always accompany my children whenever we chat online. That's the only way I was assured my sons refrained from playing games while we were chatting. But whenever their father was not with them, they always got overly busy with online gaming and seemed to completely forget that they were chatting with me.)

Apart from the pain of feeling neglected, she also admitted that what disappointed her was that her children seemed heedless of the fact that every minute she spent in a cybercafé waiting for their replies meant money wasted. Hence, every time her husband was unavailable to join their kids to chat with her due to work, she did not bother to persuade them to go online and speak with her, as it appeared pointless.

Some kids did admit to playing more than communicating with their parents when in cybercafés. But to them, it was also because the opportunity to communicate with their parents is less frequent, often only on weekends, as one child explained:

> *Mas laro po. Kasi minsan lang po, pag Biyernes at saka Sabado lang po si Mama online. Kaya mas games.* (I play games more. That's because Mama is only online on Fridays and Saturdays. Hence I play games more often.)

But then, another boy also said that his mother gives instructions to limit his brother through him, even though she is away:

> *Ako po, yung sa kapatid ko po. Kasi po napapalaro po lagi ng online games. Ako po ang binibilinan nya na bakit di ko daw pagsabihan na wag masyadong maglaro tsaka dapat ay mag-aral nang mabuti.* (In my case, its my brother [who has a problema], because he always plays online games. I am the one my mother asks why I do not instruct my borther not to play too much and remind him to study better.)

This illustrates another way by which parents try to participate in parental control, despite the distance.

Using Cybercafés for Synchronous Communication on the internet to Maintain Connectedness Among Children and Their Parents

Comparisons between the urban sample and the provincial sample were made among respondents that only accessed the internet through cybercafés. Survey results show that an OFW child's perceived knowledge of their parent who was working abroad was significantly higher only in Quezon City, among cases where the children text chat ($t(70) = 2.63$, $p \leq .01$), voice chat ($t(70) = 2.63$, $p \leq .01$), or communicate via email with their parents ($t(70) = 2.05$, $p \leq .05$; see Table 11. However, use of video chat, social networking, and email were not found to be significant ($p > 0.05$). No significant differences were found in the Calapan sample.

Child's Perceived Knowledge of the Parent

Table 11: Child's perceived knowledge of the parent based on applications used on the internet, t-scores (cybercafé only)

	QC					Calapan			
	Yes	No	*t*	*df*		Yes	No	*t*	*df*
Facebook	2.28	2.12	1.51	70		2.24	2.23	.06	59
Text chat	2.34	2.09	2.63**	70		2.31	2.19	1.19	59
Voice chat	2.38	2.11	2.86**	70		2.32	2.19	1.34	59
Video chat	2.27	2.18	.94	70		2.32	2.19	1.34	59
Email	2.32	2.12	2.05*	70		2.25	2.23	.12	59

Note: *$p < .05$, **$p \leq .01$*

Both applications (text chat and video chat) require synchronous communication. This means that both parent and child need to be online at the same time. As such, save for fortuitous or chance meetings online, this requires either scheduling communications or coordinative communication using other ICTs (such as cell phones). These impromptu communication times would be easier to achieve in cybercafés that are easy to get to and do not require significant travel time, as in the case of the Quezon City cybercafés. This may explain why such applications are significant in QC, where public access venues are a stone's throw away from the respondents' houses. As some parents' related:

> *Sa bahay naman kasi, walang computer dati, tinetext ko sila pinapalabas ko sila papuntang computer shop. So alam na nila, kung anong oras o araw ko sila pwede makausap.* (I didn't have a computer in the house before. So I used to text them so they can go to the computer shop. So they know what time or day I can talk to them.)

> *Mga one year kasi (doon) hindi ako marunong. Pagdating ko don hindi rin ako marunong tsaka nahihiya naman akong gumamit. Nung natuto ako, ayon tuwing mag-oonline, minsan magte-text…para mag-online. Kung minsan naman, naka-on na yung computer.* (For over a year, I didn't know how to use [the internet], and I was a little embarrassed to use. But, when I learned and I was online, I would text them to go online. Sometimes, I just leave the computer turned on [online].)

> *Minsan, pag YM, naka-open na ako, naka-online na ako, sila wala pa, tatawagan ko sila.* (Sometimes, when using YM [Yahoo! Messenger], my YM is already open and I am online, but they're not online. I'll call them [on the cellphone].)

This means that, even when the parent working overseas has access to the internet at home, there's still some difficulty coordinating online communication with a child if the child's only option is to go to a public access venue.

Perceived Parental Knowledge of the Child

On the other hand, perceived parental knowledge about the child was only significantly higher among those who used voice chat among QC respondents ($t(70) = 1.92$, $p \leq .05$; see Table 12). For Calapan respondents, reported parental knowledge of the children was higher for users of social networking sites, chatting applications, and email. However, none were significantly different, statistically.

Table 12: Children's perceived parental knowledge of them vis-à-vis applications used online (cybercafé only)

	QC					Calapan			
	Yes	No	*t*	*df*		Yes	No	*t*	*df*
Facebook	2.08	2.05	.26	70		2.11	2.15	-.41	59
Text chat	2.15	1.97	1.79	70		2.23	2.06	1.75	59
Voice chat	2.17	1.99	1.92*	70		2.23	2.07	1.55	59
Video chat	2.06	2.09	-.37	70		2.23	2.07	1.69	59
Email	2.09	2.06	.29	70		2.10	2.14	-.41	59

Overall, mean scores on the children's perceived knowledge of the parents were generally higher than their perception of how well their parents knew them. This appears to indicate that the children like to think they know their parents more than they think their parents know them. As Stattin and Kerr (2000) have noted, parental knowledge comes mainly from child disclosure. As such, improved means of communication and frequency of communication still may not lead to better parental knowledge, if the child is not willing to share information.

Perceived Parental Effort to Know

On parental effort to know, the disaggregated location data did not yield any statistically different scores between users and non-users of the different kinds of online communication. It is possible that parental knowledge and monitoring, at this stage in the lives of the adolescent and young adult children, relies more on the disclosure of the respondents to their parents, rather than on deliberate efforts of parents to know about their children's lives. This is especially the case for OFW parents who engage in delayed monitoring of behaviors distant from the parent in both time and space (Darling, Cumsille, Alampay, & Coatsworth, 2009). Other data from this study also suggest that mobile phone calls and texting may be used more often by parents for the purpose of direct monitoring efforts. The mobile phone's contribution to this is included in the next section.

Frequency of Internet Use in Cybercafés to Communicate with Parents

In this section, we report the results of additional investigations that were conducted correlating the frequency of children's communication with parents through cybercafés with perceived knowledge about each other. This was also compared with the frequency of communication on the cell phone as a possible benchmark for comparison.

Table 13: Spearman's rho correlations for child-reported knowledge of parent with frequency of communication

Communication Means	Location		All cybercafé users
	QC	Calapan	
Cell phone	.41***	.33**	.37***
Internet (in general)	.27*	.09	.20*
Facebook	.27*	.10	.19*
Text chat	.35**	.12	.24**
Voice chat	.35**	.13	.25**
Video chat	.22	.12	.17
Email	.30*	.09	.21*

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 13 reveals that the frequent use of the cell phone yielded the highest significant correlation to a child's perceived knowledge of the parent ($r = .37$, $p < .001$). This was significant for both Quezon City ($r = .41$, $p < .001$) and Calapan ($r = .33$, $p < .001$). However, when disaggregated, only in QC and the combined respondents were there significant relationships between frequency and type of communication, except for use of video chat ($r = .22$, $p = .069$). One possible explanation for the absence of a relationship in the Calapan sample is the lower use of the internet to communicate with their parents in that group (see Figure 1), a rate tied to the distance the cybercafés in that community were from the children.

On the use of video chat, a father in the FGDs commented:

> There's a big difference with the cell phone. With the internet, because there's a webcam, it helps soften the loneliness of your home away from the country. Although in the cell phone, you are also able to talk with them. But it's really nicer on the internet. The difference is the camera. You see the environment.

But he also qualified that, in the end,

> there's really no difference [in the sharing and getting to know each other better]. It's not like you have a heart-to-heart talk with them [on video].

Table 14: Spearman's rho correlations for parental knowledge of child with frequency of communication

Communication Means	Location		All public access venues
	QC	Calapan	
Cell phone	.44***	.35**	.40***
Internet (in general)	.14	.06	.10
Facebook	.12	.03	.07
Text chat	.22	.14	.16
Voice chat	.22	.10	.15
Video chat	.08	.11	.08
Email	.09	-.02	.02

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 14 reveals that the frequent use of the cell phone also had a significant correlation, for both QC (r = .44, p < .001) and Calapan (r = .35, p < .001), with respect to the children's perception of how well their parents knew them. The same could not be said for the various internet-based communication applications, regardless of location. Stattin and Kerr (2000) would explain that, aside from a child's own disclosure, active surveillance efforts of the parents also help them to gain more knowledge. In this respect, children may actually sense that parents' use of the cell phone is to monitor them, and not as much with the internet, where some of the monitoring is more passive.

Table 15: Spearman's rho correlations for parental effort to know the child with frequency of communication

Communication Means	Location		All public access venues
	QC	Calapan	
Cell phone	0.47***	0.31*	0.40***
Internet (in general)	0.06	-0.08	-0.03
Facebook	0.02	-0.08	-0.05
Text chat	0.16	-0.03	0.04
Voice chat	0.16	-0.07	0.02
Video chat	0.04	-0.07	-0.04
Email	0.03	-0.10	-0.06

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Table 15 likewise reveals that frequent use of the cell phone also had a significant correlation, for both QC (r = .47, p < .001) and Calapan (r = .31, p < .001), with respect to the children's perception of their parents' effort to know about them. The same could, again, not be said for the various internet-based communication applications, regardless of location (see Table 1). This would suggest that the cell phone continues to be the most direct means for maintaining the relationships, if not monitoring, between parents and children. As some parents who participated in FGDs shared, if they do not call using the cell phone, they do text (send SMS) their children everyday.

When asked which mode he preferred most for communicating with their parent, one child in Calapan who only used the internet in cybercafés and lived where access to cybercafés was more difficult said that he preferred the cell phone. He explained:

> *Kasi po sa cell phone, naririnig ko po ang boses ni Mama [at hindi ito nagagawa sa text chat]. Kahit may video cam sa ibang internet cafe, di po kami nakakapagvideo chat, dahil nahihiya po sa maraming tao[ako].* (With the cellphone I can hear my Mama's voice [which I cannot do with text chat]. Even if there's a video cam in other internet cafés, we do not resort to this, because I am embarassed to do it in front of many people.)

This suggests the need to have some private space to maximize the use of other communication applications through cybercafés.

DISCUSSION

The main finding of this in-depth study can be summarized as follows: Access to the internet is important for children with OFW parents, and for many, the primary access point is through cybercafés. Adolescent and young adult children who use various forms of online communication (email, Skype, chat, messaging, Facebook) to communicate with their parents are significantly better connected with them, as indicated by higher knowledge of their parents' lives, higher parental knowledge of their children's lives, and higher estimations of the effort made by parents to know their children.

Insights can also be derived from the location of internet access.

OFW families residing in urban poor communities are not the typical "poor," because they derive a significant amount of regular income from remittances sent by relatives. They tend to be more exposed to media than the general population, and they are more invested in communication technologies to keep in touch with relatives working abroad (Ho, 2011). This claim was supported by the survey reported in the prior section, which found that a larger proportion of the OWF adolescent and young adult children had home access to the internet than the general Filipino population. Nonetheless, cybercafés also provide access for many of them, since a significant number of households remain without home access. Cybercafés were actually more common in the urban poor communities than expected, although many were "informal." These informal cybercafés were operated within houses, some with a few computer units side-by-side within their small convenience store. Hence, when disaggregating the data according to urban and provincial/rural samples, the findings show that, in urban poor communities, public access tends to approximate home access, since no significant differences in connectedness was seen in the two locations.

On the other hand, with public access being more difficult in rural areas, there were significant differences seen in parent-child connectedness vis-à-vis home access, with the latter being associated with higher connectedness.

For cybercafé-only users, frequency of cybercafé-use to communicate with parents was positively correlated only with the children's perceived knowledge of their parents' lives, although weakly so (r = 1.95, p = .024). Moreover, use of all the online communication media (except video chat) was found to have direct relationships with children's perceived knowledge of their parents' lives overseas. Voice chat had the strongest relationship, followed by text chat, email, and Facebook. Although more frequent video-based communication did not yield any statistical significance, FGDs conducted with former OFWs who had been able to communicate with their children via the internet yielded commentary that the OWF parents preferred video chat over other online communication tools.

Regardless of where they accessed internet abroad, parents felt that seeing and hearing their children through video calls helped to relieve their yearning to be with their families back home a lot more than other communication forms. However, in the FGD conducted with the children, many of the participants revealed that they were not that comfortable engaging in video chats, particularly when done in groups, and even more so at cybercafés, primarily due to the lack of privacy in public venues. Likewise, the lack of privacy in using some applications can also lead the parent and child to use other means of communication, especially when discussing more sensitive topics. Consequently, only 47% of the respondents who used the internet primarily in cybercafés used video chat to keep in touch with their parents overseas. This could also be attributed in part to the limited video capabilities of those

cybercafés that respondents visited most often, and to the quality and reliability of the bandwidth available.

Furthermore, access to online communication did not necessarily reduce the costs or monthly expenses for communication. Instead, as explained by parents in an FGD, "cheaper" communication was instead transformed into lengthier or more frequent communication between the OFW and the family left behind.

For those children accessing the internet only through cybercafés, more frequent synchronous communication appears to generate a higher perceived knowledge of their parents' lives abroad. This effect, however, had an urban-rural difference, since urban cybercafés are easier to get to, and thus somewhat approximate home access.

Those who performed other online communication activities with parents, such as chatting, emailing, or getting updates from Facebook, also possessed more knowledge about their parents' lives than those who did not; however, the differences were not significant. To some extent, this could be a product of the children's communication preferences. The children who participated in follow-up FGDs all agreed that the online communication application they used depended on the type of conversation they'd like to have with their parents. They opted to chat with their parents to say hello and have light conversation, but any serious topics was channeled to their parents by leaving them Facebook or YM messages. According to them, leaving messages gives their parents ample time to consider the situation, sparing the children from initial emotional outbursts.

CONCLUSIONS

Public access venues (public access venues) in the form of cybercafés provide children of overseas Filipino workers with access to the internet. Internet access is essential for these children to stay in touch with their migrant parents. This investigation shows that internet use to communicate with parents makes children perceive that they know their parents better and impacts the maintenance of family cohesion.

Home access to the internet is ideal, as it allows for significantly more frequent online communication between the parent and child. More frequent communication using the internet, in turn, leads to better knowledge between them, and gives parents the capability to learn about the lives of their children.

The reality, however, is that many of the children left behind by OFWs still do not have this kind of access to the internet. Furthermore, some who do have internet connections at home have connections that are of poorer quality than what cybercafés offer, or share this with others in the household. In some instances, such shared access also makes personal communication at home less "private" than it would be if it were done in cybercafés. As such, cybercafés still provide a viable alternative for many households who remain without home access (47% of those surveyed), live in areas with limited internet access, or have poor quality internet access at home, as well as for communication that require some secrecy from household members.

Whether these cybercafés make a difference in keeping migrant worker families connected is also influenced by the frequency and quality of the communication, as well as by the sorts of applications used by children in these venues. Perceived parental knowledge of the child's life, perceived child knowledge of the parent's life, and perceived parental efforts to know the child were generally higher for users of particular communication applications, and differences were significant with respect to the children's perceived knowledge of their parent.

Frequently used synchronous forms of communication are more effective in bridging geographically separated OFW families. For instance, applications such as Skype, text chat, and video chat require synchronous communication. These applications or forms of online communication require coordination, given the differences in time zones and opportunity to access the internet for both the parent and the child. This means that both parent and child need to be online at the same time to use these technologies. Save for fortuitous or chance meetings online, this requires either scheduling communications beforehand or separate, coordinative communication using other ICTs (such as cell phones). This communication is most easily achieved with individual home access.

But, for those children who rely on public access venues for this types of communication, this would require public access venues to be near and easy to get to at any time (close and ubiquitous), not requiring significant travel time. Hence, densely distributed cybercafés with more flexible operating hours (as was found in the urban poor communities in Quezon City) can approximate the impact of home access with respect to keeping OFW families connected. But where cybercafés are sparse and difficult to get to, maintaining that level of connection is more difficult for people whose only option for internet access is to use cybercafés (as is the case for many living in rural areas in the Philippines).

As such, geographic immediacy and flexible hours are important features in cybercafés because, as mentioned previously, the synchronous communication between parent and child is complicated by

differences in time zones, availability, and access, and it often requires complex coordination. In this process, mobile phones and the internet have complementary uses. Mobile phones help in coordination, allowing children and parents to know when the other is available online. On the other hand, online communication helps to reduce the cost of communication, and it can translate to longer and more frequent communication between the parent and child.

Policy Implications

Access to the internet strengthens connectedness among OFW parents and their children. Moreover, universal service or home access to the internet is also needed to further the opportunities for these communications to occur. Universal service would require access to both computers and adequate and reliable broadband services.

Further, because communication is bi-directional, the kind of access parents have overseas and their ability to maximize it are equally important. As such, exposure and training of migrant workers on how to use online communication conducted prior to their departure would be beneficial for them. This is a service that could be offered by government agencies and non-governmental organizations that work for the welfare of migrant families. They could also provide soft loans to fund computer and internet access for the homes of OFW families. But more important, migrant workers' abilities to communicate online when working in another country should be among the rights that governments of labor-exporting countries should push for, especially with destination countries that accept a large number of blue-collar and domestic laborers, such as Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong.

But, if universal service is not possible, then universal access through public venues such as a cybercafés has to be enhanced to approximate home access. This can happen if public access becomes more ubiquitous and physically easy to reach in terms of time and distance. This could be achieved through more public access venues, such as cybercafés, or through open wi-fi hotspots. However, to better serve the purpose of strengthening family connections, public access venues should also provide for private/quiet spaces in the venues. This will encourage communication that is more personal and meaningful. The venues' operating times must also be flexible to accommodate time zone differences between OFW parents and children. They should have "dedicated periods" and services for migrant family communication.

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APPENDIX A: Profile of Cybercafés Most Commonly Frequented by Respondents

Table 16: Venue survey results

Public access venue	TYPE	LOCATION	INTERNET ACCESS FEE (PHP)	TOTAL NO. OF COMPS	VIDEO CAPABI-LITIES	MAX BANDWIDTH PROVIDED BY ISP	TOP 3 REVENUE GENERATING SERVICES	NO. OF UNIQUE USERS PER WEEK	% OF FEMALE USERS	AGE GROUP THAT FREQUENT MOST OFTEN
POP'S INTERNET CAFE	Commercial	300-500 meters from Botocan	20/hour	50	-	4 mbps (2 connections)	1. Gaming 2. Printing 3. internet Use	100	50%	Teenagers/young adults (60%)
SPOON COMPUTER SHOP	Commercial	300-500 meters from Botocan	15/hour	22	22 webcams, 22 headsets	5 mbps (Sky broadband)	1. internet use 2. Printing 3. Gaming	200-250	30%	Teenagers/young adults (60%)
BYTE SITE	Commercial	300-500 meters from Botocan	25/hour	37	4 webcams, 37 headsets	5 mbps (Sky broadband)	1. Gaming 2. Printing/ photocopying 3. internet Use	350	40%	Teenagers/young adults (70%)
AVC INTERNET SHOP	Commercial	300-500 meters from Botocan	20/hour (15/hr-online gaming)	17	14 webcams, 17 headsets	3 mbps (PLDT)	1. Gaming 2. Printing 3. internet Use	60	40%	Teenagers/young adults (60%)
BAROK'S INTERNET SHOP	Informal	within Escopa	15/hour							
DAPITAN INTERNET SHOP	Informal	within Escopa	15/hour	3	1 webcam, 3 headsets	1 mpbs	1. Printing 2. internet Use 3. ---	10	80%	Teenagers/young adults (50%), Adults (50%)
JETS	Commercial	300-500 meters from Escopa	15/hour	46	1 webcam, 25 headsets	3.5 mbps	1. Gaming 2. internet Use 3. Printing	60-70	30%	Teenagers/young adults (40%)
CYBERNET	Commercial	Town center/near a school	20/hour	20	20 headsets, not all have webcam	3 mbps	1. Gaming 2. Printing 3. internet Use	60	70%	Teenagers/young adults (60%)
SPIDERCOM 868 CAFE	Commercial	Town center/near a school	20/hour	10	2 webcams, 10 headsets	3 mbps	1. Gaming 2. Printing 3. Research (internet use)	30	40%	Teenagers/young adults (70%)
RAL MAV INTERNET SHOP	Commercial	Town center/near a school	15/hour	8	2 webcams, 8 headsets	3 mbps	1. Printing 2. Research (internet use) 3. Scanning/CD writing	20-30	70%	Teenagers/young adults (90%)
PINK WALL	Commercial	500 - 1000 m from Brgy Bulusan & Brgy Ibaba West	15/hr	10	1 webcam, 5 headsets	3.0 mbps	1. Gaming 2. Chat/internet Access	30	10%	Teenagers/young adults (85%)
LOLO ESTONG'S INTERNET CAFE	Informal	within Brgy Parang	20/hr	7	1 webcam, 1 headset	3 mbps	1. Printing 2. internet use 3. Gaming	10	50%	Teenagers/young adults (50%)
NETHOUSE	Informal	within Brgy Lumangbayan	15/hour	6	0 webcam, 1 headset	2 mbps	1. Gaming 2. internet use	30	5%	Children (70%)

ALCHEMY MX	Commercial	Town center/near a school	15/hour	10	0 webcam, 10 headsets	2 mbps	1. Gaming	50	5%	Teenagers/young adults (60%)
SOGO	Commercial	Town center	15/hour	26	0 webcam, 26 headsets	3 mbps	1. Gaming 2. internet use	50	15%	Children (70%)

APPENDIX B: Research Sites

Quezon City	Calapan
- Highly urbanized city	- Partly urban, dependent on agriculture and fishing
- Income classification: Special (Annual Income – 8.36 billion pesos)	- Income classification: 3rd class (Annual income – Php240 million or more, but less than Php320 million)
- Barangays Covered: Bgy. Escopa and Botocan	- Barangays Covered: Bgy. Lumang Bayan, Bulusan, Ibaba-West, Patas

BRGY. ESCOPA III
- Population: 22,000
- No. of households: 3,000
- Housing status: Around one-third of the residents of ESCOPA III are illegal settlers. Those who were able to secure lots are located in the Project Urban Development Site (PUD sitio). The lots were awarded in 1991 under the Community Mortgage Program (CMP) of NHA, which assisted identified "urban poor families" with purchasing their own lots.
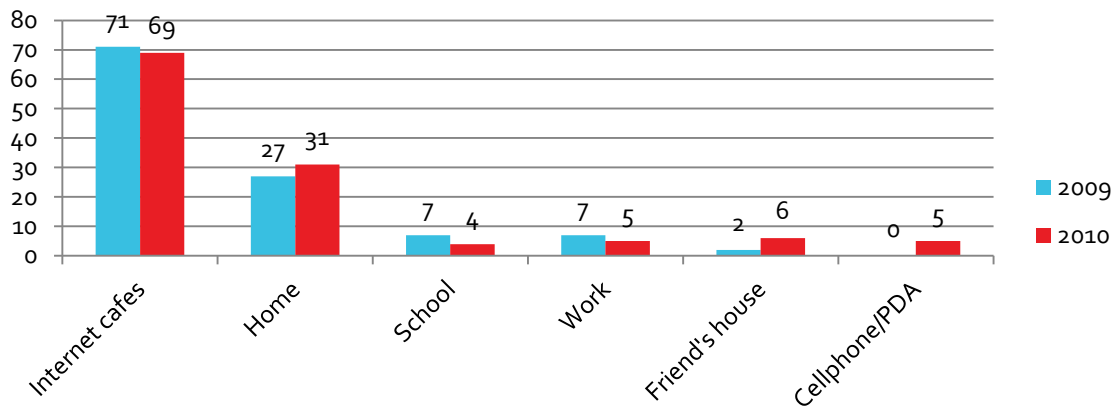- Common OFW destination country: Middle Eastern countries

BRGY. BOTOCAN
- Population: 6,380
- No. of households: 1,850
- Housing status: Residents do not have legal rights to the lots they occupy. They have been allowed to stay there temporarily, but once landowners decide to use the land for other purposes, they'll need to vacate the area. Three organizations share ownership of the area: Areas I, II, III, and IV belong to the National Water & Sewerage Authority (NAWASA); Areas V and VI belong to the University of the Philippines (UP); and Area VII belongs to the Manila Electric Company (MERALCO).
- Common OFW Destination Countries: Middle Eastern countries, East Asian countries, some European countries

APPENDIX C: Public Access ICT Context for this Study

The underserved and marginalized in the Philippines require information on basic human needs and human services, and these are things that can be delivered through information and communication technologies. However, even as the country's government has established an enabling policy and regulatory environment for ICTs and development, its implementation has much room for improvement (Macapagal & Peralta, 2012).

A previous public access landscape study conducted by the University of Washington CIS identified public libraries, government-funded Community e-Centers (CeCs), and privately owned cybercafés as being the most accessible and prevalent venues for the marginalized and underserved (Lallana, 2009). In fact, the Philippines is considered one of the leading countries in the region in establishing and experimenting with telecenters. The Community e-Center (CeC) model that has been consolidated under the Commission on Information and Communication Technologies (CICT) has provided some encouraging and exemplary practices, showcasing the variety of telecenter initiatives that can be introduced, with the added benefit of increasingly shared oversight through an umbrella network called PhilCeCNet (Townsend & Alampay, 2010). However, even as these access points have been found to be generally affordable and accessible, many barriers to the effective use of them have been found. These include obsolete and small collections and absence of internet connections in public libraries, as well as limited, if not slow, internet connections in CeCs. As such, cybercafés tend to be frequented more often than government-run CeCs (Macapagal & Peralta, 2012).

Figure 2: Place of internet access

Source: Digital Philippines 2010 Yahoo!-Nielsen Net Index Highlights, Manila, Philippines.

Evidence that internet cafés remain the most popular place for accessing the internet among users in the Philippines was shown in a survey conducted by Yahoo!-Nielsen in 2010, in which close to 70% of the nationwide sample of internet users got online at internet cafés. Netopia, the largest internet café chain in the country,[2] estimates already serving about 2 million customers a month. However, there is also a trend toward increasing personal access through the home, a friend's home, or personal cellphones/PDAs with data access (see Figure 2).

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[2] Netopia has 72 company-owned and 28 franchised stores, with over 45,000 worstations.

APPENDIX D: Gender Differences

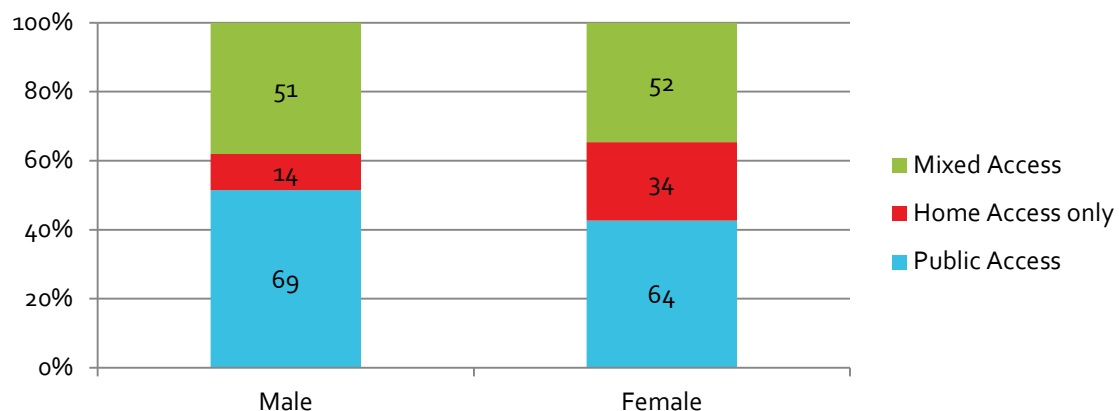| Parent	Quezon City (n=158)	Calapan (n=150)	Total (n=308)
Father	37%	39%	38%
Mother	59%	55%	57%
Both	3%	5%	4%

Most of the respondents' parents working overseas were their mothers (see Table 17). This was consistent in both locations. A very small number had both parents working abroad.

Gender Differences in Internet Use

There were slightly more female than male respondents in the sample of OFW children that used the internet (Male = 134, Female = 150). A higher proportion of female respondents only accessed the internet at home compared to male children (female = 23%, male= 10%). In other words, 90% of the male respondents went to cybercafés, compared with only 73% of the female respondents (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Users by access type and gender

These gender differences in internet use were supported by the venue survey (see Appendix A), where a majority of the public access venue managers surveyed reported having more male users in their cybercafés, with only 4 venue managers out of 15 reporting women users at a rate of 50% or higher. While gaming was generally the highest revenue-generating activity in most of the cybercafés included in the inventory, in the places were there were equal, if not more, women users, the top revenue-

generating service was usually not gaming (e.g. printing, internet use, research, scanning, etc.). A couple of these venues were the ones closer to schools.

Female OFW children used the internet and different online applications to specifically communicate with their parents abroad more often than male OFW children, although the differences were statistically insignificant (see Table 18). While the frequency of transnational online communication with parents of male and female respondents was not that different statistically, how often they got in touch with parents via cell phone was different (U = 1642, Z = -2.62, p = .009). Female respondents more frequently spoke or sent text messages to their parents than males.

Table 18: Differences in frequency of communication between male and female respondents (public access venue only)

	Mean Rank		U	Z
	Male	Female		
Frequency of public access venue use*	74.07	59.38	1720.5*	-2.33
Time spent every café visit**	75.48	57.86	1623**	-2.80
Frequency of public access venue use intended for communicating w/parents	66.26	67.8	2157	-2.62
Frequency of Communication with Parent via SNS	63.43	70.85	1961.5	-1.15
Frequency of Communication with Parent via Text Chat	65.93	68.15	2134.5	-.34
Frequency of Communication with Parent via Voice Chat	65.12	69.03	2078	-.61
Frequency of Communication with Parent via Video Chat	64.64	69.54	2045	-.76
Frequency of Communication with Parent via Email	63.93	70.31	1996	-.99
Frequency of Communication with Parent via Cell phone**	58.8	75.84	1642**	-2.62

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01

Furthermore, even this difference in the frequency of cell phone communication between male and female children did not make males statistically less knowledgeable and connected with their parents. Though female children generally had higher scores, no significant difference came out of the comparison across the genders of child-reported knowledge of parent (t(131) = -1.22, p > .05), perceived parental knowledge of child (t(131) = -.67, p > .05), and perceived parental effort to know the child (t(131) = -.41, p > .05).

	Mean		*t*	*df*
	Male	Female		
Child-reported knowledge of parent	2.1934	2.277	-1.22	131
Perceived parental knowledge of child	2.0764	2.1236	-.67	131
Perceived parental effort to know about the child	2.1989	2.2315	-.41	131

APPENDIX E: Aspiration to Work Overseas

Another impact the research measured was whether children of OFWs aspired to work abroad themselves, and whether they have used cybercafés to act on that aspiration. All in all, only 14% have actually used the cybercafés to look for work opportunities abroad or seek information from placement agencies. A slightly higher proportion (16%) have sought information about passports and visa requirements.

A larger proportion of the children surveyed have aspirations of also working overseas (71%, n=133). Female children were more likely to report this as among their goals than male children (Chi square = 4.83, p = 0.028; see Figure 7). It was also a more likely aspiration among the children in Calapan, compared with Quezon City (Chi-square = 6.93, p = 0.008; see Figure 4).
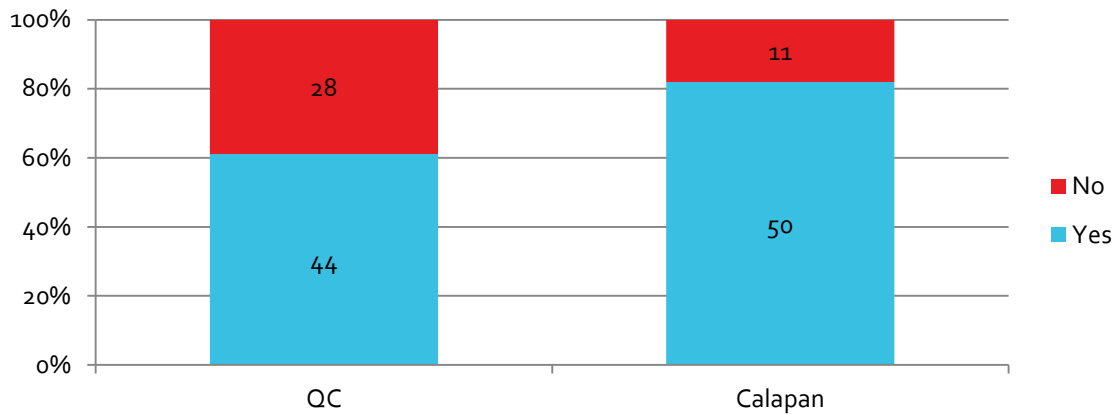
The children's perceived knowledge of their parents' lives, their perception of how well their parents knew them, and their perception of their parents' effort to know more about them were all slightly higher among those who planned to work overseas than those who did not; however, the difference was not statistically significant. However, those who sought or were given advice regarding working abroad were also more likely to say that working abroad was one of their life goals. This, though does not necessarily mean that it is also their parents' wish for them to work abroad. On the contrary, some parents' in the FGD actually say that they'd prefer their children not go abroad because of how difficult life there was, though they are still pragmatic about it. For instance, parents said the following:

> In our situation today, it is natural to want it (work abroad). We do know that we earn more there, but then, it is a sacrifice.

> For me, I tend to feel like I don't want (them to go) because of the hardship that I've experienced there. But it's still up to them. But for me, personally I don't want that (for them). As much as possible, they should have work here (in the Philippines).

Locational Differences in Aspirations to Migrate

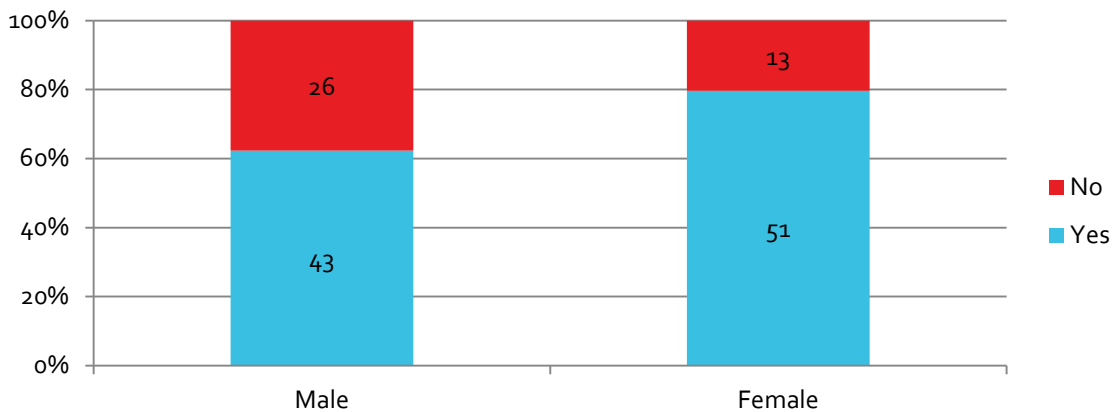Figure 4: OFW children's aspirations to work abroad, by location

Note: Chi-square = 6.93***, p = 0.008

The larger proportion of children from Calapan aspiring to follow their parents' footsteps in working overseas can be partly attributed to the advocacy of the NGO in Quezon City to discourage migration. Such advocacies are only beginning to be organized by a similar, though less-established NGO in Calapan.

Overall, it was the older children who were already thinking of working overseas, which is consistent with the development stage where they are in their lives. The younger children would be more likely to be pre-occupied with studies, rather than work.
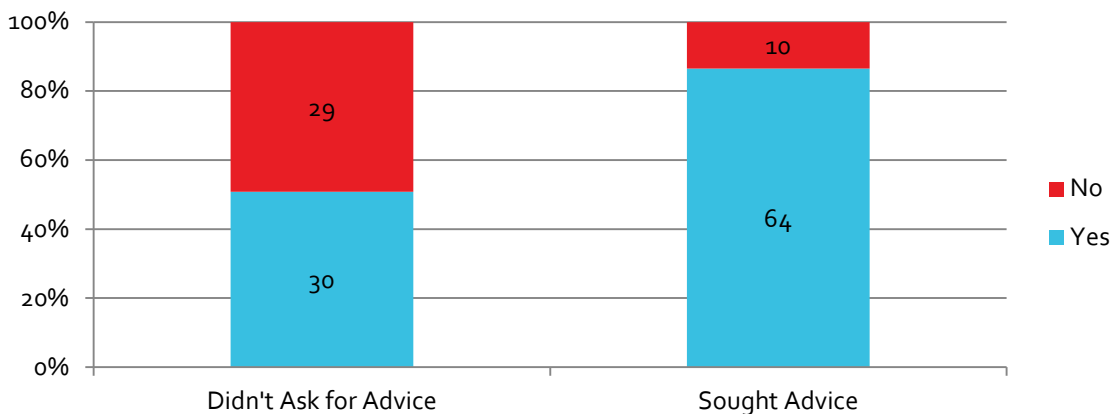
As such, this may also explain why only 14% of the respondents have actually sought information on the internet using cybercafés to find out about work opportunities overseas. A similar proportion has sought information about placement agencies, and slightly more (16%) have investigated passport and visa requirements.

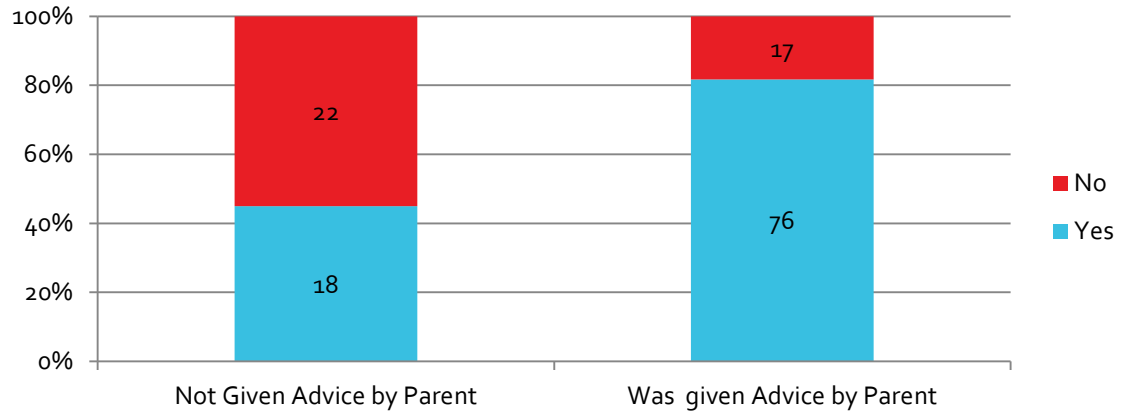Figure 5: OFW child's aspiration to work abroad, by gender

Note: Chi-square = 4.83*, P = 0.028

Figure 6: OFW child's aspiration to work abroad, advice sought from parent

Note: Chi-square = 20.12***, P = 0.000

Figure 7: OFW child's aspiration to work abroad, advice given by parent

APPENDIX F: Field Pictures

Figure 8: An informal cybercafé in Barangay Escopa, Quezon City

Teenagers and young adults were observed to be the most frequent users of the venues, although a few of the venue managers said children were the more common users. Children playing in the cybercafés were particularly noticeable in many of the "informal" venues located within the urban poor communities (see Figure 8).

Figure 9: FW services in Hong Kong (Picture by François Bar)