UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

CONCEPTUALIZING TECHNOLOGY-MEDIATED FAMILIAL BONDING: INSIGHTS INTO FAMILY USE OF SOCIAL MESSAGING SYSTEM

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

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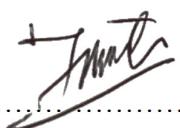
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ABSTRACT

The role of social messaging system (SoMeS) as a connecting technology in facilitating familial bonding has increased substantially in recent years. In the field of HCI, investigations of SoMeS for the domestic environment reveals that interesting family behaviour and experiences arising out from the technology use have been transformed. Technology-mediated familial bonding (TFB) that refers to the establishment of group property emerged from family ritualistic interaction within specific setting that bind family members to each other which goes beyond mere communication and information has emerged in response to contemporary technological opportunities. Consequently, understanding TFB via SoMeS is set to become an increasingly important concern. However, empirical investigations about the SoMeS mechanism in giving rise to TFB is a challenging research domain, as the experiences of both individual and group members of a family are shaped and influenced by a number of delicate and interconnected issues, which relate to varying family behaviours and nuanced experiences. Fundamental understanding of the TFB is relatively heterogeneous leading to various often unrelated directions with the underutilization of theoretical lens from more established fields. The research presented in this thesis explores how SoMeS gives rise to TFB of which can be rationalized as part of overall interface design strategy and specific family behaviour. The research centres on the belief that interaction is phenomenology-situated that involves the researcher's participation as an intimate insider in the investigation of TFB enactment as they are embodied in the lived experience and situated use of SoMeS. Using common HCI qualitative methods including behavioural logging via WhatsApp and qualitative inquiries such as focus group and individual interviews, the findings disclose how TFB is given rise by SoMeS through the presence of eight foreground and seven background elements comprising of three constituent dimensions: shared setting, content merit and sustainable praxis; and one outcome dimension: bonding experience. The contributions of this thesis lie in providing a descriptive analysis of the TFB enactment through SoMeS and developing an understanding of how SoMeS gives rise to TFB that will inform the development of insights for future SoMeS design that is sensitive to the nuances of family live, mobility and technology practices. From the practical point of view, the outcome contributes further through prescribing specific design recommendations that can help designers of SoMeS in their design decision in pursuit of TFB.

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