Analysis on the Prospects of Parent-Adolescent Communication Served by Mobile Technology

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Abstract

Parent-child’s relationships has attracted more and more attention reveals the lack of exploration of advanced technology in family education. Based on the collaborative project between Beijing Normal University and NOKIA, this article concerns about the prospects of providing services in family education by using mobile technology. This project is conducted by virtue of the combination of qualitative research methods and quantitative research methods. Survey results showed that mobile technology will do good to the parent-child’s relationship. Based on the results, the author will analyze the possibilities of providing services in parent-adolescent communication. The author also hopes that this study could expand the scope of using technology in education, especially set a good application in the domain of family education.

1. Research Background

It can be said that mobile study in family education in China mainland is still a blank page. Family education [1] plays a vital role in the growth of children. The parent-child relationship [2] is the basic and most important one. As an effective means to achieve a good parent-child relationship, parent-adolescent communication’s unique and irreplaceable role is becoming more apparent.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Research methods

In early stage, the project team used a radio messages assembly, group interviews (cluster sampling), and essay competition in K-12 students. Seven in-depth interviewers were selected from the groups participating by stratified sampling in mid-stage. In order to verify the rigor of the project, the project team used a questionnaire survey.

2.2. Research subjects

The study sample covered institutions of higher learning, K-12 schools, kindergartens, ordinary families and radio stations and the sampling areas include Beijing, Congqing, Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Shandong and Shanxi. Six groups (57 individuals) of families participated in the group interviews; In-depth interviews conducted six times; Total nearly 420 students from 11 classes of eight K-12 schools participate in K-12 schools essay competition; Radio messages collected carried out in Dalian People's Radio traffic channel and sport
channel, respectively two days, and attained over 200 effective messages.

2.3. Data processing

Quantitative research mainly adopts frequency analysis method to analyze the centralized and discrete trends. Qualitative research data include interview recordings, SMS messages, school essay writing articles and the in-depth interviews recordings. It uses weight distribution, axis-coding system and core-coding system.

3. Status analysis of parent-adolescent communication

3.1. Parents’ urgent demand for parent-adolescent communication

The process of the interview demonstrates that the fast-paced lifestyle reduces the communication of family members. Teenagers are at a crucial stage of growth, so it would be of great help for character development if they are willing to and also good at communicating with family members. Therefore, parents need communication with their children urgently. They hope to make use of leisure and trivial time to communicate with their children.

3.2. Impacts on the broadness and deepness of parent-adolescent communication by fast-paced life effects

From the interviews we could see that parents may be very busy, or may not live with their children (namely stay-at-home children), or may have little common spare time with their children, so they communicate with their children less in terms of frequency and depth. Due to the academic pressure, K-12 school students are "exhausted" by indoctrinatory teaching, so they do not have much time to conduct deep communication with their parents.

3.3. Children are less willing to communicate with parents

In-depth interviews demonstrate that some K-12 students do not want to communicate with their parents except on studies, three reasons come as below: (1). Poor communication atmosphere in the family; (2). Children think it troublesome; (3). The blocked communication results in a habit of keeping silence.

4. Analysis on the prospects of mobile applications in parent-adolescent communication

4.1. Mobile Technology making it possible for solving the problems on parent-adolescent communication

The mobile devices can exert their strengths to help parents keep their children information real-time. Mobile devices are portable, and can provide parents real-time access to their children's education and gain their voice, images, and video records and so on. Within the range of law, mobile technology is fully capable of real-time accessing to more information of children. Through the above methods, mobile technology can provide parents a good channel to access to much real-time information and help them understand the children better by vivid surroundings. Only when the parents have a better understanding of children’s difficulties, setbacks, achievements and awards and so on, can the parents communicate with their children better and to a deeper extent. Also, the children can send their information including difficulties and doubts and so on to parents in time. It is conducive to
cultivate young kids’ the ability of communication and expression for the young students.

Mobile technology can bring its advantages in full play in Parent-adolescent communication and provide services to build harmonious families. Lack of coincident leisure time between parents and children makes their communication fewer and shallower. Mobile devices can help them make better use of their segments of free time in parent-adolescent communication during work or study. At the same time, mobile technology can provide related services to enable family members to understand each other's emotional state. Parents can help their children through emotional difficulties by doing that.

Of course, we can not expect the mobile technology to resolve all issues in family education and this is very unrealistic. Mobile technology can neither completely change the education style of parents, nor completely ease closed and tension environment in the family education. However, mobile technology can change the parents’ educational styles by providing material conditions. Most of the adults’ time mainly distributes in social and other activities and their leisure time is relatively discrete. Therefore, they are willing to accept the transfer of flake, miniature courseware. Mobile technology can push and family education-related courseware to parents, which may improve the parent-adolescent communication harmony.

4.2. The retaliation of mobile technology[3]

Cell phone belongs to privacy equipment in Chinese culture. It deposits user's much information and such information should belong to personal privacy. Parents are the guardian of their children and they have the responsibility of monitoring the growth of children. However, they should not probe into the children's privacy without the prior consent of their allowances. Otherwise, it will trigger the children's psychological resistance. It seems that parents give the children power but to impose intervention at the same time. Consequently, the children may be form of a revenge effect, which fails to improve the relationship but builds up confrontation between parent and child. And then it will cut off communication in family.

5. Summaries

People who use mobile technology to solve family problems should adopt tender ways of communication, as well as taking full consideration of the characteristics of mobile devices.

This paper believes that mobile technology used in family education is not the replica of the way of Internet technology applied to school education; it should have its own application model and own living space. With the birth of a suitable application mode, mobile technology has a promising future in family field, and let's devote ourselves to the application of mobile technology in family education!

6. References