

Familial Power Under Digital Public Negotiation: Discourses on Mother-In-Law/Daughter-In-Law Relationships in Vietnam

Thi Thanh Hoa Nguyen^{1*}, Ha Phuong Pham¹

Faculty of International Communication and Culture, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, Hanoi, Vietnam

*Corresponding Author

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100700857>

Received: 05 July 2026; Accepted: 10 July 2026; Published: 14 August 2026

ABSTRACT

In the context of digital media, family conflicts are increasingly moving beyond the private sphere to become subjects of public discourse across digital platforms. While previous studies have examined family communication and digital media as separate areas of inquiry, limited attention has been paid to how online publics actively participate in negotiating the legitimacy of family power through public discourse. This theoretical gap is particularly significant in societies shaped by Confucian traditions, where family authority has historically been grounded in intergenerational hierarchy and filial obligations. This study examines how social media restructures power relations in mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships in Vietnam. Using a combination of Thematic Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, the study analyzes 6,832 comments posted by online users collected from 67 public Facebook posts related to a highly visible mother-in-law/daughter-in-law controversy in early 2026. The findings reveal four major discursive trends: the mediatization of family power relations as public entertainment, the weakening of traditional authority, the empowerment of vulnerable subjects, and the persistence of cultural inertia in family power relations. These findings suggest that social media not only reflects but also actively restructures family power by transforming the legitimacy of actors within traditional family relationships into objects of continuous public negotiation and contestation. The study contributes empirical evidence from an East Asian and Confucian cultural context while extending family communication scholarship by arguing that family authority should be understood not solely through private interpersonal interaction but also as a public discursive process negotiated within platform-based digital environments.

Keywords: family power dynamics; mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship; intergenerational communication; public discourse; social media

INTRODUCTION

In the context of global digital media, family conflicts are no longer confined to the private sphere but becoming subjects of public discussion on social media platforms. Online debates surrounding marriage, intergenerational relationships, and gender roles have become increasingly visible across cultural contexts, reflecting a broader shift in interpretive authority, from family members to the networked public. This transformation is particularly significant in East Asian societies shaped by patriarchal traditions, filial norms, and intergenerational hierarchy, where family values are continuously negotiated and redefined within digital public spaces (Duong & Hopfer, 2023). Within this context, mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships represent more than interpersonal tensions; they constitute a critical site where traditional family authority, women's autonomy, and platform-mediated communication intersect.

Family communication research has long conceptualized conflict as a part of an ongoing process through which family members negotiate roles, expectations, and relational boundaries through interpersonal interactions (Baxter, 2011; Serewicz, 2008). Such approaches largely framed family communication as an internal process occurring within private relational settings. Structural perspectives, meanwhile, emphasize how patriarchy, filial obligations, and gendered expectations sustain hierarchical family power relations (Kandiyoti, 1988; Pyke &

Bengtson, 1996). Norms such as respecting elders, female self-sacrifice, and daughters-in-law adapting to their husband's family continue to reinforce generational authority and asymmetrical family dynamics. At the same time, digital media research demonstrates that social media platforms do not merely reflect social reality but actively participate in constructing meaning, shaping moral principles, and organizing public discourse (Marwick & boyd, 2011; Papacharissi, 2015). Meanwhile, digital platforms function as key communicative environments through which the public interpret and respond to contemporary social issues.

Despite these contributions, family communication research and digital media research have largely developed in parallel. Family communication studies tend to focus on intra-family interaction and often assume that meaning negotiation occurs primarily within private contexts (Serewicz, 2008; Rittenour & Soliz, 2009). In contrast, digital media studies emphasize public discourse while rarely situating such discourse within specific dynamics of family relationships (Mesch, 2003). This separation creates an important conceptual gap: limited attention has been paid to how networked publics actively participate in defining morality, negotiating relational boundaries and the legitimacy of family power in contemporary family conflicts (Sipocz & Freeman, 2020).

To address this gap, this study examines social media discussions surrounding the family life of Vietnamese actress P.O¹ as an illustrative case.¹ Although rooted in a Vietnamese celebrity context, the case reflects a broader transnational phenomenon: the migration of family conflict from private interaction to platform-based public discourse. Beginning from 2026, discussions related to this actress's roles as wife and daughter-in-law circulated widely across Facebook and online news platforms, generating sustained public debate and extensive audience engagement over several months. It is noteworthy that these discussions quickly extended beyond celebrity gossip to broader debates about women's autonomy after marriage, the legitimacy of traditional family authority, intergenerational boundaries, and acceptable forms of family communication. The analytical value of this case therefore lies not in celebrity culture itself, but in its capacity to reveal how social media platforms operate as spaces where family norms and power relations are publicly evaluated, contested, and renegotiated through digital communication.

Drawing on discourse analysis of online comments, this study approaches social media comments not as isolated individual reactions but as public communicative practices through which users collectively negotiate family norms, moral legitimacy, and relational power. In doing so, the study examines how social media platforms participate in shaping new discursive configurations of family authority in contemporary family conflict.

By connecting family communication research with digital media studies within a contemporary Asian context, this study contributes to broader international discussions on family, power, and platform culture. More specifically, it argues that social media should be understood not simply as a space where family conflict is represented, but as a communicative arena where the legitimacy, boundaries, and meanings of family power are continuously negotiated through public discourse.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships and limits of traditional family communication approaches

In family communication research, intergenerational relationships are commonly comprehended as ongoing processes through which family members interact, negotiate, and construct shared or divergent understandings of roles, obligations, and meanings in the daily behaviours (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2006; Galvin et al., 2015). From this perspective, family conflict does not simply emerge from individual differences but from incompatibilities in how family members define relational roles, responsibilities, and boundaries (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Serewicz, 2008; Rittenour & Soliz, 2009). Therefore, relationship quality depends on the ability to construct a shared “family identity” through communication, emotional support, and mutual recognition (Soliz & Harwood, 2006).

¹ Real names of individuals involved in the case have been encrypted (abbreviated) throughout the article to ensure privacy and comply with ethical principles in digital media research.

Within this framework, the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship has been viewed as one of the most tension-filled intergenerational relationships, particularly regarding gender roles, power, and family obligations. Conflict often arises when individuals fail to adjust their communication to each other's expected roles and relational positions (Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991; Harwood & Lin, 2014). Behaviors such as interference, criticism, surveillance, or the imposition of norms are therefore interpreted not merely as personality differences, but as expressions of family power and control (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Serewicz, 2008; Baxter, 2011).

Feminist and demographic studies have emphasized that mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships cannot be separated from patriarchal structures and gender hierarchies in Asian families (Wolf, 1972; Kandiyoti, 1988). Kandiyoti (1988) argued that older women in patriarchal households may gain authority through controlling sons and daughters-in-law, thereby reproducing traditional family order. In multigenerational households, particularly co-residential families, mothers-in-law often hold moral and domestic authority related to caregiving and household management (Sung, 1995; Ikels, 2004). Consequently, the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship becomes a central site where tensions between obligation and autonomy, hierarchy and equality, traditional expectations and women's personal aspirations after marriage are negotiated (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Serewicz & Canary, 2008).

In Vietnam, previous studies have shown that norms such as filial piety, respect for elders, and responsibilities to maintain family harmony continue to shape evaluations of women's morality after marriage (Horton & Rydström, 2011; Drummond, 2006). These expectations not only regulate behaviors but also function as moral standards through which the conduct of both mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law is assessed. Meanwhile, Vietnamese media representations frequently associate women with sacrifice, endurance, and the preservation of family harmony (Drummond, 2006; Horton & Rydström, 2011; UN Women Vietnam, 2021).

Despite emphasizing the role of communication in shaping family relationships, most family communication studies still assume that these processes primarily occur within the private sphere of the family (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008; Galvin et al., 2015). In other words, existing theories largely conceptualize family power as negotiated through direct interaction among family members in domestic settings. This assumption creates an important theoretical limitation in the contemporary media environment, where family conflicts are increasingly visible on social media and transformed into objects of public discussion. Therefore, negotiation and interpretation no longer occur solely among family members but extend into online spaces where outsiders actively participate in evaluating, judging, and redefining the legitimacy of family power relations.

Social media and the publicization of family conflict

The rise of platform-based digital media has significantly transformed the boundaries between private life and public space. Research on digital media argues that social media platforms are not merely channels for information sharing but environments that reshape how social phenomena are perceived and discussed through mechanisms of visibility, circulation, and public interaction (Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Hepp, 2020). Within this environment, family matters that were once considered private increasingly become public content opened to observation, evaluation, and debate (Miller et al., 2016; Papacharissi, 2015).

Recent studies have shown that family conflict, infidelity, divorce, and mother-in-law/daughter-in-law disputes increasingly attract high engagement on platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube (Senft & Baym, 2015; Banet-Weiser, 2018). In this process, online publics do not merely consume information but actively participate in constructing moral meaning through comments, debates, and emotional expressions (Papacharissi, 2015; Highfield, 2016). Comments therefore function not simply as isolated personal reactions but as collective discursive formations through which social norms are continuously reproduced, negotiated, and challenged (Couldry, 2012; boyd, 2014).

Research has also shown that social media platforms tend to amplify emotional and entertaining content, making private conflicts highly visible and widely debated (Turner, 2010; Marwick & boyd, 2011; Banet-Weiser, 2018). Jenkins et al. (2013) argued that in participatory culture, users not only consume content but also reinterpret,

comment, and amplify controversies through online circulation. As a result, family conflicts increasingly become public content that invites collective attention, discussion, and participation (Senft & Baym, 2015).

These dynamics are particularly significant in Vietnam. The rapid expansion of Facebook and short-video platforms has intensified the visibility and circulation of online family disputes. Cases involving infidelity, divorce, or mother-in-law/daughter-in-law conflict frequently become viral controversies that attract thousands of comments and shares. Meanwhile, divorce rates in Vietnam have increased considerably in recent years, particularly in urban areas, with family conflict and intergenerational pressure identified as common contributing factors (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2023; UN Women, 2021). As family conflicts are increasingly shared online, issues once confined to the private sphere have become subjects of public observation, evaluation, and debate.

However, although digital media research has demonstrated the capacity of online publics to construct collective meanings, most existing studies focus primarily on self-presentation, influencer culture, or online fandoms (boyd, 2014; Marwick, 2015). Family studies, meanwhile, often remain limited to examining the effects of technology on interpersonal relationships. Consequently, there remains insufficient explanation of what happens when family conflict enters online spaces and becomes subjective to collective negotiation. Specifically, recent studies have yet to fully explain how online publics, through social media discussions, participate in redefining what is considered legitimate and reasonable within family power relations.

Negotiating the legitimacy of family power in digital public discourse

The intersection between family conflict and platform-based media creates an important theoretical tension. While family communication research generally assumes that power is negotiated primarily within private family interactions, digital media research demonstrates that online publics increasingly participate in constructing social meaning and moral evaluation (Papacharissi, 2015; Couldry & Hepp, 2017). This development destabilizes the traditional boundary between private family negotiation and public discourse.

Therefore, the central concern of this study is not merely mother-in-law/daughter-in-law conflict itself, but how the legitimacy of family power is renegotiated through social media discourse. Fairclough (1995) argued that discourse does not simply reflect social reality but actively participates in producing and legitimizing power relations. Similarly, Wodak and Meyer (2009) emphasized that daily language is closely tied to the construction of moral positions and social value systems. On social media platforms, online publics continuously use moral language, emotional expression, and collective judgment to define what counts as a “good mother-in-law,” a “good daughter-in-law,” a “toxic family,” or “appropriate endurance.”

Research on East Asian families suggests that family power relations are inherently negotiable and dynamic (Shih & Pyke, 2010). Meanwhile, studies of digital media demonstrate that social media platforms create public spaces where social relations are continuously discussed and adjusted (boyd, 2010; van Dijck, 2013). Practices such as sarcasm, moral labeling, collective empathy, and support for resistance do not merely express individual opinions but also contribute to defining what is considered appropriate and legitimate within family norms (Shih & Pyke, 2010; Papacharissi, 2015; Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Through these practices, online publics do not simply comment on family conflict but actively participate in reshaping understandings of intergenerational power.

This process is especially significant in Vietnam, where norms such as filial piety, hierarchy, and family obligation have historically remained stable (Horton & Rydstrom, 2011). Once family conflicts enter social media spaces, however, these norms are no longer treated as self-evident but become objects of public contestation. Some online users continue to reproduce the logic of respect for elders and traditional sacrifice, while others mobilize discourses of individual rights, mental health, and opposition to controlling or toxic family relationships to challenge intergenerational authority. Social media therefore becomes a space where multiple value systems coexist, compete, and continuously negotiate legitimacy (Papacharissi, 2015; Couldry & Hepp, 2017).

Moreover, these negotiations are not limited to moral evaluation but also become publicly visible, circulated, and consumed by large audiences. Family conflicts are often treated as forms of online entertainment in which users simultaneously engage in moral judgment and collective emotional participation through commenting, meme-making, and the circulation of controversies (Turner, 2010; Jenkins et al., 2013). This suggests that the negotiation of family power on social media is no longer simply a communicative process among family members but a public communicative practice deeply shaped by platform logics and patterns of user participation.

Nevertheless, recent studies have not fully explained whether these discursive practices are generating a new form of family power order. Existing studies tend either to focus on traditional family communication or on digital participation more broadly, without integrating the two perspectives to explain how online publics participate in restructuring the legitimacy of family power within platform-based media environments. This gap is particularly important because it indicates that current theoretical frameworks may no longer adequately explain contexts in which family power is shaped not only within domestic interactions but also through online public discourse.

Therefore, this study approaches Facebook comments not simply as individual reactions but as forms of public communicative practice through which online publics collectively negotiate what is considered legitimate, reasonable, or unacceptable in mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships. From this perspective, family communication is no longer understood solely as a process occurring within private domestic spaces, but as a collectively constructed within digital platform environments.

Based on these theoretical tensions, this study is guided by the following research question:

How do the public on social media use public discourses to negotiate the legitimacy of power in the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship in Vietnam?

METHOD

Data and sampling

This study employed an interpretive qualitative approach to examine how social media users negotiate family norms and intergenerational power through online discussions surrounding mother-in-law/daughter-in-law conflicts in Vietnam. Rather than treating comments as isolated individual opinions, the study approached them as public communicative practices through which users collectively evaluate morality, construct legitimacy, and negotiate family authority in digital environments (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lindlof & Taylor, 2019).

The controversy surrounding the family life of actress P.O was selected as a critical case because it generated sustained public debate on Facebook throughout the early 2026. Discussions surrounding the traditional role as wife and daughter-in-law rapidly expanded beyond celebrity gossip into broader debates about filial expectations, women's autonomy after marriage, emotional abuse, and the legitimacy of parental authority within the family.

Data were collected from publicly accessible Facebook posts and comment sections using four Vietnamese keywords related to the controversy: “P.O's mother scolding daughter-in-law”, “mother-in-law scolding postpartum daughter-in-law”, “breaking wind” and “the drama of P.O's mother”. Data collection was conducted between March 10 and March 14, 2026. Only publicly available content was included; no private groups, friendship requests, or restricted spaces were accessed, in line with ethical guidelines for digital media research (Markham & Buchanan, 2012). To minimize unnecessary recirculation of identifiable information, the study refers to the actress using the pseudonym “P.O” throughout the analysis.

The initial dataset consisted of 64,005 comments from 67 public Facebook posts. After removing duplicate comments, spam, irrelevant content, and comments lacking interpretive meaning, the final dataset included 6,832 comments. Purposeful sampling combined with maximum variation sampling was employed to capture a broad range of discursive positions and communicative strategies within online discussions (Patton, 2002).

Comments were included if they met at least one of three criteria: (a) they contained moral evaluations or judgments toward family members; (b) they expressed clear positions regarding family roles and power relations; or (c) they employed communicative strategies such as sarcasm, empathy, condemnation, or justification. Comments only consisting of emojis, short exclamations, or unclear expressions were excluded from the analysis.

The dataset was considered analytically sufficient once recurring interpretive patterns and discursive strategies became stable across multiple rounds of coding. In later stages of analysis, additional readings generated few new codes or interpretive categories, suggesting the dataset had reached analytic saturation (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Analytical approach and coding process

To address research questions, the study combined Thematic Analysis (TA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in order to identify recurring patterns of meaning while also examining how language was used to negotiate family norms and power relations in digital spaces (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fairclough, 2013). Rather than applying a rigid theory-driven coding framework, the study adopted an inductive and interpretive approach in which codes and themes were continuously refined throughout the analytical process.

All comments were read repeatedly to familiarize the researchers with the communicative context and recurring discursive patterns. During this process, analytic memoing was used to document recurring expressions, discursive tensions, and shifts in how users interpreted family responsibility, intergenerational authority, and appropriate behavior (Saldña, 2021).

Initial coding was generated directly from the data. Early rounds of coding identified recurring communicative patterns such as discursive sarcasm, moral labeling, empathy toward daughters-in-law, encouragement to divorce, defense of parental authority, and media manipulation skepticism. However, as coding progressed, several categories were revised to better reflect how discourse operated in practice.

For example, the initial code “media manipulation skepticism” was originally used to identify comments accusing the controversy of being manipulated. However, deeper analysis showed that many users were not only expressing suspicion but also invoking videos, cameras, or “evidence” to establish credibility and authenticity. Consequently, the code was refined into a broader category concerning “discourses of authenticity”.

Similarly, codes related to “reproduction of daughter-in-law norms” and “legitimization of maternal authority” frequently overlapped in practice. Many comments simultaneously encouraged daughters-in-law to endure, obey elders, and maintain family harmony while also defending parental intervention in married life. These codes were therefore merged into a broader category concerning the reproduction of family power order.

As the coding framework stabilized, CDA was employed to examine how comments functioned as public discursive practices. Particular attention was paid to how users mobilized sarcasm, moral labeling, empathy, and resistance to construct what was considered acceptable, legitimate, or intolerable within family relationships. Rather than viewing comments as isolated reactions, the analysis approached them as interconnected communicative acts through which collective understandings of family power gradually emerged in digital space (Fairclough, 2013; Papacharissi, 2015).

To enhance transparency and mitigate researcher bias, coding outcomes were regularly cross-checked through peer debriefing sessions among the research team. Disagreements were discussed and resolved based on contextual interpretation rather than imposing a single fixed interpretation. The analytical process concluded once additional readings no longer generated new codes or themes.

RESULTS

This section examines how social media comments participated in negotiating and restructuring power relations in mother-in-law/daughter-in-law conflicts within Vietnam's digital public sphere. Four interconnected themes

emerged from the data: the mediatization of family conflict, weakening traditional authority, the rise of empowering discourses toward daughters-in-law, and the persistence of cultural norms sustaining family hierarchy. Rather than merely reflecting familial disputes, social media transformed private family relations into objects of public observation, moral judgment, and collective interpretation.

Addressing the research question, discourses challenging traditional family authority appeared most prominently across the dataset, including sarcasm and moral labeling. At the same time, empathetic and victim-centered discourses appeared extensively throughout the comments, showing that daughters-in-law were repeatedly positioned as emotionally vulnerable subjects deserving protection. Nevertheless, traditional discourses did not disappear entirely. A smaller but persistent group of comments continued to reproduce expectations of filial obedience, endurance, and family harmony.

In general, the coexistence of these competing discourses indicates that family authority in digital contexts is not being uniformly replaced but continuously renegotiated between traditional hierarchy and contemporary individualism. Results of thematic analysis by examining Facebook comments are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of thematic analysis by examining Facebook comments

Themes	Categories
1. Familial power relations as popular culture products	(1) Dramatization and popularization (2) Authenticity discourse
2. The weakening of traditional authority	(3) Discursive sarcasm (4) Moral labeling (5) Karmic framing (6) Legal framing
3. Empowerment of vulnerable subjects	(7) Empathy (8) Victim labeling (9) Exit legitimation (10) Power restoration discourse
4. Cultural inertia in familial power relations	(11) Conflict normalization (12) Reproduction of familial power order

From domestic conflicts to public consumption

A particularly significant finding concerns the role of online platforms in transforming family conflict into publicly consumable content. In social media spaces, mother-in-law/daughter-in-law conflicts were not discussed solely as interpersonal issues but increasingly circulated as forms of popular culture and entertainment. The distribution of codes belonging to the theme “Familial power relations as popular culture products” is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The distribution of codes belonging to the theme “Familial power relations as popular culture products”

Code	Number of comments	Rate
Dramatization and popularization	366	3.95%
Authenticity discourse	357	3.85%

The code “dramatization and popularization” (3.95%, $n = 366$) revealed that many users approached these disputes through the language of television drama or internet scandals. Discourses referencing “film,” “feudal

families,” or the well-known Vietnamese drama “Living with mother-in-law” reflected how family conflict became integrated into entertainment-oriented platform culture.

Specifically, Example (1) frames the incident as “part 2” of a movie and emphasizes its “more hilarious” elements, suggesting that the user did not approach the conflict as a serious social issue but rather as entertainment content that could continue to be consumed and extended. This reflects how social media blurs the boundary between private family life and the public sphere.

Example (1): (PostID 1207015738243110, February 6, 2026)

Coming soon: Living with My Mother-in-law Part 2, with even more hilarious scenes.

Similarly, the code “authenticity discourse” (3.85%, $n = 357$) showed that users actively negotiated the credibility of family narratives online. Comments invoking “camera evidence,” “staged media,” or “image cleansing” demonstrated increasing awareness of the constructed nature of digital content.

In Example (2), phrases such as “paid people to write whitewashing posts” and “run Facebook campaigns” reflect the perception that social media content can be manipulated, staged, or strategically managed in order to shape public opinion.

Example (2): (PostID 25785582907792001, February 9, 2026)

Whoever paid people to write whitewashing posts and run Facebook campaigns these past few days should read the lawyer's post and enjoy the Tet holiday in peace.

Overall, social media has become a new arena for negotiating family authority in contemporary Vietnam. As family conflict enters digital public space, power relations once confined to the private sphere become subjective to collective scrutiny, reinterpretation, and moral evaluation. This process enables the simultaneous emergence of three major tendencies in public discourse: weakening traditional authority, the empowerment of vulnerable family subjects, and the continued persistence of cultural expectations surrounding family hierarchy and harmony.

The destabilization of traditional family authority

One of the most prominent discursive patterns in the dataset was the weakening legitimacy of traditional family authority, particularly that of mothers-in-law, who increasingly became publicly scrutinized, criticized, and morally judged on social media. This finding reflects a broader decline in the influence of Confucian norms emphasizing filial obedience, endurance, and deference toward elders within intergenerational family relations. The distribution of codes belonging to the theme “The weakening of traditional authority” is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The distribution of codes belonging to the theme “The weakening of traditional authority”

Code	Number of comments	Rate
Discursive sarcasm	2,654	28.61%
Moral labeling	1,629	17.56%
Karmic framing	482	5.20%
Legal framing	211	2.27%

Coding results showed that sarcasm constituted the most dominant discursive strategy across the dataset (28.61%, $n = 2,654$). Users frequently employed ironic praise, exaggerated humor, rhetorical questions, proverbs, and satirical language to criticize family authority. Rather than treating hierarchical expectations as natural or respectable, comments often reframed them as absurd, outdated, or morally questionable.

Example (3) employs sarcasm to undermine the mother-in-law's image and legitimacy. Details such as “hands on her hips” and “yelling at her daughter-in-law” are exaggerated to ridicule the authority figure, turning her into an object of mockery rather than respect. The phrase “and still claiming she's innocent?” directly rejects any attempt at justification, thereby stripping her of the authority to define the situation. In addition, the sarcastic label “Mother Thi Mau” negatively redefines the mother-in-law's identity.

Example (3): (PostID 899788856158738, February 24, 2026)

Standing there with both hands on her hips, legs spread wide, yelling at her daughter-in-law and still claiming she's innocent? Poor Mother Thi Mau indeed.

Moreover, morally condemnatory labeling also appeared frequently (17.56%, $n = 1,629$), reflecting the tendency of users to evaluate family conflict through moralized discourse. Mothers-in-law and marital families were repeatedly described by negative labels such as “cruel,” “toxic,” “disgusting,” or “rotten from the top.” Through these expressions, users rejected not only the behavior of specific individuals but also the legitimacy of broader family hierarchies that were traditionally justified through seniority and filial obligation.

In addition, karmic framing (5.20%, $n = 482$) and legal framing (2.27%, $n = 211$) revealed a shift in the frameworks used to evaluate family authority. References to “karma,” “retribution,” or “blessings” positioned authority figures within a moral system in which those exercising power were also expected to face consequences for harmful behavior. Meanwhile, comments invoking “lawyers,” “the law,” or “prison” reframed emotional abuse and coercion as social and legal issues rather than merely private family matters.

Example (4) destabilizes the legitimacy of maternal authority through negative moral labels such as “rotten” and “a rotten roof ruins the whole house,” thereby diminishing the superior status traditionally associated with older family members. At the same time, the invocation of “karma” places authority within a moral framework of consequences, suggesting that those in power must also face retribution.

Example (4): (PostID 899788856158738, February 24, 2026)

That whole family is shameless. A rotten roof ruins the whole house. She taught her daughter to seduce married men for money and taught her son to fool around outside and drain his wife's company money. That rotten family even bullied their daughter-in-law and now karma is hitting them. She should just hide her face instead of hiring trolls to write posts, because people will only dig up more dirt on her family.

In addition, Example (5) demonstrates a clear shift from a moral-familial framework to a legal framework in evaluating mother-in-law/daughter-in-law conflicts. Rather than treating controlling, insulting, or oppressive behaviors as private family matters to be resolved through endurance or reconciliation, the commenter frames them as violations requiring legal intervention.

Example (5): (PostID 1372790018195352, February 5, 2026)

Psychological abuse should be prosecuted because emotional pain can hurt even more than physical pain, since you never know when the wounds will truly heal.

From endurance to negotiated agency

Alongside the weakening of traditional authority, the data also revealed the emergence of empowering discourses in which daughters-in-law were reconstructed as active subjects capable of negotiating their position within the family. This finding reflects a shift from the patriarchal family model described by Wolf (1972) and Kandiyoti (1988), where daughters-in-law were expected to obey and only accumulate influence indirectly over time. Moreover, while Shih and Pyke (2010) argued that daughters-in-law in East Asian families often resisted through indirect strategies such as avoidance or symbolic compliance, the present data show increasingly explicit forms of resistance, including leaving the marital family or ending marriage in order to protect personal autonomy. The distribution of codes belonging to the theme “Empowerment of vulnerable subjects” is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The distribution of codes belonging to the theme “Empowerment of vulnerable subjects”

Code	Number of comments	Rate
Empathy	1,032	11.13%
Victim labeling	883	9.52%
Exit legitimation	661	7.13%
Power restoration discourse	476	5.13%

Empathetic discourse appeared frequently (11.13%, $n = 1,032$), indicating that social media users often expressed emotional solidarity with daughters-in-law involved in family conflict. Comments commonly employed emotional expressions such as “pity,” “suffering,” or “feeling sorry.”

Meanwhile, the code “victim labeling” appeared with a relatively high frequency (9.52%, $n = 883$). Unlike empathetic expressions, these comments explicitly positioned daughters-in-law as victims of injustice or emotional harm through recurring phrases such as “suffering,” “just gave birth,” “postpartum depression,” or “new mother.”

In Example (6), the commenter positions the daughter-in-law as a vulnerable subject by emphasizing that she had “just one week after giving birth,” thereby constructing her as a victim in need of protection. At the same time, expressions such as “makes me feel so sorry for her” and the personalization of the experience through “if it were me, I don't think I could survive it” create an affective community in which the speaker and the victim symbolically stand on the same side.

Example (6): (PostID 886388417498782, February 8, 2026)

Watching that mother-in-law yell at her daughter-in-law just one week after giving birth makes me feel so sorry for her. I really admire how strong she is, because if it were me, I don't think I could survive it with postpartum emotions running high. I hope the online community strongly condemns this old woman as a warning to others. What if that young woman couldn't take the humiliation from her husband's family and did something tragic? Who would give her justice then?

At the same time, power restoration discourses (5.13%, $n = 476$) reflected a shift from viewing daughters-in-law as passive subjects toward recognizing them as individuals capable of resistance and boundary-setting. Many users not only expressed empathy but also imagined or encouraged acts of confrontation against oppressive family behavior, through recurring phrases such as “if I were her,” “let me take her place,” or “give me a few minutes.”

Example (7) not only expresses sympathy toward the daughter-in-law but also reflects the normalization and legitimization of resistance within family conflict. Rather than encouraging endurance or the preservation of family harmony in line with traditional norms, the commenter places herself in the daughter-in-law's position and imagines retaliatory responses to what is perceived as oppressive behavior. In doing so, the comment contributes to an empowering discourse that encourages daughters-in-law to resist injustice in family communication.

Example (7): (PostID 1298515868975787, February 6, 2026)

She's way too gentle. If it were me, I'd definitely play the villain already.

Finally, the code “exit legitimation” (7.13%, $n = 661$) demonstrated a significant shift in the understanding of family boundaries, when expressions such as “divorce,” “go back home,” or “leave” appeared frequently throughout the dataset. In traditional family discourse, divorce or separating from the husband's family was often

interpreted as a failure or moral violation. However, within these online discussions, abandonment was increasingly reframed as a legitimate decision aimed at protecting mental well-being and personal autonomy.

Example (8) clearly illustrates how the commenter frames “ending it early” as the correct solution, thereby redefining the termination of an unhappy relationship as a rational and proactive decision rather than a shameful or negative act. At the same time, the warning about the consequences of continuing to endure the relationship encourages individuals to prioritize their own well-being and personal autonomy.

Example (8): (PostID 1421065096056842, February 6, 2026)

If you're unhappy from the beginning, ending it early is the right solution. A lot of people keep trying, then have a second or third child, and by that point leaving becomes much more exhausting.

The persistence of traditional family norms

Despite the prominence of resistance and empowerment discourses, the data also reveal the persistence of traditional family norms in online discussions. The distribution of codes belonging to the theme “Cultural inertia in familial power relations” is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The distribution of codes belonging to the theme “Cultural inertia in familial power relations”

Code	Number of comments	Rate
Conflict normalization	276	2.98%
Reproduction of familial power order	248	2.67%

Comments categorized as conflict normalization (2.98%, $n = 276$) framed mother-in-law/daughter-in-law tensions as ordinary and inevitable aspects of family life. Expressions such as “different blood, different hearts” or “that's normal” legitimized unequal power relations by presenting conflict and emotional endurance as expected within intergenerational families.

Meanwhile, the code reproduction of familial power order (2.67%, $n = 248$) reflected the continued influence of traditional expectations regarding women's roles and intergenerational hierarchy. Many comments emphasized that daughters-in-law should remain patient, respectful, and accommodating toward older family members, reinforcing the idea that women are responsible for maintaining family harmony even under unequal conditions.

Specifically, Example (9) invokes the past “back then, in our grandparents' generation, parents-in-law scolded their daughters-in-law” and emphasizes that previous generations “still put up with it,” thereby naturalizing conflict as an inevitable aspect of family life and reducing the perceived severity of controlling behavior. At the same time, expressions such as “just tolerate each other a bit” and “stop airing dirty laundry in public” reproduce traditional family power hierarchies by positioning the daughter-in-law as responsible for maintaining harmony through endurance and accommodation.

Example (9): (PostID 1421065096056842, February 6, 2026)

Back then, in our grandparents' generation, parents-in-law scolded their daughters-in-law all the time! But daughters-in-law in our parents' generation still put up with it until now! Some were even beaten by their fathers-in-law but still stayed! Nowadays, just a little scolding and it gets posted all over social media! That's life – people should just tolerate each other a bit and stop airing dirty laundry in public! If the husband looks bad, doesn't the wife feel ashamed too? As a mother-in-law, if you know your son is wrong, then as the mother in the middle you should balance right and wrong so the children argue less! What's so good about affairs and cheating anyway?

In general, findings suggest that once mother-in-law/daughter-in-law conflicts become visible on social media, they are no longer treated solely as private family disputes. Instead, they become sites where family authority

and moral legitimacy are publicly negotiated. Discourses weakening traditional authority challenged the legitimacy of hierarchical family power through sarcasm, moral condemnation, and reinterpretations of appropriate family conduct. Meanwhile, empowerment discourses reconstructed daughters-in-law as subjects capable of resistance, boundary-setting, and self-protection. However, traditional expectations surrounding endurance, respect, and relational harmony continued to coexist alongside these new values. The findings further indicate that social media transformed family conflict into a publicly circulated and collectively consumed form of content.

This process can be understood through four interconnected dynamics. First, the publicization of family conflict moved intergenerational authority from the private sphere into public scrutiny. Second, the repositioning of daughters-in-law expanded the legitimacy of resistance, emotional self-protection, and relational boundary-setting. Third, cultural inertia demonstrated that traditional Confucian values had not disappeared but continued to coexist and compete with emerging individual-centered values. Finally, mediatization reshaped family conflict according to platform logics, where stories became amplified, dramatized, and continuously reinterpreted through collective participation.

Moreover, this process was neither linear nor consensual. Some discourses promoted personal autonomy and resistance against oppressive family authority, while others continued to emphasize patience, compromise, and the preservation of traditional family harmony. This tension suggests that family power in digital environments no longer operates as a fixed hierarchical structure but as an ongoing discursive process negotiated among family members, online publics, and platform cultures.

Overall, findings demonstrate that social media functions not only as a space for reflecting family conflict but also as a participatory arena where family legitimacy and authority are actively reconstructed. Rather than being negotiated exclusively through interpersonal interaction within households, family power increasingly becomes shaped through public discursive practices in which networked audiences participate in evaluating behavior, assigning moral legitimacy, and defining acceptable family norms.

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates that social media has become an important site where family authority and moral legitimacy are publicly negotiated. The findings show that online publics no longer accept intergenerational authority based on age, hierarchy, or familial status. Instead, the legitimacy of family power is continuously reassessed through emotional judgments, moral evaluations, and public interpretations of appropriate behavior. At the same time, discussions increasingly prioritized women's emotional well-being, self-protection, and personal boundaries within marital families.

Previous studies on patriarchal Asian family systems have emphasized how senior women's authority was historically reinforced through age hierarchy, filial obligation, and Confucian family structures (Kandiyoti, 1988; Wolf, 1972). In contrast, the present findings reveal strong resistance toward these hierarchical expectations in digital environments, where online audiences openly question or reject family authority when it is perceived as emotionally harmful or morally unjustified. In this sense, online discourse increasingly aligns with perspectives in family communication research that emphasize autonomy, boundary management, and emotional well-being (Baxter, 2011; Serewicz, 2008). Public discussions frequently legitimized direct resistance, divorce, or disengagement from oppressive family relationships rather than encouraging endurance for the sake of family harmony.

The findings also suggest an important transformation in how daughters-in-law are socially positioned. Earlier studies often described daughters-in-law in East Asian families as subjects expected to maintain harmony through adaptation, silence, or indirect forms of resistance (Shih & Pyke, 2010). However, comments in this study frequently normalized more explicit forms of resistance, including confrontation, emotional boundary-setting, and leaving harmful marriages. This reflects a broader shift from collective family obligation toward individual-centered values emphasizing emotional health and personal autonomy.

Nevertheless, traditional values remain influential. Some users continued to emphasize patience, filial duty, and women's responsibility to preserve family harmony. This supports previous studies highlighting the persistence of filial piety and hierarchical family norms within East Asian cultures (Pyke & Bengtson, 1996). However, unlike earlier periods in which these norms occupied a dominant position, traditional values in this study appeared to compete directly with more individualistic perspectives within the same communicative space. Social media therefore becomes a site where multiple moral systems coexist, collide, and negotiate legitimacy in public.

Another major finding concerns the publicization and mediatization of family conflict. Family disputes were no longer treated as private matters but became forms of public content subject to collective observation, emotional engagement, and moral judgment. Online audiences did not simply consume these conflicts passively; they actively participated in defining who was morally legitimate and what forms of family behavior were considered acceptable. These findings resonate with studies on the collapsing boundary between private life and public visibility in digital media (Couldry, 2012; Marwick & Boyd, 2011), while extending this literature by showing how family authority itself becomes publicly contested through participatory online discourse.

The study suggests that the significance of social media lies not only in the content of public debates but also in the transformation of how family power is negotiated. Traditional family communication research has largely conceptualized conflict as occurring primarily within interpersonal family interactions. However, the present findings indicate that networked publics now function as active participants in evaluating conduct, shaping moral interpretations, and negotiating the legitimacy of family authority. Practices such as collective empathy, moral labeling, public ridicule, legal framing, and legitimizing resistance contribute to reconstructing how relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law are socially comprehended.

Based on these findings, this study proposes that family power in digital environments should be understood as a public discursive process rather than solely an internal family structure. In Confucian-influenced societies such as Vietnam, where family authority has traditionally been maintained through filial piety and intergenerational hierarchy, social media creates new communicative conditions in which these norms are publicly debated, challenged, and reinterpreted. The study therefore contributes to family communication scholarship by extending the unit of analysis beyond interpersonal interaction within households toward public digital discourse surrounding family life. Rather than treating online comments as isolated individual reactions, the findings suggest that networked audiences collectively participate in constructing moral legitimacy and negotiating acceptable family norms.

In general, the Vietnamese case demonstrates how social media reshapes the relationship between family, morality, and public culture in digitally mediated societies. Family power increasingly depends not only on traditional hierarchy but also on public legitimacy negotiated through ongoing communicative practices in networked environments.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study carry several important implications for family communication, digital culture, and public engagement in contemporary societies. First, the study suggests that social media has increasingly become a space where individuals seek emotional validation, moral recognition, and collective support when experiencing family conflict. Online discussions surrounding mother-in-law/daughter-in-law tensions demonstrate that networked publics now participate actively in defining acceptable family behavior, identifying victims and perpetrators, and evaluating the legitimacy of intergenerational authority. This indicates that digital platforms are no longer peripheral to family communication but are becoming embedded within broader processes through which family norms and relational expectations are negotiated.

Second, the findings highlight the growing importance of emotional well-being and personal boundaries in contemporary public understandings of family relationships. Many online users openly supported resistance against emotionally harmful family dynamics, legitimized divorce or separation, and emphasized mental health protection over preserving family harmony at all costs. These discursive shifts may contribute to changing public

perceptions regarding women's agency, emotional autonomy, and intergenerational authority within marriage. For practitioners working in family counseling, mental health support, or community education, the findings suggest the need to engage more directly with the communicative influence of social media in shaping how individuals interpret family obligations, conflict, and self-protection.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates how platform cultures encourage the dramatization and public consumption of family conflict. Through repetition, emotional amplification, and collective commentary, private disputes become transformed into highly visible public narratives. This has implications for digital literacy and ethical communication practices. As online users increasingly participate in moral judgment and public evaluation, there is a growing need for greater awareness regarding the consequences of public shaming, online harassment, and the simplification of complex family relationships into polarized moral categories.

In general, the findings suggest that family communication in digitally mediated societies can no longer be understood solely through interpersonal interaction within households. Instead, family meanings and power relations are increasingly shaped through public discursive participation. This highlights the importance of integrating digital communication dynamics into future educational, counseling, and policy approaches related to family relationships and intergenerational conflict.

Limitations And Future Research

While this study offers theoretically grounded insights, several limitations must be considered. First, the analysis focused on a single highly visible Vietnamese social media case involving a celebrity family controversy. Although the case provided rich data for examining public negotiations of family power, it cannot fully represent the diversity of family conflicts or online discursive practices across Vietnamese digital culture more broadly. Different types of family disputes, social contexts, or demographic groups may produce different communicative dynamics and moral interpretations.

Second, the study relied primarily on publicly available textual comments on Facebook. As a result, the analysis focused on discursive patterns visible within comment sections and did not examine other important dimensions of platform communication, such as algorithms, content circulation mechanisms, visual content, or users' private interpretations and emotional experiences. Because online visibility is strongly shaped by platform infrastructures, future studies should pay closer attention to how recommendation systems, engagement metrics, and platform moderation influence the amplification or marginalization of particular family discourses.

Third, the research captured discourse within a specific media moment. Online conversations surrounding family controversies are often highly dynamic and shaped by shifting public attention, emerging information, and changing emotional responses over time. The present study therefore cannot fully account for longer-term transformations in family discourse or the durability of the values expressed in online discussions.

Future research could expand the analysis across multiple digital platforms and different forms of family relationships in order to compare how online communities negotiate authority, morality, and legitimacy in varying cultural and communicative contexts. Comparative studies between societies influenced by Confucian traditions and more individualistic contexts may also help clarify how cultural norms shape the public negotiation of family power in digital environments. In addition, user-centered approaches such as interviews, ethnography, or audience reception studies could provide deeper insight into how individuals interpret and emotionally engage with online family discourse. Such approaches may further illuminate how public commentary influences people's understandings of marriage, authority, emotional boundaries, and family obligation in everyday life.

Finally, future research may contribute to the development of new theoretical models for family communication in digital societies. Rather than conceptualizing family power as a stable internal structure, future research could further theorize family authority as a dispersed, public, and continuously negotiated discursive process shaped by networked participation and platform cultures.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study consist of publicly available Facebook comments collected from publicly accessible posts. To protect users' privacy and comply with ethical considerations in digital media research, the full dataset is not publicly shared. De-identified excerpts used in the analysis are included within the manuscript. Additional information may be available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethical Approval

This study analyzed only publicly accessible Facebook posts and comments. No private accounts, groups, or personally identifiable information were accessed. All identifying details of individuals involved in the case were anonymized in accordance with ethical guidelines for digital media research (Markham & Buchanan, 2012).

REFERENCES

1. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
2. boyd, d., Golder, S., & Lotan, G. (2010). Tweet, tweet, retweet: Conversational aspects of retweeting on Twitter. *Proceedings of the 43rd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS)*, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1109/HICSS.2010.412>
3. boyd, d. (2014). *It's complicated: The social lives of networked teens*. Yale University Press.
4. Baxter, L. A., & Braithwaite, D. O. (Eds.). (2008). *Engaging theories in family communication: Multiple perspectives*. SAGE Publications.
5. Baxter, L. A. (2011). *Voicing relationships: A dialogic perspective*. SAGE Publications.
6. Banet-Weiser, S. (2018). *Empowered: Popular feminism and popular misogyny*. Duke University Press.
7. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE Publications.
8. Couldry, N., & Hepp, A. (2017). *The mediated construction of reality*. Polity Press.
9. Couldry, N. (2012). *Media, society, world: Social theory and digital media practice*. Polity Press.
10. Duong, H. T., & Hopfer, S. (2023). Exploring intergenerational communication on social media group chats as a cancer prevention intervention opportunity among Vietnamese American families: A qualitative study. *JMIR Formative Research*, 7, e35601. <https://doi.org/10.2196/35601>
11. Drummond, L. (2006). Gender practices in contemporary Vietnam. *Vietnam Studies*, 1(1-2), 515-541. <https://doi.org/10.1525/vs.2006.1.1-2.515>
12. Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
13. General Statistics Office of Vietnam. (2023). *Statistical summary book of Viet Nam 2023*. <https://www.nso.gov.vn/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Nien-giam-tom-tat-2023.pdf>
14. Galvin, K. M., Braithwaite, D. O., & Baxter, L. A. (Eds.). (2015). *Family communication: Cohesion and change* (9th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315663982>
15. Harwood, J. (2005). Shared family identity, age salience, and intergroup contact: Investigation of the grandparent-grandchild relationship. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 22(5), 689-708. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637750500534388>
16. Harwood, J., & Lin, M.-C. (2014). Intergroup contact and communication in families: A review and theoretical integration. In Y. Y. Kim (Ed.), *The International encyclopedia of intercultural communication*. Wiley-Blackwell.
17. Horton, P., & Rydström, H. (Eds.). (2011). *Heterosexuality in Vietnam: The remaking of intimacy*. Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press.
18. Hepp, A. (2020). *Deep mediatization*. Routledge.
19. Highfield, T. (2016). *Social media and everyday politics*. Polity Press.

20. Ikels, C. (Ed.). (2004). *Filial piety: Practice and discourse in contemporary East Asia*. Stanford University Press.
21. Jenkins, H., Ford, S., & Green, J. (2013). *Spreadable media: Creating value and meaning in a networked culture*. New York University Press.
22. Kandiyoti, D. (1988). Bargaining with patriarchy. *Gender & Society*, 2(3), 274-290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124388002003004>
23. Koerner, A. F., & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (2002). Toward a theory of family communication. *Communication Theory*, 12(1), 70–91. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2002.tb00260.x>
24. Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2019). *Qualitative communication research methods* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
25. Marwick, A. E., & boyd, d. (2011). I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience. *New Media & Society*, 13(1), 114-133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444810365313>
26. Marwick, A. E. (2015). Instafame: Luxury selfies in the attention economy. *Public Culture*, 27(1), 137-160. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2798379>
27. Mesch, G. S. (2003). The family and the Internet: The Israeli case. *Social Science Quarterly*, 84(4), 1038-1050. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0038-4941.2003.08404016.x>
28. Markham, A., & Buchanan, E. (2012). *Ethical decision-making and Internet research: Recommendations from the AoIR ethics working committee* (Version 2.0). Association of Internet Researchers. <https://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf>
29. Miller, D., Costa, E., Haynes, N., McDonald, T., Nicolescu, R., Sinanan, J., Spyer, J., Venkatraman, S., & Wang, X. (2016). *How the world changed social media*. UCL Press.
30. Pyke, K. D., & Bengtson, V. L. (1996). The “normal American family” as an interpretive structure of family life among grown children of Korean and Vietnamese immigrants. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 58(2), 329-339. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00240.x>
31. Papacharissi, Z. (2015). Affective publics. In P. V. Alphen, P. McGowan, & J. M. Smith (Eds.), *Affective societies: Key concepts*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351039260-28>
32. Papacharissi, Z. (2015). *Affective publics: Sentiment, technology, and politics*. Oxford University Press.
33. Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
34. Rittenour, C. E., & Soliz, J. (2009). Communicative and relational dimensions of shared family identity and relational intentions in mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationships: Developing a conceptual model for mother-in-law/daughter-in-law research. *Journal of Family Communication*, 9(4), 294-316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570310802636334>
35. Suter, E. A., Sahlstein Parcell, E., Adebayo, C. T., Romo, D. C., & Weadock, C. R. (2024). Charting a research agenda for relational dialectics theory: Forwarding critical theorizing in interpersonal and family communication research. *Journal of Family Communication*, 24(3-4), 177-195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2024.2394027>
36. Serewicz, M. C. M., & Canary, D. J. (2008). Toward a triangular theory of the communication and relationships of in-laws: Theoretical proposal and social relations analysis of relational satisfaction and private disclosure in in-law triads. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 25(5), 823-844. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407508096697>
37. Serewicz, M. C. M., & Canary, D. J. (2008). Assessments of disclosure from the in-laws: Links among disclosure topics, family privacy orientations, and relational quality. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 25(2), 333-357. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407507087962>
38. Sipocz, D., Freeman, J. D., & Elton, J. (2021). “A toxic trend?” Generational conflict and connectivity in Twitter discourse under the #BoomerRemover hashtag. *The Gerontologist*, 61(2), 166-175. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnaa177>
39. Sung, K.-T. (1995). Measures and dimensions of filial piety in Korea. *The Gerontologist*, 35(2), 240–247. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/35.2.240>
40. Senft, T. M., & Baym, N. K. (2015). What does the selfie say? Investigating a global phenomenon. *International Journal of Communication*, 9, 1588-1606. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/3183>

41. Shih, K. Y., & Pyke, K. (2010). Power, resistance, and emotional economies in women's relationships with mothers-in-law in Chinese immigrant families. *Journal of Family Issues*, 31(3), 333-357. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X09350875>
42. Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications. Turner, F. (2010). *From counterculture to cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the rise of digital utopianism* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
43. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). (2021). Country gender equality profile Viet Nam 2021 (CGEP). UN Women Asia-Pacific. https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEAsia/Docs/Publications/2021/10/vn-CGEP_Full.pdf
44. van Dijck, J. (2013). *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media*. Oxford University Press.
45. Wolf, M. (1972). *Women and the family in rural Taiwan*. Stanford University Press.
46. Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2009). *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
47. Yan, Y. (2016). *The individualization of Chinese society*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Note. Real names of individuals involved in the case have been encrypted (abbreviated) throughout the article to ensure privacy and comply with ethical principles in digital media research.