

Social media and the Reshaping of Family Interaction Patterns: A Study of Families in Laghouat City

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of social relationships formed via social media platforms on the nature of familial bonds. To address this objective, a field study was conducted involving a sample of 125 families from Laghouat City. A questionnaire was employed as the primary data collection instrument, offering a reliable and objective means of capturing participants' perspectives and attitudes. Given the complexity of the topic, the descriptive-analytical approach was adopted as the most appropriate framework for examining the phenomenon within its real-life context and for analyzing its various dimensions. The study seeks to develop a comprehensive scientific understanding of the potential transformations in family relationships driven by the growing use of social media. The central research question guiding the investigation is: How do social media platforms influence the nature of relationships among family members? The findings reveal several significant insights, most notably: Social relationships developed through social media have a discernible impact on the privacy dynamics within family structures. Virtual interactions contribute to the emergence of new patterns in family communication.

Keywords: *Social media; digital communication; family communication; family dynamics; virtual relationships;*

Introduction

In the context of evolving social paradigms, it is imperative to examine the shift in societal values precipitated by the diminishing influence of traditional social institutions, which now vie with contemporary media and communication technologies, collectively referred to as 'new media'. Henceforth, this study emerges from the urgent need to understand the profound transformations brought about by

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modern technology in terms of values and social relationships, as these represent some of the most significant challenges facing societies today.

Social media platforms have encapsulated our societal interactions within a virtual realm, profoundly impacting every aspect of communal life. These platforms significantly shape individual identities and interpersonal relations at both familial and societal levels. The deep penetration of these sites into the societal fabric poses significant challenges to traditional values and ethics, which are fundamental in sustaining familial ties. This necessitates a thorough examination of their impacts on values and family relationships, an analysis of the family's role in addressing these effects, and an effort to establish mechanisms to strengthen social bonds and moral values in the context of this new virtual reality.

To equip families to navigate these challenges effectively, particularly in safeguarding younger members, it is crucial to establish robust boundaries between social media influences and the core values, religious beliefs, and ethical standards that underpin familial bonds, in light of the emerging risks. Comprehending the effects of social media on family relationships and bolstering the family's role in mitigating these impacts is vital for protecting family members from potential adversities.

1. Problem Statement

In recent decades, the familial landscape within Algerian society has seen profound transformations in structure and intra-family relations, predominantly influenced by social media. The creation of virtual interactions has often led these digital relationships to rival, and at times supplant, face-to-face familial interactions. Social media platforms have become integral to their users' lives, reshaping family dynamics.

Amid rapid technological advancements and media liberalization, family values are increasingly being reshaped by the diverse values and standards propagated through social media. These platforms not only facilitate constant communication and bridge geographical gaps virtually but also contribute to heightened feelings of isolation and loneliness, distancing individuals from their familial and social circles.

The technological challenge stands as one of the most significant factors that has, directly or indirectly, impacted the institution of the family—an institution traditionally responsible for ensuring the socialization of individuals in accordance with established social norms and values. The integration of technology into the socialization process has not only shared in the family's traditional role but has, in some cases, even surpassed it in terms of its influence. This growing influence has extended to various dimensions of life, including social structures, political systems, intellectual paradigms, education, and the family itself (Ouarem, & Mehdi, 2019, pp. 2-3).

As a result, social media increasingly dictates both individual and collective behavioral norms, fostering niche communities bound by specific ideological and intellectual affiliations.

Accordingly, our research seeks to address the central question: *How do social media platforms affect the nature of family relationships?*

Sub-questions:

- _ How does continuous engagement with social media platforms influence the privacy of family relationships?
- _ In what ways does the communication style adopted on social media alter traditional family communication norms?

2. Hypotheses:

- _ Engaging in social relationships via social media platforms significantly impacts the privacy dynamics within family relationships.
- _ Virtual social interactions foster the emergence of innovative methods of family communication and interaction.

3. Study Objectives:

- _ To understand the effects of social media usage on the dynamics of family relationships.
- _ To evaluate how social media influences interpersonal relationships among family members.
- _ To delineate the patterns and habits of social media consumption within familial settings.
- _ To uncover the specific ways in which social media reshapes communication within families.

4. Study Concepts:

4.1 Concept of Social Media:

Social media represents a digital form of mass communication that operates primarily through online platforms and networks where users exchange information, personal messages, and other multimedia content.

Social media can be conceptualized as an array of web-based applications that foster social connections by building virtual communities (Gregersen, & Rodriguez, 2023). These platforms encourage collaboration, dialogue, and debate, enhancing the dissemination of knowledge through the exchange of information, experiences, and viewpoints (Al-Arishi, & Al-Dosary, 2015, p. 22).

Social media constitutes a system of interconnected electronic networks that enable users to create personalized profiles and establish connections—within a digital social framework—with other individuals who share similar interests and hobbies (Saidani, & Leiket, 2021, p. 138).

• *Operational Definition of Social Media:*

Social media encompasses applications enabling users to create personal profiles for interaction, facilitating the sharing and engagement with content amongst users.

4.2 Concept of Communication:

Communication is defined by Charles Cooley as the foundational mechanism through which human relationships are initiated, cultivated, and developed by transmitting mental symbols over space and time (Al-Abdellah, 2006, pp. 23-25).

Rickard Andy further specifies communication as a process aimed at eliciting a particular response from a receiver, emphasizing its deliberate and purposeful nature with clearly defined elements (Deliou, 2003, p. 22).

It is also viewed as a social mechanism for the exchange of information, opinions, and ideas through meaningful symbols between individuals or groups, bridging societal and cultural divides to achieve defined objectives (Al-Dihi, 2015, p. 8).

- *Operational Definition of Communication:*

This term refers to the process through which information, ideas, and emotions are exchanged, encompassing all dimensions and patterns of communication between parents and children.

4.3 Concept of Family:

The family is recognized as the cornerstone of society and the primary environment for nurturing. It plays a pivotal role in the holistic development, education, and satisfaction of the physiological and psychological needs of children (Al-Daeilj, 2007, p. 89).

Ahmed Zaki Badawi characterizes the family as the fundamental social unit that sustains human species preservation, shaped by the collective intellect's norms and the societal rules, thus positioning the family system as the societal nucleus (1983, p. 152).

- *Operational Definition of the Family:*

The family is a union founded on socially recognized norms and connections, comprising individuals bound by familial ties.

4.4 Concept of Family Relationships:

Family relationships encompass a complex network of social dynamics among family members, characterized by either positive aspects such as loyalty, bonding, and cohesion or negative elements like discord, conflict, and an aversion to responsibility.

These dynamics are evident in relationships between parents, between parents and children, and among siblings, playing a crucial role in the socialization process within the family. Through these interactions, values and standards are imparted to children, shaping their social behaviors and cultural understanding (Al-Khali et al., 2009, p. 17; Tabchouche, 2011, p. 187).

- *Operational Definition of Family Relationships:*

These relationships are a network of bonds and social interactions that emerge among family members, defining the familial structure.

5. Field Framework:

5.1 Methodology:

This study employs a descriptive methodology designed to uncover facts, provide precise descriptions of phenomena, and ascertain their attributes both qualitatively and quantitatively. The focus extends to analyzing the historical context of phenomena, exploring their present conditions, and forecasting their future trajectories.

This approach is particularly geared towards describing phenomena in detail, systematically summarizing collected data around specific topics, and interpreting these data to yield insightful results (Zerouati, 2008, p. 112).

5.2 Data Collection Tool:

The primary instrument utilized for data collection was the questionnaire, a fundamental and widely recognized tool in the social sciences. This tool facilitated direct communication between the researcher and the participants, containing a series of questions pertinent to the study's central issues.

The questions were administered to a selected sample of the research community, who were requested to provide written responses. The questionnaire comprised 61 questions, structured across four thematic axes.

5.3 Study Sample:

This study investigates the impact of social relationships facilitated through social media on the dynamics of family relationships within Laghouat. The total population comprises all families residing in Laghouat, estimated at 125,069 families by the Directorate of Programming and Budget Monitoring.

The sampling process began with geographic cluster sampling, which involves selecting samples from defined geographic areas such as rural aerial mappings or urban divisions into neighborhoods or administrative districts (Saboun, & Jeradi, 2012, pp. 143-144).

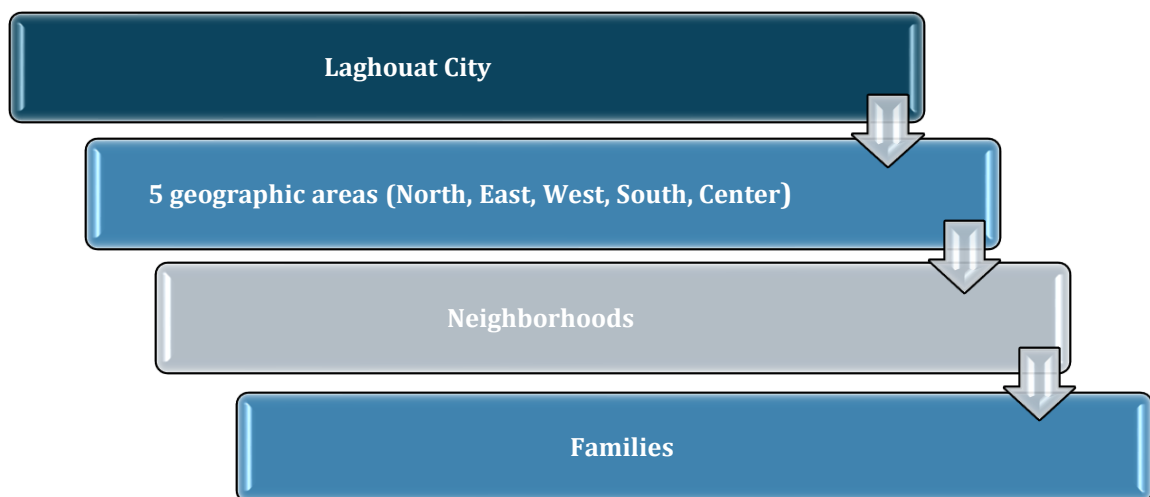


Figure 1. Geographic cluster sampling method in Laghouat

Source: created by the authors.

Following the geographic clustering, a simple random sampling technique was applied. Laghouat was divided into five distinct regions; north, east, west, south, and central. Each region was numerically cataloged, and neighborhoods within these

regions were randomly selected, culminating in the selection represented in the table below:

Table 1. Selected Neighborhoods for the Study

Region	Selected Neighborhoods
North	North Oases
South	Shatit Neighborhood
East	Energy Street
West	Al-We'am Neighborhood
Central	July 5th Neighborhood

Source: created by the authors.

From the population of 125,069 families, a sample representing 0.1% was determined as follows:

- Sample Size Calculation: Total Population = 125,069, Sampling Rate = 0.1%.

$$125 = 0.1 \times \frac{125069}{100}$$

- Sample Size = Study population size x Sampling rate / 100

125 samples were distributed as follows:

$$25 = \frac{125}{5}$$

When retrieving the questionnaires, three forms were discarded for not meeting the basic requirements. Therefore, the final sample consists of 122 families.

5.4 Data Analysis of the Study

The analysis focused on the first hypothesis regarding the perception of internet connectivity and its relation to beliefs about the enhancement of family social relationships through social media. The findings are summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Link Between Perceived Internet Access and Belief in Social Media's Role in Family Relationship

Connectivity	Yes		No		Total	
Relationships	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes	41	%47.1	18	%51.4	59	%48.4
No	46	%52.9	17	%48.6	63	%51.6
Total	87	%100	35	%100	122	%100

Source: created by the authors.

The analysis depicted in the table highlights the relationship between respondents' perceptions of internet connectivity and their beliefs regarding the role of social media in enhancing family social relationships.

The data reveals that a majority, 51.6%, of respondents are skeptical of social media's role in bolstering family ties, with 52.9% of this group having internet access. In contrast, 48.4% of respondents, including 51.4% of those without internet connectivity, view social media as beneficial to family relationships.

This divergence in perceptions suggests that social media may not necessarily strengthen family social relationships, particularly among those with ready access to internet services. The findings point to a potentially detrimental impact of social media on traditional family and social communications, as these digital platforms increasingly serve as substitutes for direct, personal interactions within families. The prevalent use of social media is observed to weaken direct social interactions and diminish interpersonal communications within the familial setting.

Laghouat's technological landscape has notably evolved with enhancements in internet infrastructure, such as the rollout of fiber optic services and improvements in network speed and bandwidth, alongside the expansion of affordable fourth-generation network services. These advancements have popularized internet use among many families in the region, potentially leading to high levels of dependency or even addiction to digital media.

This extensive use of digital platforms can influence human behaviors and intra-family relationships, catalyzing shifts in traditional family gatherings and interactions towards more isolated, individualistic forms of engagement, thereby fostering a new paradigm of knowledge exchange and communication predominantly based on remote interactions.

Conversely, a segment of Laghouat's population that engages less frequently with the internet reports stronger familial bonds and more robust interpersonal relationships. This observation supports the notion that reduced dependency on digital communication channels can lead to enhanced direct social interactions and stronger familial ties.

Table 3. Impact of Social Media Use on Family Time and Relationships

Media Usage	Yes		No		Total	
Reduction in Sitting Together	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes	47	%64.4	39	%79.6	86	%70.5
No	26	%35.6	10	%20.4	36	%29.5
Total	73	%100	49	%100	122	%100

Source: created by the authors.

The data presented in the aforementioned table delineates the relationship between respondents' usage of social media with family and close relatives, and its influence on the time allocated to familial interactions.

It was observed that 70.5% of participants who reported a decrease in time spent with family due to social media usage are paralleled by 79.6% of those who do not engage with family and close relatives via these platforms. Conversely, 29.5% of respondents believe that their engagement on social media does not impinge on the time spent with family, corroborated by 35.6% of those who utilize social media to connect with family and relatives.

From these observations, it can be concluded that social media networks do indeed play a role in reducing the time individuals spend with family members. The

majority of those who acknowledged a reduction in family time reported not using social media for interactions with family and relatives.

According to their perspective, social media draws family members into a virtual, somewhat illusory environment that diverges significantly from real societal interactions. This group argues that excessive internet use and dependence on social media platforms hinder the strengthening of familial ties, viewing such internet addiction as a considerable misuse of time.

Furthermore, this demographic holds that the onus of shielding this generation, particularly from the encroaching influences of pervasive online engagement, primarily lies with the parents. They are seen as pivotal in instilling robust family values and fostering the social development of their children alongside various other social institutions.

Analysis suggests a negative correlation between the extent of social media use and the level of active social engagement within the family: higher usage rates are associated with increased social isolation among family members. In contrast, minimal use of social media correlates with more vibrant social activity, a decrease in individualistic tendencies and depressive feelings among family members, thereby fostering richer and more meaningful family gatherings.

Table 04. Motives for Social Media Use and Family Connectivity Anytime, Anywhere

Motivations Allowance	Cultural		Social		Entertainment		Economic		Political		Educational		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Yes	20	47.6	18	58.1	8	28.6	1	100	5	100	05	33.3	57	46.7
No	22	52.4	13	41.9	20	71.4	-	-	-	-	10	66.7	65	53.3
Total	42	100	31	100	28	100	1	100	5	100	15	100	122	100

Source: created by the authors.

The data from the aforementioned table, which explores the relationship between respondents' motivations for using social media and their perceptions of its efficacy in maintaining family connections across time and space, reveals a complex picture. It shows that 53.3% of respondents do not believe that social media facilitates family connections, with a significant majority of these users engaging with social media primarily for entertainment (71.4%) and educational (66.7%) purposes. This viewpoint underscores a skepticism towards the ability of social media to sustain familial ties effectively.

On the other hand, 46.7% of respondents hold that social media does indeed facilitate such connections, with all respondents in this group utilizing social platforms for political and economic reasons. This division highlights differing perceptions based on the purposes for which social media is used.

These statistical insights suggest that a majority of family heads perceive that social media does not support ongoing familial engagement, as their predominant engagement with these platforms is for entertainment. This type of usage has profound implications, particularly in the contemporary context where family

interactions are often limited to necessary and succinct exchanges, and traditional, intimate family gatherings are becoming increasingly rare.

The trend towards individualization is accelerated by social media, which often leads to isolation among family members and a dilution of shared familial communication values. Consequently, many individuals feel that social media networks do not effectively contribute to fostering connections with family anytime and anywhere, as the bulk of their social media time is devoted to entertainment, which may further alienate them from family members and cool familial relationships.

Table 5. Social Media's Role in Quality Time and Preference for Online vs. Routine Family Topics

Spending Time	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Daily Topics						
Yes	18	25	16	32	34	27.9
No	54	75	34	68	88	72.1
Total	72	100	50	100	122	100

Source: created by the authors.

The data extracted from the table highlights the relationship between the perceived utility of social media in enhancing familial interactions through chat conversations and the appeal of topics discussed on these platforms compared to everyday family discussions.

A significant majority, 72.1% of respondents, indicated that they do not find the topics on social media more appealing than those discussed in daily family routines. This sentiment is reinforced by 75% of respondents who believe that social media facilitates enjoyable interactions through chat conversations. Conversely, a minority of 27.9% views the topics on social media as more captivating than daily family discussions, corroborated by 32% of individuals who do not perceive social media as beneficial for engaging family conversations.

From this analysis, it is evident that most family heads do not consider social media topics to surpass the engagement found in routine family discussions, yet they acknowledge that these platforms can provide a venue for pleasant exchanges. This dual perspective suggests that while social media is primarily seen as an entertainment medium, it does not supplant the familial interactions that are deemed essential, particularly for the socialization of children and teenagers. Families regard these platforms as secondary to the direct communication and information sharing that occurs within the household.

Given the prominent role families play as the primary source of information and guidance, particularly for younger members, it becomes crucial to implement structured guidelines for social media usage. Establishing clear rules is necessary to safeguard the psychological and emotional well-being of children and teenagers, mitigating potential negative impacts on their development and family relationships.

Families serve as a supervisory entity, actively involved in educating their members about the risks associated with excessive social media use. They enforce internet usage policies and employ parental control tools to monitor and regulate online activities, ensuring a balanced engagement with technology.

Furthermore, families are encouraged to promote alternative activities that provide constructive outlets for energy and learning, such as participation in sports and scientific clubs, which offer valuable experiences outside the realm of digital interaction. Through these measures, the family reinforces its role as the fundamental unit of society, not only by fostering care and upbringing but also by inculcating religious practices and moral values, such as punctuality in prayer, respect for parental authority, and the virtues of courage and obedience.

5.4.1. Data Analysis for the Second Hypothesis

Table 06. Social Media Role in Opinion Expression and Comfort in Family Communication

Opinions and Perspectives	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Psychological and Social Comfort						
Yes	66	89.2	29	60.4	95	77.9
No	8	10.8	19	39.6	27	22.1
Total	74	100	48	100	122	100

Source: created by the authors.

The data presented in the table elucidates the relationship between the use of social media for expressing opinions and attitudes that respondents find challenging to convey in face-to-face settings, and their sense of psychological and social comfort when communicating with family members via these networks.

A significant majority, 77.9%, reported feeling psychological and social comfort when interacting with family through social media, corroborated by 89.2% who appreciate the platform's capacity to enable expression of complex personal opinions and attitudes. In contrast, 22.1% of respondents did not experience such comfort, supported by 39.6% who felt that social media does not facilitate the expression of their more challenging views and attitudes.

From this data, it is inferred that the majority of family representatives find psychological and social comfort in utilizing social media networks for family communications.

Many participants articulated that these digital spaces provide a valuable outlet for expressing opinions and attitudes that are difficult to express in conventional interactions. Social media has become integral to the lives of many, serving not just as a communication tool but as a vital medium for articulating inner feelings and connecting with the world at large, including family members.

Participants highlighted the liberating nature of these platforms, where long periods spent chatting and communicating create an ideal environment for sharing interests and challenges with peers and family. Social media is perceived as a realm

free from the traditional constraints and inhibitions of face-to-face interactions, offering a space where individuals can freely express their thoughts and feelings.

Furthermore, family communication is recognized as essential for fostering psychological and social security among family members. The study findings indicate that a majority of the sample derives a sense of security from their interactions on social media. This observation aligns with the functionalist perspective on family dynamics, which posits that family communication is crucial for maintaining stability and balance within the family unit, regardless of the communication medium employed.

Table 7. Impact of Family Emotional Void on Social Media Use and Communication Comfort

Feeling of Emptiness	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Psychological and Social Comfort						
Yes	39	88.6	56	71.8	95	77.9
No	05	11.4	22	28.2	27	22.1
Total	44	100	78	100	122	100

Source: created by the authors.

The data from the table elucidates the relationship between respondents' perception of social and emotional voids within the family and their subsequent engagement with social media to fulfill these needs, alongside their feelings of psychological comfort when communicating with family members through these networks.

Notably, 77.9% of respondents reported experiencing psychological and social comfort while interacting with family via social media, supported by 88.6% who attributed their engagement on these platforms to a perceived social and emotional void within their family dynamics. Conversely, 22.1% of respondents did not feel this comfort, and 28.2% did not associate their social media usage with seeking fulfillment for any familial void.

The notion of the 'global village,' propelled by advancements in information and communication technologies, has reshaped our societal structures, integrating these technologies into the fabric of human, social, and cultural relationships. These advancements have significantly reduced the barriers of distance and time, facilitating easier and more immediate communication between individuals and their families.

From the insights garnered from the respondents, it is evident that the majority experience a sense of psychological and social comfort during interactions with family via social media. These platforms have increasingly become substitutes for traditional forms of family interaction, notably reducing the frequency of in-person visits to relatives and kin.

Where family gatherings and visits to relatives were once regular or weekly occurrences, they have largely been supplanted by virtual interactions such as voice

messages, written texts, or video calls. This shift is largely attributed to the pervasive reliance on the internet, which has transformed social systems and relationships.

Several factors contribute to this dynamic, including feelings of social and emotional void within the family, which drive individuals to seek connection through digital media. Additionally, social media has mitigated feelings of alienation and facilitated instant and ongoing contact with family, relatives, or friends residing in distant locations, thereby obviating the need for travel and its associated costs.

In this evolving context, personal visits among family members are now primarily reserved for significant religious holidays, marriage celebrations, and funerals. With the rise of social media platforms, the traditional paradigms of family communication have undergone profound changes, enabling these networks to not only meet individual communication needs but also play a crucial role in preserving family structures and sustaining these relationships through the functionalities provided by these platforms.

Table 8. Social Media's Role in Encouraging Openness and Enhancing Family Connection

Freedom	Yes		No		Total	
Understanding Thoughts and Opinions	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes	7	36.8	38	36.9	45	36.9
No	12	63.2	65	63.1	77	63.1
Total	19	100	103	100	122	100

Source: created by the authors.

The data from the table highlights the complex relationship between the use of social media platforms for discussions and the facilitation of understanding between family members regarding their ideas and opinions. It reveals that 63.1% of respondents feel that social media networks do not significantly aid in connecting with family members to understand their perspectives thoroughly.

This perception is aligned with 63.2% of respondents who value the freedom, openness, and boldness that social media platforms provide for discussing topics, as opposed to traditional face-to-face interactions. Conversely, 36.9% of respondents believe that social media networks are effective in fostering connections with family members for better understanding of each other's ideas and opinions, but this view is equally matched by 36.9% who disagree, feeling that social media does not offer the same level of openness and boldness for discussions compared to direct interactions, with a slight variation of 36.8% holding an opposing stance.

The findings indicate that a majority of the family members surveyed perceive that social media networks do not facilitate deeper connections within the family unit, nor do they enhance understanding of each other's ideas and opinions. This sentiment underscores concerns that social media may limit the expansion of genuine social networks within the family context.

As families in Laghouat adapt to globalization and the pervasive spread of information technologies, modern communication methods have deeply infiltrated family dynamics, capturing the attention and desires of family members. These platforms offer a new and evolving space for establishing relationships beyond the immediate family environment, which some view as a potential threat to the future of familial bonds.

Concerns have been raised about the implications of these interactions, including potential breaches of privacy and the dissemination of misinformation. Furthermore, there is a perception that social media may stifle individual creativity, rendering users less capable of independent thought or expression of their genuine intellectual abilities.

6. Study Results

After meticulous data collection, tabulation, and analysis, the study elucidated several notable correlations and findings as outlined below:

- _ We discovered a link between respondents' perceptions of internet availability and their beliefs about the impact of social media on family social relationships. It was noted that 51.6% of participants do not view social media as a facilitator of family social relationships. This observation is corroborated by 52.9% of those with access to internet connectivity, indicating a skepticism towards the role of social media in fostering familial closeness.
- _ A significant correlation was found between respondents' use of social media with immediate family and relatives and the reduction in the time they spend with family members. A substantial 70.5% of respondents feel that their engagement with social media networks decreases the time allocated for family interactions, with 79.6% of those who avoid using social media for connections with family and first-degree relatives supporting this perspective.
- _ We also conclude that there exists a relationship between the motivations for using social media and the ability of these platforms to enable connections with family at any time and place. We found that 53.3% of respondents are constrained by social media in terms of connecting with their family consistently and universally, supported by 71.4% of users who engage with social media for entertainment and 66.7% for educational purposes.
- _ Additionally, we identified a correlation between the use of social media for engaging chat conversations and the appeal of the topics discussed compared to daily family routine topics. We observed that 72.1% of respondents find the discourse on social media less appealing than the topics that emerge in everyday family interactions, with 75% of those appreciating social media for enhancing good times through chats endorsing this view.
- _ There is a significant relationship between the facilitation of expressing opinions and attitudes on social media that are difficult to express in real life and the respondents' feelings of psychological and social comfort when communicating with family through these networks. A notable 77.9% of participants experience psychological and social comfort in their interactions with family via social media,

reinforced by 89.2% who find social media a valuable platform for expressing challenging real-life opinions.

_ We found a connection between respondents experiencing a social and emotional void within the family and their turn to social media to fill this void, along with their feelings of comfort while communicating with family members through these networks. Observations show that 77.9% of respondents enjoy psychological and social comfort in their family communications via social media, with 88.6% attributing their engagement in social media to a felt social and emotional void within the family.

_ Lastly, we observed a relationship between the freedom, openness, and boldness provided by social media for discussing various topics and the effectiveness of these networks in fostering deeper familial connections and understanding. We found that 63.1% of respondents do not feel assisted by social media networks in deepening family connections or understanding family members' ideas and opinions, supported by 63.2% who value the liberty social media provides for discussion over face-to-face interactions.

7. Study Recommendations

Based on the findings of the presented study, the following recommendations can be proposed:

- _ Disseminate media materials that highlight the importance of balancing virtual interactions with direct communication among family members.
- _ Offer training sessions for families on the significance of face-to-face dialogue and its role in strengthening social bonds.
- _ Promote activities that contribute to reinforcing emotional ties within families, such as participating in community events or engaging in volunteer work.
- _ Encourage schools to include topics related to the use of social media and its impact on relationships in their curricula.
- _ Activate the role of religious and social institutions to provide guidance and advice on building strong family relationships in the age of technology.
- _ Support future research on the psychological and social effects of social media on families and evaluate the proposed solutions.
- _ Encourage media outlets to produce content that supports family values and emphasizes the importance of direct social relationships.

8. Conclusion

This research clarifies the multifaceted impact of social media platforms on family relationships. The findings underscore the dual nature of social media's role within the family context, significantly reshaping the dynamics and privacy of these relationships through new modes of virtual interaction. On one hand, social media offers substantial opportunities for family members to stay connected, facilitating communication across geographical and temporal boundaries. On the other hand, it also presents challenges, particularly in diminishing real-world interactions and potentially eroding familial solidarity.

The evidence suggests that while social media can enhance connectivity, its influence may also be detrimental if not navigated carefully. Therefore, it is imperative to approach social media use with a conscious awareness and responsibility to safeguard and nurture the intrinsic qualities of family relationships. Henceforth, we can conclude that social media platforms influence the nature of relationships within the family by creating a sense of emotional distance and virtual communication, which may weaken direct interactions among family members. At the same time, they promote new values and behaviours that may sometimes conflict with traditional family values.

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