

The Relationship between Time Spent on Social Media and Quality of Family Relationships of University Students of FCCU

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ABSTRACT

Aim: This research is designed to identify the relationship between time spent on social media and the quality of family relationships of university students of FCCU. Literature shows that engaging more in social media leads to inadequate family interaction, lack of communication, self-isolation, and alienation, and difficulty in developing emotional bonding. The Uses and Gratification Theory is used to understand why people engage in social media and how it relates to the quality of family relationships.

Methodology: The research is a cross-sectional quantitative study. Convenient sampling was used to collect data. A total of 200 university students were sampled. The population was made up of an almost equal number of male and female participants to ensure gender equality. FCCU university students were the respondents for the study.

Data analysis: SPSS has been used for data analysis. First factor analysis has been used to show the reliability of the scale. Next, descriptive statistics have been used to present study variable frequencies and percentages, and lastly, Welch ANOVA Games-Howell Post-hoc analysis has been used to present the relationship between the study variables.

Results: Welch ANOVA showed that the mean difference of family relations to social media usage was statistically significant, Fw (3.92.91) = 8.258, p<0.01. The Games Howell post hoc test reveals that the quality of family relations was significantly lower when the social media usage is more than 5 hours (21.8 ± 11.1) as compared to 4 - 5 hours $(28.8 \pm 8.00, p = 0.001)$, 2 - 3 hours $(28.9 \pm 8.47, p = 0.001)$, and 1 - 2 hours $(32.2 \pm 9.74, p = 0.00)$.

Conclusion: It is also recommended that awareness is created about the detrimental effects of social media usage on family quality of life and interventions are introduced to improve family quality time and reduce social media usage.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Technology often reveals inadequate interactions, or zero communication between parents and child, and also siblings (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). It has a major impact on families as it reduces family time, socialization, and face-to-face interaction. Excessive use of social media prevents learning through social consultation, interpersonal skills, communication skills, and bonding. Various scholars suggest that people may feel connected to social media, but it takes away their abilities to hear and see voiceless messages (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). Psychologists are even more concerned that technology is disrupting family relationships. It can rob families of attention, communication, and a sense of security within the family. Social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram became common place for young people, especially in our country. Young people spend most of their time on social media which results in changing personality habits and cultural values, which can become a further cause of estrangement with family and parents.

Conceptual Definitions

Time spent on social media

Time spent on social media, as described by Verduyn et al. (2017, p. 281), refers to the number of hours spent on social media, engaging on "direct exchanges" among users, such as: likes, comments, notifications, and other forms of interaction. Additionally, hours on social media can also be spent observing and reading information posted by others.

Quality of family relations

For this study, the quality of family relations, has been explained using five areas: (i) the strength of bond with family, (ii) the level of intimacy and understanding with family members; (iii)

participation in family traditions, and d) common ideas with family members (Alolyan, 2015; Grevenstein, Bluemke, Schweitze, & Aguilar-Raab, 2019).

Significance of Study

The purpose of this study is to look into the relationship between time spent on social media and the quality of family relationships. This study would be important in highlighting the changing relations between students and their parents. Moreover, this study would provide some recommendations about how to balance social media usage and family time.

Study Aims

This study aims to identify the relationship between time spent on social media and the quality of family relations. Recommendations are developed regarding improvement in family relations and control of time spent on the use of social media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media plays a large role in society these days. Websites and apps that enable users to create and share content or participate in social networking are known as social media (Google, 2015). The use of social media's impact on family relationships is a topic that affects people of all ages. One study lays out a very interesting conclusion that kids who spend a lot of time using technology and in front of a screen, have more difficulty than their peers in understanding emotions and building relationships (Kindle, 2019). Working to maximize the time of high-quality families without technology is essential. Setting aside family time, such as family meals, game nights, quality talk time each day without phones, TV, and computers is key to learning

face-to-face interactions and modeling healthy communication and interpersonal relationships (Procentese, Gatti,; Napoli, 2019).

A study conducted by Greenhow (2011), reports the positive effect of social media, in terms of internet learning of students and rolling with the new technological advancements in a positive way that would encourage the students to learn more. However, a local study reports that the excessive use of social media platforms by students has endangered their family relations, in terms of creating separation and lack of communication, they no longer seek the assistance of each other (Ali, 2016). Another local research by Shabir, Safdar, & Gilani (2014) reports that high involvement with social media creates social disturbances.

According to another study, the more time you spend on social media, the lonelier you are (Lindsay Doddson, 2017). A few studies highlight that excessive social-based media use creates problems in relationships (Clayton, Nagurney, et al., 2013; Valenzuela, Halpern, and Katz, 2014). A Pew Research (2014) study found that very nearly 33% of respondents felt that online media affected their relationships negatively. McDaniel (2015) in his research, reports that technology causes "interruption" between relationships (McDaniel, 2015). Proudfoot also agrees that technology will divide people and leave an individual isolated and push them to spend more time with technology rather than with their families. (Proudfoot, 2007).

According to studies, the overwhelming use of social media has pushed people away from conventional social environments, volunteer organizations, and pure relationships (Hampton et al., 2011). Furthermore, research shows that heavy use of social media increases alienation and isolation, while reducing bonding between interpersonal relationships. The dynamics and importance of relationships have changed as a result of social media. Children now use social media to communicate their emotions, feelings, and difficulties with their

peers without telling their parents about their concerns. Individuals are less concerned with family matters as they become more engrossed in their computers and mobile phones, and families are lacking the close emotional bonds that once existed (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009).

Social media platforms are impacting not only a single individual but the entire family, parents, and siblings. In one study it has been highlighted that even parents use excessive social media and so their children are affected negatively due to lack of attention and time given by parents (O'Keeffe, 2016). According to Sultana (2017), excessive use of social networking sites harms family harmony overall, leading to lasting estrangement of breaking of family bonds.

Theoretical Framework

The uses and gratifications theory is the most commonly applied theory to explain why people engage in social media. Elihu Katz and his colleagues Jay Blumer and Michael Gurevitch first proposed this theory in 1973, and it was used to investigate why people use social media to satisfy their needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). The theory suggests that the reasons behind the excessive use of social media by students include enhancing one's credibility, avoiding isolation, keeping track of others, and entertainment (Sheldon, 2008). Females are more likely to turn to the media to compensate for the lack of family relationships. Males, on the other hand, preferred to use media to alleviate their isolation and feeling of loneliness.

People are dependent on social and are using it all the time to gratify themselves and to satisfy their needs of social interaction and loneliness. People may also spend more time on social media to gratify themselves when their needs for intimacy, emotional security, associations, and company are not met by their families. So, people make online friends and find other sources for socialization, interaction, entertainment, and to reduce loneliness as proposed

by uses and gratifications theory (Sheldon, 2008). However, more time spent on social media and less with the family, can contribute to the weakening of family relationships.

METHODOLOGY

Ethics of Research

All ethical considerations were followed by the researcher, including confidentiality and anonymity. All participant information has been kept securely with the researcher. There was no physical or emotional harm to any of the participants. They were given information about the study's goals, objectives, and their role in it. Participant queries were answered honestly and fully. All participants gave their informed consent. The participants were told that they can leave the study at any time.

Research Design

The research is a cross-sectional quantitative study. A closed-ended survey was used to collect data, using internationally standardized tools.

Research Questions

The research question for this study is as follows:

Is there a relationship between time spent on social media and the quality of family relationships, as perceived by university students?

Operationalization

The impact of social media is largely determined by the number of hours spent on it (Ganda, 2014). The five basic indicators used to measure the quality of family relationships are a) Strong bond, b) Intimacy, c) Participation in family traditions, and d) Common ideas (Alolyan, 2015).

Hypothesis

The hypothesis for this study is:

The more University students spend time on social media, the lower their quality of family relationships (Sultana, 2017).

Variables

The independent and dependent variables are assigned as follows:

Independent variable: For this study, time spent on social media is the independent variable. Social media includes Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Dependent Variable: The dependent variable for this study is the quality of family relationships.

The family includes the immediate nuclear family relations, that is, parents and siblings.

Gender has been assigned as a control variable.

Selection Criterion & Sample Size

For this research FCCU university students were requested to participate. No other university students were sampled due to the coronavirus pandemic and observance of social distancing. Seeking consent and permission during lockdown from other universities was not possible or convenient for the researcher. The sample size was 200 students- 100 males and 100 females.

Sampling Method

Convenient sampling was used. Student societies and Facebook groups were used to sample students from different years of study.

Data Collection

Permission to undertake this study was taken from the Institutional Review Board, Forman Christian College University. Data was collected through Google Survey to observe social distancing during the pandemic. Emails, Facebook, and WhatsApp were used to collect data.

Surveys were circulated in WhatsApp and Facebook groups to collect data from students in different years of study. The settings in the Google survey were assigned to ensure that all answers were completed before a submission is allowed. Respondent data is automatically sent from Google survey to an Excel file, enabling automatic coding and transfer to SPSS for analysis. Data collection started in September 2021 and was completed at the end of October 2021.

Instrument

Two internationally standardized tools were used for data collection (Appendix B). The survey consists of 19 questions and has 3 sections. Questions 1 to 6 are socio-demographic questions. Question 7 measures the independent variable, which is 'time spent on social media' (Ganda, 2014). The indicator used to measure the time spent on social media includes the number of hours spent on it. Questions 8 to 19 measure the quality of family relations (Alolyan, 2015). The five basic indicators that are used to measure the quality of family relationship includes: a) Strong bond, b) Intimacy and understanding, c) Participation in family traditions, and d) Common ideas (Alolyan, 2015). Question 19 is a self-made question which is measuring emotional security. To measure the study variables a 5-point Likert scale from 'Never' to 'Always' has been used.

Data analysis

SPSS has been used for data analysis. First factor analysis has been used to show the reliability of the scale. Next, descriptive statistics have been used to present study variable frequencies and percentages, and lastly, Welch ANOVA has been used to present the relationship between the study variables. There needs to be homogeneity of variances but the data failed to meet this assumption therefore Welch ANOVA was used instead of ANOVA. The independent variable

(social media usage) is categorical and the dependent variable (family relations) is continuous. Levene's test showed that there was no homogeneity of variance. Therefore Games-Howell Posthoc analysis has been used to see which categories were statistically significant.

Significance levels at p<0.05 have been assigned for reporting of results.

Budget

Table 1

There is no budget for this research study as we collected data online.

Reliability Results

Table 1 presents the reliability results. Factor Analysis was conducted to assess the validity of family relations. The results showed that for two items, factor loading was less the 0.5. These 2 items were excluded and factor analysis was carried out again with the remaining items. The results showed that the remaining items have factor loading more than 0.5 which means that the scale is valid. The value of Cronbach's alpha was 0.89 which was within the recommended interval of 0.7-0.95 and shows high relative internal consistency. The relevant items were computed to create the domain of family relations. The mean was 27.3.

Psychometric properties of scale used in the study

Variable **Factor Loadings** Cronbach's Alpha $M \pm SD$ **Family Relations** 0.899 27.3 ± 10.0 1-Do you share with your family to make a decision? .598 2-Do you feel you have got a strong relationship with .619 your family? 3-Do you feel that the time you spend with your .590 family is boring? 4-Do you find someone from your family who you .610 can talk with about your private issues? 5-Do you feel comfortable discussing your special .713 opinions, ideas with your family? 6-Do you feel family meetings are meaningful? .603 7-Do you feel you spend more time online than with .585

your family?	
8-Do you feel isolated when your family is around you?	.636
9-Do you feel that there is a lot common in you and your family?	.512
10-Do you feel that your family members can't understand you?	.543
11-Do you feel free to show your authentic self to your family?	.667

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents the socio-demographic data of the participants. The mean age of respondents is 21.3. More than fifty percent of respondents are males and 49.8% are females. The participants are well distributed between all the years of study: (i) Freshmen (11.8%), (ii) Sophomore (27.1%), (iii) Junior (22.0%), and (iv) Senior (28.1%). Nearly all of the participants (91.1%) have family members of 3 or less. Nearly all of the respondents (87.2%) connect to the social network once a day. In addition to that, 74.4% of respondents use Instagram more than the other social media apps.

Table 2Descriptive Statistics of Socio-demographics (N=200)

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean ± SD
Age			21.3 ± 1.41
Gender of respondent			$1.50 \pm .501$
Male	102	50.2	
Female	101	49.8	
Year of study			$2.77 \pm .989$
Freshmen	24	11.8	
Sophomore	55	27.1	
Junior	67	22.0	
Senior	57	28.1	
Number of family members			$2.08 \pm .296$
3 and less	184	91.1	
4 and above	18	8.9	

Connect to social network			$2.84 \pm .515$
Rarely	11	5.4	
Every couple of days	13	6.4	
Once a day	177	87.2	
Several times a day	2	1.0	
Most used app			$2.06 \pm .722$
Facebook	29	14.3	
Instagram	151	74.4	
Twitter	5	2.5	
Other	18	8.9	

Descriptive Statistics of use of social media and family relations

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the use of social media and family relations. Significant number of participants (31.5%) spend 4-5 hours on social media and 29.1% spend more than 5 hours on social media. Most of them (57.2%) share with their families to make a decision. A majority (65.5%) of the respondent feel that they have got a strong relationship with their families. Some (14.3%) of the respondents feel that the time they spend with their family is boring. Furthermore, 54.2% of the respondents don't find someone from their families with whom they can talk about their private issues. Majority (52.2%) feel comfortable discussing their special opinions, ideas with their families and many of them (69.4%) feel that family meetings are meaningful. A near majority (44.9%) of respondents feel that they spend more time online than with their families and 16.7% feel isolated when their family is around them.

Table 3Descriptive Statistics of use of social media and family relations (N=200)

	Frequency	Percentage
How much time do you spend	on social media in a day?	
1-2 hours	30	14.8
2-3 hours	50	24.6

4-5 hours	64	31.5
More	59	29.1
Do you share with your family to make a dec	ision?	
Never/Rarely/Sometimes	87	42.9
Often/Always	116	57.2
Do you feel you have got a strong relationship	p with your family?	
Never/Rarely/Sometimes	70	34.4
Often/Always	113	65.5
Do you feel that the time you spend with you	r family is boring?	
Never/Rarely/Sometimes	174	85.7
Often/Always	29	14.3
Do you find someone from your family who	you can talk with about your private	issues?
Never/Rarely/Sometimes	110	54.2
Often/Always	93	45.8
Do you feel comfortable, to discuss your spec	cial opinions, ideas with your family	?
Never/Rarely/Sometimes	97	47.7
Often/Always	106	52.2
Do you feel family meetings are meaningful?		
Never/Rarely/Sometimes	62	30.6
Often/Always	141	69.4
Do you feel you spend more time online than	with your family?	
Never/Rarely/Sometimes	112	55.2
Often/Always	91	44.9
Do you feel isolated when your family is arou	and you?	
Never/Rarely/Sometimes	169	83.3
Often/Always	34	16.7
Do you feel there is a lot common between yo	ou and your family?	
Never/Rarely/Sometimes	102	50.3
Often/Always	101	49.7
Do you feel that your family members can't u	inderstand you?	
Never/Rarely/Sometimes	144	70.9

Often/Always	59	29.1
Do you feel free to show your authentic se	elf to your family?	
Never/Rarely/Sometimes	114	56.2
Often/Always	89	43.9

Mean Results

Table 4 presents the Welch ANOVA and Post-hoc Comparisons to assess mean differences in family relations to time spent on social media. Levene's test showed that homogeneity of variance was not present. Therefore Games-Howell Post-hoc analysis has been used to see which categories were significant. The results of Welch ANOVA showed that the mean difference of family relations to social media usage was statistically significant, Fw (3,92.91) = 8.258, p<0.01. The Games Howell post hoc test reveals that the quality of family relations was statistically significantly lower when the social media usage is more than 5 hours (21.8 ± 11.1) as compared to 4-5 hours $(28.8 \pm 8.00, p = 0.001)$, 2-3 hours $(28.9 \pm 8.47, p = 0.001)$, and 1-2 hours $(32.2 \pm 9.74, p = 0.00)$. From the 4 averages it is clear that as the usage of social media increases, the average family score decreases as they have a negative correlation.

 Welch ANOVA and Post-hoc Comparisons results for time spent on social media as a predictor of family relations

Predictor variable	M ± SDA	<i>p</i> -value	$MD \pm SE^{c}$	MD ± SE	MD ± SE
Time spent on social media		< .001	2 – 3 hours	4 – 5 hours	> 5 hours
<2 Hours	32.2 ± 9.74		3.28 ± 2.14 ns	3.42 ± 2.04^{ns}	$10.4 \pm 2.29^*$
2-3 hours	28.9 ± 8.47			0.14 ± 1.56^{ns}	$7.12 \pm 1.88^{**}$
4-5 hours	28.8 ± 8.00				$6.99 \pm 1.76^{**}$
>5 Hours	21.8 ± 11.1				

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to understand the relationship between time spent on social media and the quality of family relations. The study findings reveal that as social media usage increases the quality of family relations decreases. The results support the study hypothesis that the more university students spend time on social media, the lower their quality of family relationships. Previous literature favors the research results, which says that more than half of those who use more social networking sites have a poor relationship with their parents (Sultana, 2017). Through the excessive use of social media, it is not just the individual who is affected, but the entire family (O'Keeffe, 2016). Parents and children both experience estrangement and loneliness.

Another study reports that due to the rise in social media the transmission of cultural values from parents and elders to children are declining (Ali, 2016). The cultural values and our cultural system encompass caring for the family, spending time with them on daily basis, sitting together for lunch or dinner, playing with younger siblings, and tutoring them for studies. When people use social media more, all of these family values are disrupted or ignored. In our everyday lives, we also see parents complaining about their children not listening to them or using their cell phones and playing too many video games. Social media and the game world are so attractive and magnetic that it keeps children glued to the screens. McDaniel in his research argues that technology is one of the key causes of "interruption" between parent and child relationships (McDaniel, 2015).

Another research concluded that the more social media is used, the more the feeling of loneliness arises, also referred to as the state of "social isolation" (Lindsay Doddson, 2017). This

isolation and social media use are loops. The more social media is used, the more the loneliness and in return people again use social media to come out of the state of loneliness which results in more loneliness. In this way, individuals end up continuously using social media and in return ignoring their family and significant others.

This research also found that the quality of family life and relationship quality significantly fall low when the usage of social media exceeds 5 hours a day as compared to less than 5 hours' schedules. Both social media use and quality of family life/ time spent with the family are directly proportional to each other which is backed up by previous research with shows a negative impact on the family life of social media use (Sultana, 2017). This research also provides new insight into the fact that university students are very much aware of the fact that family relationships and spending time with family are necessary. Despite being aware, they are unable to provide sufficient time to family due to their frequent use of social media.

These results should be taken into account when considering managing and limiting the use of social media in everyday life. We should not just look at the positive points of social media i.e., ease of communication across borders or marketing but the negatives must be kept in mind. The same message was given by Greenhow that though social media plays an important role in the learning and studies of students, the bad impact of it cannot be ignored and kept aside (Greenhow, 2011). Students must be able to divide the time for their studies, family life, social media usage and also incorporate other healthy physical activities in their daily routines. It is highly possible that technology will divide people and leave individuals lonely and force them to spend more time with technology and on social media rather than with their families (Proudfoot, 2007).

Limitations

The limitations of this study are that the data was collected from university students who tend to have more social media use. Another limitation is that data was only collected in Lahore, a city area where again social media usage is high, compared to rural areas and smaller cities, where data could not be collected. The sample size was smaller than initially planned due to the time limitation and COVID-19. Furthermore, the pandemic situation also may have made an impact on the research results as students were at home, leading them to increase their use of social media. Methods of awareness regarding social media use are yet not explained in this research.

Recommendations

This research can be used to create strategies to limit the social media usage of university students to improve the quality of family life and family relationships. This research is also valuable for psychologists, who can plan counseling to improve the quality of family life and to counsel families to upscale the level of bonding between them. Moreover, future research can be carried out on the same topic with a larger sampled population for more generalizable results. It also needs to be researched if social media usage sustains through what other ways the quality of family life can be improved or upgraded. The research results also would help the policymakers and decision-makers in planning policies for limiting social media use or keeping it only where it is significantly required.

CONCLUSION

The study implies that the more time a participant spends online, the more they feel dissatisfied with their family relations. So, it is highly important to limit its use at different times of the day and on different occasions. Youth needs to be encouraged to create a balance between social

media and family time. It is recommended that awareness is created about the detrimental effects of social media usage on family quality of life and interventions are introduced to improve family quality time and reduce social media usage.

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TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND QUALITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

23

APPENDIX A: Informed Consent Form

Date: _____

Dear Respondents,

You are invited to participate in a survey entitled "The Relationship between Time Spent

on Social Media and Quality of Family Relationships of University Students of FCCU."

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between time spent on social

media and the quality of family relationships. The study wants to assess the negative effects of

excessive use of social media on the quality of family relationships as perceived by university

students. The attached questionnaire will just require 10-15minutes approximately to answer.

There is no compensation for responding nor is there any kind of known risk. The information

provided will not be released to a third party and all efforts to protect your identity and keep the

information confidential will be taken. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary

and you have the full legitimate right to withdraw from this at any point.

By signing this form, you are agreeing that you have read the above information and

indicating your consent to participate or take part in this research study.

Name of the participant: _____

Thank you! Your participation is highly appreciated.

Name of Researcher: Rania Khan

BSc. Hon, Department of Sociology, Forman Christian College

Email: 231459011@formanite.fccollege.edu.pk

APPENDIX B: IRB Certificate



FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

(A Chartered University)

Institutional Review Board

IRB Approval Certificate

IRB Ref: IRB-299/07/2021

Date: 30-07-2021

Project Title: The Relationship between Time spent on social media and quality of family relationships of University students of FCCU.

Principal Investigator: Rania Khan

Supervisor: Dr. Sara Rizvi Jafree

Institutional review board has examined your project in IRB meeting held on 30-07-2021 and has approved the proposed study. If during the conduct of your research any changes occur related to participant risk, study design, confidentiality or consent or any other change then IRB must be notified immediately.

Please be sure to include IRB reference number in all correspondence.

Dr. Kauser Abdulla Malik HI,SI,TI

Chairman, IRB

HEC Distinguished National Professor (Biotechnology)

Dean Postgraduate Studies

Director, Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC)

Forman Christian College (A Chartered University)

Lahore

APPENDIX C: Survey Questionnaire

Questions 1 to 6 are *demographic questions*. Questions 7 measure the time *spent on social media* (Ganda, 2014). Questions 8 to 19 measure *the quality of family relations* (Alolyan, 2015).

Demo	graphics:						
1	Age						
2	Gender						
3	What is your year of study at FCCU?	Freshmen		Sophomore	Junior		Senior
4	How many members are there in your family?	3 and less			4 and above		
5	How frequently do you connect yourself to social networks?	Rarely		Every couple of days	Once a day		Several times a day
6	Which App do you use most?	Facebook	Instag	gram	Twitter	Other	•

Questionnaire for measuring time spent on social media. (Ganda 2014).

7	How much time do	1-2	2-3	4-5	More
	you spend on social				
	media (e.g.,				
	Facebook, Instagram,				
	Twitter, or other) in a				
	day?				
	-				

Questionnaire for measuring family relation (Alolyan, 2015).

		Never	Rarely	Sometime	Often	Always
8	Do you share with your family to make a decision?					

9	Do you feel you have got a strong relationship with your family?			
10	Do you feel that the time you spend with your family is boring?			
11	Do you find someone from your family who you can talk with about your private issues?			
12	Do you feel comfortable discussing your special opinions, ideas with your family?			
13	Do you feel family meetings are meaningful?			
15	Do you feel you spend more time online than with your family?			
16	Do you feel isolated when your family is around you?			
17	Do you feel that there is a lot common between you and your family?			
18	Do you feel that your family members can't understand you?			
19	Do you feel free to show your authentic self to your family?			