

The Impact of Social Media on Family Communication within Algerian Families among Adolescents in the Wilaya of Oran

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Abstract:

This study aims to identify the impact of social networking sites on family communication within the Algerian family among a sample of children. It also aims to identify the level of addiction to social networking sites among a sample of children.

To conduct this study, it was applied to a sample of (25) sons and daughters in the state of Oran. The descriptive, correlational approach was used to suit the nature of the current study. To collect information, two questionnaires were prepared, one of which was specific to using social networking sites and the second was specific to family communication. To test the validity of the study hypotheses, the Social Statistical Package (SPSS) program was applied, and we reached the following results:

-The use of social networking sites negatively affects children's family communication.

-The level of addiction to social networking sites among children is high

Keywords: addiction, social networking sites family, family communication

Introduction :

Family relationships constitute a cornerstone for the continuity of family life and the reinforcement of its proper structure, as they sustain interaction, dialogue, and consultation among members. Achieving this requires mental presence and regular gatherings, which allow for meaningful conversations and the resolution of diverse familial challenges such as divorce, illness, adolescence, unemployment, or abandonment of work.

The importance of family dialogue and communication is thus essential for ensuring the healthy and upright development of children, as it creates an environment of constructive interaction between them, their parents, and other relatives. However, families—once relatively shielded from external social disruptions—have increasingly been exposed to a new, pervasive phenomenon: social media. Its rapid spread has significantly affected all family members, who now devote extended hours, often late at night, to browsing these platforms. This trend is not limited to children and adolescents; parents, too, contribute to the problem by providing their children with mobile devices as a means of keeping them quiet, thereby granting them excessive independence in decision-making—an indicator of parental neglect and lack of supervision.

Consequently, family members have grown indifferent to their designated roles and show little regard for organized family gatherings. The absence of meaningful family dialogue—which serves as a preventive mechanism against behavioral and moral deviation in children—has become increasingly evident due to preoccupation and addiction to social media. The present study therefore seeks to illuminate this phenomenon by examining the nature of the relationship between its key variables.

1. Problem Statement:

The family is regarded as the fundamental pillar for constructing a healthy and well-structured society, free from psychological and behavioral disturbances as well as deviant practices that typically stem from deficiencies in social upbringing and education within the household. A well-functioning family is one where members are integrated, understanding, and supportive of one another, as was characteristic of earlier generations. Numerous scholars have addressed the significance of the family, recognizing it as a social institution that has accompanied the historical development of human societies (Ben Ammara & Bouaicha, 2013, p. 1).

This cohesion arises primarily from the presence of family dialogue and communication, which foster intimacy, affection, solidarity, and cooperation. Hamed Zahran, for instance, argues that marital happiness strengthens family cohesion, thereby creating an environment conducive to the development of balanced and well-rounded personalities in children (Zahran, 1997, p. 15).

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Nevertheless, the advent of the scientific and technological revolution—especially the proliferation of the internet—has embedded social media platforms within Algerian families. Initially designed to facilitate communication and provide services, these platforms have evolved into a source of widespread addiction within society. The increasing accessibility of expensive mobile devices has reinforced this phenomenon, as individuals seek to remain abreast of technological progress.

Whereas families once thrived on mutual understanding, respect, and meaningful dialogue—particularly during family gatherings that nurtured children’s intellectual, emotional, and psychological development—contemporary households face growing isolation. Adolescents, in particular, are absorbed by their intensive and largely unrestricted engagement with social media, most notably Facebook. These platforms are defined as virtual social networks that enable users to engage in open-ended interactions within a shared human experience (Bayoumi, 2019, p. 11).

Such preoccupation undermines family cohesion by eroding opportunities for dialogue and consultation about important familial matters. This study, therefore, investigates the impact of social media addiction on family communication and dialogue. Based on the foregoing conceptual framework, the research addresses the following questions:

- Is there a relationship between social media addiction and family communication among adolescents in the Wilaya of Oran?
- What is the level of social media addiction among adolescents in the Wilaya of Oran?

2. Research Hypotheses :

Hypotheses are considered provisional answers and scientific assumptions formulated by the researcher regarding the study topic, based on the theoretical framework and previous studies; therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

- Social media addiction influences family communication among adolescents in the Wilaya of Oran.

- The level of social media addiction among adolescents in the Wilaya of Oran is high.

3. Rationale for Choosing the Topic :

The topic of this research was chosen due to its increasing importance in light of technological development and its direct impact on the individual and the family, as well as the need to study it scientifically because of its psychological and social implications.

- The topic aligns with the researcher's area of specialization (Family Counseling).
- Emphasis on the importance of the family unit as a fundamental institution.
- Increasing rates of family disintegration, with children as the principal victims.
- Rising divorce rates within Algerian society, particularly in the Wilaya of Médéa.
- Growing instances of emotional estrangement ("emotional divorce") within households.
- Excessive use of social media, amounting to addiction, in the absence of parental supervision.

4. Study Objectives :

- To explore the relationship between social media addiction and family communication within Algerian families, particularly among children.
- To assess the extent of social media addiction among children.

5. Significance of the Study:

The significance of this study lies in its examination of the quality of intra-family relationships. It further underscores the role of parents in monitoring their children's use of mobile phones and their engagement with social networking platforms such as WhatsApp, Viber, and, most notably, Facebook.

6. Key Concepts:

Concepts are regarded as the gateways to research, and their precise definition represents the first and most critical step in any study. They lay the foundation for a clear understanding of the subject under investigation. From this perspective, the present research has undertaken the identification of the

fundamental concepts that underpin the topic, which are considered among the most significant variables of the study, namely:

6.1 Family:

The family constitutes the first natural and social environment for the individual, shaped by socially accepted norms and values established by society (El-Khouli, 1979, p. 34). Bogardus defines it as a small social unit, generally consisting of a mother, father, and one or more children, bound together by love, responsibilities, and socially acceptable behavior.

6.2 Social Media Addiction:

The excessive, unproductive use of social media platforms by individuals who rely heavily on them to fill emotional voids or for entertainment and social interaction (ICDL Arabia, 2015, p. 6).

6.3 Social Media Platforms:

Rahouma characterizes these platforms as virtual cafés where individuals exchange information, with the distinguishing feature being that this café is technologically mobile and accessible anywhere (Rahouma, 2007, p. 75).

6.4 Family Dialogue and Communication:

An interactive process among family members involving constructive, respectful exchange of ideas and perspectives. Al-Azza describes it as an honest and indispensable mechanism for sustaining social and family life, enabling members to express both positive and negative emotions in an accepting and non-injurious manner (Al-Azza, 2000, p. 25). Mabarki adds that it is a form of positive communication fostering intergenerational respect, promoting healthy dialogue, and equipping children with the courage to confront life's challenges (Mabarki, 2019, p. 89).

7. Fieldwork Component:

Methodological procedures are indispensable to the preparation of any scientific study, encompassing the research method, study population, pilot study, primary sample, and data collection instruments.

7.1 Research Method:

A research method is the means through which facts are uncovered, validated in diverse contexts, and generalized into what ultimately becomes scientific theory—the principal aim of research (Ayachi & Kadour, 2020, p. 37). The present study employed the descriptive–correlational method, which is particularly suitable for investigating the relationship between the two central variables: social media addiction and family dialogue/communication

• **7.2 Pilot Study :**

- An exploratory study is defined as one that seeks to examine the conditions surrounding the phenomenon under investigation and to identify the principal hypotheses that may be formulated and subjected to scientific scrutiny. In our exploratory study, we have undertaken the following:

Objectives:

- To estimate costs and anticipate potential difficulties.
- To determine the appropriate timing for the main study.
- To verify the psychometric properties (validity and reliability) of the research instruments.
- To evaluate the clarity or ambiguity of questionnaire items.
- To assess the suitability of the questionnaire content for the target population.

Main Study:

The finalized questionnaires were administered to a sample of twenty-five adolescents (male and female).

7.3 Data Collection Tools:

This study relied on a set of methodological tools appropriate to the nature of the topic and the objectives of the research, in order to collect accurate and objective data on the study variables. The research instruments were carefully selected to measure the phenomenon under investigation and to identify its various dimensions, while taking into account psychometric properties such as validity and reliability. The following section presents a detailed description of the study tools used.

7.3.1 Social Media Addiction Scale:

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7.3.1.1 Scale Description:

Drawing upon prior studies and theoretical literature, the researcher constructed a questionnaire consisting of eighteen items.

- Positive items: 01, 02, 03, 07, 09, 11, 13
- Negative items: all remaining items

7.3.1.2 Response Options and Scoring:

Response options: *Always, Sometimes, Rarely*

- For negative items: scored 3, 2, 1 respectively
- For positive items: scoring reversed (1, 2, 3)

7.3.1.3 Psychometric Properties :

1. Validity

- Expert Validity: The instrument was evaluated by a panel of specialized professors for linguistic accuracy, clarity, and relevance. Their approval ranged between 80% and 100%, with minor linguistic modifications incorporated.

- Item–Total Correlation Validity:

To calculate the validity of item–total correlations, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was employed. The findings are presented in the table below:

**Table (01): Results of Item–Total Correlation for the Social Media
Addiction Scale**

Item	Correlation Coefficient	Item	Correlation Coefficient	Item	Correlation Coefficient
01	*0.745	07	*0.635	13	*0.628
02	0.561	08	**0.526	14	**0.537
03	**0.743	09	*0.789	15	*0.885
04	0.581	10	**0.667	16	0.558
05	**0.653	11	0.463	17	*0.365
06	*0.552	12	0.302	18	**0.897

Pearson’s correlation coefficients ranged between 0.302 and 0.897, all of which were statistically significant at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels. These results demonstrate a high degree of validity.

2. Reliability:

To assess the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was employed. The outcomes are presented in the following table:

Table (02): Cronbach's Alpha for the Social Media Addiction Scale

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Media Addiction Scale	0.802

Implimenting Cronbach's Alpha, the reliability coefficient was 0.802, indicating

The results demonstrated exceptionally high internal consistency and reliability.

7.3.2 Family Dialogue Scale:

The Family Dialogue Scale is a tool designed to measure the level and quality of communication within the family, identifying patterns of interaction—whether positive or negative—which helps in determining strengths and weaknesses and promoting effective dialogue.

7.3.2.1 Scale Description:

Drawing upon previous research and established theoretical frameworks, the researcher designed a questionnaire comprising 22 items, organized into two dimensions:

- Management of family dialogue on household matters (items: 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 19, 21)
- Adoption of family dialogue within the household (items: 2, 4, 7, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22)

Within this scale, the negatively worded items are 6, 10, 13, 15, and 22, while the remaining items are positively framed.

7.3.2.2 Response Options and Scoring Key:

Participants responded using three options: *Always*, *Sometimes*, *Rarely*.

- For positive items, responses were scored 3, 2, and 1, respectively.
- For negative items, the scoring was reversed, with values of 1, 2, and 3 assigned.

7.3.2.3 Psychometric Properties :

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1. Validity

- Expert Validity: The instrument was reviewed by specialists, whose approval ratings ranged from 75% to 100%, confirming the linguistic clarity and conceptual appropriateness of the items.
- Item–Total Correlation Validity: To assess the correlation between individual items and the overall score, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was applied. The findings are summarized in the table below:

Table (03): Results of Item–Total Correlation for the Family Dialogue Scale

Item	Correlation	Item	Correlation	Item	Correlation	Item	Correlation
01	0.652	07	**0.620	13	0.336	19	*0.637
02	*0.567	08	*0.756	14	0.685	20	**0.558
03	*0.452	09	**0.637	15	0.447	21	0.342
04	**0.630	10	*0.637	16	**0.668	22	0.356
05	0.345	11	0.441	17	*0.635		
06	0.306	12	0.365	18	0.359		

From the preceding table, the item–total correlation coefficients were found to range between 0.306 and 0.756, all of which are statistically significant at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels. These results confirm the validity of the scale.

• Dimension–Total Correlation

To further evaluate construct validity, the researcher calculated the correlation coefficients between each sub-dimension of the scale and the overall score. The outcomes are summarized in the following table:

Table (04): Correlation Between Sub-Dimensions and the Total Score

Dimension	Correlation Coefficient
Dimension 1	**0.765
Dimension 2	*0.536

From the preceding table, the correlation coefficients between the sub-dimensions and the total score were found to be high, ranging from 0.536 to 0.765, and statistically significant at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels. These findings confirm the validity of the scale. Both coefficients demonstrate statistical significance, thereby reinforcing its construct validity.

2. Reliability

The reliability of the instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, and the results are presented in the following table:

Table (05): Cronbach's Alpha for the Family Dialogue Scale

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Family Dialogue Scale	0.791

From the results presented in the preceding table, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found to be 0.791, a value that reflects a high level of internal consistency and, consequently, strong reliability. Since the scale has demonstrated both validity and reliability, it is deemed appropriate for use in the present study.

8. Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Hypotheses:

The stage of analyzing and interpreting the hypothesis results is a crucial step in scientific research, as it aims to examine the relationship between two key variables in the study: social media addiction and the level of family dialogue. This stage allows for understanding the impact of excessive social media use on the quality of communication within the family among the adolescent sample in the Oran province, and determining whether the results support the hypothesis stating that there is a relationship between social media addiction and family dialogue, thereby contributing to practical scientific recommendations for addressing this phenomenon.

8.1 Analysis of the First Hypothesis:

Hypothesis: There is a relationship between social media addiction and family dialogue among adolescents in the Wilaya of Oran.

To examine this hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed. The corresponding results are displayed in the following table:

Table (06): Pearson Correlation Results

Variable	Sample Size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation Coefficient	Statistical Significance (sig)	Significance Level	Result
Social Media	25	47.563	8.362	-0.856**	0.000	0.01	Significant

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Addicti on							
Family Dialogue e	25	45.362	4.751				

From Table (06), it can be seen that the Pearson correlation coefficient between the social media addiction scale and the family dialogue scale is -0.856, with a statistical significance of 0.000 at the 0.01 level. This demonstrates a strong inverse relationship. The mean score for social media addiction was 47.563 (SD = 8.3622), whereas the mean score for family dialogue was 45.362 (SD = 4.7510).

The correlation coefficient of -0.856 confirms the existence of a strong negative association between social media addiction and family dialogue. The statistical significance at the 0.01 level validates the robustness of this result: as levels of addiction increase, family dialogue significantly decreases.

Researcher's Interpretation:

This finding may be explained by the excessive engagement of adolescents—and family members more broadly—with mobile phones under the pretext of studying, particularly on platforms such as Facebook. Such behavior fosters isolation, reduces family interaction, and diminishes meaningful communication.

Adolescents are less likely to engage in family discussions aimed at addressing issues such as illness, divorce, or other challenges. In certain families, closed or rigid communication systems exacerbate these difficulties, restricting external social ties and reinforcing tendencies toward withdrawal.

In support of this, Amraoui & Hafsi (2021) reported that adolescents' direct communication with family members has declined due to prolonged immersion in virtual environments. A preference for online interaction over face-to-face exchanges has weakened family dialogue and strained relational bonds.

This form of addiction can be regarded as a maladaptive coping mechanism and an escape from life pressures, often linked to a lack of life skills and effective coping strategies. It also disrupts sleep and overall health, contributing to irritability, resistance, and defiance toward parental authority.

8.2 Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of the Second Hypothesis:

Hypothesis: The level of social media addiction among adolescents is moderate.

To test this hypothesis, a one-sample t-test was applied. The results obtained are summarized in the following table:

Table (07): Results of the One-Sample t-Test

Variable	Sample Size	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Test Value	Degrees of Freedom	Statistical Significance	Observation
Social Media Addiction	25	47.563	8.3622	28.33	24	0.000	Significant

From Table (07), it appears that the mean score for social media addiction among adolescents is 47.563, with a standard deviation of 8.3622. The t-test value is 28.33, with a significance level of 0.000, indicating statistical significance. Since this value exceeds the hypothetical mean of 36, the results confirm that the level of social media addiction among adolescents is high, not moderate.

This outcome is consistent with several prior studies, including that of Ghodban & Amour (2023). The researcher attributes this elevated addiction level to the global technological boom, which has been embraced by nearly all segments of society through widespread internet and social media use. In many cases, the absence of parental supervision contributes to the misuse of these platforms, which have even surpassed television in popularity. Adolescents, in particular, tend to prefer communication through virtual environments, resulting in prolonged immersion and dependence—most notably through chat features.

According to Kubey (2001, p. 66), excessive social interaction in online chat rooms intensifies feelings of loneliness, as it promotes time-wasting

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activities that reduce opportunities for meaningful social participation and community engagement. Similarly, Roe (2002) found that individuals who spend extended periods online exhibit weaker family communication and are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, frustration, and social withdrawal. Their interpersonal relationships tend to be guided by self-interest, often marked by isolation—particularly among adolescents, who are at a sensitive developmental stage and thus in need of parental guidance and support.

Moreover, allowing adolescents unrestricted freedom in their online activities often leads to uninvolved parenting and, in turn, rebellion against traditional family values. This dynamic is clearly reflected in the weakening of parental authority and the erosion of family decision-making structures.

General Conclusion:

Drawing upon both the theoretical and empirical findings of this study, the following conclusions were reached:

- There is a strong negative correlation between social media addiction and family communication among adolescents.
- The overall level of social media addiction among adolescents is high.

Recommendations

- Strengthen the role of family counseling within households.
- Stress the importance of parental monitoring and guidance, particularly for adolescents.
- Encourage open family dialogue and communication between parents and children across different family structures.

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