



International Journal of Social Sciences Insights

A Globally Recognized Quality Refereed (Peer Reviewed) &
Online Journal of Multidisciplinary Social Science Research

Web: socialinsights.in



LIKES, SHARES, AND SILENT FLARES: A PERCEPTION STUDY ON SOCIAL MEDIA'S INFLUENCE ON INTRA-FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

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Article info

Received – 11 Feb 2026

Received revised -28 Feb 2026

Accepted -03 March 2026

Available online -31 March 2026

Pages: -18-25

Keywords: Social Media, Family Communication, Emotional Well-being, Positive Affect, Negative Affect, Family Structure

Abstract

This study explores the complex ways in which social media influences the communication and emotions of families. Using quantitative data collected from a survey of social media users, the differences in how men and women experience social media within families are examined and compared with families that do not reside together. Results indicate that although some participants believed that social media had a negative effect on quality family interaction, most did not report that it caused conflict within the family. Rather, responses suggest that social media serves as a technological distraction from face-to-face family interaction. Looking at the data through the lens of gender and family type, results reveal that women living with nuclear families reported higher positive affect and lower negative affect than other groups. In contrast, individuals and families from extended families reported a more complex and various set of negative emotions, particularly among the men in these households, and women in these households reported higher levels of negative emotions in a bimodal distribution. These results suggest that the extended family setting exacerbates the complexity of expectations and roles within families, leading to greater negative emotions, particularly in a technological society in which women are increasingly defined by their work roles. The study illustrated the highlights the method through which social world of the family impacted by the digital world as well as family interaction and emotional well-being firstly affected by social media through influence and distraction, and affected by the intersection of gender and family structure.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The researcher found that social media and other forms of digital media communication are commonly into the daily lives of individuals from all part of life. It is increasingly common to attached people to their phone and scrolling with friends and family to share their views and information. The social media like Facebook and Instagram, as well as messaging apps like WhatsApp are more common example in this sense. The evolution of communication through social media, increased screen time, and other new technologies has led to a rapid proliferation of research into how technology use and social media affect family relationships. Research specifically examining parental behavior reveals that parental phubbing—treating one’s phone as more interesting or important than the presence of a child or spouse is perceived negatively by children and adolescents and is damaging to parent-child relationships. The mere presence of a phone can give a parent the “Techno Ference” that convinces them to opt for technology over emotionally relevant, meaningful interaction with family members. Studies have shown that youth who are phubbed feel neglected and rejected by their parents, which negatively affects their relationship with their parents. Adolescent social media use also has implications for their emotional well-being. Parental awareness of social media can also influence how adolescents use these media, suggesting that family dynamics can shape social media use.

A cross-sectional study of Iranian adolescents reported that family social capital predicted internet use, and to a lesser extent social media use. Another study of 1,600 adolescents found that perceiving insufficient support from family members increased the likelihood of internet use problems, with hostility and depressive symptoms mediating this relationship.

Family conflict is also identified as a factor that contributes to the development of maladaptive digital habits in adolescents. A research study found that parent child conflict is predictive of problematic internet use and gaming among adolescents, it suggested that such behavior is used to fill unmet emotional needs, Chen et al. (2025). This paper conclude and suggested that how parents of young people with mental health problems by social media uses and identifying how it is seen as a threat to family unity.

Beyond virtual conflicts social media also fosters social isolation. Long-term research conducted by Willem Wagenaar on a group of Dutch individuals, spanning nine years, indicates that both consuming and producing social media content – scrolling and posting/sharing – leads to greater loneliness. Digital contacts may feel like intimacy, but are mostly short-lived and do not deliver the same kind of emotional rewards as being together in the flesh. In families, social media is part of intra-family interaction, and these digital contacts can both reflect and change the way people are connected within their own homes. On the one hand, social media can increase feelings of validation and support, since a “like” may be perceived as a sign of affection and care. On the other hand, social media can erode intimacy and reduce emotional availability and well-being. The way family members make sense of these interactions (i.e., how they explain, justify or defend them) is crucial to grasping the implications for emotions and relationships

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The popularity and usage of social networking sites has fundamentally change the family communication patterns, the vital concerns about how they likes, shares, and the frequently unnoticed silent flares of online activity influence the intra-family relationships and emotional well-being through this communication pattern. The research study by Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) was suggested that social media platforms like Facebook could promote social capital and reputation by providing users to retain relationships, exchange information, and form supportive networks. Similarly, the study by Valkenburg and Peter (2009) illustrated that when adolescents participate in such social media active, self-disclosing conversation online, established friendships are frequently reinforced. However they did warn that passive use, particularly social comparison, may have a negative impact on wellbeing.

Another study Turkle (2011) contrasts on the hopeful potential of social media, arguing that persistent digital contact may leave individuals ‘alone together.’ Turkle used ethnographic narratives to show how the interpersonal communication or interfamily communication may affected by the usage of the gadgets for digital conversation. Kuss and Griffiths (2011) expanded on this worry by finding that excessive social networking as a type of behavioral addiction, demonstrating how compulsive online engagement can affect offline relationships and spoil the emotional climate of homes.

It was found that adolescents are particularly susceptible the processes of online engagement to the social media, Frison and Eggermont (2015, 2017). It was discovered that daily stress frequently causes youngsters to seek assistance on platforms like Facebook, or other social media but the comparison to others may enhance melancholy mood. Twenge, Joiner, Rogers, and Martin (2018) in their study found that by usage of social media and increasing smartphone has been a significant increase in depressive symptoms and self-harm among adolescents in the United States during the early 2010s. Although this notion has been challenged, with Orben and Przybylski (2019) found the tiny and highly diverse connections between technology use and wellbeing.

The frequently use of technology causes subtle but significant disturbances within the family. McDaniel and Radesky (2018) coined the term ‘technofence’ to describe how parental attention with mobile devices disrupts interactions with children, resulting in poorer parental attentiveness and increased child behavior problems. In romantic relationships, Roberts and David (2016) described a related tendency called ‘phubbing,’ or ‘phone-snubbing,’ which decrease intimacy, increase conflict, and lowers relationship satisfaction. Subsequent research has revealed that partner phubbing not only harms couples but also impact on the parent child relationship which reducing teenage perception of warmth and security.

Simultaneously, the social media can provide as a shared area for family connections. Coyne, Padilla-Walker, Day, Harper, and Stockdale (2014) found that when parents and children interact online together through social media platforms, it may consequence can be better bonds and more understanding. The study by Hertlein (2012) found CFT that is Couple and Family Technology concept, which contends that digital media transform family structures by redefining borders, responsibilities, and communication patterns. While these shifts present obstacles but they also create opportunity for new forms of intimacy, particularly among families separated by distance.

However, the social comparison is a common issue, particularly among parents. Frison et al. (2017) discovered that moms who compared themselves to idealized images of parenting on social networking platforms had worse parental competence, more role overload, and more depressive symptoms. This is consistent with the findings of Primack et al. (2017), while social isolation is concerned among young adults, the regulate social media use paradoxically associate with it. it also implying that online interaction does not always lead to offline connection.

The studies also show that social networking might cause jealousy, monitoring, and boundary violations in the relationships. According to studies excessive monitoring, secrecy, or online entanglement often leads to offline arguments in case of Facebook and other platform problems which cause of reductions in relationship satisfaction and emotional well-being (Roberts & David, 2016). The consistent correlation with increased depression, anxiety and other mental health problems was found in the study by Kuss & Griffiths, 2011; Twenge et al., 2018), whereas meta-analyses of phubbing highlight its broad relationship impact (Roberts & David, 2016).

Frison and Eggermont did a study in 2015. They found out that when teenagers use media and get nice comments it can help them feel less stressed and more able to deal with things. They also found that social media can be good for parents. Parents can get help and support from parents online. This can make their family life better. Some researchers, like Hertlein in 2012 say that parents can benefit from being part of communities. They get advice. Feel like they're not alone. Recent studies, such as the one by Orben and Przybylski, in 2019 show that social media affects people in ways. It depends on their age, gender, personality and family.

The University of Wollongong did a study in 2025. Found that when parents are distracted by technology it can hurt their children. This can affect their behavior, how they think and how they sleep. There's something called "Digital Haunting". It is when social media shows you posts or memories that you had forgotten about. This can make you feel bad, regretful or anxious. It can stop you from moving and growing as a person. It can also affect how you talk to your family and how you see yourself. A study in the US called the Pew survey found out that 48% of teenagers think social media is bad for their health. 55% Of parents are worried about their teenagers wellbeing.

Nowadays teenagers are not having relationships as much. Instead they are having relationships on their screens through apps like Snapchat. This is changing how they develop emotionally and how they interact with their family and friends. A study in China in 2024 found out that when parents are too busy with their phones it can affect their children. The children may start using their phones much and this can be bad for them. Girls are more likely to have problems with their relationships and boys are more likely to use their phones much. A study in Saudi Arabia found out that using media too much can be bad for your mental health and your family life.. Some people think that WhatsApp is a more positive platform. Another study in 2025 found out that being addicted to the internet can be bad for your family life and your emotions. It can also be bad for your health.

A review of studies found out that using social media can be bad for children. It can make them feel depressed, anxious and bad about themselves.. If they use it in a moderate way and their family and school support them it can be good for them. They can express their emotions. Get support from others. There are tools like eaSEL that can help families communicate and understand each others emotions when they use media. Arora and Hastings said that we need to do something about media. They said that it can be bad for teenagers because it can make them feel stressed and anxious.

A meta-analysis found out that when parents are too busy with their phones it can affect their children. The children may start using their phones much and this can be bad for them.

Another study found out that families can be affected by media even if they do not talk about it directly. So what do all these studies tell us? They tell us that social media can be good or bad for families. It depends on how they use it. If they use it in a way it can bring them closer together and make them feel better.. If they use it in a bad way it can make them feel stressed and anxious. It is, like the saying "likes, shares and silent flares". Social media can make families feel connected. It can also make them feel distant and stressed.

3.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out how family connections and communication quality are impacted by social media usage trends.
- To examine the psychological and emotional effects of social media use on specific family members.

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is about how social media affects family communication and emotional well-being among family members. The study will have 150 participants. Research was collected data using a standard questionnaire. The questionnaire has three parts: questions about media use, a scale to measure how well family members communicate and get along and a test called the PANAS test to measure emotions and moods. This will help us answer two questions: how social media affects family communication and how it affects family members emotions. The 150 respondents from the urban and rural area family has selected for the responses. The selected respondents are the active user of the social media. The respondents have minimum age of 15 year. The questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. The pilot study has been done before the survey for the fitment of the questionnaire.

The main variables of the study were connection between the media use and family communication, communication quality. The statistical tools to measure the variable were uses like correlation, average and PANAS test to see social media effect. Cornbach Alph use to make sure the scale an reliability of the study.

5.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

To find out how family connections and communication quality are impacted by social media usage trends.

TABLE 1: ILLUSTRATE THE DATA RELATED TO THE DATA ABOUT CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNICATION QUALITY.

Response Option	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Q1: I spend more time on social media than interacting with my family members face-to-face.	18	39	33	42	18	150
Q2: Social media has reduced the number of meaningful conversations I have with my family.	20	36	34	40	20	150
Q3: Even when we are together, family members are often distracted by their phones or social media.	12	28	25	55	30	150
Q4: I use social media during family meals or gatherings.	30	40	25	35	20	150
Q5: My social media use causes misunderstandings or conflicts in my family.	35	45	30	28	12	150

The survey results show a picture of how social media affects family interactions among 150 respondents. 39 people think that spending time on social media than with family is not a good thing. Thirty Three were neutral while 42 agreed and 18 strongly agreed that they spend more time on social media than with family. When it comes to whether social media reduces family conversations most people do not think it is a big issue. 36 People disagreed 34 were neutral 40 agreed and 20 strongly agreed that social media reduces family conversations.

However many people are concerned about distractions during family time. 55 People. 30 Strongly agreed that phones are a distraction when they are with family while 28 disagreed and 25 were neutral. Most people do not use media during meals or gatherings. 40 People. 30 Strongly disagreed with using social media during meals or gatherings while 25 were neutral 35 agreed and 20 strongly agreed.

Most people do not think that social media causes family misunderstandings or conflicts. 45 People disagreed and 35 strongly disagreed while 30 were neutral 28 agreed and 12 strongly agreed that social media causes family misunderstandings or conflicts. Overall social media does not seem to be a problem, for family relationships. People do need to be aware of how social media can affect their family time and try to find a balance.

TABLE 2: ILLUSTRATED THE DATA RELATED TO IMPACT BY SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

Response Option	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Q1. More time on social media than with family	15	30	32	50	23	150
Q2. Reduced meaningful conversations	18	32	30	45	25	150
Q3. Family distracted by social media	10	20	25	60	35	150
Q4. Use social media at meals	28	35	28	40	19	150
Q5. Social media causes conflicts	35	40	33	28	14	150

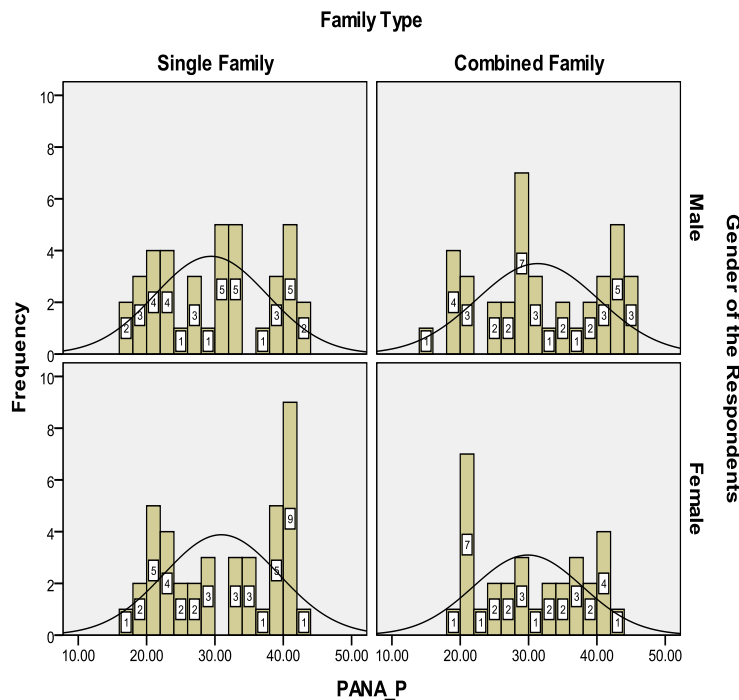
There is a tendency about the answers to Q1 "More time on social media than with family." Fifty people said yes and 23 people said they really agree. So a lot of people think they spend time on social media than with their family.. Almost the same number of people said no, 30 people and 32 people were not sure. This means that even though a lot of people say they spend time on social media than with the people they love some people do not agree and some are still not sure. The answers to Q2, " meaningful conversations " are similar. Most people, 45 people said yes. 25

People said they really agree that social media makes it harder to have good conversations.. Not everyone thinks this is a big problem for their family because 30 people were not sure and 30 people said no.

More people agree with Q3 "Family distracted by media." Two-thirds of people 60 people said yes. 35 People said they really agree that their family is distracted by social media. Not many people said no, 20 people and only 10 people said they really disagree. This shows that people are really worried about how social media's distracting their family. The answers to Q4 "Use media at meals " are more mixed. A lot of people said no, 35 people and 28 people were not sure even though 40 people said yes and 19 people said they really agree. This means that even though a lot of people use media when they eat some families try not to or have different ideas about it.

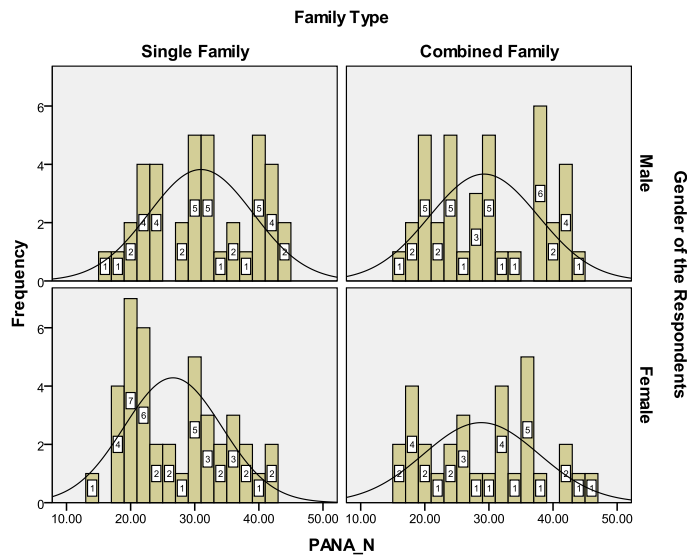
The most people disagreed with Q5 "Social media causes conflicts." 42 people said yes 28 people said yes and 14 people said they really agree, that social media causes fights.. 75 People said no 35 people said they really disagree and 40 people said no. This means that a lot of families do not think social media is a reason for fights even though it can be distracting and make it harder to talk. So families generally think social media is distracting and gets in the way of conversations but not as many people think it causes fights. The results show that people are starting to realize how social media affects their family especially when it comes to being distracted and talking less, to media.

To examine the psychological and emotional effects of social media use on specific family members. The PANAS Test using to evaluate the above objective by using PANAS to check the effectiveness of intervention (Social Media Usage)



The graph shows how men and women score on a test that measures how positive they feel called PANA_P. This test score can be anywhere from 10 to 50. We looked at how men and women living in types of families scored on this test. For men who live in a family home the scores are pretty spread out in the middle range with a few more men scoring 25 and 35. Most men scored in the middle. Not too many men had the same score. For men who live with families the scores are a bit different. A lot of men scored 28 which is a bit higher than the middle.

The scores for women who live in a family home are a bit all over the place. The most women scored 40 which is pretty high. Some women also scored in the range around 20 to 30. For women who live with families the scores are mixed. Some women scored high 40 and some women scored lower around 20. This means that women who live with families have different levels of positive feelings. What we can see from the graph is that the type of family you live in and whether you are a man or a woman can affect how positive you feel. Men and women who live with families have different scores and women who live in a single family home tend to feel more positive. All the groups have scores, in the range but the most common scores are a bit different depending on the family type and whether you are a man or a woman.



A faceted histogram shows us how PANA_N scores are spread out across types of families and genders. If we look at men who live in single-family homes their PANA_N scores are pretty average mostly falling between 25 and 35. They are spread out in a fairly normal way. On the hand women who live in single-family homes have PANA_N scores that are a bit higher on the lower end with a lot of them scoring between 15 and 25. The common scores for these women are around 20 to 22 and about 6 or 7 of them have these scores, which means that most women in single-family homes tend to have lower negative affect scores than men.

However there are some women who have scores up to 30 or 45 which means that some women in single-family homes do have higher negative affect scores. Men who live in families tend to have higher PANA_N scores than men who live in single-family homes with the most common scores being around 35 to 40. Women who live in families have PANA_N scores that are all over the place with two peaks around 25 to 30 and 35 to 40 and most of them have scores between 20 and 40. This means that women in families have really different experiences when it comes to negative affect with some having moderate scores and others having higher scores.

The study shows that there are differences in PANA_N scores between men and women. Men tend to have scores when they live in single-family homes but women have a wider range of scores and tend to have higher scores when they live in combined families.

6.0 RELIABILITY OF TEST (PANA)

By Using SPSS 'Cronbach Alpha' was calculated in the following table for reliability of the responses (data) for PANA test.

RELIABILITY STATISTICS		
PANA Responses		
For Positive	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
	.903	10
For Negative	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
	.907	10

The reliability analysis for the PANA (Positive and Negative Affectivity) responses shows strong internal consistency for both subscales. For the positive affect items, Cronbach's alpha is an impressive .903 across 10 items, indicating that these questions reliably measure the same underlying construct. Similarly, the negative affect subscale scores a .907 alpha with its 10 items, confirming excellent reliability here too meaning respondents' answers on these scales are highly consistent and trustworthy for research purposes.

SCALE STATISTICS				
	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
For Positive Item	29.8067	68.761	8.29223	10
For Negative Item	29.8333	75.361	8.68109	10

The average Positive Affect score is 29.81. It has a variance of 68.76 and a standard deviation of 8.29. This is based on ten items. The mean score for Negative Affect items is 29.83. It has a variance of 75.36. The standard deviation is 8.68. These numbers are also based on ten items. These numbers show that participants scored about the same on Positive Affect and Negative Affect. This means their emotions were balanced. The Negative Affect scale has a larger variance and standard deviation. This means peoples reactions to emotions varied more. Most participants reported levels of positive emotions. There was more variation in their negative emotions. The average scores, for Positive

Affect and Negative Affect are close. This shows that both positive and negative emotions were reported at levels. The study sample had an emotional profile. The Positive Affect and Negative Affect scales gave results. Participants reported levels of Positive Affect and Negative Affect.

7.0 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The study shows that people have opinions about how social media affects family connections and how well family members communicate with each other. Most people do not think it is a big problem. This difference in opinion suggests that how social media affects family relationships might depend on how individual people use media what their family is like and what they think about technology. Most families agree that social media can be distracting and that it can make it harder for them to spend quality time together. However social media is not usually the cause of fights in households. Most people do not think that social media causes misunderstandings or arguments which suggests that families might see media as something that gets in the way but not as something that directly causes problems.

The study found some patterns when it looked at how men and women and different types of families feel about social media. When it comes to men the study found that they tend to be in the middle when it comes to how they feel about media whether they live in a single-family household or a combined family household. Women on the hand tend to feel differently about social media. In single-family households women tend to have negative feelings about social media than men do. In family households both men and women tend to have more negative feelings about social media and they tend to feel more emotional stress. Men in family households tend to feel more negative about social media while women tend to have a range of feelings from moderate to high levels of negative emotions. This suggests that living in a combined family household can be emotionally challenging for both men and women but in different ways. Social media is still a part of this and how people feel about social media can vary a lot. The study reveals that social media can have effects on people and that peoples feelings, about social media can depend on many factors, including their family situation and their individual personality. Social media is one part of the picture and it is not the only thing that affects how people feel about their family relationships.

Social media changes the way families interact with each other.. It does not always cause more arguments. This is something that other studies have also found. Social media can make it harder for people to talk to each other in person and can make their relationships worse.. Social media can also help people connect with each other especially if they live far apart. This is what studies by Coyne and others in 2014 and Padilla-Walker and others in 2012 have shown.

When people use their devices a lot during family time it can be. Make it harder for them to pay attention to each other. This is called "technoference" by McDaniel and Coyne in 2016. It is related to the fact that many people agree that social media can be a distraction.. Social media is more likely to distract people than to cause arguments because many families learn to live with it without fighting. This is what Radesky and others found in 2016.

The results of this study show that whether you are a man or a woman and what kind of family you have can affect your health. Women who live in families tend to be happier and less stressed than women who live in combined families. People who live in families tend to have more varied and more negative emotions. This is what other studies have found. Extended or blended families can be stressful because there are people to interact with and more chances for conflict. This is what Amato found in 2000 and Musick and Meier found in 2010. On the hand nuclear or single-family environments can be more emotionally stable. This is because they are simpler and there is chance for conflict. The study also found that womens emotional health is affected by their family environment. Single-family settings can provide autonomy and less stress for women. This is what Twenge and Nolen-Hoeksema found in 2002. Birditt and Fingerma found in 2003.

In conclusion social media can distract people from each other. It does not always cause arguments. Some families see media as a threat to their relationships while others see it as a normal part of life. This study shows that whether you are a man or a woman and what kind of family you have can affect your health. Single-family environments seem to be better for womens well-being while combined families seem to be linked to more varied and more negative emotions for both men and women.

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