

The Impact of New Media on Family Relationships in Algerian Society

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Abstract:

This study examines the impact of new media on family relationships in Algerian Society. It aims to explore how the increasing use of social networking platforms has reshaped patterns of communication, interaction, and emotional bonds among family members. The study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach based on a review of sociological and media-related literature addressing digital communication and family dynamics. The findings reveal that excessive engagement with new media contributes to the weakening of direct family interaction, the reduction of dialogue, and an increase in emotional distance between parents and children, as well as between spouses. At the same time, new media can play a positive role in maintaining family ties across geographical distances when used in a rational and balanced manner. The study concludes that balanced and conscious use of new media is essential for preserving family cohesion and social stability in contemporary Algerian society.

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Introduction :

The rapid development of new media has profoundly affected various aspects of social life, particularly family relationships . The family , as the fundamental unit of society , has been significantly influenced by the widespread use of digital communication technologies , which have reshaped patterns of interaction and communication among its members . The increasing presence of new media within family spaces has contributed to changes in daily practices, often reducing direct interpersonal communication and weakening traditional forms of dialogue between parents and children , as well as between spouses(Ali, 2010,p.233).

The spread of digital media has altered emotional bonds within households and challenged traditional family cohesion , especially in family-centered societies such as Algeria (Castells,2010,p.395)

New media platforms have enabled individuals to establish virtual social networks that extend beyond geographical boundaries , offering opportunities for interaction and self-expression. However , this expansion of virtual communication has also led to a decline in face-to-face interaction within the family, resulting in emotional distance and reduced family cohesion (Shaban,2017,p.9). Many individuals now devote considerable time to online communication , often at the expense of family interaction , which has raised concerns about the balance between virtual engagement and real-life social relationships.

In the context of Algerian society , these transformations have become increasingly evident , as families face new challenges related to communication patterns , authority structures , and value transmission . The growing reliance on digital communication tools has altered traditional modes of interaction , leading to questions about their impact on the nature and quality of family relationships.

Accordingly , this study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach from a socio-anthropological perspective , aiming to examine how new media reshapes family interaction patterns and emotional bonds within the specific cultural context of Algerian society. In light of the growing influence of media , this study seeks to answer the following question : **How does media interact with Algerian families to reshape daily interaction patterns and emotional bonds among family members ?**

1. The Concept of New Media :

New media refers to a set of digital communication technologies that rely primarily on the internet and interactive platforms to produce , distribute , and exchange information . Unlike traditional media , new media is characterized by interactivity , immediacy , user participation , and the integration of text , sound , and image within a single digital environment.

According to " Balkhairi" , new media includes all electronically transmitted media content that uses the internet its various services , such as blogs , social networking sites , and video-sharing platforms like You Tube (Balkhairi,2014). This definition highlights the technological and interactive

dimensions that distinguish new media from conventional forms of communication. New media transforms users from passive receivers into active participants in content creation and communication. (McQuail,2010,p.43).

Scholars have found it difficult to establish a fixed and comprehensive definition of new media due to its continuous evolution and rapid technological development . The constant emergence of new digital applications and platforms makes new media a dynamic and evolving concept (Sadik , 2014) . this dynamic nature positions as makes a constantly changing social environment rather than a static technological tool. Therefore , the term " new media " is often used as an umbrella concept encompassing digital communication technologies that facilitate interaction , participation, and content creation by users.

New media tools continue to evolve in response to technological advancements , making them a central component of contemporary social interaction . Their widespread use has transformed communication patterns , social relationships , and cultural practices , particularly within the family context .

In the family environment , the interactive nature of new media reshapes communication dynamics alters hierarchical structures and increases individual autonomy . Children and adolescents , in particular , gain access to information and social spaces that were previously mediated by parental authority . As a result , the family's role as the primary gatekeeper of knowledge and values becomes less dominant.

1.1 Similar Concepts:

Several terms are used interchangeably with the concept of new media , reflecting its multifaceted nature . These include electronic media , digital media , interactive media , social media

, and network media . Each of these terms emphasizes a specific aspect of new media , such as its reliance on electronic technology , digital content , interactivity , or network-based communication. This conceptual overlap reflects the complexity and multidimensional nature of new media , shaped by continuous technological development (McQuail,2010,p.45)

Despite the diversity of technology , these concepts share common characteristics , particularity user participation , immediacy , and the integration of multiple communication formats .

This conceptual overlap highlights the complexity of defining new media within a rapidly changing technological environment. Such an environment becomes a shared yet contested space where different generations interact with media in distinct ways.

1.2 Types of New Media :

New media can be classified into several categories based on the technologies and platforms they rely on :

1. Internet-Based New Media : This includes websites, social networking platforms, blogs, and online video-sharing services. This type is characterized by rapid development and continuous innovation.
2. Mobile-Based New Media : This category includes smartphones , tablets , and mobile applications that allow users to access content anytime and anywhere/
3. Traditional Media-Based New Media : Traditional media such as radio and television have evolved by

incorporating digital features, interactivity , and on-demand services.

4. Offline Digital Media : This includes digital content stored on physical media such as offline applications like video games and e-books.

This classification reflects the diversity and adaptability of new media in response to technological change. The constant availability of mobile and internet –based media increases individual media consumption and reduces shared family time (Livingstone,2009,p.112).

At the same time , the integration of digital features into traditional media has blurred the distinction between old and new forms of communication. Families are no longer exposed to media at specific times , as was the case with television or radio , but rather in a continuous and individualized manner . This transformation affects shared family experiences and reduces collective media consumption.

2. New Media Tools:

New media tools represent the practical applications of digital communication technologies that enable individuals to produce , share , and exchange information . With the rapid development of technology , media is no longer limited to traditional forms such as television , radio , and printed newspapers. Instead , it has expanded to include digital platforms , online newspaper , and interactive websites that facilitate communication and participation across different social groups.

These tools have become widely accessible, allowing users to communicate regardless of geographical location , social background , or cultural affiliation . As a result , new media tools have played a significant role in transforming social interaction

patterns , particularly within family relationships. While they facilitate connectivity and information exchange , excessive use of these tools has raised concerns regarding social isolation and the weakening of direct family communication (Ali,2010,p.233).

Within households , the individualized nature of these tools encourages solitary media consumption , even when family members are physically present in the same space . This phenomenon contributes to a gradual weakening of family dialogue and shared emotional experiences.

2.1 Social Networks :

Social networks are interactive digital platforms that allow individuals to create personal profiles , establish connections with a virtual environment . These platforms emerged with the development of web technologies , which emphasize user participation and content creation.

Social networking sites enable users to communicate through messages , comments , and shared content , fostering virtual communities based on common interests , affirmations , or social ties . Unlike traditional media , social networks are characterized by immediacy , interactivity , and the ability to form dynamic relationships that transcend physical boundaries.

From a sociological perspective , social networks function as spaces for social interaction and identity construction (Boyd, 2014, p.6) . However , their intensive use may also contribute to changes in communication patterns within the family , particularly when virtual interaction replaces interpersonal communication.

In the family context , intensive engagement with social networks may reduce the quality of face-to-face interaction and weaken emotional bonds . Family members may become more invested in online relationships than in direct communication with one another , leading to emotional distance and misunderstandings.

2.2 Types of Social Networks :

Social networking platforms vary in their functions and modes of interaction . Among the most prominent platforms are Facebook , Twitter and You Tube.

- **Facebook** is social networking platform that allows users to connect with friends , share content , and participate in online communities . It is widely used for maintaining social relationships and exchanging personal and public information.
- **Twitter** functions as a microblogging platform that enables users to share short messages and follow real-time news and events, making it a significant tool for rapid information dissemination.
- **You Tube** is a video-sharing platform that allows users to upload , view , and interact with audiovisual content , contributing to the spread of user-generated media.

These platforms play a central role in shaping contemporary communication practices and influencing social and family interactions .This diversity contributes to fragmented media use and reduces collective family interaction. (Boyd,2014,p.21)

The varied nature of these platforms affects patterns of use within families , as individuals gravitate toward platforms that meet their personal needs . This diversity may further

fragment family interaction , as each member engages with different digital environments rather than shared activities.

2.3 Blogs :

Blogs are digital platforms that publish content in the form of regularly updated posts displayed in chronological order . They allow individuals to express opinions , share experiences , and disseminate information within a personalized digital space . Exposure to diverse viewpoints through blogs may challenge traditional family values and create generational differences(Livingstone,2009,p.118)

Blogs are characterized by archiving capabilities , enabling users to access previous content at any time , which enhances their role in knowledge sharing and communication.

Within families , blogging and similar platforms may influence attitudes and perspectives by exposing individuals to alternative viewpoints .While this exposure can enrich cultural awareness , it may also create value conflicts between generations , particularly when online content challenges traditional norms.

2.4 Electronic Journalism :

Electronic journalism refers to the of producing and distributing journalistic content through digital platforms and online media . It relies on the internet as primary medium for delivering news and offering information immediately , interactivity , and wider accessibility compared to traditional print journalism and online journalism has transformed the relationship between media institutions and audiences by

enabling participation , feedback , and real-time interaction , therefore McQuail explains that " online journalism differs from traditional journalism in its speed , accessibility, and interactive nature , which reshapes the relation between media institutions and audiences " is characterized by immediacy, interactivity, and the continuous updating of news content , allowing audiences to participate more actively in the news process " (McQuail,2010,p.201) .

However , the constant flow of digital news may also affect family interaction by redirecting attention away from interpersonal communication . Continuous exposure to online news and media content may reduce opportunities for discussion and shared reflection within .

3.Family Relationships

Family relationships refer to patterns of interaction and communication among family members living within the same household. These relationships vary according to social , cultural, and economic contexts.

3.1 Internal Family Relationships :

- **Marital Relationships** : The relationships between spouses plays a central role family stability.
- **Parent-Child Relationship** : Healthy communication fosters psychological security and social adjustment.
- **Mother-Child Relationship** :The mother plays a fundamental role in emotional and psychological development.(Al-Twajjri, 2001,p.191)

3.2 External Family Relationships :

These include relationship with relatives through blood or marriage ties , contributing to social cohesion beyond the nuclear family.

In Algerian context , family relationships are deeply rooted in cultural values that emphasize solidarity , respect for parental authority , and strong emotional bonds . Internal family relationships , particularly between parents and children , traditionally rely on close daily interaction and shared responsibilities . However , the increasing presence of new media within Algerian households has altered these dynamics , as excessive use of digital devices reduces direct communication and weakens emotional proximity among family members . At the same time , external family relationships have benefited from digital communication , especially in maintaining contact with extended family members living in different regions or abroad . while new media facilitates the continuity of these ties , it may also reduce face-to-face visits , gradually transforming traditional family interaction patterns into digitally mediated relationships. This situation reflects what Turkle describes as a decline in direct interpersonal communication , where digital interaction increasingly replaces face-to-face family dialogue.(Turkle,2011,p.19)

4. New Media and Its Impact on Family Relationships:

New media has become an integral part of daily life, reshaping communication patterns and social interaction . While it facilitates connectivity , excessive use reduced face-to-face family interaction and dialogue.(Shaban ,2017).

4.1 Physical Separation :

This occurs when individuals isolate themselves within the household due to personal use of digital devices.

4.2 Mental Separation :

The form of separation occurs despite physical proximity , as individuals become mentally absorbed in digital interaction. This separation undermines shared family experiences and emotional support (Kraut et al,2002,pp.49 – 53).

4.3 Positive and Negative Effects :

Positive effects include maintaining long-distance family ties and facilitating information exchange .

Negative effects involve social isolation , weakened dialogue , and increased family conflicts.

In Algerian society , where family cohesion and face-to-face interaction traditionally play a central role in social life , the widespread use of new media has significantly reshaped family relationships . While digital platforms facilitate communication and information exchange , excessive use within the household has reduced direct dialogue and emotional presence among family members . Parents and children may share the same physical space but remain mentally engaged in digital environments , leading to emotional distancing and weakened family bonds. At the same time , new media has contributed positively to maintaining family ties across geographical distances , particularly with relatives living outside the country . This dual impact highlights that the influence of new media on Algerian family relationships depends largely on patterns of use and the level of digital awareness within the family. This is confirmed by Lakhel regarding the positive and negative aspects of social networking sites , as he states "social networking in

Algeria have produced both positive effects , such as improved communication and social participation , and negative effects , including weakened family ties and challenges to traditional social values " (Lakhel,2025p.216).

5.The Impact of New Media on Family and Society:

New media plays a crucial role in shaping both family relationships and broader social structures. At the society level , digital communication platforms have become major sources of information , contributing to the formation of public opinion and influencing individuals' cultural , social , and political awareness. These platforms facilitate access to global news and diverse perspectives , thereby accelerating cultural exchange and social interaction across national boundaries (Balkhairi,2014,p.53).

Within the family context , new media has introduced significant changes in communication patterns and social roles . While it enables families to maintain contact across geographical distances , excessive and uncontrolled use has been associated with a decline in direct interaction and shared family activities . This transformation has contributed to emotional distancing among family members and weakened traditional mechanisms of socialization and value transmission (Shaban , 2017,p.p.6-15).

At the societal level , the widespread use of new media has also affected social cohesion by promoting individualistic patterns of communication. Prolonged engagement with digital platforms may reduce participation in collective social activities , leading to a gradual weakening of social bonds and community ties.

Studies indicate that intensive internet use is linked to decreased social support and reduced interpersonal communication within both family and community contexts.(Kraut et Al,2002,p.49).

Moreover , new media has facilitated the diffusion of values , norms and lifestyles that may differ from those traditionally upheld within Algerian society . This perceptions , behaviors , and social identities.

Consequently , the of new media extends beyond the family to encompass broader societal changes , highlighting the need for conscious and regulated use preserve social stability and cultural continuity.

Conclusion :

This study has examined the impact of new media on family relationships within Algerian society , highlighting the profound transformations brought about by digital communication technologies . The findings reveal that new media has become an integral part of daily life , reshaping patterns of interaction , dialogue , and emotional exchange among family members , while digital platforms provide opportunities for maintaining contact across geographical distances , their excessive and uncontrolled use has contributed to a decline in face-to-face communication and weakened family cohesion.

The study demonstrate that the influence of new media extends beyond the family unit to affect broader social structures . At the societal level, prolonged reliance on digital communication encourages individualistic interaction patterns and reduces participation in collective social life . This shift may gradually weaken social cohesion, particularly in societies where family plays a central role in social organization , such as Algerian society.

Within the Algerian family context , the tension between traditional values and modern digital practices has become increasingly evident . Younger generations are more inclined toward virtual communication , witch challenges traditional mechanisms of socialization , value transmission , and parental authority . However , the study also emphasizes that new media

is not inherently negative . When used consciously and responsibly , it can strengthen family ties , facilitate emotional support , and enhance access to information and cultural exchange.

Therefore, the impact of new media on family relationships should be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by patterns of use , cultural context , and social awareness. This study underscores the importance of promoting digital literacy and encouraging balanced media consumption within families to preserve dialogue, emotional bonds , and cultural values . Future research is encouraged to adopt empirical approaches and field studies to further explore the long-term social and psychological effects of new media on family and society.

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