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SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN CAIRO, EGYPT

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Abstract: Social media platforms grew significantly in the number of participants throughout the last decade; now it has become an integral part of people's lives. The excessive usage of social media platforms created a digital attachment amongst Egyptian families, resulting in lack of communication between family members. Members of the family appear focused intently on their devices rather than communicating with each other. This study examines the impact of social media usage on family relationships. The objectives of the study are: to explore the amount of time the family members spend on social media platforms, to understand the perceived influence of social media on the way family members communicate with each other, and to investigate the difference between online communication and face-to-face communication in terms of effectiveness.

Descriptive Research design using a mixed-methods approach has been used to determine the relationship between two variables family relationships and social media platforms. Results show that there is a cogent relationship between social media platforms and family relationships with respect to family communication in Cairo, Egypt. The majority of people use social media for a vast amount of time on a daily basis. Consequently, 70% of the respondents agree that social media has an impact on their relationship with their families. 87% of the respondents use their phones while sitting with their families, and 70% agree that their social life before the social media existence was better.

Keywords: **Social Media, Family Relationship, Family Communication, Impact, Egypt**

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have played a significant role in the Egyptian revolution since 2011. After the Arab spring it was obvious that social media can be used as an important instrument to change not only societies but also countries. (Hamanaka, 2018) The change that occurred because of social media platforms, especially Facebook, was not only on the political side but alsoon the economic and social side. There is a massive rise in the number of social media users since the time of the revolution. In 2011 the number of social media users in Egypt was 4.7 million and there were only half a million active users on twitter (Halawa, 2015). In 2020 Egypt has 42 million active users on social media platforms (Project, 2000).

This massive increase in the number of social media users carries a challenging transition in the Egyptian society in terms of politics, economic, and social life. But for this study, the focus is on the social aspect and how social media platforms played a vital role in this transition. Social media platforms are a collection of applications based on the internet and build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, that allow users to create and exchange content in a fast and easy way (Kaplan &Haenlein,2010).

These collections of applications are not only used for knowing news and watching videos, but also it can be used as an important tool in personal communication. Communication is the process of exchanging ideas, meanings, and facts in order to create a common understanding of the message (Pearson & Nelson, 2000). Thus, social media platforms as a new communication technology have become an important method for communication with the people inside and outside the country. Social media platforms allow users to make new friends, communicate with each other, and share pictures, feelings, and ideas. It also allows family members to stay in touch with each other. But the development of social media platforms does not have only a positive side, but also it has a negative side.

The matter of examining whether the impact of social media on society is positive or negative is a growing field of scholarly inquiry. It differs according to the place and society. It can be argued whether it is positive or negative, but it cannot be ignored that social media can play a dynamic role. Social media has become a ubiquitous phenomenon in Egypt and all over the world as well. With the radical changes in various aspects of people's lives in Egypt and the vast transition which families are passing through as well. Social media might affect the structure of the family and relationships among family members. The important question here is, are social media platforms affecting the relationships among people in Cairo, Egypt, and do they have a positive/negative impact on family relationships in Egyptian Society?

Statement of the Study

In Egypt, over the last few years, social media became the main platform and channel for a growing young and educated Egyptian population (Kamel, 2014). With the rapid increase of social media users, people in the most populous country in North Africa, have become more interested in spending time on social media platforms, that creates a real phenomenon and area of study that deserves to be examined. The researcher observed that this phenomenon also increased the gaps between family members and made an impact on family relationships. Social media platforms control people's time because they spend most of their time using their devices instead of family connection and social interaction (Alanazi, 2015).

The family is the kernel of a social system that has structure and roles. It plays an influential role in the society and community system; this system can operate and adapt according to the internal/external changes and effects that happen to the relationships among family members. One of the factors that might affect family structure is social media. Therefore, this study is attempting to highlight the impact of growing social media presence on family relationship in Cairo, Egypt.

Aim of the Study

This study is an attempt to understand how social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, influence communication between individuals. However, this study specifically focuses on the use of social media platforms, and their influence on family stability and communication in Cairo, the capital of Egypt.

Furthermore, this study provides some solutions and recommendations to avoid the negative impact of social media platforms and deal with this new technology in an ideal way. This study can open new scopes for the future researcher to investigate this matter in-depth or might help the Egyptian government to improve the use of social media in order to boost the quality of the Egyptian society and to avoid future problems.

Personal Motivation

Earlier my father used to scold me and my sisters if we stayed using Internet or social media for a long time and he used to threaten us by cutting the internet connection. After that, with the rapid increase of social media users, my father was one of the newcomers to social media. Then he learned how to use social media and got engaged with it very quickly, thus he became the first one to complain if the internet connection is not working. The situation became backward; we started to beg him to leave his phone and talk to us or give attention. This actually inspires me to investigate the impact of social media platforms on family relationships.

Background

Egypt is an important country for both the Middle East and the world, based on its geography, demography, and diplomatic posture. The most populous Arabic-speaking country, with more than 100 million people, is also controlling Suez Canal, which links the Mediterranean Sea to the Red sea, and it is the world's most well-known maritime checkpoint (Sharp, 2009).

Egypt has the Nile River, one of the longest rivers all over the world; without the Nile River, all of Egypt would be desert. Al-Azhar University, one of the oldest universities in the world and the leading source of Islamic scholars, is located in Cairo, Egypt. The 22-member Arab League is located in Cairo, as well (Sharp, 2009). Egypt has been a cradle of many civilizations and kingdoms. The country with a long and rich history, the cohesive kingdom from around 3200 B.C was ruled by different countries. Egypt gained its independence from the British-backed monarchy in 1952 (Bhuiyan, 2011).

People and Culture

About 90 percent of Egyptians are Muslim, and 10 percent are Copts, one of the oldest branches of Christianity. Egypt's population is growing rapidly and most of its people are living on the Nile River banks[1]. Egyptian culture is not spurred of the moment, Egypt has a rich history and culture started with the Pharaonic culture, then Christianity, and Islam. Its culture has been influenced by cultures from different countries that invaded Egypt. Tourism is one of the main income sources in Egypt: along with the exotic touristic sites, Egyptians are well known for their hospitality and acceptance for different cultures which is a key reason why tourists enjoy visiting Egypt[2].

Family

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[1] https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/countries/egypt/

[2] https://www.globalizationpartners.com/2017/01/17/traditions-and-cultures-of-egypt/

Family is a significant component of Egyptian society; Egyptians give a special importance to the family's relationships and values. Children live with their parents till they get married and sometimes they get married and live with their families at the same home. Although the marriage rates are so high, families support their sons and daughters financially to get married. The role of the parents in the Egyptian family is divided between fathers and mothers. Normally, men are responsible for the financial part and women for childcare[3].

In Cairo, education is very important. Twelve years of school education before entering the university stage, and public schools are free. Many families can pay for private schools but not the majority. Education and religious instruction come from the family - this is where children learn about societal values[4]. Physically and emotionally, families tend to be close to one another. Also, kinship is very important in social relations; children are subordinate to the family. Families follow values such as loyalty to the extended family network, mutual living, and sharing are dominant in Egyptian culture, and often one will find three generations living together[5].

According to the Top 20 countries with the highest number of internet users (2019), Egypt ranks 20th in the world for Internet users, with just over 49 million users in December 2019 out of a population of 102million.

Social Media in Egypt

Social media usage is undoubtedly spreading across the Arab world. All along with the "Arab Spring," social media played a critical role in political movements in the region, collateral with major alterations in usage trends. Once used only as a tool for social networking and entertainment, social media now is part of the daily lives of millions of Arabs[6].

According to the report published by Hootsuite & We are social (2020), the total active social media users are 42 million, compared with the total population is 41%. Also, the change in social media users' numbers from April 2019 to January 2020 is +7.3% with 2.9 million. The percentage of active social media users accessing via mobile is 99% (Hootsuite & social, 2020). The most-used social media platforms in Egypt according to the report published by Hootsuite & We are social (2020); Facebook at the top of the list with 91%, then YouTube 89%, WhatsApp 79%, Facebook messenger 73%, Instagram 68%, twitter 52%, LinkedIn 34%, Snapchat 25%, Pinterest 25%, TikTok 24%, Skype 24%, Viber: 22%, Wechat17%, Line 17%, Reddit 14%, Tumblr 14%. This shows that most of the social media platforms, if not all, are popular in Egypt and it is widely used.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have examined the impact of social media usage and communication technology on family structure, family relationships, society, children, and adolescents (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). But this research specifically focuses on the impact of social media usage on family structure and family relationships. The impact on family communication and family relationship is not too different from the impact on society, the family is positively part of the society, and whatever affects the structure of the family will absolutely affect society, community, thus, country. "The family is the nucleus of civilization and the basic social unit of society" (Bennett, 2012). Family is considered to be the foundation of human society as it plays a vital role in formatting society. Through family, you will find men, women, and children are bound in a relationship together (Kapur, 2018).

Since the family structure is a broad measure with many definitions and it changes within time too, family structure replicates relationships at some certain points of biological relatedness or kinship, which can be marital and partnership status or and living arrangements. Also, "Family structure is a term that describes the members of a household who are linked by marriage or bloodline and is typically used in reference to at least one child residing in the home under the age of 18" (Pasley&Petren, 2016, p. 1). There are many types of structures that can be there in the family. In this study, the researcher focuses only on the nuclear family in Cairo, Egypt. As the nuclear family gives rise to the joint family after children get married and stay with their parents.

The nuclear family can be described as two married biological couples or parents living with one child in the same house, and siblings might be present or otherwise (Pasley&Petren, 2016). Furthermore, family stability might differ from culture to culture or place to another, Harden (2004) defines family stability as the process of continuously giving care and concern from parents to their children in order to facilitate healthy child development. Besides, family stability is also defined as the consistency of family activities and routines (Ivanova & Israel, 2006).

There are some certain individual facets that might be portrayed from these two definitions that can affect family stability, such as; care, concern and protection. Activities that are more susceptible to change on the based on the family communication and family activities which are happening among family members, and more likely to be affected by factors such as the use of technology and social media (Cummins, Eckersley, Pallant, van Vugt, &Misajon, 2003).

Since the use of technology and social media is clearly impacting on family stability or family relationships, whether this impact is positive or negative, many studies have examined the impact of communication technology on the relationship. In particular, the impact of social media usage on family relationships. And this is because communication technology is an inherently social technology represented in social media platforms, therefore it seems likely to affect family relationships. Instant messaging affected stability through the mediating variables of time with friends and the quality of friendships (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007).

Also, the studies that examined communication technology and relationships present varying results, including contradictory results (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2014). For instance, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) researcher Alolyan (2015) in her paper "The perceived impact of the internet on family and social relations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia", found that technology has an impact on the changing of the attitudes and relations between society and family members in Saudi Arabia (KSA). Although the KSA has

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been characterised as a traditional and socially conservative society, the internet was apparently having led to significant changes in social relations owing to time displacement, especially for (too many) women. The Internet offered the means to sidestep traditional restrictions on social interaction. While most reported no change in social attitudes, those with relatively heavy usage did report an impact on both acceptance of existing cultural norms and social relationships (Alolyan, 2015).

At the same time, another study in the same country investigated the effects of using social media communication on family relationships. Meanwhile, this research has shown that despite the excessive usage of social media recently in KSA, families still maintain their strong relationships, and there is no significant effect on family members including husband, wife, and children caused by social media communication (Alanazi, 2015). The difference in the findings might be conflicting due to the difference in choosing the sample or the method, Alolyan (2015) distributed 300 questionnaires in two universities and one high school, while Alanazi (2015) questioned 499 participants from different places in Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, these two studies are not the only studies that examined the same topic in Saudi Arabia. There are more research papers with different results and findings as well.

In a study conducted by Alsharkh (2012), 617 students from the University of Dammam were asked about the effect of social media on their families. The results showed that social media networks caused independency for children in terms of decision-making processes. Unlike before, the consultation was a must for them. Also, it enhanced their ability to accept contrasting opinions (Alsharkh, 2012). More, because of social media, females have become more open-minded to know a lot about men's characteristics in their society (Al-Saggaf, 2004). Alsharkh (2012) concluded that despite the excessive usage of social media platforms, there were no significant changes in family structure, and youth are still maintaining traditional family values, but still social media usage has potentially changed Saudi Arabia's family values.

Scholars on Social Media's Negative Effects

Not only in Saudi Arabia but also in many other countries in The Middle East, Asia, and Europe, various studies have been conducted to examine if there is an impact of social media usage on the relationship or family communication, some of these studies claim that online communication has an overall negative impact on relationships or family structure, suggesting that online communication prevent face- to-face communication and it creates a weakness in the relationships (Kraut, et al., 1998).

Displacement theory was supported evidently by several studies. Study indicates that people interact less with their social environment when they spend more time using the internet (Nie, Hillygus, &Erbring, 2002). Furthermore, online communication displaces the time not only with friends but also with parents (Lee, 2009).

In Oman also, researchers Reem Abuiyada, Salithamby Rauff and Adnan Eteiwi (2016) in their research titled "Effect of Internet Usage on Relations between Members of the Omani Family in the Dhofar Region", they examined 200 families from different parts of Dhofar/ Oman, they asked about the family's views on how modern technology affects their life. The findings proposed that internet usage has created a low husband-wife relationship in family life. Also, regarding siblings, there was a low relationship between them as well. Therefore, Internet usage had a negative impact on Omani families' traditional culture and beliefs (Abuiyada, Rauff, &Eteiwi, 2016).

From Oman to Dhaka another study conducted by researcher Saida Sultana (2017) in order to investigate whether excessive use of social networking sites is associated with the declining family relationship among the youth in Dhaka city. Results showed that the use of social networking sites has a strong relationship with family relationships. Overall, this study suggested that the excessive use of social networking sites is extremely influential to the breakdown of family relationships or family systems (Sultana, 2017).

Another study titled "Effects of Social Media on Social Relationships: A Descriptive Study on the Impact of Mobile Phones among Youth Population", researchers Rajeev and Jobilal (2015) studied the various impacts of mobile phones among the youth on social relationships, study shows that society influenced by social media in myriad ways. Researchers highlighted the vast scope of social media in the development aspects; meanwhile, mobile phones have a highly negative impact on youth. The study also recommended that; the implementation of sensitization and intervention programs in order to control the negative effects of social networking sites among teenagers (Rajeev & Jobilal, 2015).

Scholars on Social Media's Positive Effects

On the other hand, some other studies argued that online communication has a positive impact on relationships. One of these examples, a survey showed clear evidence that communication through E-mail and Web has enhanced users' relationships with their families and friends (PEW Internet and American Life Project, 2000). Also, online communication has positively enhanced the quality of friendship among adolescents during the time spent with existing friends (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007). A similar study found that online communication occurring among adolescents through instant messaging was mostly used with existing friends, and has a positive impact on well-being, the study suggested that online communication might cause improvement in the interaction between friends in an offline setting and make existing friends even closer (Wang & Wang,2011).

Many studies found that the impact of communication technology on an existing relationship, as well as the new relationships, formed online through internet and social media platforms, having a positive impact on life satisfaction and well-being, in addition to they considered a variety of relationships formed online might be genuine and meaningful, furthermore the negative impact of online communication is often based on a small percentage of the sample and not all (McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002).

In another study conducted in The UAE Gjylbegaj and Abdi (2019) After noticing that, the excessive reliance on Social Media platforms have created a noticeable void in the lack of communication among the family members in UAE, especially during family gatherings; members of the family appear focused intently on their devices rather than communicating with their family members. The research has shown that While, excessive usage could probably be an action that would lead to preventing or endangering the relationship between family members, to the extent that might be irredeemable.

Nevertheless, regarding communicating and maintain family relationships, families in the UAE are mostly in control of their mobile phone usage. "So, caution and appropriate guidance from parents and governmental authorities can assist in preventing this issue from collapsing into the UAE community, and harm the future generations that will lose valuable resources such as, strong familial bonds and enhanced communication skill(s) if this issue is not addressed and taken seriously" (Gjylbegaj& Abdi, 2019, p.395).

Reasons for the Contrary Results

The findings of the impact of social media usage on the family member who forms an integral part of society might be conflicting because of several reasons such as; using different methodologies, choosing different samples, people, local, and sample size (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2014). Nevertheless, there are certain factors that have been not examined thoroughly, it could be increasing the number of participants, or conducting more interviews or examining the real genuine reasons beyond the lack of communication, it is because of social media and internet or communication already has an issue in terms of face-to-face communication regardless of the use of social media.

Current Research

According to a report titled "We Are Social" published in January 2020, out of the total population of 101.4 million in Egypt, there are 54.74 million internet users, and this number has increased by 9.8 million (+22%) between 2019 and 2020. Furthermore, social media users reached 42 million after increasing by 2.9 million (+7.3%) between April 2019 and January 2020, and social media penetration stood at 41% in Egypt in January 2020 (Kemp &Kepios., 2020).

Since the internet and social media have witnessed a huge increase in the number of the users in 2020, and the usage of social media platforms became ubiquitous, this field of studies has not been adequately examined in Egypt, therefore this paper fills the gap and investigates the impact of social media platforms on family structure and relationships by examining 132 nuclear families in Cairo, Egypt.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The response from the individual on mass media content might be different from one receiver to another. For instance, responses to violent content differ from people who enjoy violent content and others who get scared, but those responses could be predicted based on the subjects' psychological and cultural differences. When researchers realized that not everyone responded to mass media the same way, scholars started to examine it directly; these scholars were said to be taking mainstream approaches to mass media. These examinations led to some theories, two theories among them are included in this study framework, Uses and Gratification Theory and Media Displacement Theory.

This research is investigating if the immersion of social media usage in order to satisfy the desires and needs "Uses and Gratification Theory" (U&G) cause poor communication among family members and this is due to the huge amount of time spent on social media platforms from the participants that make them have no enough time to do other activities like talking to their families (Media Displacement Theory). People use social media platforms to satisfy their needs, whether they want to watch videos, read the news or even communicate with each other, this phenomena has been explained and described in the Uses and gratification theory, and due to the huge amount of information and content on the internet and social media the needs of people is increasing day by day, they do not want to miss anything, this created excessive immersion with social media usage, therefore, people are not getting time to do other things, such as communicating with each other or their family and this is what media displacement theory talking about.

Uses and Gratification Theory

One of the most important and popular theories used to understand why people interact and get attached to social media platforms or the internet, in general, is the uses and gratifications theory (U&G). Scholar Elihu Katz and his partners Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch conducted this theory in 1973 in order to figure out the motives people have for interacting and engaging with the media to satisfy their needs (Katz, Blumler, &Gurevitch, 1973). Uses and Gratification Theory theorizes that media consumers make their own choices on which media and what type of media they consume in order to receive maximum gratification for their needs (Alajmi, Alharbi, & Ghuloum, 2016). In short, U&G focuses on consumers' motives for using specific types of media and the satisfaction they receive from their use. People make their own decisions on which media to engage with in order to satisfy their needs, however, those needs are not always obtained. Often times, the gratifications sought are not the same as the gratifications obtained and although strongly correlated, continued use of a medium over time implies that the gratifications obtained strongly reinforce continued use of that same medium in order to continue seeking the gratifications originally sought after (Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rayburn, 1980) (Levy &Windahl,1984).

Displacement Theory

Time is limited for every human being as we all have 24 hours a day, it is the same with attention we cannot focus on all the surrounding activities at the same time, and participation in one communication activity takes away from participation in others. Therefore, when a new communication technology appears, people will have less time for other communication activities. Displacement theory occurs when someone's time and attention within his/her day or is limited. So, he/she has a certain capacity to do only limited activity during this day. But, still, he/she wants to participate in other activities, so when a person is introduced into a new medium such as social media, it occupies their time to an extent they will compulsorily compromise on other activities (Newell, Pilotta, & Thomas, 2008).

Precisely, in this study, the researcher will be addressing how media displacement theory through social media platforms affects communication among family members in Cairo, Egypt. MediaDisplacement Effect theory can be summarised as the extensive amount of time spent on media or social media creates a limitation on a person's mental space, daily life, and energy; that does not allow him/her from giving attention to other matters, for example, a student would be using his phone or playing on it during the lecture and not paying attention to his lesson, such acts prohibit the attention span of the person from noticing when the teacher, explain important points, talk about exam, or assignment. Because of media, virtual life has emerged, people are living in a virtual world that prevents them from interacting with the real world. Specifically, when it comes to communicating with each other, media has facilitated an excessive connection between one world to the next virtually through social media, but in reality; it has compromised on the face−to−face value of communication.

Online communication became the shelter young people use to sustain and preserve their online relationships in the 21st century, with time being increased in devotion for that purpose; whereas offline peers subject to abandonment (Alsharkh, 2012). Similarly, the negative or positive quality of these relationships could be attributed to the use of social media; where the quality of the conversation could differ and change from how it may be online, and how it may be through messaging; creating a sort of dissonance of communication between young people and their friends (Valkenburg & Peter, 2007).

IV. METHODOLOGY

Research Problem

Social media platforms can be considered as a method to undermining the relationships between family members in one of two ways-

* First way: if the social media platforms are taking the time from the family member and not allowing them to engage or interact with each other, especially after shifting from computer and laptop to smartphones, allowing mobility and ease of use.

* Second way: the internet allows family members to access new norms of social and personal life which were not existing before in the small actual world they used to live in. It allows them to feel free to share their opinions, feelings, and beliefs with no restrictions from family orsociety.

Research Questions

To assess the particular effects of social media on Egyptian society, the study has the following four research questions to derive answers in order to satisfy its objectives.

RQ1) What is the relationship between using social media and the way family members communicate?

The study investigates first if there is a relationship between using social media platforms and family communication.

RQ2) What is the influence of using social media on family structure in Egypt? Is it positive or negative?

This question is raised to understand the (nature) type of effect caused by using social media platforms, whether it is positive or negative.

RQ3) Till which level the impact of social media on family structure can reach?

This question was conducted to measure the impact of social media usage on family structure, and to which extent it might affect the stability of the family relationship.

RQ4) What are the effects of internet usage in shaping relations of members of the family?

This question is to address how social media platforms affect the way family members communicate with each other, and how they prefer to communicate: online or face-to- face.

Objectives of this study

The research aims to find out if social media usage is pointedly related to the way family members communicate with each other. The objectives of this research are-

1- To explore the amount of time the family members spend on social media platforms.

2- To understand the perceived influence of social media platforms on the way family members communicate with each other.

3- To understand and study social media influence on the family structure.

4- To investigate the difference between online communication and face-to-face communication in terms of effectiveness.

Research Design

A Mixed-Methods Approach was used in the present research which includes a survey of quantitative questions and one qualitative short answer question. The explanatory methods correlated with other data from previous studies used when examining research wherein the data are intangible based on thoughts and beliefs. The research design also includes a questionnaire consist of both closed-ended open- ended questions. The questionnaire allowed a much larger group to express their opinion towards the issue and tell the reasons people think the internet might affect their family structure or family relationships.

Descriptive research is defined as a research method that describes the characteristics of the population or the phenomenon that is being studied where it focuses more on the "what" of the research subject rather than the "why" of the research subject (ISAAC & Michael, 1981). It helps to measure and explain the correlation among two variables: family relationships and social media platforms.

Finally, surveys were posted on varied social media platforms as the tool of collecting the data; also, statistical analysis was involved in this research.

Data Analysis Method

This study combines a mixed-method approach which includes a survey of quantitative questions and one qualitative question. For this study information will be gathered through an online questionnaire using google forms, the questionnaire is in Arabic and English which is convenient for Egyptian people who mostly speak Arabic.

Research Population

The research population of this study is the nuclear families living in the capital of Egypt, Cairo. The members of these families are social media active users regardless of the device which has been used to open social media application whether it is a phone, computer, tablet, or laptop. Social media usage of these family members has been apparently affecting their relationships.

Sampling

In the present research, the survey was used to gather the quantitative data from a modest representative, but varied population. The survey method has helped the researcher in collecting information directly from the family members living in Cairo, who are using social media platforms.

A probability sampling technique-simple random sampling method was applied for data collection and selecting subjects. The sample size consists of 132 respondents from different regions in Cairo governance, male and female; high, low and middle income; youth and middle-aged people carrying a university degree or still studying in university and high school. Participants were given a short description of the project in both Arabic and English language and the questions in the questionnaire were provided in both languages, the researcher was diligent to answer and clear all the inquires for the participants.

Data Collection

The process of collecting data from 132 participants was through an online survey. There was only one type of survey which has been distributed and posted on social media platforms and the date was successfully collected. This survey was suitable to be answered by all the family members, whether they are parents or kids. There was no specific survey for each gender or specific survey for each family member individually.

Participants were given guidelines and asked to freely share their personal opinions and experiences with social media and its impact on their family's relationships. The survey was conducted through a Google form tool.

Cairo the capital of Egypt was chosen for this study because it is one of the largest cities not only in Egypt but also in Africa, Cairo is a city of culture, ancient places, beautiful landscapes, and the great pyramids of Giza. Also, it has both family patterns: traditional and modern. "It is located close to the Nile Delta. With a history dating back to CE 969, Cairo blends old-world and new-world Egypt. It is often referred to as Masr by Egyptians, which is the Egyptian Arabic pronunciation of Egypt, as well as al-Qahirah ("the Vanquisher"), Kayro or Umm al-Dunya ("the mother of the world"). Cairo's 2020 population is now estimated at 20,900,604" (Cairo Population,2020).

Data Analysis

Using an accurate and appropriate approach for data analysis is a must for the correct interpretation of these data. Therefore, when the complete data has been gathered, the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) program 26th version has been applied to ensure descriptive statistics such as: frequencies and percentages. Content Analysis has been applied for only the last question, which is an open-ended question with short answers. Microsoft Excel 2019th version has been used for arranging and organising data before transferring it to SPSS to analyses it.

SPSS along with a Google form and Microsoft Excel created successfully: tables, bar graphs, pie charts, and frequencies using the data. Tables were utilised to present the results as a clear and simple raw data. The online survey was based on Likert scale questions in order to measure the disagreement or the agreement level stated by the respondents. And multiple-choice questions were used to get certain information regarding the characteristics of the respondents. Finally, one open-ended question to examine the respondent's point of view towards the issue was also employed.

Procedure

In formulating this research, a survey was deemed the most appropriate method to find out the essence of this issue and measure the impact of socialmediausageonfamilystructure.Thetotalpopulationforthisstudycontains 132 respondents from varieties of a family member in Cairo Egypt residents, 7 responses came from fathers while 5 responses came from mother's side and the highest responses were from daughters with 81 responses and it followed-up with 39 responses from sons; and youth aged between 19 to 25 years, middle-aged 30 to 40 years, who have access to social media, and less people who are above 40 years. This population provides a concise pattern of responses that can be easily converted into authentic data to answer the research question and explain if there is any impact of using social media platforms on family stability.

In this research, the questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection, the distribution tool used in for this survey was Google Doc as it is easy to use and to be conducted as well, it also can record and store data into comprehensible form; that allows you to analyze it later. The questionnaire was posted on different social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp where the researcher can find lots of target audiences and social media users. For data analysis Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 26th version) has been used, MS Word, Excel, and Google Doc were used for designing tables, graphs, and charts.

As surveys tend to require time and effort and sometimes concentrate by the respondent the research intended to limit the questionnaire into 19 questions, 18 among them are closed-ended questions and one last question is an opened-ended question that represented the qualitative method and makes it mixed method. The closed-ended questions include different types of questions like: (yes or no/ multiple choices/ Likert scale) hence quantitative data has been collected the presence of these types of questions is important in order to include all the possibilities that may exist in the responses. Along with the primary data has been collected through surveys, relevant secondary information has been gathered through research journals, working papers, books, and other government and NGO report working on similar aspects.

Measures. The survey asked participants' age, income and education level, it examined the number of hours participants spend on social media platforms compared with the time they spend with their families and which platforms they used to communicate with their families. It measured also the way family members communicate with each other and the method they preferred to use whether face-to- face or virtual communication.

It questioned also the participants when was the last time he/she had dinner outside with family and do they use their phones while they are sitting with them. In order to understand if the phone and using social media is really a serious issue in that matter, the researcher asked the participants if they spend time talking to their families in case the phone is not working or the internet is disconnected.

Limitation of the Study

1- Limitation in literature: there were no previous studies about the impact of social media platforms/ internet on relationships in Egypt.

2- Limitation in samples: the sample size was too small compared to the population of Cairo and Egypt. Also, the profile of the sample was limited as the sample was only from Cairo residents.

3- Limitation in method: the study does not have interviews, which may have helped the researcher to examine the research question in more depth.

4- Limitation in time and place: with the help of extra time reviewing more materials would be possible; and because of the distance from the area of study, collecting more surveys and face-to-face interviews were not possible.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

The study aims to understand the impact of excessive usage of social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram) on the family's structure, relationships, and communication behaviour between the members.

To collect the data for the study, an online survey was conducted using a questionnaire with open-ended and closed-ended questions; the survey was circulated on social media platforms in Cairo, Egypt and a total sample of 132 were collected - all are Cairo residents - of which 46 are of males and 86 are of female

(This suggests that the participation of women on social media is reasonably higher than males). Descriptive statistics in the form of tables, frequencies, and percentages have been used to represent the data analysis and findings.

Family Setup

Egyptian society has both joint and nuclear family structures. This study focuses on the nuclear family (parents and children). The 132 respondents answered a question to find out their position in the family -whether they are parents or children- to understand their perceptions and responses to the questions.
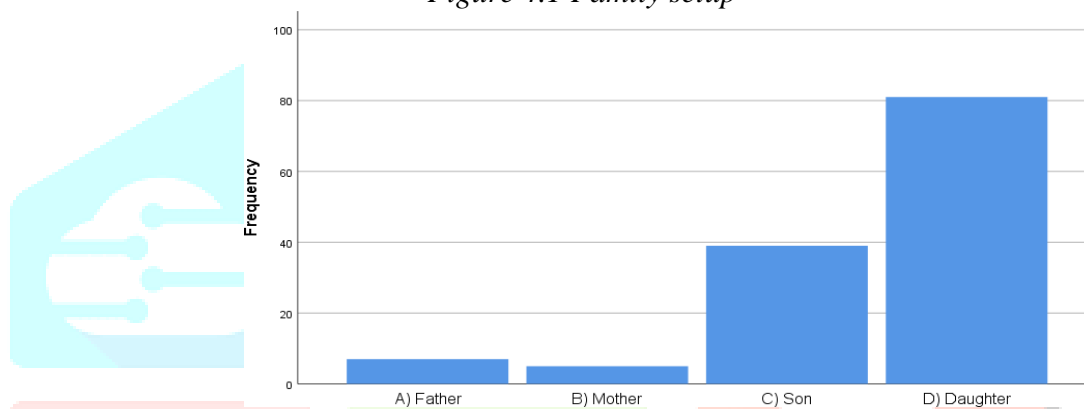
Table 4.1

Family Setup of The Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) Father	7	5.3	5.3	5.3
	B) Mother	5	3.8	3.8	9.1
	C) Son	39	29.5	29.5	38.6
	D) Daughter	81	61.4	61.4	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: *author*

Figure 4.1 Family setup

source: author

Table 4.1 and figure 4.1 show that out of 132 respondents: 81 (61.4%) are daughters, 39 (29.5%) are sons, 7 (5.3%) are fathers and 5 (3.8%) are mothers. This implies that most of the participants are youth and mostly females. Females showed a higher interest in answering questions related to social media platforms.

Family Income

With a socio-cultural belief in Egypt that "rich families are unstable", family income was taken into consideration as a parameter to find out if there is a relationship between family income and its stability or the way its members communicate. A question about family income (Egyptian pounds/month) was included in the online questionnaire.
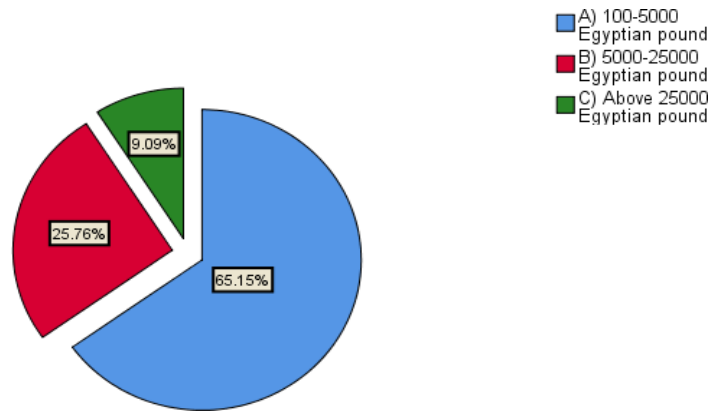
Table 4.2

Family Income (Cairo, Egypt) in Egyptian Pound

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) 1000-5000 Egyptian pound/month	86	65.2	65.2	65.2
	B) 5001-25000 Egyptian pound/month	34	25.8	25.8	90.9
	C) Above 25000 Egyptian pound/month	12	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: *Author*

Figure 4.2 Family Income (Cairo, Egypt) In Egyptian Pound

Source: Author

Table 4.2 and Pie chart 4.2 show that: 86 (65.2%) of the respondents lay in the income range from 1,000 to 5,000 (Egyptian pound/month); equals to 63.5-317.5 (USD/month); equals to 4,851 to 24,259 (INR/month), 34 (25.8%) of the respondents lays in income range from 5,001 to 25,000 (Egyptian pound/month); equals to 317.5- 1,587.5 (USD/month); equals to 24,264 to 1,21,295 (INR/month), and the last 12 (9.1%) of the respondents have an income more than 25,000 (Egyptian pounds/month) or more than 1,587.5 (USD/month) or more than 1,21,295 (INR/month) approximately as per the currency exchange rate for 21st of April 2020.

Education Level

To build an understanding of the role that education plays in the awareness about the impact of social media on the family structure. The questionnaire included a question about the highest level of education of the participants.
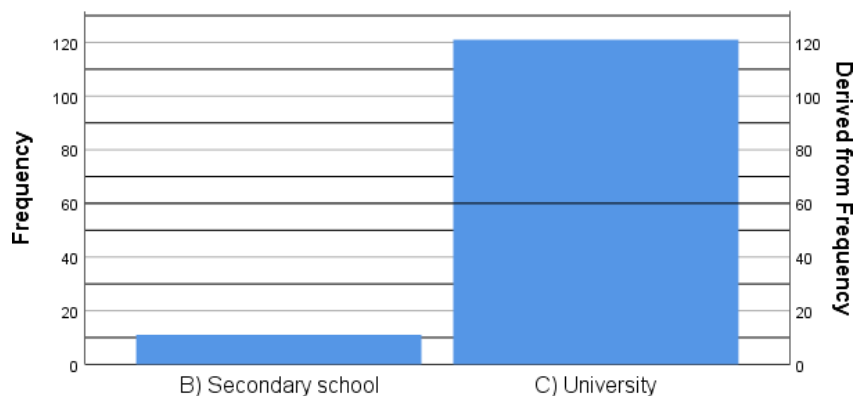
Table 4.3

Education Level of The Participants (Cairo, Egypt)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) Secondary school	11	8.3	8.3	8.3
	B) University	121	91.7	91.7	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author

Figure 4.3: Education Level of The Participants (Cairo, Egypt)
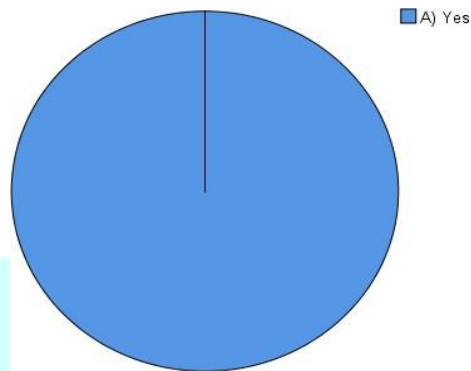

Source: Author

All the respondents of the research paper are educated. Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 show that out of 132 participants: 121 (91.7%) participants have a university degree, and only 11 (8.3%) have a secondary school level education. Participants in this study are highly educated so they should be aware of the social media usage and its impact whether it is positive or negative.

Social Media Usage

Respondents were asked if they are aware of different social media platforms and their usage: the results show that all 132 (100%) participants are aware of social media platforms and their usage, which provided the researcher a good sample for the study.

### Figure 4.4: Social Media Usage of The Participants (Cairo, Egypt)

Source: author

Time Spent on Social Media

To know the time spent on social media by each participant, they answered a question to estimate the average number of hours they spend on their favourite platform.

The time ranges were divided into four categories viz: the first category between one to three hours (normal use), the second category between four to six hours (moderate use), the third category seven to nine hours (high use), the fourth category more than nine hours (excessive/addictive usage).

Figure 4.5: Time Spend on Social Media
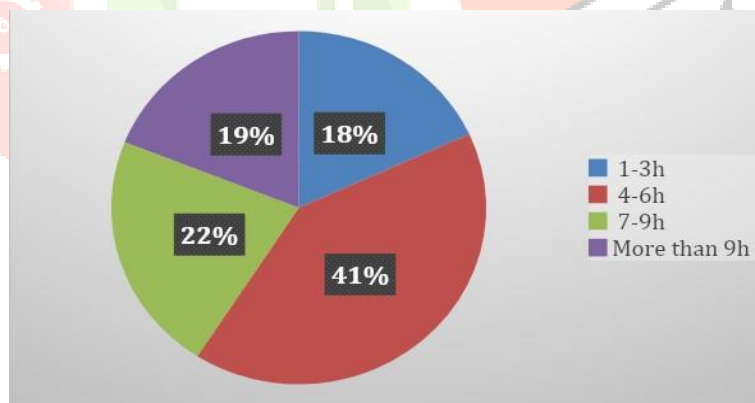
Source: Author

Table 4.4

Time Spend on Social Media of The Participants (Cairo, Egypt)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) 1-3h	24	18.2	18.2	18.2
	B) 4-6h	54	40.9	40.9	59.1
	C) 7-9h	29	22.0	22.0	81.1
	D) More than 9h	25	18.9	18.9	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author

The data illustrated in Table 4.4 shows that: 54 (40.9%) spend between four to six (hours/daily) on social media platforms representing the majority of the sample, 24 (18.2%) spend between one to three (hours/daily) representing the minority of the sample, 29 (22%) spend between seven to nine (hours/daily), and 25 (18.9%) spend over nine (hours/day). This implies that most of the participants use social media in a high proportion and it has an impact on the participants. The results of this high usage of social media is not indicating whether the impact can be positive or negative, at the same time it is obvious that such heavy usage of social media platforms could have negative outcomes; like lack of sleep, procrastination, and inactivity during family time. This appears to be in the support of the media displacement theory and the objective of this study.

Family Time at Home

In contrast to the previous question, participants answered a question about how much time they actively spend communicating with their families. The answer to this question can provide an insight into whether the time spent on social media affects holding conversations with family members or not.

Table 4.5

Family Time at Home of The Participants (Cairo, Egypt)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) 1-3h/day	70	53.0	53.0	53.0
	B) 4-6h/day	36	27.3	27.3	80.3
	C) 7-9h/day	15	11.4	11.4	91.7
	D) More than 9h/day	11	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author

Table 4.5 shows that: 70 (53%) participants spend 1-3 (hours/day) actively communicating with their families representing the majority of the sample, 11 (8.3%) participants spend more than 9 (hours/day) with their family representing the minority of the sample, 36 (27.3%) spend 4-6 hours daily, and 15 (11.4%) spend 7-9 hours. The majority (53%) of the sample group spend 1-3 (hours/day) with their families at home while a majority (41%) of the same sample group spend 4-6 (hours/day) using social media: that shows a gap between the number of hours spent with families and the number of hours spent on social media. That also leads to a gap in communication among family members, participants are attached to the new technology and they spend most of their time in online virtual interactions.

Comparison Between Time with Friends on Social Media, and Time with Family

This question aims to make the participants compare the time spent with their families to the time spent with friends on social media. The answer will draw a clear picture for both the participants and the researcher of the excessive use of social media as a communication barrier between family members.
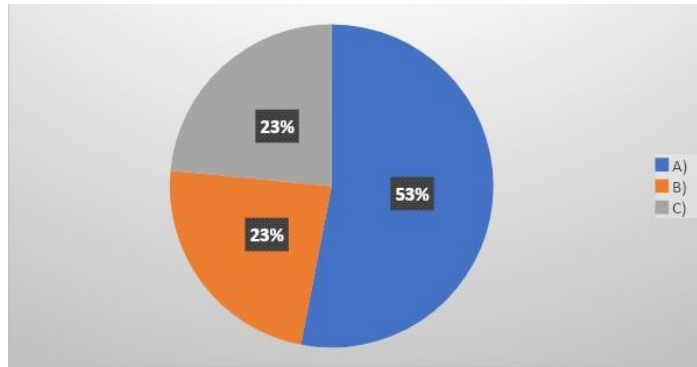
Table 4.6

Comparison Between Time with Friends on Social Media and Time with Family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) The time with my family is less than my friends	70	53.0	53.0	53.0
	B) The time with my family is same as my friends	31	23.5	23.5	76.5
	C) The time with my family more than my family	31	23.5	23.5	76.5
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: author

Figure 4.6: Time with Friends on Social Media Compared with Time with Family

Source: author

Table 4.6 and Figure 4.6 show that: 70 (53%) or more than half of the participants spend less time with their families than with their friends, the number of participants who spend the same time with family and friends is equal to the number of participants who spends more time with family than with friends with 31 (23.5%) each. Participants preferred communicating with their friends through social media which can explain the impact of social media usage on the way family members communicate with each other.

Impact of Social Media on Family Stability

Respondents were asked if social media has an impact on their families' stability and to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement. Slider rating has been used for this question, to entirely understand and represent the appropriate data.

Table 4.7

Impact of Social Media on Family Stability

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) Strongly agree	25	18.9	18.9	18.9
	B) Agree	67	50.8	50.8	69.7
	C) No impact	31	23.5	23.5	93.2
	D) Disagree	7	5.3	5.3	98.5
	E) Strongly disagree	2	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author

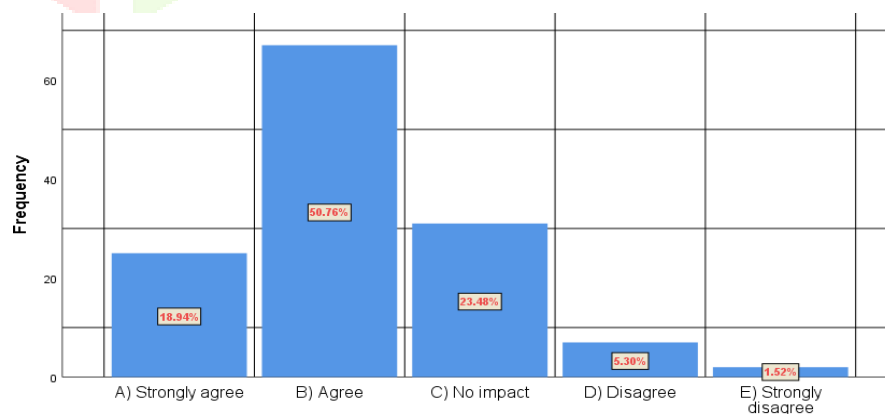*Figure 4.7 Impact of Social Media on Family Stability*

Table 4.7 and Figure 4.7 show that: the majority of the participants (50.8%) agreed that social media has an impact on their family's stability, 18.9% strongly agreed, 23.5% said that there is no impact, (5.3%) disagreed with the statement, and only 1.5% strongly disagreed. The number of subjects that agree comes to 69.7%, participants do agree that there is a negative impact on their families, and social media is affecting the family stability. The extra space to express given by social media for its users can be the reason most people prefer spending their time using them and not with their families: which adversely affects family structure and stability.

Social Life Before and After the Advent of Social Media

Another slider rating question was asked to the respondents to know if they think there is a change in their social life before and after the introduction of social media. This is to understand the interruption caused by the existence of social media and to prove the media displacement theory.

Table 4.8

Social Life Before and After the Advent of Social Media

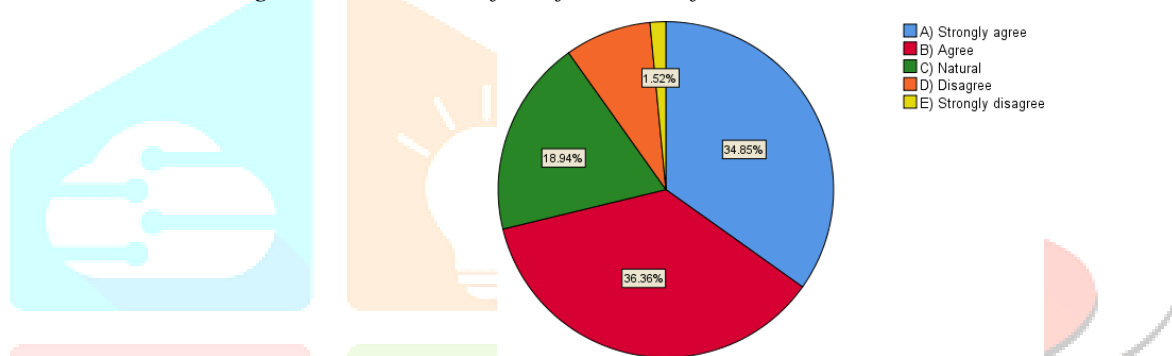|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) Strongly agree	46	34.8	34.8	34.8
	B) Agree	48	36.4	36.4	71.2
	C) Neutral	25	18.9	18.9	90.2
	D) Disagree	11	8.3	8.3	98.5
	E) Strongly disagree	2	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author

Figure 4.8: Social Life Before and After Social Media Existence

Source: Author

Table 4.8 shows that the majority of respondents agree that social life was better before the existence of social media with 34.8% strongly agreed, 36.4% agreed: representing the highest percentage, 18.9% were neutral, and 13 (9.8%) disagreed with the statement. The majority of participants stated that life and communication were better before social media. Due to high social media usage, the participants confessed that they spent less time with their families, and that agrees with what the media displacement theory suggests, that after the wide spread of social media participants in Cairo started to spend most of their time using it which leads to a lack of time spend on other activities especially time with their families. It ended up with the participants not spending proper time talking with their families, that it has a negative impact on family relationships.

Going for Dinner with Family

Family dinners are a good chance to communicate and bond, so a question was asked to the participants about when was the last time, they had dinner with their families.
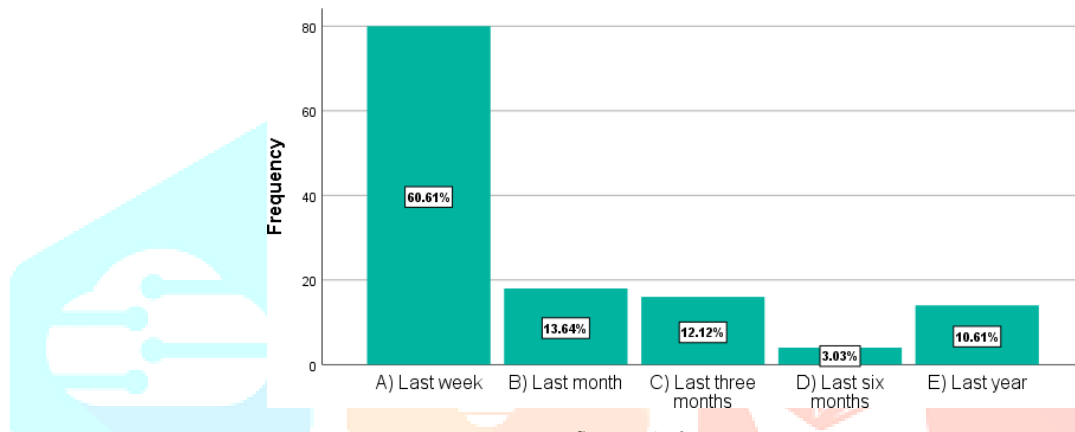
Table 4.9

Last Dinner with Family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) Last week	80	60.6	60.6	60.6
	B) Last month	18	13.6	13.6	74.2
	C) Last three months	16	12.1	12.1	86.4
	D) Last six months	4	3.0	3.0	89.4
	E) Last year	14	10.6	10.6	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author

Figure 4.9: Last Dinner with Family

Source: Author

Table 4.9 shows that: (60.6%) which represents the majority of the participants had their last family dinner last week, 13.6% had it last month, 12.1% had their last family dinner during the last three months, 3.0% went for dinner during the last six months, and 10.6% during last year. Although going for dinner creates a chance to communicate with family members, people still be busy with their phones.

It can be observed from the table that 60% of the respondents went out for dinner with their families during the last week. Meanwhile, almost 14% of the participants went for dinner last month, so the chance of opening conversation and talking with family is less, sharing meals strengthens the bond between family members and fortifies the family structure if the communication and interaction happened during it.

Using Phone in Presence of Family Member

Sitting with your family in the same place won't necessarily lead to effective communication. To evaluate the time quality spent with family members, participants answered a question to know if they use their phones while being around other family members.
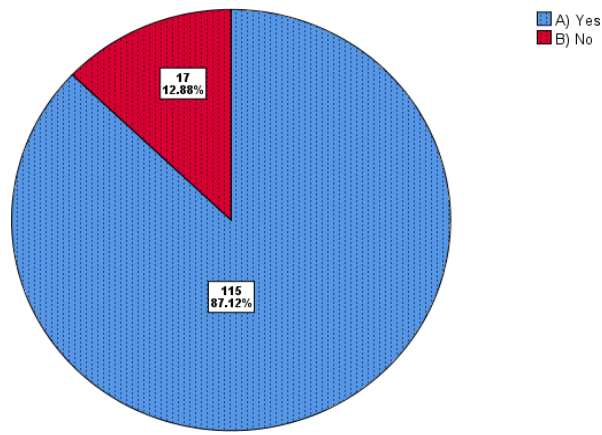
Table 4.10

Using the Phone While Being with Family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) Yes	115	87.1	87.1	87.1
	B) No	17	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author

Figure 4.10 Using the Phone While Being with Family

Source: Author

Table 4.10 shows that: 115 (87.1%) participants while they are sitting with their families, and only 17 (12.9%) participants do not. This implies that family members sitting together does not indicate good communication. Spending time in the presence of family members, or having dinner with them is not enough for family stability. Social media can even invade the time they spend with family and prevent family members from having effective communication, this all shows how social media platforms have a negative impact on family relationships.

Using Phone During Dinner

The attractive nature of social media makes it difficult for its users to detach themselves from it, even while doing extra activities like sitting with their families or watching TV. The respondents answered a question if they use their phones during the mealtime. The researcher chooses mealtime, assuming that it might be a good time for family members to communicate with each other.
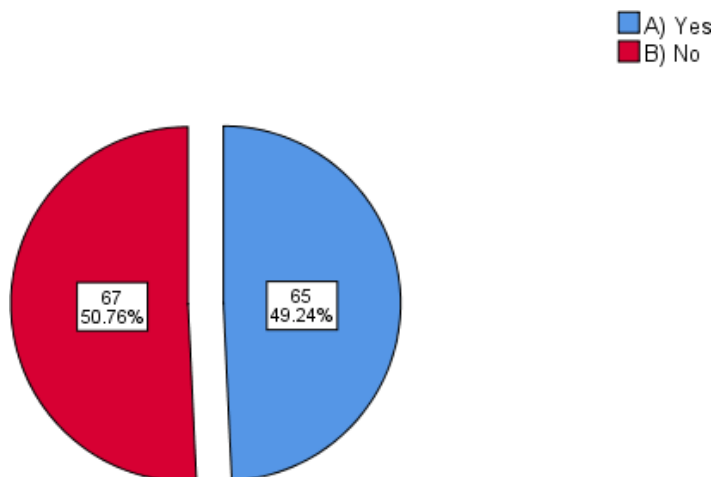
Table 4.11

Using Phone During Food Time

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) Yes	65	49.2	49.2	49.2
	B) No	67	50.8	50.8	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: *Author*

Figure 4.11: Using Phone During Food Time

Source: Author

The findings show that: 65 (49.2%) use their phones while having their food, while 67 (50.8%) answered that they do not use their phones while having their food. The results are nearly the same but show that almost half of the participants still can be surfing social media even while being occupied having their food. Even during such occupied time almost half of the participants use their phones, this is shows how much they are addicted to their devices and continually checking the notification from their social media apps. Food time is also a good chance to start conversation to strengthen the relationship among family members, but still, many participants are not benefiting from it and use their phone instead, which clearly has an impact on the family relationships.

Sitting with Family Without Phone

The researcher wanted to investigate when was the last time the participants sat with their families without their phones to point out the times or chances that they might communicate actively together.
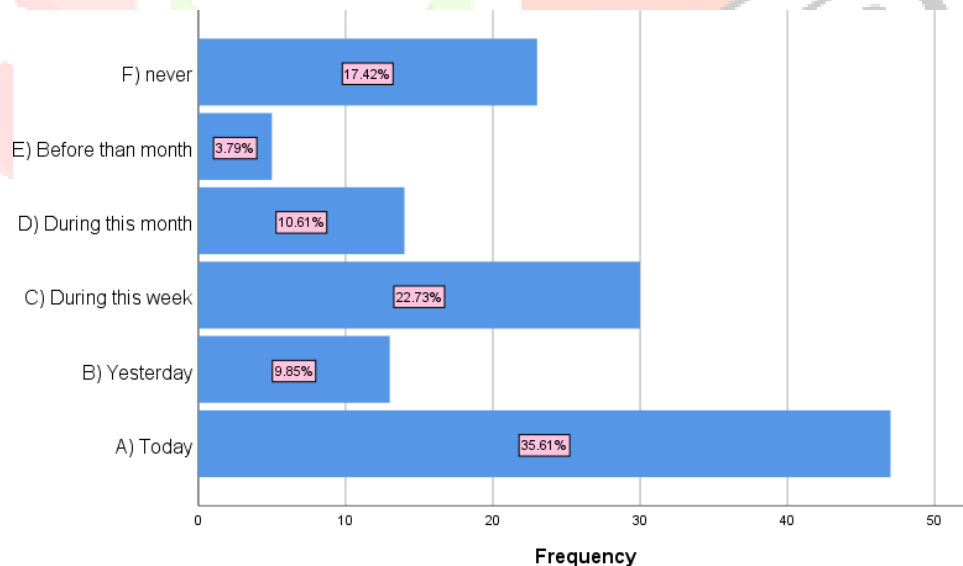
Table 4.12

Sitting with Family Without Phone

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) Today	47	35.6	35.6	35.6
	B) Yesterday	13	9.8	9.8	45.5
	C) During this week	30	22.7	22.7	68.2
	D) During this month	14	10.6	10.6	78.8
	E) Before than month	5	3.8	3.8	82.6
	F) never	23	17.4	17.4	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author

Figure 4.12: Sitting with Family Without Phone

Source: author

Table 4.12 shows the result of the question: 47 (35.6%) sat with their families without their phones on the same day of answering the questionnaire, 13 (9.8%) sat without their phones the day before, 30 (22.7%) sat with their family without their phones during the previous week, 14 (10.6%) sat without their phones during the previous month, 5 (3.8%) sat with their families without phones more than a month ago, and 23

(17.4%) never sat with their families without their phones: looking at the last three percentages it indicates that a daily communication between family members does not happen in almost 30% of the cases and that may affect the family stability and leave a negative impact on the family relationships.

*Spending Time with Family when Phone is Not Working*

The author proposed this question to address the chances of people communicating together when the phone or the internet is not working, in a sense that they do not have an option but to stay away from social media, in order to understand if social media and internet have a direct factor in preventing family communication or not.

Table 4.13

Spending Time with Family When Phone Is Not Working

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) Strongly agree	27	20.5	20.5	20.5
	B) Agree	56	42.4	42.4	62.9
	C) Same	39	29.5	29.5	92.4
	D) Disagree	9	6.8	6.8	99.2
	E) Strongly disagree	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author

Figure 4.13: Spending Time with Family While Phone Is Not Working
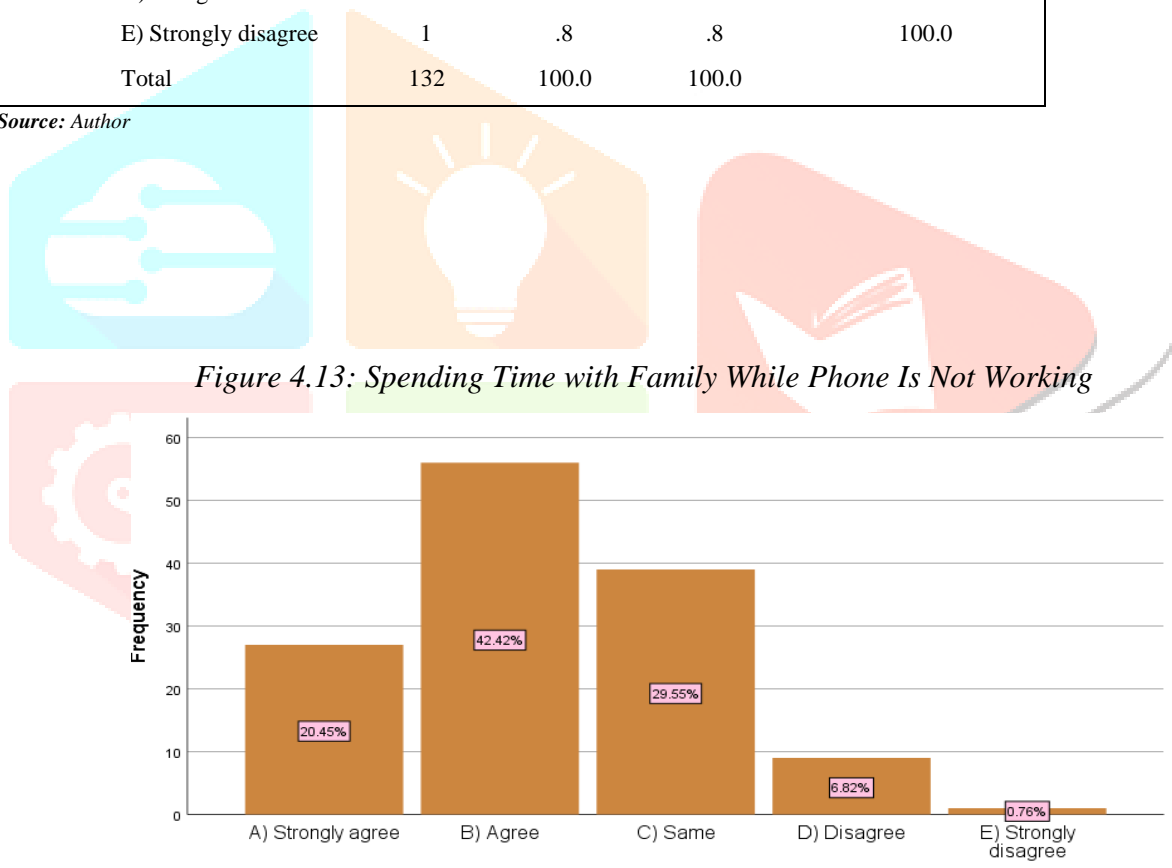
Source: Author

Table 4.13 views that 27 respondents (20.5%) strongly agree that when the internet is switched off, they spend time with their families, 56 respondents (42.4%) agree that they spend time with their families when the internet is not working, while only 9 respondents (6.8%) they disagree with the question and only one person strongly disagree, furthermore there are 39 respondents (29.5%) from the total population who are neutral and the condition is same for them whether or not the internet is there. These results stat that almost 60% of people might spend time with their families if the internet is not working, which means also that the internet and social media might be the main reason for families not to communicate. Also, for the 29.5% of people who spend the same time with their families whether or not the internet is there, this population might be among people who are already spending time with their families on a daily or weekly basis as has been discussed earlier below table 4.11. Family time increases by 62.8 % when the internet is off, clearly indicates that social media is hampering family relationships.

Effectiveness of Sharing Feelings Through Phone

The researcher wanted to know the respondent's view of their preferable means to communicate, whether they found expressing emotions on social media to be better or face-to-face.

These two questions aim to examine which way of communication people prefer the most when they need to express feelings, in general, or with their families.
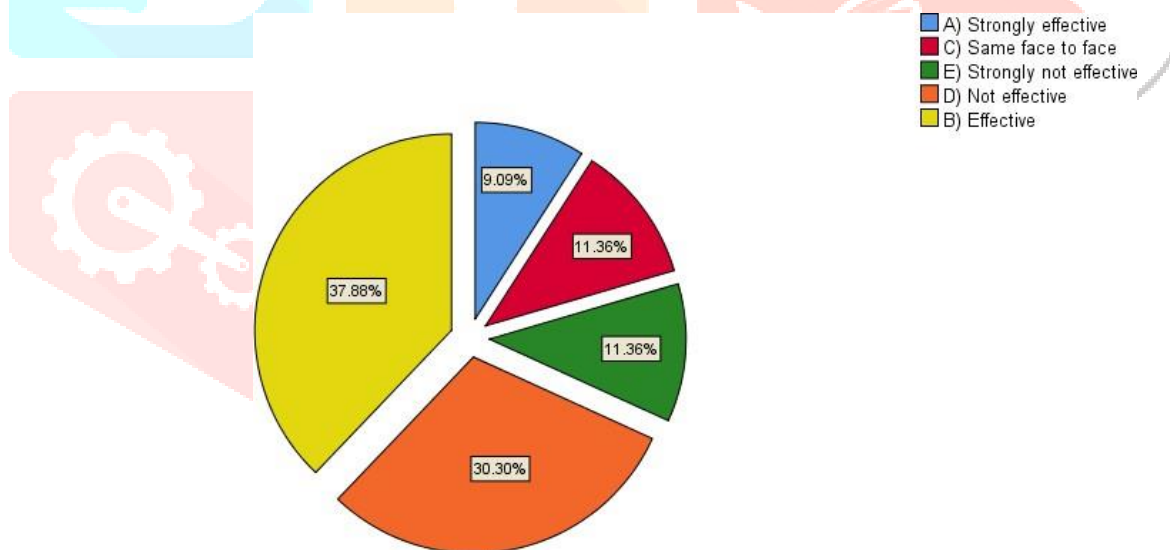
Table 4.14

Effectiveness of Sharing Feelings Through Phone

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A) Strongly effective	12	9.1	9.1	9.1
	C) Same face to face	15	11.4	11.4	20.5
	E) Strongly ineffective	15	11.4	11.4	31.8
	D) Ineffective	40	30.3	30.3	62.1
	B) Effective	50	37.9	37.9	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author

Figure 4.14: Effectiveness of Sharing Feelings Through Phone

Source: author

Table 4.14 above shows that decent number of the participants consider expressing feelings and emotions on the phone effective. 50 respondents (39.7%) said it is effective, 12 respondents (9.1%) said it is strongly effective, 40 respondents (30.3%) consider it ineffective and 15 respondents (11.4%) said that communication and sharing feeling through the phone is strongly ineffective, and 15 respondents (11.4) consider it same as face-to-face interactions. Respondents displayed a slight appreciation of using a phone for sharing emotion with a total of 62 respondents considering it an effective way of communication while 15 respondents were neutral. This displays an appeal towards sharing feelings through the phone over the other ways of communication. Although, social conducts are better translated in person and the respondents preferred social life before social media existence; yet they prefer to share their feelings through the phone. This leads to higher interaction through phones and lack of communication among family members which: threatens family stability.

Effectiveness of Sharing Feelings Face-To-Face

Continuing with the previous question, this question rates face-to-face communication and sharing feelings or emotions through personal interactions.

Table 4.15

Effectiveness of Sharing Feelings Face-To-Face

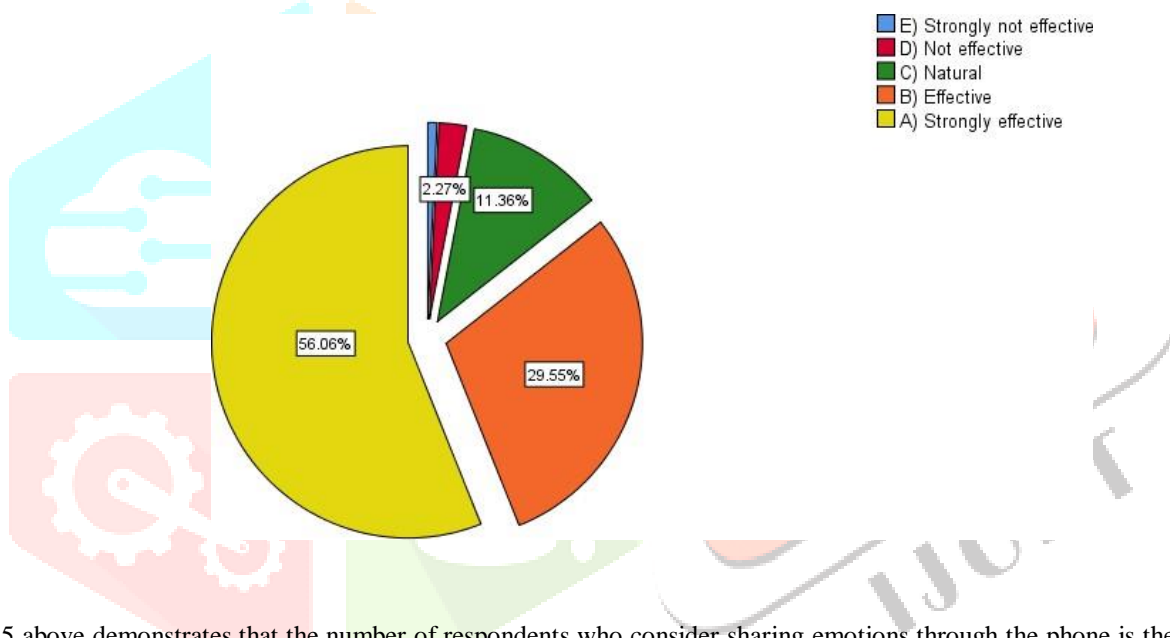|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	E) Strongly ineffective	1	.8	.8	.8
	D) Ineffective	3	2.3	2.3	3.0
	C) Neutral	15	11.4	11.4	14.4
	B) Effective	39	29.5	29.5	43.9
	A) Strongly effective	74	56.1	56.1	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: author

Figure 4.15: Effectiveness of Sharing Feelings Face-To-Face

Table 4.15 above demonstrates that the number of respondents who consider sharing emotions through the phone is the same as the number of people who prefer face-to- face interactions. In the previous question, 15 respondents rate the process of sharing it face to face as neutral. 74 respondents (56.1%) consider sharing emotions face to face strongly effective, 39 respondents (29.5%) consider it effective, on the other side, three respondents consider it to be ineffective while one considers it to be strongly ineffective. The answer to the two last questions reveals the conflict that can be embedded within communication functions in this day and age. It is evident that some people prefer to be occupied by their phones in social life and they prefer to use the phone as a way to share emotions and feelings although they might consider social life to be better and sharing emotions face to face to be more effective.

Discussion: How to Make the Family More Stable

The last question in the survey was an open-ended question. The participants were asked "how can the family be more stable?"; and all answers revolved around 5 recurring themes: First, effective and healthy communication among the family members; Second, spending more time with family members; Third, sharing secrets and being honest with the family members; Fourth, expressing love to each other. And finally, financial stability.

First, effective and healthy communication: Many respondents mentioned that effective communication and mutual understanding between family members are important factors to maintain family stability; few of the respondents were specific about parents' role in listening to their children, sharing their interests and being involved in their problems.

One participant stated that "The presence of understanding and respect among the parents themselves first and then among parents and children is very important for family stability". While another participant stated that "Understanding each other and trying to create a conversation that makes us always updated about whatever happens in our lives".

A third participant stated that "Being able to Communicate in general is important, sometimes people don't use social media but still they do not feel comfortable talking to their parents".

Second, spending more time with family members: the most frequent response was related to time spent with family. Respondents suggested to spend more time together and decrease the time spent on social media platforms, as well as doing more activities together, in short, the balance between virtual and real-life is needed.

While analysing the responses came under this theme, a participant stated that "more communication on a daily basis is important, we should conduct a schedule to spend more family quality time, also fix some meal gathering".

Another one suggested that "we should ensure that every day there is enough time for bonding between them without judging each other and talking freely".

Also, a third participant said that "We can decrease social media usage and communicate more with each other, face-to-face communication is important".

Third, sharing secrets and being honest: some respondents believe that sharing secrets and being honest with family members is the main key to family stability. "By sharing our problems with each other the family relationship will be stronger" the participant claimed. Another one stated, "family stability occurs when we believe in each other and be together always".

Fourth, expressing love to each other: the word "love" was a recurring theme in the responses of the study subjects, love, and positive feelings create the desire in family members to spend more time together, parents' love toward their kids and kids' love towards their parents will lead to better consultation and advising process. Many respondents stated only one-word as an answer to this question: "Love", while another participant stated: "By containment, support and respect; family stability will happen".

Fifth, financial stability: some respondents viewed that financial stability as an essential component of family stability. "availability of money sometimes leads to family stability but not always,". stated a participant. Another participant stated, "give me more money everything in my life will be better,".

"Money" was another one-word response to this question. Also, some respondents posited that family members should stay away from social media while they are sitting together. They reminisced over the past when people used to live without social media. Furthermore, respondents stated that the family member should spend weekends together and go out frequently, the family members should accept each other, and parents should support their kids.

The displacement theory thesis was very obvious in the responses of the participants. Most of them claimed that spending much time on social media lower the time they spend offline with family.

Summary

This study investigates the relationship between social media and family relationships. The findings show that there is a significant relationship between social media and family relationships. Social media does have an influence on family communication and family relationships in Cairo, Egypt. 70% of the participants

agree that social media has an impact on their family stability and negatively affecting the family structure, 71% of the participants agree that social life before social media was better.

Also, the study aims to understand the perceived influence of social media platforms on the way family members communicate with each other. Results show that 53% spend less than three hours daily with their families at home, and more time online with their friends, which indicates that there is a gap between the number of hours spent with families and the number of hours spent on social media, participants are attached to social media. This all leads to ineffective communication among family members.

Due to the high attachment to social media platforms, almost 80 percent of the participants use social media for more than four hours daily, 87% of the participants confessed that they use their phones in the presence of their families, but 61% spend more time with their families if the phone or the internet is not working, which means that social media platforms prevent them from having an effective conversation and resulting in family instability.

The study investigates the difference between online communication and face-to-face communication in terms of effectiveness. Results show that 85% of the participants agree that sharing feelings face-to-face is effective, at the same time 47% consider sharing through phone is effective, these results reveal that the conflict may be embedded within communication functions in this day and age. Some people choose to be on their phones and they prefer to use it to share emotions and feelings even after being convinced that face-to-face communication is more effective.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

The study aims to examine the relationship between social media usage and family relationships. Social media made communication easier than before. As a human being it is a need to communicate with people around us, to know new people, and discover new places to connect with the outside world; and social media platforms help us do that. However, as it is proved in this study, social media has both positive and negative side, findings in this study provide persuasive and clear evidence that social media platforms have more negative consequences than benefits on the family structure and family relationships in Cairo, Egypt.

It was obvious that social media platforms do have an impact on the family structure and the family relationship. Many families are facing the problem of little face-to-face communication because of social media platforms and their negative influence on the family and its communication.

Residents of Cairo, Egypt are not in control of their usage of social media platforms and the internet for the most part, as the findings show; the more the time the family members spend on social media platforms, the less time they spend on family communication. However, there is still evidence of some control over the usage of social media platforms and maintaining the relationship among family members.

By conducting this research in Cairo, Egypt, the aim is to give a clear motivation to lower social media usage that can prevent the effective family communication.

Finally, findings show that the Egyptian families are for the most part not in control of their social media usage, in regards to communicating and maintaining family relationships within the nuclear family. However, the Egyptian community is still in some other parts in control of family relationships and family gatherings, the situation can be controlled if the family members decrease the amount of time, they spend on social media platforms and increase the time they spend together without using their phones.

Recommendations

Taking into consideration the research and the literature review were done to examine the impact of social media usage on family relationships in Cairo, Egypt. The research leads us to the observation of a variety of serious outcomes from the excessive use of social media platforms. The researcher highlights some recommendations which might help to solve the issue in the future or open a

window for other researchers to continue on the same track to maintain the Egyptian community and family relationship. They are as follows:

Reducing the family members' time on social media platforms; as the research shows 40.9% of participants spend four to six hours daily on social media platforms, while 18.2% spend one to three hours daily, 22% spend seven to nine hours, and 18.9% spend over nine hours on social media platforms. The less the number of hours spent on social media platforms and the internet, the more the time to do other activities.

Family indoor (having a discussion, playing games, watching movies) and outdoor activities (going for dinner, going to the gym, visiting relatives) are important as they give the chance to spend more time with each other away from social media.

Parents' active communication with their children is crucial, and if required parents should put rules for internet usage and offer alternative activities for the children that allow direct interaction and better communication.

Media outlets including TV, radio, newspaper, and social media in co-operation with schools, universities, and all educational institutions can conduct awareness-raising campaigns to make people aware of the negative impact of social media platforms and how the excessive usage of social media platforms might affect families' stability and well-being. Active communication is a process that requires continuous efforts for it to last: for family, it is important to offer time, love, and understanding for its members.

For researchers. There are a few suggestions and recommendations for future researches to put into consideration in order to head down the same path and get better and more effective results.

Future work can take into consideration to examine the impact of social media platforms on family relationship from different perspectives, such as parents' perspective or kids' perspective, also researchers need to reach the people who do not use social media and they are members of the family as well. And examine their perspective about social media impact on other members who use social media platforms.

Future researches should examine what exactly the ideal and perfect amount of time family members should spend on social media platforms in order to maintain the relationship between them, and make a balance between the excessive usage of social media platforms or not to use it at all.

Although the respondents of this study are 65% females, this study did not explore the differences between males and females on social media use and it might be interesting to examine the impact of social media from each gender perspective separately instead of grouping them together as this study has done.

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