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The Integration of Technology on Family Dynamics and Communication Pattern

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Abstract

This research paper explores the multifaceted impact of technology on family dynamic patterns, focusing on how digital advancements have reshaped communication, relationships, and interactions within families. The study identifies both positive and negative influences of technology. Technology facilitates and enhances communication through social media and instant messaging, offering families the ability to connect across distances. It can reduce face-to-face interactions; lead to an increase dependence on technology usage. This research will examine the impact of technology on family communication. The study will employ a method of quantitative survey method to assess the integration of technology among different families alongside its variance across different family structures and socioeconomic statuses. The findings suggest that while technology presents challenges to traditional family dynamics, it also offers opportunities for growth and adaptation. The paper concludes with recommendations for families and policymakers to navigate the evolving

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digital landscape, emphasizing the need for balance and mindful usage of technology to support healthy family relationships.

Keywords: Communication, Technology, Family and Pattern

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Technology innovations tools involve WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook Zoom, Email and Instagram that uses pictures, text, calls,video calls,playing a key function in family interpersonal communication, relationships, interactions and feelings of connectedness.Nevertheless these technological platforms are accompanied with challenges that affect family communication patterns.Nouwens, M., Mackay, WE, and Griggio, CF (2017) Early studies on technology and family communication demonstrated the importance of interactive gadgets towards connected related emotions. While promoting communication and bolstering family bonding. Technological advances in communication and information can also lead to conflict and distraction within families. In the past there has not been a wide range of tools and applications available for family members to collaborate, express themselves, and communicate with one another. During COVID-19, video conferencing in particular proved to be the most effective means of preserving family ties for numerous people. These ties include relatives who are far away owing to immigration, travel, and deployment issues as well as extended family members in diaspora.

J. L. Lebow (2020) findings, during COVID-19 that families had members confined to quarantine or unable to travel depended on online interactions. Certain families had more communication and connection with young adults while others conducted virtually to family dinners ensuring everyone remained in touch. The norms that families decide when convenient to interact using technological devices, including how and what platforms to use are crucial for effective collaborative technological communication. These guidelines include times when family members are present in the home together, considering the time zone , standards and ideals to fit into their families members' daily well-being and daily operations.Technology use by family members can sometimes be detrimental in ways that help resolve disputes.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid advancement and widespread adoption of communication technology have significantly transformed the patterns families interact and maintain relationships offering numerous benefits, such as facilitating long-distance communication and providing new ways to share experiences, they also present challenges that can impact family dynamics. For instance, the pervasive use of smartphones and social media has been linked to a reduction in face-to-face interactions and longer screen time, which can lead to feelings of disconnection and misunderstandings within the family unit. Despite the growing body of research on this topic, there is a need for a more comprehensive understanding of how these technologies affect various aspects of family dynamics, including communication patterns, emotional bonds, and the overall functioning of the family. Previous literature reviews has explored the individual effects of communication technology on specific family relationships, such as parent-child interactions and marital satisfaction. However, there is a research gap in understanding the holistic integration of these technologies into the entire family system. Furthermore, there is limited research on how different cultural contexts moderate the integration of communication technology in families. This study aims to fill these gaps by examining both the beneficial and detrimental effects of communication technology on family interactions, emotional closeness, and family cohesion across diverse cultural settings. By doing so, it seeks to provide a more balanced and comprehensive perspective on the role of technology in contemporary family life.

Objectives This study seeks to investigate the integration and impact of technology on family dynamics and communication patterns

Literature and Theoretical Review

Family Systems Theory, developed by Murray Bowen in the mid-20th century, conceptualizes the family as an emotional unit and uses systems thinking to describe the complex interactions within it. The theory notes that family members are interconnected and individual behaviors cannot be understood in isolation from the family system. Key concepts include differentiation of self, triangles, and family projection processes, which describe how family members influence each other. This theory is highly pertinent to research on communication technology's impact on family dynamics because it provides a holistic view of the family as an interdependent system. The use of communication

technology can alter traditional patterns of interaction, potentially creating new dynamics and tensions.

Social Information Processing Theory Social Information Processing (SIP) Theory, originated by Joseph Walther in 1992, provides a foundational framework for understanding how people form impressions and develop relationships through computer-mediated communication (CMC). The central theme of SIP theory is that individuals can effectively convey social and emotional information through CMC, taking more time compared to face-to-face interactions due to reduced social cues. Walther posits that as users adapt to the medium's constraints, they develop compensatory strategies to achieve relational outcomes comparable to those in face-to-face settings. This theory is particularly relevant to the study of communication technology's integration into family dynamssics as it explains how family members can maintain and even enhance their relationships through digital means. For instance, through frequent texting, video calls, and social media interactions, family members can share emotions, provide support, and sustain emotional bonds despite physical distances.

Theory Media Richness Theory, developed by Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel in 1986. This theory is crucial for examining the impact of communication technology on family dynamics, as it helps explain the differential effectiveness of various digital tools in maintaining family relationships. For example, video calls (a richer medium) can better convey emotional nuances and foster a sense of presence compared to text messages (a leaner medium). Understanding media richness can help identify which communication technologies are most beneficial for specific family interactions,

Empirical Review McDaniel & Coyne (2016) explored the phenomenon of technoference, examines the effects of technology's meddling in romantic relationships and how it affects people's personal and interpersonal well-being.

With the increasing ubiquity of smartphones and other digital devices, understanding how technology affects intimate relationships is essential for maintaining healthy family dynamics. Stockdale & Coyne (2019) investigated the impact of parents' and adolescents' social media use on family dynamics and adolescent development through the pervasive use of social media among adolescents and parents, understanding how social media affects family relationships and teenage well-being is essential for promoting healthy family dynamics.

A study conducted by wang et al (2015) showed the use of phones as a communication tool among family members significantly contributes to all 3 dimensions of family well-being (harmony, happiness, and health). It showed that establishing similar communication interconnectivity and relationships, through active integration of modern technological tools inside various communication patterns can give the desired outcome delivered by face-to-face communication. The study also shows the critical impact that ICTS integration with conventional communication techniques plays in enhancing family well-being, and it suggests that families include technology in their communication patterns for best results.

Kildare and Middlemiss's (2017) study affirm the impact of technology on parent-child communication, this effect comes in dynamic forms through pros and cons. (Nedelcu & Wyss, 2016; Oduor et al., 2016; Vaportzis, Giatsi Clausen, & Gow, 2017). The study asserts the impact of technology use on family interactions is multifaceted and varies based on the context and method of use, as this literature review indicates. (Karimullah, 2023) Suud Sarim. (2023) highlight that although technology can cause conflict in families, it can also be an instrument for building stronger bonds among family members. Technology has many other gains it offers to its family members as an assistance tool for parents and children in the educational sphere.

(Karimullah, 2023) Children can benefit from the assistance of a variety of educational platforms , and apps to learn specific subjects. Technology can benefit parents by serving as an extra educational resource that fosters their kids' intellectual growth. In this digital age, educating kids about digital ethics and accountability is equally crucial. This entails acting appropriately in cyberspace, protecting one's privacy, abstaining from risky behavior, and realizing the repercussions of one's activities.

Generally (Sakrani, Maidin, & Mohamad Nasir, 2022) the positive outcomes of technology in family communication patterns outweigh the negative sides, where it can affect family time and bonding, rather employing the cautious use of technology can significantly develop a greater environment for bonding and connections for family members.

METHODS

The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data collected from relevant scholarly sources. Desk research involves collecting data from existing resources hence, it involves the executive's time, telephone charges, and

directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports, and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Communication technology has had a profound and complex impact on family dynamics, highlighting its benefits and challenges. This supports (Sakrani, Maidin, & Mohamad Nasir, 2022) findings that technology affects family relationships, bonding, and communication patterns where technology integration is high, offering significant benefits through technological connections varying from text messages, X platform, Facebook platform, and Emails to simplify bonding for family members.

According to this study, using technology frequently results in less in-person encounters and a greater sense of isolation, which has a negative impact on relationship satisfaction and raises tension. The use of technological gadgets by parents was important; active moderation and co-viewing helped to create a cohesive family atmosphere, but excessive use by teenagers was associated with despair and anxiety. To improve family relationships and wellness, the study underlined the need for balanced technology use and suggested open communication, explicit guidelines, and "tech-free" zones. A Unique Addition to Policy, Practice, and Theory.The comprehensive study by Radesky, Kistin, CZuckerman, Nitzberg, Gross, Kaplan-Sanoff, Augustyn, and Silverstein (2014) offered insight into the dynamics of usage of mobile devices and parent-child relationships. In contrast, a desktop research approach was used in this study

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the potential for technology to be a double-edged sword in family dynamics. On one hand, digital communication tools can bridge physical distances, allowing family members to stay connected across geographical boundaries. This is particularly beneficial for maintaining relationships with extended family members and for families with members who travel frequently. To mitigate these effects, families are encouraged to establish "tech-free" zones and times, such as during meals or before bedtime, to ensure that quality interactions are prioritized. The impact and integration of communication technology on family dynamic communication pattern is profound and

complex, requiring a thoughtful and proactive approach to harness its benefits while addressing its challenges. By fostering open communication, setting clear guidelines, and modeling healthy technology use, families can navigate the digital age in a way that supports their bond and togetherness.

Recommendations

Educators can benefit from understanding how technology affects family dynamics, as this knowledge can inform their approaches to involving parents in students' academic lives and addressing behavioral issues linked to technology use.

Practitioners, including family therapists and counselors, should incorporate discussions about technology use into their sessions with families. It is essential to recognize and address the role of digital devices in creating or exacerbating family conflicts and to work towards strategies that promote healthier technology habits.

Policymakers should consider the findings of this study to create and promote policies that support healthy technology use within families. This includes developing guidelines and educational campaigns that inform the public about the potential impacts of communication technology on family dynamics and mental health

Governments could also fund and support community programs that offer resources and support for families struggling with technology-related issues. This could include family counseling services, workshops on setting technology boundaries, and activities that promote family bonding without digital distractions. Policymakers should collaborate with technology companies to design features that help families manage screen time, such as parental controls, screen time reports, and the ability to schedule device-free periods.

The study also suggests that future research should explore the long-term effects of communication technology on family relationships, as well as the potential for generational differences in technology which can create conflicts or misunderstandings through addressing these gaps in the literature, researchers can develop more robust theories that better explain the evolving nature of family dynamics in a digital world.

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