

## The effectiveness of a counselling programme to prevent family disintegration due to social media (Facebook) addiction: A Field Study in Adrar Province

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### Abstract:

The aim of this study was to determine the effectiveness of a counselling programme in preventing the phenomenon of family disintegration resulting from the addiction of family members to social media and its impact on family dynamics, including communication channels within the family, roles, family relationships and social isolation. The study included a sample of (65) individuals from families willing to undergo the counselling programme, divided into experimental and control groups. They were assessed using a social media addiction scale and a family disintegration scale. After data analysis, it was found that there were statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test scores. In addition, statistically significant differences were found between the experimental and control groups in the pre-test. According to the effect size (eta squared), the counselling programme proved to be effective in preventing family disintegration due to social media addiction.

**Keywords:** Counselling programme, family disintegration, addiction, social media, Facebook.

**Type of contribution:** Wall-mounted presentation.

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### 1. Introduction:

The political, economic and social transformations that societies are experiencing, as well as the constant dynamics of a rapidly changing world, are forcing communities to find ways and means to meet their current needs and future aspirations, as well as to adapt to change in order to ensure their survival and continuity.

The contemporary world has witnessed a series of rapid changes in the field of communication and information technology, which have turned the world into a global village where information travels to all corners of the globe in a fraction of a second. These changes have undoubtedly had a direct impact on individuals and institutions, prompting societies to embrace and adapt to these innovations in order to reap the benefits they offer in various fields.

Electronic social media platforms are among the most widespread on the Internet due to their unique characteristics that distinguish them from other sites. This has encouraged Internet users from all over the world to increase their engagement with

these platforms, despite the intense criticism that social networks often face. Among these criticisms is their negative and direct impact on the family structure and its disintegration. Conversely, some see them as important tools for the growth and cohesion of communities, facilitating the understanding of concepts and perspectives with others and allowing the recognition of different cultures. They also play an active and significant role as effective channels of communication during popular uprisings. The immense connection to social media is no longer limited to a specific class or group; it has permeated all segments of society, regardless of age, gender or different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Families, as an integral part of society, have begun to use these platforms continuously, with all members (parents and children) fully integrated into these media throughout the day, even during peak family times when they would traditionally gather. Smartphones have become an extension of the hand, leading to a weakening and fragility of family bonds. Interaction within the family now often consists of mere meetings or gatherings, with social or religious activities that used to characterise families diminishing significantly in the post-social media family. This extensive use has led to a deterioration of family relationships (fragility of relationships, weakened communication and social interaction) (Lashab and Mbareki, 2022).

## **2. Research problem**

At present, societies rely heavily on technology in all its forms, making it a necessity of the age, especially when compared to its active role in various aspects of life. At the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the third millennium, the possibility of interconnection and the creation of a coherent network of computers led to the emergence of social media in its various forms, covering the entire globe. These platforms are among the most prominent technological phenomena that have significantly opened up new opportunities for individuals to interact with different groups worldwide by building virtual social relationships.

The impact of this technology has extended to all aspects of economic, social, political and educational life in modern societies, including the family, which is considered the basic unit of society. The family plays a fundamental role in shaping individual perceptions and culture, as well as the value system that guides social behaviour, including family relationships. Today, a significant part of this role has shifted to social media platforms, which have opened avenues for modern communication patterns (individual or medium) within families, who use them to fulfil social relationship needs. Some see these platforms as a source of information and topics that stimulate discussion among family members, while others use them for entertainment and relaxation or to bridge distances between dispersed family members. In addition,

some individuals use them to escape reality, which can lead to isolation (Al-Tahami, 2022)

According to the study by Sahari and Bouhda (2021), the Algerian family has undergone profound changes in the last ten years in terms of its structure and the relationships between its members. These changes are the result of several factors, the most important of which is the revolution in information and communication technologies, especially social media, which have become an essential element in people's lives. The study found that social media, especially Facebook, has caused drastic negative changes in family relationships, with notable effects including a lack of dialogue, isolation and family disintegration.

Counselling programmes are seen as effective mechanisms to prevent and raise awareness of the negative effects of social media, such as family disintegration and its impact on family dynamics, including clarity of communication channels, family roles and relationships, and social isolation. Based on the above, the research question can be formulated as follows:

**Does the proposed counselling programme have an effect on preventing family disintegration due to social media (Facebook) addiction among the study sample?**

**Sub-research questions:**

The following sub-questions arise from this general question:

1. Are there statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-test applications for the study sample on the dimensions of family disintegration (clarity of communication channels within the family, roles and family relationships, and social isolation)?
2. Are there statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the post-test application regarding the dimensions of family disintegration (clarity of communication channels within the family, roles and family relationships, and social isolation)?
3. Are there differences between the study sample in the dimensions of family disintegration in the post-test due to personal variables (gender, professional identity)?

**3. Research hypotheses:**

We expect that the proposed counselling programme will be effective in preventing family disintegration due to social media (Facebook) addiction among the study sample.

From this general hypothesis, the following sub-hypotheses emerge:

1. We expect to find statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-test applications for the study sample in the dimensions of family disintegration (clarity of communication channels within the family, roles and family relationships, and social isolation).

2. We expect to find statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the post-test on the dimensions of family disintegration (clarity of communication channels within the family, roles and family relationships, and social isolation).

3. We expect to find differences between the study sample in the overall level of family disintegration in the post-test due to personal variables (gender, age, professional identity).

#### **4. Research aims:**

The researchers aim to understand the effectiveness of the proposed counselling programme in preventing family disintegration due to social media (Facebook) addiction by achieving the following sub-objectives:

1. To determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-test applications for the study sample in the dimensions of family disintegration (clarity of communication channels within the family, roles and family relationships, and social isolation).

2. To determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the dimensions of family disintegration (clarity of communication channels within the family, roles and family relationships, and social isolation).

3. To determine whether there are differences between the study sample in the dimensions of family disintegration attributable to personal variables (gender, age, professional identity).

#### **5. Significance of the study:**

This research has scientific importance as it contributes to the scientific treatment of family disintegration through family guidance mechanisms, particularly in the form of guidance programmes. It is also of practical importance as it seeks to find realistic solutions in the field to prevent family disintegration.

#### **6. Procedural definitions:**

##### **1. Effectiveness:**

The researchers define it procedurally as the ability of the counselling programme to achieve its set goals to the greatest extent possible by raising awareness of methods and ways to prevent family disintegration. It is measured by the difference between the pre- and post-tests for the control group and the difference between the experimental and control groups in the post-test.

##### **2. Guidance programme:**

The researchers procedurally define it as a counselling programme aimed at preventing family disintegration due to addiction to social media (Facebook). It is based on scientific, educational, religious and social principles and aims to provide

awareness services on how to use social media and preventive services that include ways to maintain the family system that emphasises positive relationships and communication between family members, while preventing social isolation. The programme consists of 9 sessions, with one session per week.

### **3. Family disintegration:**

Procedurally defined as the maladjustment among family members due to the breakdown of the components of the family system, characterised by unclear communication channels within the family, failure of each member to fulfil their assigned roles, breakdown of family relationships and social isolation.

## **7. Previous studies**

### **1. Arabic Studies**

#### **Study by Lamia Mohsen (2020):**

This study aims to identify the role of social media in family disintegration in Egyptian society. The study is based on media ecology theory and uses a media survey methodology. The field study population consists of a number of Egyptian families (husband/wife/children) who use social media. The researcher selected the sample using a purposive sampling method, and the study tool was a questionnaire that was administered to 210 Egyptian families, including all family members who use social media.

The study revealed several findings, including: a lack of interaction between spouses within families, as evidenced by the fact that they spend less than two hours talking to each other, while each spends more than five hours a day on social media. The causes of family problems resulting from spouses' use of social media include: ethical breaches in dealing with the opposite sex, bias towards the opinions of friends on social media, and sharing their private lives with friends on social media.

Being preoccupied and spending long hours on social media are the main reasons for poor marital relationships in Egyptian families. There is also a difference in the level of trust between husbands and wives in terms of knowing each other's social media passwords. Most respondents reported the negative impact of social media use on the family, citing wasted time, deteriorating family relationships, widening gaps between parents and children, social isolation and various resulting problems such as infidelity and increasing divorce rates.

Shabiri et al. (2020): The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of a cognitive-behavioural counselling programme in reducing family disintegration among a sample of adolescents in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The researchers used a quasi-experimental design to apply the study instruments, represented by the Family Disintegration Scale, to a sample of 30 young people. Within this framework, an experimental design based on an experimental group was used, where the research tools were applied at the Isa

Cultural Centre, the Rehabilitation Centre and the Creativity Training Centre to measure the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The results showed statistically significant differences between the scores of the sample members before and after the application of the cognitive-behavioural counselling programme on the family disintegration scale, in favour of the post-test.

Al-Assali (2020): The research aimed to explore the impact of the Internet on the patterns of family relationships in Yemeni society. For this purpose, the descriptive analytical approach was used as the appropriate methodology, and a questionnaire was used as the main tool for data collection. The analysis of the data led to several findings, the most important of which is that the Internet has become the greatest challenge to the family structure by increasing social isolation and widening the gap in relationships between spouses and between parents and children. It has also led to emotional dryness, neglect of family matters and the emergence of behavioural patterns that threaten to deviate and signal the disintegration of the family as a relational entity.

Rahawi and Rahawi Belhoussein (2023): This descriptive study aimed to understand the role of social media use in the emergence of social isolation in Algerian families, from the perspective of parents. The researcher selected a purposive sample of 30 individuals (fathers and mothers) from the city of Daira, Algeria. In order to achieve the research objectives and to collect and analyse the data, interviews and the statistical programme (SPSS: 26) were used. The study revealed that 43.33% of the sample members believe that their children use social media intensively, and more than 53% confirmed that their children do not participate in family communication practices. In addition, 50% of them believe that social media use has reduced communication between them and their children. Based on these findings, social media plays a fundamental role in causing social isolation within Algerian families.

Study by Jaafar and Makhtari (2022): The current study aims to highlight Facebook as a model of social media and examine its relationship with family alienation among students (a field study on a sample of students from Lazib Ahmed Secondary School, Jadidiya, Ghazaian State). The study aims to reveal the reality experienced by students within their families and the effects of excessive use of social media. The researchers used a descriptive method and began the study after distributing a scale of family alienation to 32 students from different disciplines at the new Jadidiya Secondary School. The results showed a relationship between students' use of Facebook and their level of family alienation. There were also statistically significant differences between males and females in terms of family alienation among students who use Facebook, while no statistically significant differences in family alienation were found among Facebook users based on the discipline variable.

Study by Ibn Ouyicha (2019): This study aimed to explore the prevalence of Facebook use among university students of both genders, and to identify the purposes behind its use and its impact on their family relationships. The study relied on several independent variables, such as the respondents' gender, age, educational level, and daily frequency of Facebook use, to address the research questions and identify factors that influence the impact of Facebook use on family relationships. The results showed that all respondents used Facebook for multiple purposes, including academic study, scientific research, entertainment, following events and communication.

## **2. Foreign Study**

Foreign Study by Fortuna et al. (2019): This study aims to deepen understanding of the role of parents' perceptions of the impact of social media on family systems within their households. Specifically, it examines the relationship between family collective efficacy and open communication within family systems with adolescents. A questionnaire was distributed to 227 Italian parents who have one or more teenage children and who use Facebook and WhatsApp to communicate with them, to assess the openness of family communication, family collective efficacy and perceptions of the impact of social media on family systems. The results indicate that these perceptions act as a mediator in the relationship between family collective efficacy and communication openness, suggesting that not only the actual impact of social media on family systems is important, but also parents' perceptions of it and their sense of ability to manage their own and their children's social media use without damaging family relationships.

Study by Aid Al-Raggad (2021): This study aimed to determine the impact of social media on family relationships from the perspective of parents of students in the city of Sahab, Jordan, during the first semester of the academic year (2020/2021). The sample consisted of 864 families randomly selected from a total population of 36,475 parents. The researcher used a questionnaire consisting of 27 items divided into three domains, and the validity and reliability of the study tools were verified with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.88. The following statistical treatments were used to analyse the results: independent samples t-test, one-way ANOVA and frequency calculations regarding family relationships. The study revealed several results, the most important being: significant statistical differences based on income, favouring higher incomes, while no differences were found based on gender, education level, age or family size. The researcher recommended the removal of barriers between parents and children in order to help them benefit from their parents' life experiences and to support them in overcoming psychological difficulties they face in everyday life..

Study by Kashiga (2021): This study focused on exploring the relationship between social media and social relationships to determine family members' perceptions of the

use of social media in their social interactions and the resulting impact on improving family relationships. It was conducted in Kinondoni District, Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. The study used a descriptive research design and collected both qualitative and quantitative data. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select a population sample of 100 respondents.

A questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data, while in-depth interviews and observations were used to collect qualitative data. Quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22, which produced percentages, tables and frequencies to summarise the findings. Conversely, qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis and the results were presented narratively. It was found that the relationship between social media and the family has both positive and negative effects. Most respondents who reported negative effects stated that they had become less interactive with their families; social media contributed to unrealistic expectations of what family relationships should be like. However, positive effects included increased interaction between family members; social media facilitated the exchange of information and access to knowledge on various issues. The study recommended that the government ensure the improvement of laws related to the use of social media, such as electronic transactions and business, and address any violations related to the use of social media.

**8. Methodological procedures of the study:**

Before presenting, analysing and discussing the findings of the study, the researchers first defined the methodological procedures as follows:

**1. Study Method:**

The researchers used an experimental method based on scientific experimentation, description, diagnosis, and development, and selected an appropriate experimental design for this study.

**2. Sample of the study:**

The study included a sample of 65 individuals who agreed to participate in the counselling programme aimed at preventing family disintegration due to addiction to social media (Facebook), after applying the family disintegration scale designed by the researchers. Table (1) shows the characteristics of this sample.

**Table (1): Characteristics of the study sample**

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage %
<b>Gender</b>	Male	12	18.50
	Female	53	81.50
	Total	65	100
<b>Age</b>	20-30 Years	29	44.60
	31-41 years	22	33.80

	42-52 years	14	21.50
	Total	65	100
<b>Professional Identity</b>	Employee	52	80.00
	Non-employee	13	20.00
	Total	65	100

**3. Location and duration of the study:**

The study was conducted in the state of Adrar from 15 April 2024 to 21 May 2024. During this period, the questionnaire designed by the researchers was applied and the sessions of the counselling programme were conducted.

**Study tool:**

The researchers designed a scale to measure the variable of family disintegration among parents who wished to participate in the counselling programme and who reported excessive use of Facebook at the expense of their family structure. The scale contains 32 items divided into three dimensions:

- Family relationships: 9 items
- Communication between family members: 12 items
- Social isolation: 11 items

**4. Psychometric properties of the instrument:**

**1. Validity:** This is defined as the ability of the scale to measure what it is intended to measure. Discriminant validity was used to determine the ability of the scale to discriminate between the two ends of the trait.

**Table (02): Discriminant validity of the study instrument**

Extremes of the Trait	Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	T value	Statistical Significance	Level of Significance
Upper	20	232.15	3.29	16.33	0.00	Significant at 0.01
Lower	20	217.60	3.23			

From Table (02) we can see that the value of “t” is 16.33, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, we can say that the measurement designed by the researchers is capable of distinguishing between the two ends of the trait and therefore measures what it was intended to measure.

**Reliability:** This refers to the ability of the scale to give the same results when applied to another sample under similar conditions. The split-half method was used to investigate the reliability of the scale designed by the researchers.

**Table (03): Reliability of the scale using the split-half method**

Dimensions	Number of items	Reliability after	Coefficient Correction

		(Spearman-Brown)
Family Relationships	09	0.72
Communication Among Family Members	12	0.86
Social Isolation	11	0.74
Total Score	32	0.77

From Table (03) we can see that the researchers’ scale for family disintegration has a high reliability of 0.77. Therefore, we can conclude that the results obtained by applying it to the rest of the sample are trustworthy.

**9. Presentation, analysis and discussion of the results:**

Having established the methodological procedures for the research, we proceeded to present, analyse and discuss the results as follows:

**1) Presentation and analysis of the results of the first hypothesis:**

The hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-test scores of the study sample in the dimensions of family disintegration (clarity of communication channels within the family, roles and family relationships, and social isolation).

To determine this, the “t” statistical method for paired samples was used, as shown in Table (04).

**Table (04): Differences between the pre- and post-scores of the study sample in the dimensions of family disintegration**

Dimension	Application	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation	T value	Statistical Significance	Level of Significance
Clarity of Communication Channels	Pre-test	65	35.02	8.751	36.02	0.00	Significant at 0.01
	Post-test	65	79.35	4.140			
Roles and Relationships	Pre-test	65	35.02	8.751	20.16	0.00	Significant at 0.01
	Post-test	65	59.00	3.627			
Social Isolation	Pre-test	65	86.03	3.445	22.35	0.00	Significant at 0.01
	Post-test	65	98.38	3.729			
Total Score	Pre-test	65	168.42	18.597	22.98	0.00	Significant at 0.01
	Post-test	65	224.3	6.274			

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From Table (04) we can see that the “t” values for the dimensions of family disintegration and the total score are all significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-test applications among the study sample in the dimensions of family disintegration (clarity of communication channels within the family, roles and family relationships, and social isolation), favouring the post-test application. This is also reflected in the mean scores for the dimensions of family disintegration and the total score, which were higher than the mean scores for the pre-test application.

This finding is consistent with what Shabir et al. (2020) found in their study, which aimed to determine the effectiveness of a cognitive-behavioural counselling programme in reducing family disintegration among a sample of adolescents in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The researchers used a quasi-experimental design to apply the study instruments, represented by the Family Disintegration Scale, to a sample of adolescents (30). Within this framework, the experimental design was used based on the experimental group that underwent the research tools at the Issa Cultural Centre, the Rehabilitation Centre and the Creativity Training Centre to measure the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The results of the study showed significant statistical differences between the scores of the sample members before and after the application of the cognitive-behavioural guidance programme on the Family Disintegration Scale, in favour of the post-test.

**2) Presentation of results for the second hypothesis:**

The hypothesis states that there will be statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups at post-assessment on the dimensions of family disintegration (clarity of communication channels within the family, roles and family relationships, and social isolation). To determine this, the independent samples t-test was used, as shown in Table (05).

**Table (05): Differences between experimental and control groups at follow-up on dimensions of family disintegration**

Dimension	Groups	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation	T value	Statistical Significance	Level of Significance
Clarity of communication channels	Experimental	32	81.41	3.591	4.48	0.00	Significant at 0.01
	Control	33	77.36	3.673			
Roles and Relationship	Experimental	32	60.88	2.637	2.63	0.00	Significant at 0.01

s	Control	33	57.18	3.557			
Social isolation	Experimental	32	87.22	3.900	4.76	0.00	Significant at 0.01
	Control	33	84.88	3.209			
Total score	Experimental	32	229.50	4.399	10.86	0.01	Significant at 0.01
	Control	33	219.42	2.905			

From Table (05) we can see that the “t” values for the dimensions of family disintegration are all significant at the 0.01 level of significance, while the total score is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the dimensions of family disintegration (clarity of communication channels within the family, roles and family relationships, and social isolation) as well as in the overall score at post-test, in favour of the experimental group. This is supported by the arithmetic means of the experimental group, which were higher than those of the control group.

Given the existence of differences between the pre-test and the post-test, as well as between the experimental and control groups in the study sample in terms of family disintegration, we can say that the proposed counselling programme is effective in preventing family disintegration due to addiction to social media (Facebook).

In order to determine the effect size of the counselling programme (the effect size), or in other words, to understand the level of contribution of the counselling programme in raising awareness about methods and ways to prevent family disintegration due to addiction to social media, it is necessary to use the effect size measure “Eta squared”, as shown in Table (06).

**Table (06): Effect size of the counselling programme**

Variance	Sum of Squares	Freedom degree	Mean Square	F value	Statistical Significance	Level of Significance	Eta Squared
Between Groups	59.90	13	4.60	7.58	0.00	0.01	0.75
Within Groups	2459.47	51	48.22				
Total Variance	5119.35	64					

From Table (06) we can see that the value of Eta-squared is 0.75, which indicates that the effectiveness of the proposed counselling programme is high. Therefore, we can

say that the proposed counselling programme contributes to the prevention of family disintegration due to addiction to social media (Facebook) by 75%.

**Presentation and analysis of the third hypothesis:**

This hypothesis states that there are differences between the individuals in the study sample in the total score of family disintegration in the post-test that can be attributed to personal variables (gender, professional identity).

The following statistical methods were used to determine this:

For the variables of gender and professional identity, the independent samples “t” test was used, as shown in Table (07).

**Table (07): Differences between individuals in the study sample in the total score of family disintegration in the post-test attributed to personal variables (gender and professional identity).**

Variable	Group	Application	Mean	Standard Deviation	T value	Statistical Significance	Level of Significance
Gender	Male	12	225.33	6.78	0.54	0.59	Not Significant at 0.05
	Female	53	224.17	6.20			
Professional Identity	Employee	52	226.02	5.53	5.41	0.00	Significant at 0.01
	Non-employee	13	217.85	4.68			

From Table (07) we can see the following:

- For the gender variable, the value of “t” was 0.54, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that there are no differences between the members of the study sample in family disintegration due to the gender variable.
- For the professional identity variable, the value of “t” was 5.41, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating that there are differences between the study sample members in family disintegration attributed to the professional identity variable.

These results are consistent with those found in the study by Eed Al-Raggad (2021), which found no differences attributed to gender, educational level, age or family size. The researcher recommended the need to remove barriers between parents and

children, which would help them benefit from their parents' life experiences and guide them in overcoming the psychological difficulties they face in their daily lives.

**Suggestions and recommendations:**

Based on the above, researchers can propose some suggestions and recommendations that could help prevent family disintegration due to social media (Facebook) addiction:

1. Implementation of counselling programmes as a method of awareness and prevention of family disintegration.
2. Encourage family members to adopt open communication methods that allow individuals to express their needs comfortably.
3. To promote positive patterns of dialogue between family members.
4. Respect family relationships.
5. Ensure that each family member fulfils his or her role and provides support to those in need.
6. Parents should strive to integrate their children into the family system to protect them from social isolation.

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