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Assessment 2
Portfolio

Identify 4 images which represent families in the 21st century. Then compare and contrast these images to explore, in depth, how social media can influence current representations of family within society.

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Written Component

The implications of social media in family life.

Introduction

This portfolio will critically analyse the multifaceted components of social media and its influence on families and society now in the 21st century. It aims to explore how social media platforms shape interpersonal relationships, ways of communicating, and social interactions between family dynamics and their effects on family structures and wider societal standards. Through a comprehensive examination, this study will contribute to understanding social media's role in contemporary social interactions and its potential effects on family cohesion and societal values. It also aims to investigate the positive impacts of social media on communication and interaction among family members. It will analyse how social media can facilitate enhanced connectivity, fostering a sense of closeness and engagement. However, it is crucial also to acknowledge the potential negative consequences that social media may pose to family dynamics, particularly regarding diminished face-to-face interactions and impaired communication skills. This exploration offers a balanced perspective on the twofold impact of social media on family dynamics. It will demonstrate that technology is a crucial facilitator in maintaining interpersonal communication within families, mainly when a family member is frequently absent due to professional obligations. It underscores the importance of technological tools that enable consistent interaction, fostering a sense of connectedness and support among family members despite physical distance. Overall, the aim is to demonstrate that social media has both positive and negative implications for modern-day family life. In the beginning, it will define what social media is and how it came to be what it is in the world today.

Definitions of Social Media

Firstly, let's get a definition of what social media is

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The term "social media" encompasses various digital platforms for user-generated content and sharing, often confused with "social network." Clear definitions are vital in academic discussions to understand these platforms' roles in modern communication. Social media is an online platform allowing individuals to connect through public or partially public profiles, and explore their networks, with specific details varying by site (Boyd and Ellison, 2007, p.1). Obar and Wildman (2015) State that even though the Internet and the World Wide Web have always facilitated social interactions, the emergence and rapid proliferation of Web 2.0 features in the early 2000s marked a significant enhancement in the social dimension of web usage. Furthermore, the decreasing costs of online data storage enabled a broader range of Internet users to access numerous user-focused spaces filled with user-generated content. This development opened many opportunities for connecting these spaces to virtual social networks. Research indicates that the use of social media can influence family relationships both positively and negatively. According to a survey by Nabi and Keblusek (2014), young adults and children who interacted with their parents on social networking platforms felt a greater sense of closeness and reported a more substantial overall relationship.

Positives of Social Media

Families extend beyond physical spaces inhabited by their members; they represent complex social systems characterised by intricate interactions, dynamics, and relationships among individuals within the unit (Broderick, 1993, and Galvin, Dickinson, Marrow, 2006). Singh (2023) states the benefits of social media in family relationships lie in the enhanced communication and engagement it fosters among individuals. This is illustrated by (Appendix 1). The widespread use of social media has connected people and made it easier to stay in touch. These platforms allow users to communicate with distant relatives, share news, photos, and videos, and maintain a sense of closeness. As illustrated by (Appendix:2). Valkenburg and Peter (2017, p.1169 - 82) indicate that individuals who engage in consistent online communication can enhance and fortify interpersonal connections. Specifically, families who maintain regular digital interactions demonstrate significantly stronger relational bonds, suggesting that such communication practices are crucial in relationship development and maintenance. This is demonstrated in (Appendix: 1). Social media posts can create a distinct bond between parents and their teenagers. As demonstrated by (Appendix: 1). Although many individuals quickly highlight the adverse effects of social media on families, there are numerous benefits as well. However, it extends beyond merely sharing posts with relatives. Aim to produce rather than take in digital content to maximise social media's various positive effects. Creating content is an excellent way to foster collaboration. (Schumacher, 2021). While sharing posts with family can provide a brief chuckle, nothing compares to joining forces to assist parents and teens in transforming excellent concepts into engaging digital creations. As demonstrated by (Appendix:1,2). This process strengthens family bonds and serves as a source of enjoyable entertainment. Furthermore, it encourages trust between parents and

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their teens. Illustrated by (Appendix: 1,2). Collaborating on content also provides valuable insight into the types of media your teen interacts with online, enabling you to ensure their safety on social media while respecting parental boundaries (Schumacher, 2021). During the last decade, the increase in social media has highlighted the need to study how military families cope with separations. A review found a lack of focused research on their use of social media, which offers benefits such as fostering connection, enhancing communication, involving serving parents in family routines and improving the deployment experience. As illustrated by (Appendix:2). However, it also noted challenges linked to traditional communication methods (Wood, Gray, Goodier-McBard, 2022). Research in military and civilian contexts highlights the importance of face-to-face video communication in enhancing connections among distance-separated families. This is demonstrated in (Appendix 2). This technology fosters emotional closeness and alleviates feelings of isolation, which is especially relevant for military families facing long separations. Video communication is vital for maintaining familial bonds during physical separations (Goodney, 2014; King-O'Riain, 2015; Konowitz, 2013). Goodney (2014) states that Video calls engage young children more effectively than other forms of communication, likely due to their interactive and visual nature. This is illustrated by (Appendix:2). This aligns with the developmental needs of early childhood, as the immediate feedback from video calls fosters emotional connections and enhances attentiveness, making this mode of communication particularly appealing. Additionally, according to the Children's Commissioner (2018), there is international evidence suggesting that social media may contribute to enhanced well-being in children of military families, with research indicating higher levels of happiness, a greater sense of parental engagement, increased excitement, and feelings of security. Demonstrated by (Appendix; 2). It also noted that social media could foster a better knowledge of their parent's time in the military, which can assist in easing worries regarding parental safety. Children of service members may undergo adverse emotional and behavioural changes, which can include feelings of loneliness, anxiety, longing for their absent parent, and a deterioration of the relationship the connection between the parent who stays at home and their child. (Godier-McBard *et al.*, 2021). A global analysis of existing literature on the well-being of service children discovered that staying in touch with their active-duty parents can alleviate some of the negative impacts of separation. (Blamey *et al.*, 2019). Studies worldwide highlight several benefits for families that use social media or instant messaging to communicate. When families have limited opportunities to interact in person due to busy schedules or geographical distances, these digital platforms can help maintain and strengthen family connections (Abel, *et al.*, 2020; Bacigalupe and Bräuninger, 2017; Storch and Ortiz Juarez-Paz, 2018). The present arrangement facilitates the involvement of parents who reside separately from their children in essential daily parenting activities. This includes collaborative engagement in tasks such as meal preparation and assisting with academic assignments. Such involvement is crucial for maintaining familial bonds and supporting children's developmental needs (Cabalquinto, 2017; Nedelcu and Wyss, 2016).

Negatives of social media

Social media platforms have transformed the communication landscape, providing opportunities for connection and potential detriments to interpersonal relationships. While these platforms are esteemed for their engaging nature, they often foster disengagement among users, particularly within familial contexts. The pervasive use of social media tends to inhibit direct communication and meaningful interactions among family members, leading to a decline in face-to-face exchanges vital for emotional and psychological well-being. (Saveva, 2023). Further supported by Singh (2023). Nonetheless, spending too much time on social media may result in adverse effects, including lowered subjective well-being. Demonstrated in (Appendix: 3,4). In contemporary family settings, it is increasingly common to observe gatherings where individuals prioritise digital interactions over personal ones. For instance, families dining in a restaurant may focus more on smartphones, with substantive dialogue occurring primarily during practical exchanges, such as placing food orders (Saveva, 2023). This shift in communication dynamics raises concerns about the erosion of essential interpersonal skills integral to emotional health. The decline of meaningful communication within families prompts a vital inquiry: in the absence of genuine interaction, how do human relational behaviours distinguish themselves from those observed in non-human species (Saveva, 2023). The phenomenon of phubbing, defined as ignoring an individual in a social context in favour of focusing on mobile devices, poses significant risks to the dynamics and relationships within familial settings. As demonstrated in (Appendix 3) Insufficient discourse and adaptive measures concerning social media and mobile technology utilisation may contribute to this detrimental behaviour. For instance, the interruption of shared mealtimes by individuals attending to their phones for messages or missed calls exemplifies how such practices can disrupt familial interactions and diminish the quality of interpersonal relationships. This trend underscores the necessity for a more comprehensive understanding and constructive dialogue about the impact of technology on family engagement and communication (Bai, Bai, Dan, Lei, Wang, 2019 and Guazzini, Duradoni, Capelli, Meringolo, 2019). Madden *et al.* (2013) tell us that the involvement of parents and older relatives on social media, like Facebook, often makes teenagers feel their privacy is being invaded, leading to conflicts in family relationships. This highlights generational differences in understanding privacy in digital spaces and calls for a closer look at how it affects family communication and socialisation today. A study results in conflicts and reduced satisfaction within family relationships. Chou and Edge (2012) found that social media can decrease in-person interactions

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and emotional intimacy among family members. Valentine and Holloway (2001) stated that a study indicated that parents believed they had limited influence over their children's exposure to online content, including potentially harmful material or interactions, making them feel that their capacity to safeguard their children was diminished. Nabi and Keblusek (2014) found that heavy use of social media may cause conflicts and reduce relationship satisfaction among family members.

Parents engaged in treatments centred around family involvement reported that prolonged exposure to social media introduced additional stressors and risks for their already vulnerable children. Demonstrated by (Appendix:3). The analysis of themes. revealed a feeling of feelings of hopelessness among parents and a feeling of losing control. This reflects their perceptions of social media and the Internet as ongoing threats to parental authority and family unity (Lewis *et al.* 2015). A central theme that emerged was parents losing control over family dynamics due to Internet and social media intrusion in their lives. This concern is linked to three subordinate themes. First, the Internet offered easy and discreet access to content and people; second, virtual communication was constant, lacking limits of space and time; and third, children, being digital natives, often possessed greater technological skills than their parents (Lewis *et al.* 2015). As demonstrated by (Appendix 4). Many parents are concerned about children's easy access to unsuitable online content, which can confuse adolescents lacking the necessary skills to evaluate it (Lewis *et al.* 2015). Compared to earlier generations, a notable shift in the social experiences of contemporary teenagers and young adults is characterised by a reduced frequency of face-to-face interactions with peers. Instead, there is a marked increase in social engagement facilitated through electronic communication, predominantly via social media platforms. Demonstrated in (Appendix:4). This transformation brings up significant inquiries regarding the implications of digital interactions on social development and interpersonal relationships in this demographic (Miller, 2024). Social media platforms affect individuals and their families, including parents and siblings. A study pointed out that parents also engage excessively with social media, negatively impacting their children due to inadequate attention and time from them. (O'Keeffe, 2016). Sultana (2017) argued that the overuse of social networking sites can negatively impact family unity, potentially resulting in enduring estrangement or the deterioration of family relationships.

Conclusion

This portfolio Has emphasised the twofold effect of social media. Familial interactions. On the positive side, when utilised effectively, social media platforms can enhance family bonding, facilitate enjoyable interactions, foster information sharing, improve communication, create lasting memories, and support educational endeavours for children. Helping families who are separated due to work commitments stay in touch, benefit from face-to-face interaction with loved ones, and not miss out on seeing them. It also highlighted the advantages of in-person interaction with social media, allowing the absent parent to be involved in everyday aspects such as cooking and homework (Cabalquinto, 2017; Nedelcu and Wyss, 2016). Conversely, on the negative side, excessive or improper use of social media may lead to communication challenges, alienation of family members, and interference with in-person interactions within the family unit and in broader social contexts. It also causes friction and even conflict within the family. Also, parents feel they have very little control over the content their children may access through social media. This duality highlights the significance of managing social media responsibly to optimise its advantages while mitigating its adverse effects. Ultimately, The connection between social media and family interactions. It is complex, offering benefits and hurdles. As we explore this online landscape, everyone must collaborate to ensure that technology is a connection rather than a hindrance to enhancing family bonds. The existing research offers invaluable perspectives, laying the foundation for upcoming research and approaches at the intersection of family studies and digital communication. (Singh, 2023).

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Appendix 1 (Image 1)

Eli Asanova_ (2020) *Happy family with little kids enjoying using laptop computer together* Available at: [Happy Family With Little Kids Enjoying Using Laptop Computer Together Stock Photo - Download Image Now - iStock](#) [Accessed on 19/12/2024].



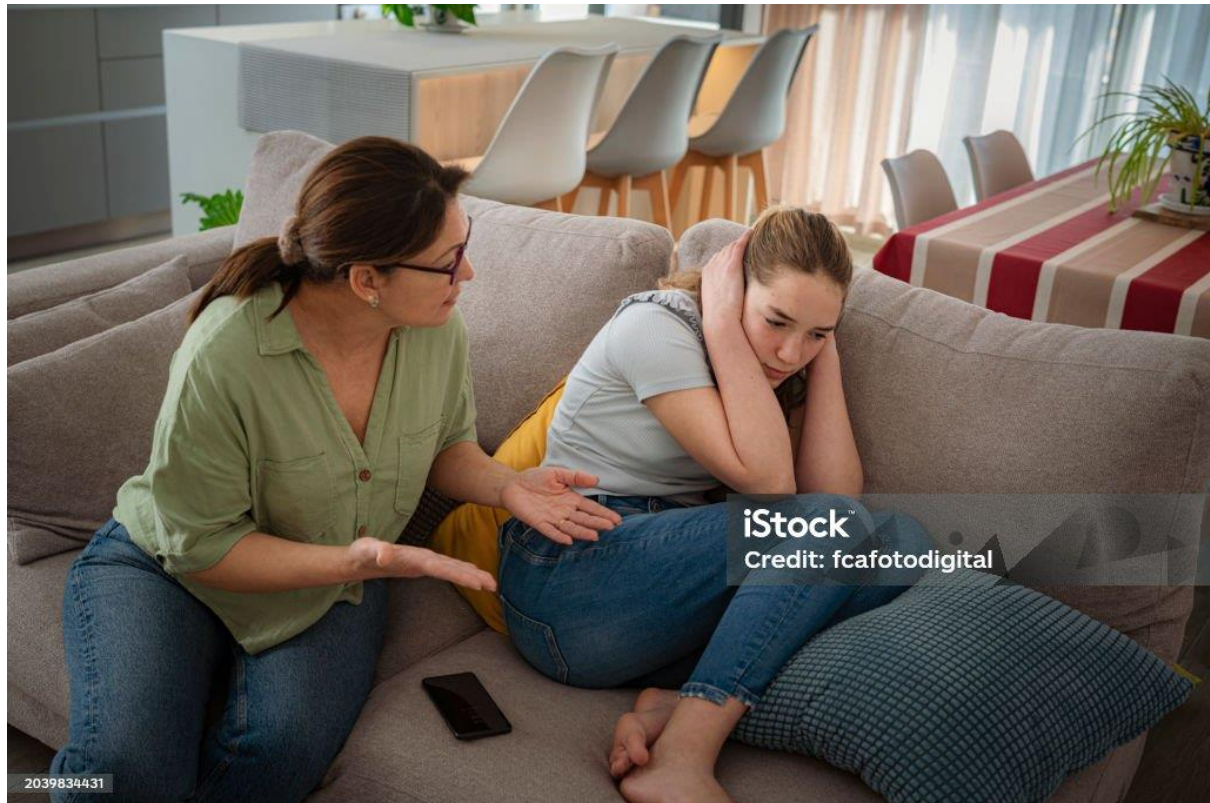
Appendix 2 (Image 2)

Videodet_ (2012) Military man video chats with family on a tablet stock photo available at: [Military Man Video Chats With Family On A Tablet Stock Photo - Download Image Now - Military, Armed Forces, Family - iStock](#) [Accessed on 19/12/2024].



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Appendix 3 (Image 3)

fcafotodigital_ (2024) Mother scolding to adolescent daughter about overuse of mobile phone
stock photo available at: [Mother Scolding To Adolescent Daughter About Overuse Of Mobile Phone Stock Photo - Download Image Now - iStock](#) [Accessed on 20/12/2024]



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Appendix 4 (Image 4)

Marco_plunti (2024) Internet dangers for young children stock photo Available at: [Internet Dangers For Young Children Stock Photo - Download Image Now - Child, Digital Tablet, Watching - iStock](#) [Accessed on 20/12/2024].



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