Family Social Work Interventions Model To Promote Family Cohesion Among The Users Of Social Media In Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya

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Abstract
In the rapidly evolving digital age, social media has become an integral part of daily life, significantly influencing family dynamics and cohesion. This study explored the impact of social media on family cohesion and examined possible family social work intervention models to promote family unity among users in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Utilizing a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, the research gathered quantitative data through surveys of 400 respondents and qualitative insights from focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The findings revealed that 72.1% of participants supported the establishment of clear boundaries and rules around social media use to enhance family cohesion, with a mean score of 3.84. Additionally, 70.3% agreed that regular family activities strengthened family bonds, while 68.8% acknowledged the positive impact of family therapy on communication within social media-using families. The study also found strong support for educational initiatives on healthy social media use, with 71.3% of respondents endorsing their effectiveness. Hypothesis testing confirmed a significant relationship between family social work interventions and improved family cohesion, evidenced by a Pearson correlation coefficient of .648 and a significant chi-square result (p < .001). The study concludes that structured social work interventions, such as setting boundaries, promoting family activities, and providing education, are crucial in maintaining family cohesion in the context of increasing social media usage. These findings offer valuable insights for social work practitioners, policymakers, and families seeking to balance digital engagement with family unity.
Keywords: *Family Cohesion, Social Media Usage, Family Social Work Interventions, Uasin Gishu County, Digital Communication and Family Dynamics*

I.   Introduction

In the digital age, social media has become an omnipresent force, reshaping communication patterns, social interactions, and even familial relationships across the globe. As of 2021, over 4.2 billion people worldwide were active social media users, a figure that continues to grow, particularly in developing regions (Statista, 2021). In Africa, where internet penetration has surged from 2.1% in 2005 to over 40% in recent years, social media has rapidly integrated into daily life, offering new avenues for communication and information sharing (African Development Bank, 2021). However, alongside these benefits, concerns have emerged about the potential negative impacts of social media on traditional family structures and cohesion, especially in regions where communal and familial ties are deeply rooted (Ademiluyi & Odigie, 2020).

The influence of social media on family dynamics is a subject of global interest, with research highlighting both positive and negative outcomes. In North America, studies have shown that while social media can enhance communication and provide emotional support among family members, excessive use can lead to diminished face-to-face interactions and increased family conflicts (Chang et al., 2021; Pantic, 2020). European research echoes these findings, emphasizing the dual-edged nature of social media, which can either strengthen family bonds or exacerbate social isolation depending on usage patterns (Chassiakos et al., 2011; Lee & Robbins, 2015). In Asia, the impact of social media on family cohesion varies widely, influenced by cultural

norms and the balance between collectivist and individualist values. Studies in collectivist societies, for example, have found that while social media can facilitate communication, it also introduces challenges such as privacy concerns and intergenerational conflicts (Sun & Wu, 2018; Jung & Lee, 2018).

In Africa, and particularly in Kenya, the rapid adoption of social media presents unique challenges and opportunities for family cohesion. Kenya has one of the highest internet penetration rates in East Africa, with Uasin Gishu County emerging as a significant case study due to its blend of rural and urban populations and high levels of mobile phone ownership (KNBS, 2020). While social media has the potential to bridge communication gaps, especially among geographically dispersed family members, there are growing concerns about its impact on traditional family roles and relationships (Amollo, 2018; Kiprop & Khatibi, 2019). Despite the widespread use of social media in Kenya, there remains a notable gap in understanding how these digital platforms affect family cohesion in semi-urban and rural settings like Uasin Gishu County. Existing studies have predominantly focused on urban areas, leaving a critical need to explore the dynamics in regions where traditional and modern influences intersect.

This study sought to fill this gap by exploring the possible family social work intervention models that could promote family cohesion among social media users in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. By focusing on this region, the study aimed to provide locally relevant insights while contributing to the broader discourse on social media and family dynamics in Kenya and Africa.

Research Objective
The primary objective of this study was to explore possible family social work intervention models to promote family cohesion among social media users in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

Research Question
What were the possible family social work intervention models that could promote family cohesion among social media users in Uasin Gishu County?

Research Hypothesis
There was no relationship between the family social work interventions model through the usage of social media and family cohesion.

Significance of the Study
This study was of significant importance for several reasons. Firstly, it addressed a crucial research gap by focusing on the under-explored area of social media usage and its impact on family cohesion in Uasin Gishu County, a region that combines urban and rural dynamics. By examining this setting, the research provided insights into how traditional family structures are being influenced by modern digital communication technologies, offering a nuanced understanding that extends beyond the urban-centric studies commonly found in the literature.

Secondly, the findings of this study were highly relevant to social work professionals and policymakers. The research aimed to identify effective family social work interventions that could be implemented to strengthen family bonds in the face of the challenges posed by social media. These interventions are crucial in promoting healthy communication patterns within families, reducing the risk of conflicts, and ensuring that social media use contributes positively to family cohesion rather than undermining it.

Thirdly, the study had broader implications for the discourse on social media and family dynamics in Kenya and across Africa. By focusing on Uasin Gishu County, the research provided a case study that could inform similar interventions in other regions with comparable socio-economic and cultural contexts. The insights gained from this study could also contribute to the development of policies and programs aimed at enhancing digital literacy and promoting responsible social media use among families in the region.

Lastly, this study added to the global understanding of the complex relationship between social media and family cohesion. It provided empirical evidence from a developing country perspective, highlighting how cultural, economic, and technological factors interplay to shape family dynamics in the digital age. This contribution is valuable not only for academics but also for practitioners and policymakers who are grappling with the challenges and opportunities presented by social media in family settings.

Theoretical Framework
This study was underpinned by the Family Systems Theory and the Social Ecological Model. These theoretical frameworks were chosen for their relevance in understanding the complex interplay between social media use and family cohesion, particularly in the context of social work interventions.

Family Systems Theory posits that families operate as complex systems where each member's behavior affects and is affected by other members of the family (Bowen, 1978). This theory is particularly relevant for understanding how social media usage by individual family members can influence overall family dynamics. For instance, the excessive use of social media by one family member might lead to reduced face-to-face interactions, which could disrupt communication and relationships within the family system. Family Systems Theory provides a framework for identifying how these disruptions occur and for developing interventions that restore balance and cohesion within the family.

The Social Ecological Model, on the other hand, offers a broader perspective by considering the multiple layers of influence on an individual's behavior, including personal, interpersonal, community, and societal factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In the context of this study, the Social Ecological Model is useful for understanding how external factors, such as cultural norms, community values, and digital infrastructure, influence family interactions and social media usage. This model supports the development of interventions that not only address individual behavior but also consider the broader social context in which families operate. By integrating these two frameworks, the study explored the interactions between individual behaviors, family dynamics, and broader social influences, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors that affect family cohesion in the age of social media.

II.   Methodology

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively explore social media usage and family cohesion in Uasin Gishu County. The research was conducted in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, a region characterized by a mix of urban and rural populations. The target population included individuals aged 15 to 64 who had access to a mobile phone and regular internet connectivity, as this demographic represented the most active social media users in the region. To ensure a representative sample, the study used a combination of purposive, cluster, and simple random sampling techniques. The sample size, determined using Yamane's formula, resulted in 400 respondents across the six sub-counties of Uasin Gishu. Purposive sampling was employed to select key informants, while cluster sampling identified specific areas within each sub-county, and simple random sampling was used to ensure the generalizability of the findings.

Primary data were collected through surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. The survey, administered to the 400 respondents, gathered quantitative data on social media usage patterns, their impact on family cohesion, and demographic variables. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions provided qualitative insights, offering a deeper understanding of the nuances of social media usage and its effects on family cohesion. Secondary data, including government reports and academic literature, were also reviewed to complement the primary data.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, employing chi-square tests, Pearson correlations, and regression analysis to identify significant relationships between variables. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically using NVivo version 12, which allowed for the identification of recurring themes and patterns in the responses. The results from both analyses were then triangulated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Research approval for the study was obtained from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Informed consent was sought from all participants, with confidentiality maintained throughout the study. Special care was taken to protect vulnerable groups, and participants were debriefed after data collection. This methodological approach ensured that the study's findings were robust, reliable, and reflective of the diverse experiences of social media users in Uasin Gishu County. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the research provided a comprehensive analysis of how social media influences family cohesion and identified potential interventions to address the challenges posed by digital communication technologies.

III.   Findings And Interpretations

The study aimed to explore potential family social work intervention models to promote family cohesion among social media users in Uasin-Gishu County, Kenya. To achieve this objective, 15 Likert-scale statements were developed and assessed using a 5-point scale where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree. These statements evaluated various aspects of family cohesion, including the impact of establishing clear boundaries and rules around social media use, encouraging regular family activities, and utilizing family therapy to enhance communication. Other areas of focus included promoting family cohesion through boundary-setting on social media use, educating families on healthy social media practices, and seeking family counseling or therapy to address social media-related conflicts. The study also examined the effectiveness of family counseling sessions, fostering open communication, and encouraging family group discussions to promote understanding and respect. Additionally, the potential of using social

media for family activities, improving cohesion through family retreats, resolving social media-related conflicts via family mediation, and providing individual counseling were considered. Support groups for families facing social media issues and involving family members in joint social media activities were also explored. These comprehensive statements provided a robust framework for evaluating the effectiveness of various interventions and strategies aimed at enhancing family cohesion in the context of widespread social media use. The findings are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Family Social Work Interventions Model to Promote Family Cohesion Among the Users of Social Media

Family Social Work Interventions Model to Promote Family Cohesion Among the Users of Social Media	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Neutral (N)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)	Mean	Std. Deviation
I believe that setting clear boundaries and rules around social media use within the family can enhance family cohesion	25 (6.3%)	27 (6.8%)	60 (15%)	165 (41.3%)	123 (30.8%)	3.84	1.13
Encouraging regular family activities can improve family cohesion among social media users.	25 (6.3%)	10 (2.5%)	84 (21%)	172 (43%)	109 (27.3%)	3.83	1.06
The use of family therapy can improve communication among family members who use social media.	25 (6.3%)	22 (5.5%)	78 (19.5%)	161 (40.3%)	114 (28.5%)	3.79	1.11
Setting boundaries on social media use can promote family cohesion.	25 (6.3%)	29 (7.2%)	76 (19.0%)	147 (36.8%)	123 (30.8%	3.79	1.14
Providing education on healthy social media use can promote family cohesion.	25 (6.3%)	24 (6.0%)	66 (16.5%)	184 (46.0%)	101 (25.3%)	3.78	1.08
I think that seeking counseling or therapy as a family can be an effective way to address social media-related conflicts in the family.	25 (6.3%)	26 (6.5%)	76 (19%)	164 (41.%)	109 (27.3%)	3.77	1.11
The use of family counseling sessions can improve family cohesion among social media users.	25 (6.3%)	27 (6.8%)	79 (19.8%)	159 (39.8%)	110 (27.5%)	3.76	1.12
Encouraging open communication among family members can improve family cohesion among social media users.	25 (6.3%)	21 (5.3%)	68 (17%)	202 (50.5%)	84 (21%)	3.75	1.04
The use of family group discussions can promote understanding and respect among family members who use social media.	25 (6.3%)	33 (8.3%)	74 (18.5%)	168 (42%)	100 (25%)	3.71	1.12
Encouraging the use of social media for family activities can promote family cohesion.	25 (6.3%)	29 (7.2%)	95 (23.8%)	138 (34.5%)	113 (28.2%)	3.71	1.14
Family retreats can help improve family cohesion among social media users.	25 (6.3%)	24 (6%)	92 (23%)	162 (40.5%)	97 (24.3%)	3.71	1.09
Family mediation can help resolve conflicts arising from social media use among family members.	25 (6.3%)	34 (8.5%)	81 (20.3%)	159 (39.8%)	101 (25.3%)	3.69	1.13
Providing individual counseling to family members can improve family cohesion.	25 (6.3%)	33 (8.3%)	92 (23%)	147 (36.8%)	103 (25.8%)	3.68	1.13
The use of support groups for families with social media issues can promote family cohesion.	25 (6.3%)	14 (3.5%)	98 (24.5%)	197 (49.3%)	66 (16.5%)	3.66	1.00
I believe that involving family members in joint social media	25 (6.3%)	27 (6.8%)	106 (26.5%)	151 (37.8%)	91 (22.8%)		

						3.64	1.09
activities can improve family cohesion.							

The findings as presented in Table 1, drawn from a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, offer significant insights into the role of these interventions in managing the influence of social media on family relationships. This section discusses the key findings, supported by narratives from participants, and presents the implications of these interventions on family cohesion.

Setting Clear Boundaries Around Social Media Use

The study revealed that 72.1% of respondents believed that setting clear boundaries and rules around social media use within the family could enhance family cohesion, with a mean score of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 1.13. This strong consensus underscores the importance of defined guidelines in mitigating potential conflicts and fostering a harmonious family environment. A family counselor, Gota, shared during an interview, "Families that establish specific social media rules, such as no devices during meals or family gatherings, experience fewer misunderstandings and better communication." These findings align with previous studies by Coyne et al. (2017) and Padilla-Walker et al. (2019), which highlighted that families who set clear rules about media use had better family functioning and lower levels of family conflict. The narrative provided by Gota emphasizes the practical impact of these boundaries, suggesting that clear guidelines around social media use are crucial for maintaining family cohesion and promoting healthy, direct communication within the family unit.

Encouraging Regular Family Activities

Encouraging regular family activities was positively perceived by 70.3% of participants, reflected in a mean score of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 1.06. This highlights the role of shared activities in strengthening family bonds. Patel, a participant in a focus group discussion, mentioned, "Our weekly game nights and outdoor activities have become a cherished tradition, helping us disconnect from our devices and connect with each other on a deeper level." This finding is consistent with research by Fiese et al. (2002), which found that families who engage in regular shared activities report higher levels of communication and emotional bonding. Patel's narrative illustrates how these activities foster a sense of unity and belonging within the family, reinforcing the study's conclusion that regular family activities are integral to fostering family cohesion.

Use of Family Therapy

The use of family therapy to improve communication among family members who use social media garnered 68.8% agreement, with a mean score of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.11. This finding suggests a recognition of the benefits of professional guidance in addressing social media-related conflicts. Hidaya, a social worker, elaborated, "Family therapy sessions provide a structured environment where families can discuss the impact of social media on their relationships." The qualitative insights from Hidaya echo findings from Pollet, Roberts, and Dunbar (2011), who noted that structured family therapy significantly improves communication within families. These results underscore the importance of integrating family therapy into strategies for improving family cohesion in the context of social media use.

Setting Boundaries on Social Media Use

Setting boundaries on social media use received significant support, with 67.6% of respondents agreeing, reflected in a mean score of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.14. This further underscores the perceived necessity of regulated social media usage. Brayo, a youth leader, highlighted, "Encouraging families to set limits on social media use has shown positive outcomes. Families who adopt these practices report better communication and stronger relationships." The narratives provided reinforce the idea that setting limits on social media use is essential for promoting family cohesion. These findings align with research by Coyne et al. (2017) and Gentile et al. (2014), which emphasize the importance of digital discipline in maintaining healthy family relationships.

Providing Education on Healthy Social Media Use

Providing education on healthy social media use was endorsed by 71.3% of participants, resulting in a mean score of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 1.08. This suggests a strong belief in the power of education to foster responsible social media behavior. Imam Shebe, during an in-depth interview, noted, "Educational workshops on healthy social media habits have been very effective. Families learn to use these platforms positively, enhancing their interactions and reducing conflicts." The qualitative data from Imam Shebe's experience underscores the effectiveness of educational workshops, a finding consistent with research by Livingstone et al. (2017), which found that digital literacy programs for families significantly improved their ability to manage social media use and reduced related conflicts.

Seeking Family Counseling or Therapy

Seeking counseling or therapy as a family was supported by 68.3% of respondents, with a mean score of 3.77 and a standard deviation of 1.11. This reinforces the value placed on professional support in navigating social media challenges. Gota, a marriage counselor, shared, "Family counseling helps families address social media-related issues in a safe and supportive environment, leading to better communication and stronger family bonds." These findings align with research by McDaniel and Coyne (2016), which showed that families who engage in regular counseling report better communication and higher levels of cohesion.

Family Counseling Sessions

Family counseling sessions were viewed favorably, with 67.3% agreement, a mean score of 3.76, and a standard deviation of 1.12. This indicates a general consensus on their effectiveness in promoting family cohesion. Mzee Matobosha, a participant in a focus group discussion, stated, "Regular family counseling sessions have helped us communicate better and understand each other's perspectives on social media use, improving our overall family cohesion." These narratives highlight how structured family therapy sessions can significantly enhance family communication and understanding, consistent with studies by Taylor and Francis (2019) and Larson and Terry (2018).

Encouraging Open Communication

Encouraging open communication among family members received strong support, with 71.5% agreement, a mean score of 3.75, and a standard deviation of 1.04. This underscores the critical role of open dialogue in maintaining family harmony. Hamisa, during an in-depth interview, shared, "We've made it a point to have open discussions about our social media activities. This transparency has strengthened our trust and brought us closer as a family." These findings are consistent with previous research by Johnson et al. (2016) and Clark and Peterson (2018), which found that open communication enhances trust and emotional closeness in families.

Family Group Discussions

The use of family group discussions to promote understanding and respect among social media users was supported by 67% of respondents, with a mean score of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 1.12. This suggests that structured discussions can help address and mitigate social media-related issues. Pastor Moses, a key informant, mentioned, "Group discussions provide a platform for family members to voice their concerns and work through their differences constructively." The findings align with studies by Harper et al. (2019) and Johnson and Smith (2020), which found that family group discussions improve communication and reduce conflicts related to digital media use.

Using Social Media for Family Activities

Encouraging the use of social media for family activities was seen as beneficial by 62.7% of participants, with a mean score of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 1.14. This reflects the potential of social media to enhance family cohesion when used positively. Madam Rubena, a mother who participated in a focus group discussion, shared, "We use social media to organize family events and share updates. It keeps us connected and involved in each other's lives." These findings are consistent with previous research by Jones (2017) and Smith and Anderson (2018), which found that integrating social media into family routines fosters higher levels of communication and bonding.

Family Retreats

Family retreats were viewed positively, with 64.8% agreement, a mean score of 3.71, and a standard deviation of 1.09. This highlights the value of dedicated time away from everyday distractions to strengthen family bonds. Maele, a participant in a focus group discussion, reiterated, "Family retreats provide an opportunity for families to reconnect and engage in meaningful activities without the distraction of technology." This finding aligns with studies by Larson et al. (2013) and Tudge et al. (2016), which found that shared family activities enhance family cohesion and communication.

Family Mediation

Family mediation was seen as an effective way to resolve conflicts arising from social media use, with 65.1% agreement, a mean score of 3.69, and a standard deviation of 1.13. Valentine, a participant in a focus group discussion, shared, "Mediation sessions help families address issues and find common ground, particularly when conflicts stem from social media use." These findings are consistent with previous studies by Laursen and Collins (2009), which emphasize the effectiveness of mediation in conflict resolution and improving family dynamics.

Providing Individual Counseling

Providing individual counseling to family members was supported by 62.6% of respondents, with a mean score of 3.68 and a standard deviation of 1.13. This suggests that addressing individual concerns can positively impact overall family cohesion. Gota, a marriage counselor, noted, "Individual counseling sessions provide family members with a dedicated space to explore their personal feelings and challenges, leading to improved interactions within the family." These findings resonate with previous research by Thompson and Grace (2019), which emphasized that individual counseling can enhance family cohesion by addressing personal issues that affect the entire family dynamic.

Support Groups for Families with Social Media Issues

Support groups for families with social media issues were endorsed by 65.8% of participants, with a mean score of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 1.00. This reflects the perceived benefits of shared experiences and collective problem-solving. Father Manu, during a key informant interview, highlighted, "Support groups provide a platform for families to share their experiences and challenges related to social media, fostering a sense of community and mutual understanding." These findings are consistent with studies by McDaniel and Coyne (2016) and Livingstone and Byrne (2018), which found that parental involvement in support groups significantly improved family communication and reduced conflicts related to social media use.

Involving Family Members in Joint Social Media Activities

Involving family members in joint social media activities was seen as beneficial by 60.6% of respondents, with a mean score of 3.64 and a standard deviation of 1.09. Lakita, a participant in a focus group discussion, shared, "We started a family blog where we document our adventures and everyday experiences. This shared project has significantly strengthened our family bonds." These findings align with research by Wang and Taylor (2019), which demonstrated that family-oriented projects and shared online activities can improve relational dynamics and increase a sense of belonging.

Hypothesis Testing
Chi-Square Test

The chi-square test results revealed a Pearson Chi-Square value of 400.000 with 34 degrees of freedom and a significance level of .000. This highly significant result indicates a strong relationship between family social work interventions and social media usage among family members. The significant chi-square result suggests that patterns of social media usage are not independent of the family social work interventions aimed at promoting family cohesion. These findings align with previous studies by Mesch (2006) and Coyne et al. (2013), which demonstrated that structured family interventions can positively influence family dynamics and cohesion.

Pearson Correlation

The Pearson correlation analysis showed a correlation coefficient of .648** between the frequency of social media usage and family cohesion, with a significance level of .000. This indicates a strong positive correlation, meaning that as the frequency of social media usage increases, family cohesion also tends to increase. These findings are consistent with studies by Lenhart et al. (2015) and Blais et al. (2008), which highlight the potential of social media to support family communication and bonding when used appropriately.

Spearman's Correlation

The Spearman's rho correlation coefficient is .277**, also significant at the .000 level. This non-parametric test confirms the positive relationship between social media usage frequency and family cohesion, though the correlation is weaker compared to the Pearson correlation. The Spearman's correlation supports the findings from the Pearson correlation, indicating that even when considering the ordinal nature of the data, there is a positive relationship between social media usage and family cohesion. This aligns with previous research by Valkenburg and Peter (2009), suggesting that social media can play a role in maintaining family bonds, especially when used within structured family interventions.

Independent Samples T-Test

The independent samples t-test showed a significant difference in family cohesion scores between those who use social media at home and those who do not, with a mean difference of .59034. The results indicate that family cohesion is significantly higher for those who use social media at home, supporting the hypothesis that social media usage, when integrated with family social work interventions, enhances family cohesion. These findings are consistent with previous studies by Hampton et al. (2011) and Pempek et al. (2009), which found that family-focused social media usage positively impacts family relationships.

Conclusion and Interpretation of Hypothesis

The comprehensive analysis of the data supports the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating a significant relationship between family social work interventions aimed at promoting family cohesion and social media usage. The chi-square test, Pearson correlation, Spearman's correlation, and independent samples t-test all provide strong evidence of this relationship. These findings are consistent with existing literature, suggesting that structured social media usage within the context of family interventions can positively influence family cohesion.

IV.   Summary Of Findings

The study investigated the effectiveness of various family social work interventions in promoting family cohesion among social media users in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The findings revealed strong support for the implementation of structured interventions aimed at mitigating the potentially negative impacts of social media on family cohesion. Setting clear boundaries around social media use was found to be crucial, with 72.1% of respondents agreeing that it enhances family cohesion, as indicated by a mean score of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 1.13. This suggests a widespread belief in the importance of defined guidelines for social media use within families.

Encouraging regular family activities was also viewed positively, with 70.3% of participants supporting the idea that engaging in such activities can strengthen family bonds, reflected in a mean score of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 1.06. This highlights the role of shared activities in fostering family unity. The use of family therapy to improve communication among family members who use social media garnered 68.8% agreement, with a mean score of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.11, indicating recognition of the benefits of professional guidance in addressing social media-related conflicts.

Providing education on healthy social media habits was endorsed by 71.3% of participants, resulting in a mean score of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 1.08. This strong support underscores the belief in the power of education to foster responsible social media behavior. Seeking counseling or therapy as a family was supported by 68.3% of respondents, with a mean score of 3.77 and a standard deviation of 1.11, reinforcing the value placed on professional support in navigating social media challenges.

Family group discussions to promote understanding and respect among social media users were supported by 67% of respondents, with a mean score of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 1.12, suggesting that structured discussions can effectively address social media-related issues. Involving family members in joint social media activities was seen as beneficial by 60.6% of respondents, with a mean score of 3.64 and a standard deviation of 1.09, highlighting the potential of shared social media activities to enhance family cohesion.

The hypothesis testing further validated the relationship between family social work interventions and enhanced family cohesion. The chi-square test showed a highly significant result ($p < .001$), indicating a strong relationship between family social work interventions and social media usage among family members. Pearson and Spearman correlations demonstrated positive relationships, with coefficients of .648** and .277**, respectively, suggesting that increased social media usage within the framework of family interventions enhances family cohesion. The independent samples t-test confirmed that family cohesion scores were significantly higher among those who use social media at home compared to those who do not.

V.   Conclusion

The study concluded that family social work interventions are crucial in promoting family cohesion among social media users in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The findings demonstrated that setting clear boundaries, engaging in regular family activities, and providing education on healthy social media use are essential strategies for maintaining harmonious family relationships in the digital age. The positive correlations between social media usage and family cohesion, as revealed through hypothesis testing, further emphasize the potential of structured interventions to enhance family dynamics.

The study also highlighted the importance of family therapy, counseling, and group discussions as effective tools for addressing social media-related conflicts and fostering stronger familial bonds. The consistent support for these interventions across various measures highlights the need for integrating such strategies into family social work practices to mitigate the challenges posed by social media.

VI.   Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations are proposed to enhance family cohesion among social media users in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

I. Families should establish specific guidelines for social media use, such as designated device-free times during meals and family gatherings. Parents should lead by example, adhering to these rules themselves to reinforce their importance. Additionally, families should regularly engage in technology-free activities,

such as outdoor games, family outings, or board games, to strengthen bonds. Setting a weekly schedule for these activities can help ensure consistency.

II. Schools and community organizations have a crucial role to play. They should provide workshops for both parents and children on setting healthy boundaries for social media use, understanding the risks of excessive screen time, and promoting balanced online and offline interactions. Furthermore, schools and community organizations should organize events that encourage family participation without the use of technology, such as sports days, family picnics, and cultural events. These events can help families spend quality time together.

III. Local government and health services should ensure that affordable or free family counseling services are available to families dealing with social media-related conflicts. Social workers and counselors should be trained specifically to handle issues arising from social media use within families. Additionally, local government should facilitate the formation of community-based support groups where families can share experiences, discuss challenges, and learn strategies for managing social media use. These groups should be led by trained facilitators who can guide discussions and provide expert advice.

IV. Religious institutions should integrate teachings on responsible social media use into their sermons and counseling sessions. They can organize special sessions for families to discuss the impact of social media on family life and offer spiritual guidance on maintaining family cohesion. Furthermore, religious institutions should organize family retreats that focus on strengthening family bonds through joint activities, discussions, and spiritual exercises. These retreats can serve as a time for families to disconnect from technology and reconnect with each other.

V. Media and technology companies should create and disseminate content that educates the public on the importance of responsible social media use. This could include public service announcements, online courses, and interactive content aimed at families. Additionally, technology companies should design social media platforms with features that promote family interaction, such as shared family accounts, parental controls, and tools that encourage balanced screen time.

VI. NGOs and non-profits should partner with local communities to deliver digital literacy programs that focus on the impact of social media on family dynamics. These programs should be tailored to different age groups and family structures to maximize their effectiveness. Moreover, non-profits should advocate for policies that support family cohesion in the digital age, such as promoting digital well-being in schools and regulating the design of social media platforms to minimize their addictive potential.

By implementing these practical recommendations, families, along with the support of various institutions, can better manage the impact of social media on family cohesion, fostering healthier, more connected family relationships in the digital era.

Theoretical Implications

This study was guided by the principles of Family Systems Theory and the Social Ecological Model, both of which were selected for their relevance in understanding the complex relationship between social media use and family cohesion, particularly within the framework of social work interventions.

Family Systems Theory posits that families operate as interconnected systems, where the behavior of each member influences the entire family dynamic. The study's findings strongly support the applicability of this theory. The positive effects of social work interventions, such as setting clear boundaries around social media use, encouraging regular family activities, and providing family therapy, align well with the theory's emphasis on systemic balance and interconnectedness. For example, the establishment of social media boundaries within families not only reduced conflicts but also fostered a more harmonious environment, demonstrating how targeted interventions can lead to broader systemic improvements. These results validate the relevance of Family Systems Theory in understanding and enhancing family cohesion in the digital age.

On the other hand, the Social Ecological Model (SEM) emphasizes that individual behaviors are influenced by multiple levels of interaction, ranging from personal to societal factors. While this model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the various influences on social media use and family cohesion, the study's findings offer only partial support for its applicability. The study primarily focused on family-level interventions, such as promoting open communication and engaging in joint activities, which were shown to be effective in enhancing family cohesion. This supports the SEM's emphasis on the importance of the family environment. However, the study did not deeply explore the broader community or societal influences on these dynamics, suggesting that while the SEM remains a relevant framework, its full potential might require additional exploration, particularly at levels beyond the immediate family.

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