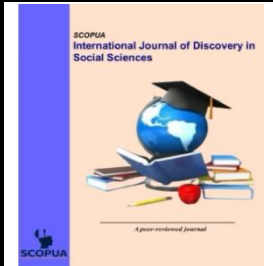




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Social Media Culture and Changing Patterns of Family Communication Among Urban Youth: A Qualitative Exploration of Intergenerational Relationships

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of social media culture on patterns of family communication among urban youth and focuses on intergenerational communication. The research took a qualitative, exploratory approach in line with the principles of Media Ecology Theory, which aimed to capture the lived experiences and interpretations of youths in the context of digital communication within their families. The participants were 15 urban youth aged 18 to 25 who were purposively sampled and engaged in semi-structured interviews, and reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The results identified five themes: social media as a double-edged sword in family bonding, a shift toward texting over face-to-face communication, generational differences in digital skills and expectations, continued negotiation of privacy and parental monitoring, and new ways of being close through content and family group chats. The findings indicate that social media is not an end to traditional family communication, but rather a reconstruction of the context in which family communication takes place, creating relational tension and new opportunities for family communication. The study provides practical suggestions for families who want to find a balance between digital and face-to-face interaction, and for educators and policymakers developing digital literacy programs to meet intergenerational communication challenges.

Keywords: Social media; Family communication; Urban youth; Intergenerational relationships; Qualitative research; Digital culture

1. Introduction

Urban youth have become more socially connected and more socially communicative than ever before, and social media has helped to shape their social identities. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and TikTok are no longer just secondary channels, but places where youth spend large parts of their everyday lives, making friends, looking for information and expressing themselves (Bengtsson & Johansson, 2022). The increasing reliance on digital platforms has been associated with wider sociocultural changes, as social media has taken over functions previously attributed to the "real" world through face-to-face communication, slowly influencing daily activities, routines, and ways of expression among younger generations (Bozzola et al., 2022). In urban areas in particular, where the use of smartphones and Internet connectivity is high, youth are increasingly using digital space to navigate their social worlds instead of physical space (Tulibaleka & Katunze, 2024).

Family communication is not spared from this change. In the past, families used to communicate values, concerns, and everyday experiences through their shared meals, through having to be physically present, and through face-to-face conversation. But in the digital age, these patterns are being refashioned. Families are increasingly using screens, text messages, and social media for communication, and this is impacting the nature and quality of interpersonal communication (Odenigbo, 2025). The digital age has brought new challenges to family life, as parents and children find themselves in a situation where there is a lack of a shared understanding of what is happening and how to interpret it when it comes to digital presence and digital absence (Ghasemi & Zakaie, 2025). Meanwhile, the wider sociocultural shift in the age of digital technology is also impacting value systems across generations, and families are not just learning to use new tools, but are also undergoing a transformation in their understanding of relationships and obligations (Kravchenko et al., 2025).



This shift has led to a significant generational divide in communication and connectivity. Social media offers a way to connect with your child on a constant basis, but it does not always lead to meaningful communication. Increased and unregulated social media usage has been linked to psychological stress and behavioral issues among youth, which has sparked concerns regarding its overall influence on family relationships and well-being (Zubair et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). Parents and youth may not have experienced the same technologies, and parents may have difficulty understanding what their children are doing online, while youth may feel that parental monitoring is inappropriate or out of the way from their actual online lives. This generational divide in digital fluency and expectation is not unique to the digital world, and in other areas of social life, digital transformation has led to a re-negotiation of authority, communication norms, and trust between generations (Behie et al., 2023). In the family context, this may include less face-to-face communication, misunderstandings about boundaries, and a loss of the family's communicative routines that were once important for family bonding (Ghasemi & Zakaei, 2025).

Although there is increasing awareness of these dynamics, the current research literature is largely based on quantifiable measures of social media use and psychological outcomes, which do not provide deep analyses of how urban youth and their families experience and interpret these shifts in their everyday lives. There continues to be a need to further examine in detail the perceptions of young people about the impact of social media culture on their relationship with parents and older family members. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate how the social media culture is impacting the family communication patterns of urban youth, especially when it comes to intergenerational communication. In particular, the study aims to address the following questions:

1. How do urban youth perceive the influence of social media on their communication with family members?
2. In what ways has social media reshaped the frequency, style, and content of family interactions?
3. What challenges and opportunities do social media platforms create for intergenerational understanding within urban families?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Media Culture and Youth Identity

Social media has emerged as a key location for young people to construct their identities, providing opportunities for them to practice and play with their self-presentation, negotiate belonging, and describe changing parts of their identities. Rehman (2025) suggests that platforms are not simply tools but also active spaces where youth construct their identities, influencing their self-perception and understanding of others and culture. This process can be collective and not individual, and young people learn group norms, symbols, and practices from their peer groups via media, which strengthen group identity and belonging (Lim, 2022). Cultural identity is also at stake, as young people can connect with their own culture and culture in other parts of the world at the same time, sometimes reinforcing and other times eroding their sense of cultural identity (Radwan, 2022; Ahmed et al., 2022). In digital media ecologies, youth create their identity through everyday practices of posting, curating, and interacting, positioning identity as a performance that is negotiated and constantly in process (Tsaliki, 2022). These dynamics have direct implications for family life because the identities that youth are developing online can conflict with, or be different than, the identities and roles that are expected of them within the family unit.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study is largely inspired by the Media Ecology Theory that focuses on media as not just a medium for information but an environment that affects perception, relationships, and social organization among humans. As described by Myers (2025), media ecology explores how the arrival of new media technologies transforms the contexts in which communication takes place, changing the pace, the expectations, and the meaning associated with communication. In the context of family communication, this approach implies that social media is not just a new means of communication that coexists with other family communication channels, but it is also the one that changes the communicative context in which parents and children interact. Tsaliki (2022) builds on this perspective by conceptualising youth identity and practice as part of a digital media ecology, one in which platforms, peer culture and personal expression are mutually constitutive. Media ecology theory is appropriate for a qualitative examination of intergenerational relations, because it emphasizes the relational and environmental changes that social media engenders as opposed to the discrete behavioral consequences.



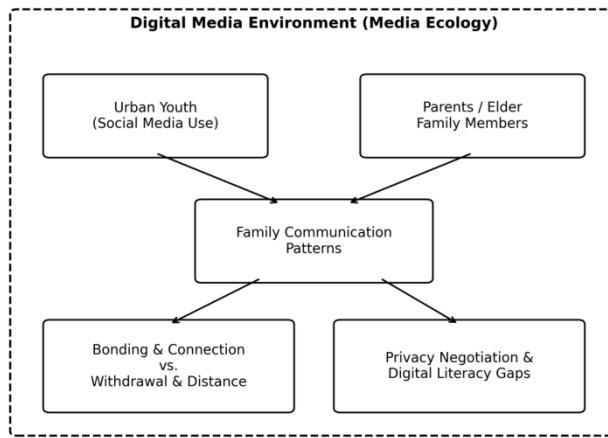


Figure 1: Conceptual framework illustrating social media as a mediating environment (Media Ecology Theory) shaping family communication between urban youth and parents/elder family members.

2.3 Prior Studies on Intergenerational Communication and Technology

Studies of intergenerational communication in the digital age suggest that social media can have positive and negative impacts on family communication. Social media literacy has become a key determinant in understanding and interpreting youth online behavior and a source of misunderstanding between generations (Cho et al., 2024). In general, social media has been found to enable communication with the world and between people, reducing the barriers to contact, but this broader connectivity does not necessarily result in greater relational understanding in the context of close relationships, like family (Fazil et al., 2024). Research on social interaction indicates that social media has been found to bring about an increase in the frequency of contact, but at the same time it brings about a decrease in the depth and quality of face-to-face contact, which is relevant to family communication (Azzaakiyyah, 2023). Youth's own qualitative review also shows they are aware of this tension, with some describing how social media has helped them feel connected to family and friends while others report feeling disconnected or misunderstood by their parents, especially when it comes to managing their online presence or expectations of how parents would like them to behave on social media (Popat & Tarrant, 2023). In addition, political and influencer-driven content creates another layer of complexity, because young people are growing up with values and viewpoints that are being spread through influencers that can conflict with those they are learning in the family, creating new sources of intergenerational conflict (Riedl, Lukito, & Woolley, 2023).

2.4 Research Gap Justifying a Qualitative Approach

Previous studies have provided rich insights into how social media contributes to identity formation, and the effects of social media on interaction and literacy, but these studies have been scattered across disciplines and have tended to use structured or quantitative measures that reflect behavioral patterns rather than the lived meaning which youth give to the changes in their lives (Cho et al., 2024; Azzaakiyyah, 2023). Research on intergenerational communication tends to be more individualistic, examining literacy disparities or wellbeing outcomes, but not examining how young people understand and talk about the changing communicative relationship with their families (Popat & Tarrant, 2023). Additionally, there is a considerable amount of literature available that is theoretically rich but has not been directly applied to the study of family communication as a relational environment (Tsaliki, 2022; Rehman, 2025). This gap calls for a qualitative study that can capture the complex, context-specific ways in which urban youth are experiencing and making sense of the evolving family communication patterns in their social media world.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study used a qualitative, exploratory research design to explore the relationship between social media culture and urban youth's family communication patterns, focusing on intergenerational communication. The qualitative approach was deemed most suitable as the study seeks to understand the subjective experiences, meanings, and interpretations rather than measuring variables that are predetermined (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Given there is limited in-depth qualitative research that has focused on this relational context, an exploratory design was chosen to allow the researcher to be open to themes that may emerge and dimensions of participants' experiences that may not have been hypothesized. In this overarching qualitative approach, the study adopted a thematic analysis as an analytic tool and an orientation, as it was appropriate for the study to uncover patterned meaning in the participants' accounts of family communication in the digital era (Braun & Clarke, 2023).

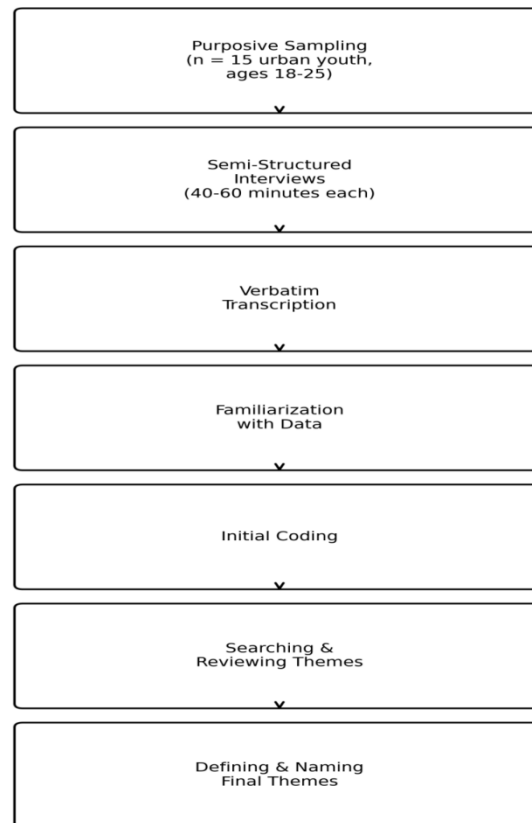


Figure 2: Methodological flowchart illustrating the sequential stages of sampling, data collection, and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke) followed in this study.

3.2 Study Setting and Population

The study targeted urban youth aged 18 to 25 years, as this age group is generally active on social media and has continuous, direct communication with parents and older family members. This age group was deemed to be especially significant because they have been raised in a family home with a high level of digital exposure. The population of interest was urban youth in family settings with at least one parent or older family member because intergenerational communication was the focus of the study and not individual use of social media. The settings selected were urban ones because smartphone ownership, access to the internet, and social media use are higher than in rural settings, making it an appropriate setting to explore the interaction between digital culture and family communication.

3.3 Sampling

The purposive sampling method was used to obtain participants who could give rich and relevant information regarding the research questions. This type of non-probability sampling enabled the researcher to intentionally select urban youth who were active social media users and who were able to talk about their communication patterns with family members. Fifteen participants were recruited, a number similar to that used in qualitative research where depth of understanding is the desired outcome rather than statistical generalizability. Interviews were continued until saturation of data was achieved, defined as when new themes or insights emerged in minimal amounts.

3.4 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data in a flexible yet focused way, exploring participants' experiences. A guide for the interviews was created around the key research questions of the study, including daily social media use, communication with parents/elders, perceived change in communication with parents/elders, experiences of connection and conflict associated with social media use, and participants' own interpretations of intergenerational understanding in their families. The semi-structured approach enabled the researcher to explore the topics that arose in each interview further, and to keep the questions consistent. All interviews were conducted for about 40 to 60 minutes each and were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants and subsequently transcribed verbatim for accurate and rich representation of participants' language for analysis.

The domains of the interview guide and their alignment with the research questions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Structure of the Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Domain	Focus of Inquiry	Linked Research Question
Daily social media habits	Platforms used, time spent, and routines of use within the household	RQ1



Domain	Focus of Inquiry	Linked Research Question
Perceived changes in family communication	How communication with parents and elders has changed in frequency, style, and content	RQ1, RQ2
Experiences of connection and conflict	Episodes in which social media brought family members closer or created tension	RQ2, RQ3
Intergenerational understanding	Participants' interpretations of how parents and elders understand their online lives, and vice versa	RQ3

Note. Interviews lasted approximately 40 to 60 minutes and were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. Probing questions were used flexibly within each domain.

3.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2017) was used to analyze the data, which involved familiarizing oneself with the data, coding the data, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes. This was done reflexively, as the researcher was conscious of their positionality and interpretation throughout coding and developing themes, as suggested in more recent literature on rigorous and reflexive thematic analysis practice (Braun & Clarke, 2023). Codes were manually generated and then checked for consistency across transcripts and then summarised into larger candidate themes that reflected common themes of meaning across participants' descriptions of family communication and social media use.

The analytic phases and their application are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: *Phases of Reflexive Thematic Analysis Applied in the Study*

Phase	Application in the Present Study
1. Familiarization with the data	Repeated reading of verbatim transcripts alongside audio recordings, with initial analytic notes
2. Generation of initial codes	Manual line-by-line coding of all 15 transcripts, cross-checked for consistency across transcripts
3. Searching for themes	Grouping related codes into candidate themes capturing shared patterns of meaning
4. Reviewing themes	Checking candidate themes against coded extracts and the full dataset for coherence and distinctiveness
5. Defining and naming themes	Refining the scope of each theme and naming the five final themes
6. Producing the report	Selecting participant extracts and relating themes to the research questions and literature

Note. Phases follow Clarke and Braun (2017), conducted reflexively in line with Braun and Clarke (2023).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted before data collection, and an informed consent form was given to all participants, explaining the purpose of the study, their rights to withdraw at any time without penalty, and that participation was voluntary. The anonymity of the participants was ensured during the research process through the use of pseudonyms and by storing all the audio recordings and transcripts in a secure location. Particular sensitivity was applied in the study, since it was focused on the family relationship, and participants were not pushed to reveal information on conflict in the family or personal issues that they were not comfortable with sharing.

4. Findings

The interview data were analyzed to identify five interrelated themes that shed light on the transformation of family communication in the context of social media culture among the urban youth in this study. The themes highlight opportunities and tensions that arise as digital platforms become integrated into intergenerational relationships. The themes and a summary of their core meaning, research questions, and an extract are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: *Summary of Themes, Core Meanings, and Extracts*

Theme	Core Meaning	RQ	Extract
1. Social media as a double edged sword in family bonding	Strengthens ties with extended family while weakening shared presence within the household	RQ1, RQ3	"We are all sitting in the same room but everyone is on their phone."
2. Changing communication styles: texting versus face to face	Text becomes the default for routine and awkward topics, at the cost of nuance and depth	RQ2	"It is easier to text my father for money or permission than to ask him directly."
3. Generational gaps in digital literacy and expectations	Youth act as digital guides; parents misread online activity, creating mutual frustration	RQ3	"He does not understand that I use it for my university group projects too."
4. Negotiating privacy and parental monitoring	Explicit and implicit monitoring prompts negotiation of trust and self censorship online	RQ1, RQ3	"I behave differently online than I actually feel."
5. New forms of closeness through shared content and group chats	Family groups and shared media create novel, affectively rich intergenerational contact	RQ2, RQ3	"She laughs and sends voice notes back. We never used to talk like this before."



Note. RQ = research question. Extracts are drawn from participant interviews reported in Sections 4.1 to 4.5.

4.1 Theme 1: Social Media as a Double Edged Sword in Family Bonding

Social media was always portrayed in a paradoxical way, bringing family members together and yet apart, by the participants. On the other hand, some participants reported that they have been able to maintain contact with extended family in other cities by using platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook, sharing updates and photos that would not have been shared otherwise. One participant explained,

"My phupo lives in Karachi and I barely used to talk to her, but now we are in the same family group and I feel more connected to her than before."

Meanwhile, participants often referred to social media as a place of physical and emotional escape in the close circle of family. Multiple respondents commented that they had seen a shift over time as families spent more time looking at screens together, or sharing meals while everyone watches their own devices. One participant reflected,

"We are all sitting in the same room but everyone is on their phone. My mother says we have become strangers who just happen to share a house."

This duality is proof that social media is not always a positive or negative influence on the family, but it is a restructuring of it, strengthening some relationships and weakening others, all within the same family.

4.2 Theme 2: Changing Communication Styles: Texting versus Face to Face

Participants' communication preferences with family members became evident, with the shift from verbal, face-to-face communication to text-based communication, especially for routine or minor issues. Many people reported that they were more comfortable using texting for some conversations, particularly when asking for information, updating, or talking about a subject that they were not used to discussing in real life. As one participant said,

"It is easier to text my father for money or permission than to ask him directly. On text I can explain properly without getting nervous."

But participants also acknowledged that this change was accompanied by a loss of nuance and depth of feeling. Some said that there were important or sensitive family conversations that still needed in-person interaction, but that younger family members were not as used to or comfortable with in-person interaction. One participant shared,

"When there is a serious issue, texting does not work. But now even serious things get delayed because everyone is used to just sending a message instead of sitting down and talking."

This means a shift in the norms of communication from one generation to the next, with digital text-based exchange taking the place of the traditional face-to-face exchange, even if this is not necessarily the best communication mode for effective and meaningful family conversation.

4.3 Theme 3: Generational Gaps in Digital Literacy and Expectations

A significant difference between the participants' own digital fluency and that of their parents and older family members was reported, influencing both the actual interactions and expectations. Many reported assuming digital parenting roles, assisting parents in navigating the privacy settings on their smartphones, social media, or online services. One participant noted,

"My mother does not understand how Facebook works properly, so I have to explain again and again. Sometimes she gets frustrated and says things were simpler before."

This literacy gap also created conflict over expectations, as parents often mismatched the type of content their children were consuming online, and youth felt their parents lacked understanding of the norms of the platforms. A participant explained,

"My father thinks that if I am active on Instagram it means I am wasting time or doing something wrong, but he does not understand that I use it for my university group projects too."

This was a greater sense of miscommunication, as parents' lack of technical knowledge combined with youth frustration at not being understood.

4.4 Theme 4: Negotiating Privacy and Parental Monitoring

One of the most debated aspects of family communication as a result of social media was privacy. There was a continuing discussion about the level of exposure parents wanted to students' online presence, and sometimes tension, over this issue. Several participants said that they felt their parents were checking the content they posted, their followers, or their messages, and that this was intrusive to them even though they knew their parents were concerned. One participant said,

"My mother asks to see my Instagram sometimes. I understand she worries, but it feels like she does not trust me completely."

Other participants spoke of more indirect types of monitoring, in which it was their awareness that their posts might be seen by family members that influenced their online behavior and self-presentation. As one of the participants explained,

"I am careful about what I post because I know my cousins will screenshot and show my parents. So, I behave differently online than I actually feel."

In this theme, social media is explored as a new way of negotiated visibility in the family, where young people are expected to negotiate between expressions of self and a consciousness of intergenerational surveillance, actual or imagined.



4.5 Theme 5: New Forms of Closeness Through Shared Content and Group Chats

In spite of the above-mentioned tensions, participants also found new and specifically digital ways of closeness within the family that had developed as a result of the use of social media. Especially, family WhatsApp groups were mentioned as places where family members from different generations shared religious content, family pictures, greetings on special days, and updates on their daily lives. One participant said this was good:

"Our family group is very active. Uncle sends good morning messages, my mother shares recipes, and we all comment on each other's photos. It keeps us together even though we don't meet often."

Shared content also enabled new forms of intergenerational interaction, not previously seen in other communication forms, such as parents commenting on their child's posts and youth sharing memes and videos with grandparents. A participant noted,

"My grandmother started using WhatsApp last year and now I send her funny videos. She laughs and sends voice notes back. We never used to talk like this before."

The results indicate that social media has transformed the way that families communicate, but it has also created new ways to communicate that some of the participants found meaningful and rich in emotion, undermining the simple notion of digital communication as a disruption to family life.

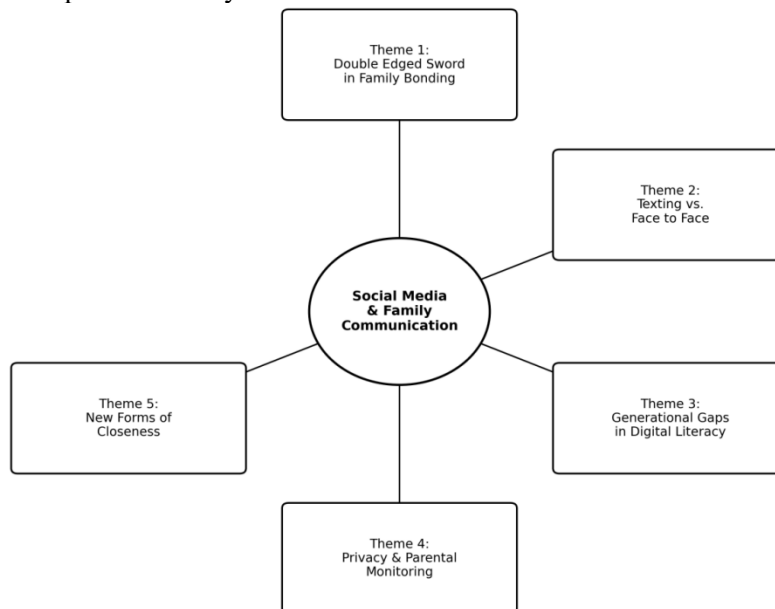


Figure 3. Thematic map showing the five emergent themes identified through thematic analysis, organized around the central phenomenon of social media and family communication

The five themes collectively present a multifaceted and sometimes paradoxical picture of family communication in the realm of social media culture. Social media does not seem to have a uniform impact on intergenerational relationships, but rather reconfigures the ways in which family closeness, conflict, and understanding are negotiated among urban youth and their families.

5. Discussion

The results of this study provide a complex picture of the impact of social media culture on family communication among urban youth, and cannot be easily categorized as entirely positive or entirely negative. Instead, as the study's guiding theory suggests, social media seems to change the dynamics of family communication, rather than simply providing a new platform for communication in addition to the others (Myers, 2025). The connection and disconnection in Theme 1 is also a reflection of this environmental restructuring, as families' everyday experiences of connection and disconnection are simultaneously reshaped by digital technology, as described earlier, which reorganizes families, rather than simply adding to them (Ghasemi & Zakaei, 2025).

The trend of using text communication as reported in Theme 2 is consistent with other research that has shown that social media has been seen to increase the number of contacts but may not have the same impact on the depth of interpersonal communication (Azzaakiyyah, 2023). The pattern reinforces the idea that convenience-driven digital communication can slowly replace more nuanced face-to-face communication, while at the same time reducing the barriers to routine communication. But importantly, this change was not seen as completely bad, which indicates that young people are learning to communicate in new ways to meet the needs of everyday family life, not to reject communication completely.

The generational literacy gap found in Theme 3 supports previous research highlighting the importance of social media literacy in understanding intergenerational literacy, and that differences in knowledge of social media platforms directly



affect communication and trust between parents and youth (Cho et al., 2024). This discovery also aligns with the larger research that suggests families, as social institutions, must also re-negotiate authority and understanding across the generational divide as part of a digital transformation. (Kravchenko et al., 2025). While previous research has focused on a technical dimension of this gap, the current finding indicates a relational dimension as well, influencing the understanding of each other's intentions and concerns.

Results on privacy and parental monitoring in Theme 4 build on previous research on adolescent experiences of social media, which also reports on the conflict between autonomy and parent intrusion (Popat & Tarrant, 2023). The qualitative evidence from participants, such as self-censorship because of family visibility while using social media, complements the quantitative findings regarding the association between excessive and/or anxious social media use and psychological strain (Zubair et al., 2023). This indicates that the psychological costs of social media use within a family may not just be related to the use of the platform but also to the relationship pressures of being monitored and/or interpreted by family members. Lastly, the presence of new kinds of intimacy in the family group chats in Theme 5 aligns with the research that identifies social media as a place where identity, culture, and relational meaning are actively created and shared among users (Tsaliki, 2022; Rehman, 2025). This result is also consistent with previous studies that have observed that social media is used beyond just information sharing for mood regulation and relational maintenance (Bengtsson & Johansson, 2022).

Table 4 brings together the relationship between each theme and previous research and how the current study contributes to the themes, while Figure 4 illustrates how the research questions, themes, and outcomes from the relationships are interrelated, with the themes of 1-4 converging on relational strain and the themes of 1 and 5 pointing to new avenues of connection.

Table 4: *Integration of Findings with Existing Literature*

Theme	Key Finding	Consistent With	Contribution of Present Study
1. Double edged bonding	Social media simultaneously connects extended family and fragments household presence	Myers (2025); Ghasemi & Zakaei (2025)	Shows restructuring rather than simple addition of a channel
2. Texting versus face to face	Higher frequency of contact with reduced depth of exchange	Azzaakiyyah (2023)	Youth adapt strategies rather than abandon meaningful talk
3. Digital literacy gaps	Literacy disparities fuel miscommunication and mistrust	Cho et al. (2024); Kravchenko et al. (2025)	Frames the gap as relational, not only technical
4. Privacy and monitoring	Tension between autonomy and parental oversight; self censorship	Popat & Tarrant (2023); Zubair et al. (2023)	Links strain to relational pressure of being watched
5. New forms of closeness	Group chats support relational maintenance and shared identity	Tsaliki (2022); Rehman (2025); Bengtsson & Johansson (2022)	Documents digitally mediated intergenerational intimacy

Note. Themes are discussed in detail in Section 5.

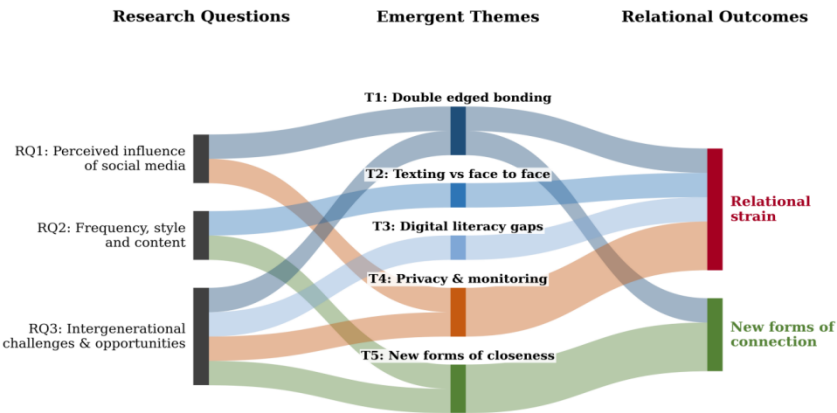


Figure 4: Alluvial diagram tracing how the three research questions flow into the five emergent themes and how each theme contributes to relational strain or new forms of connection within urban families. Band width reflects the number of research question and outcome linkages for each theme.

The results have a number of implications for practice. The results indicate that there is a need for intentional practices that maintain face-to-face communication practices while also sustaining digital contact for families rather than replacing one with the other. There is a clear rationale for including social media literacy programs that not only teach skills for using social media but also skills for relating and communicating with others, particularly for educators, because there is evidence that literacy gaps directly influence family relations (Cho et al., 2024; Fazil et al., 2024). The results highlight the importance

of community- or school-based digital literacy programs targeting parents to reduce the intergenerational knowledge gap found across this study for policymakers. These gaps could be worked on to help families maximize the relational power of social media (Theme 5) and reduce the relational tension that is seen in Themes 1- 4.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the influence of social media culture on the family communication patterns of the youth in the city, and to investigate the intergenerational family communication patterns. The results indicated a complex and sometimes contradictory relationship in which social media can enhance and weaken family relationships. Participants spoke about a shift to text-based communication for routine matters, generational differences in digital literacy and expectations, continued negotiation about privacy and parental monitoring, and new, digitally mediated ways of closeness through family group chats and shared content. Taken together, these findings indicate that social media is not just a substitute for family communication, but is also shaping the context of family communication, offering new possibilities for connection and new avenues for misunderstandings between generations.

6.1 Limitations of study

There are a number of caveats to be noted. The findings may not be generalizable to other age groups, rural populations, or families with different structures because the study sample was small and purposively selected. Furthermore, it only included the youth voice and did not include the voices of parents or older family members, which could have offered a more nuanced understanding of intergenerational communication patterns.

6.2 Future Research Directions

Future studies should include a multi-generational approach to the same families to include both sides of the communicative relationship. Comparative studies across urban and rural settings and longitudinal designs that capture changes in family communication over time would further enhance understanding of the ongoing transformation of family life in digital culture across contexts.

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