

The Role of Facebook in the Spread of Emotional Divorce: A Field Study of Married Couples in the City of Biskra

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Abstract :

The widespread diffusion of digital media has given rise to numerous social phenomena that have affected all components of society, particularly the family, which constitutes its fundamental social institution and plays a central role in the socialization of future generations. Among social networking platforms, Facebook has become one of the most widely used in Algeria, with most individuals owning one or more Facebook accounts. While some users regard it as a means of entertainment and leisure, others consider it an indispensable part of their daily lives, a pattern that may develop into Facebook addiction. This excessive use has contributed to the emergence of several social problems, most notably those affecting marital relationships. As husbands and wives increasingly spend considerable amounts of time on Facebook and interact with others online, excessive use may weaken marital communication and foster emotional estrangement between spouses.

Accordingly, this field study investigates the role of Facebook in the spread of emotional divorce, a phenomenon that differs from legal divorce and is often considered more detrimental because of its potential consequences for family cohesion. The study was conducted on a sample of married couples in the city of Biskra using the descriptive method. Data were collected through a questionnaire. The findings revealed that Facebook plays a role in the spread of emotional divorce through its two dimensions: marital silence and emotional estrangement.

Keywords: Digital Media, Family, Facebook, Marital Relationship, Emotional Divorce.

Introduction :

In the contemporary digital era, social media platforms have become an integral part of everyday life, with Facebook emerging as one of the most widely used platforms. Facebook has profoundly influenced social relationships by enabling individuals to communicate and interact beyond the constraints of time and place, thereby creating extensive networks of personal and social connections that may produce both positive and negative consequences. Among the emerging social issues associated with the increasing use of Facebook is emotional divorce, a phenomenon that has become increasingly prevalent among married couples and has attracted growing scholarly attention due to its implications for family stability.

Emotional divorce refers to a state of emotional detachment between spouses in which they continue to live under the same roof while experiencing a significant decline in emotional communication, intimacy, and mutual support. Although the marital relationship formally persists, it becomes devoid

of affection, emotional closeness, and meaningful interaction. In this context, Facebook may contribute to widening the emotional gap between spouses by encouraging emotional withdrawal and excessive engagement in virtual interactions. Moreover, excessive Facebook use may facilitate the involvement of third parties in marital relationships, thereby intensifying emotional estrangement and undermining the quality of spousal communication.

1. Research Problem

Since the emergence of social media platforms, Facebook has become one of the most influential platforms in contemporary society, affecting both individuals and communities. It is no longer merely a means of social communication; rather, it has evolved into an interactive digital environment through which individuals express their opinions, share aspects of their personal lives, and establish virtual relationships that may profoundly influence their real-life social interactions.

Emotional divorce is a social phenomenon with psychological and behavioral dimensions that may lead to the gradual deterioration of marital relationships despite the continuity of marital life. It is characterized by emotional detachment, diminished intimacy, and weakened emotional communication between spouses, even though the legal marital bond remains intact.

A growing body of research has linked the emergence of this phenomenon to the increasing use of social media platforms, particularly Facebook. Previous studies have shown that social networking platforms can influence marital relationships in both positive and negative ways. Although Facebook may strengthen communication between spouses when used appropriately, excessive use may contribute to social isolation and consequently weaken emotional bonds within the marital relationship.

One of the major concerns associated with intensive Facebook use is the formation of virtual relationships. Facebook enables individuals to establish new relationships with strangers or reconnect with people from their past, potentially giving rise to emotionally inappropriate relationships that may distance spouses from one another. Such relationships may intensify feelings of emotional emptiness within marriage and contribute to the spread of emotional divorce.

Furthermore, excessive Facebook use may lead spouses to neglect one another in their daily lives. Spending extended periods browsing personal profiles or following online activities reduces the time devoted to direct emotional interaction, thereby creating an emotional gap that reinforces feelings of isolation and emotional detachment.

Another issue concerns external interference through Facebook, including the involvement of friends or relatives in marital affairs. Such interference may increase tensions between spouses or intensify existing conflicts. Moreover, Facebook may encourage individuals to compare their marital lives with the idealized images presented on others' profiles, which can generate dissatisfaction, frustration, and anxiety.

Because Facebook primarily promotes written and virtual communication rather than face-to-face interaction, it also increases the likelihood of misunderstandings between spouses. Messages, comments, or online interactions may easily be misinterpreted, thereby widening the emotional distance between partners and in some cases, creating conflicts that would not have arisen in offline interactions.

Like many other Algerian cities, the city of Biskra has experienced significant social transformations in recent years, accompanied by a substantial increase in the use of social media platforms,

particularly Facebook, As online social interaction has become more widespread, emotional divorce has emerged as an increasingly noticeable phenomenon, raising important questions regarding the role of these platforms in weakening family stability.

Although many families in Biskra continue to uphold traditional social values and cultural norms, the growing influence of Facebook has, in some instances, conflicted with these traditions, creating new social challenges that affect marital relationships. Many married couples have become increasingly immersed in Facebook use, resulting in reduced face-to-face emotional communication and contributing to the intensification of emotional divorce.

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following main research question:

What is the role of Facebook in the spread of emotional divorce?

This main question is further divided into the following sub-questions:

1. What is the role of Facebook in the spread of emotional estrangement?
2. What is the role of Facebook in the spread of marital silence?

2. Research Objectives

The present study aims to:

- ✓ Examine the role of Facebook in the spread of emotional divorce.
- ✓ Define the concept of emotional divorce and its dimensions.
- ✓ Investigate the role of Facebook in the spread of emotional estrangement and marital silence

3. Research Methodology

The research methodology constitutes the systematic approach that guides the researcher throughout the research process by organizing its stages and directing the procedures required to achieve the study objectives. The selection of a research method is not arbitrary; rather, it is determined by the nature of the discipline, the research problem, and the characteristics of the study population. Accordingly, the present study adopted the descriptive method, as it is the most appropriate approach for investigating the phenomenon under examination.

The descriptive method is defined as "an analytical approach based on the collection of adequate and accurate information about a specific phenomenon during a particular period or over several periods, with the aim of producing scientific findings and interpreting them objectively in a manner consistent with the actual characteristics of the phenomenon"

4. Study Concepts

4.1. Definition of Facebook

Facebook is defined as "a social networking platform that has gained widespread acceptance and popularity, particularly among young people around the world. It was initially launched in 2004 at Harvard University in the United States by a student named Mark Zuckerberg. At first, it attracted only a limited number of users; however, following its development in 2007, it achieved remarkable global popularity" (khawla, 2020, p. 99)

Facebook is also defined as "a social networking platform that has attracted considerable interest and engagement from users by enabling them to exchange information, files, personal photographs, videos, conversations, and instant messages with friends, as well as establish friendships and social relationships within a relatively short period of time" (limiya, 2015, p. 212)

For the purposes of the present study, Facebook is operationally defined as a virtual social platform that connects individuals and groups from different regions of the world, enabling them to

communicate, express their opinions, establish social relationships, and engage in recreational and social interaction.

4.2. Definition of Emotional Divorce

Emotional divorce is defined as "a profound disruption and rupture in the emotions, feelings, and marital relationship, whereby spouses remain legally married and continue to live in the same household while becoming emotionally detached and disconnected in their interpersonal relationship. It has become increasingly prevalent in recent years due to a variety of factors that differ from one case to another, with intellectual and cultural incompatibility between spouses being among its major causes" (nouria, 2022, p. 151)

This definition suggests that emotional divorce primarily affects the emotional dimension of the marital relationship, resulting in emotional indifference and detachment. Unlike legal divorce, emotional divorce does not involve the dissolution of the marriage contract; rather, spouses continue to live under the same roof while experiencing emotional coldness and limited interpersonal communication.

Emotional divorce is also defined as "an undeclared divorce between spouses resulting from their inability to communicate effectively in daily life, accompanied by weak intellectual and emotional interaction, which leads to a formal continuation of the marital relationship despite emotional separation and continued cohabitation" (omar & hanaa, 2017, p. 151)

For the purposes of this study, emotional divorce is operationally defined as a state of emotional numbness and detachment between spouses despite the continuation of the marital bond, characterized by limited communication, diminished emotional interaction, and the failure of both partners to fulfill their mutual marital rights and emotional needs.

4.3. Definition of Marital Silence

Marital silence is defined as "the silent treatment between spouses, representing a form of negative emotional behavior within the marital relationship. It is manifested through verbal silence as an expression of contempt, rejection, or emotional withdrawal" (wafaa, 2021, p. 45)

It is also defined as "a problem experienced by some married couples that reflects the deterioration and stagnation of the marital relationship. Healthy, continuous, and effective communication between spouses plays a fundamental role in strengthening marital relationships, maintaining family cohesion, and promoting marital adjustment" (hajer, 2023, p. 17)

For the purposes of the present study, marital silence is operationally defined as a state of persistent verbal and emotional disengagement between spouses, characterized by limited communication, avoidance of meaningful dialogue, and the absence of effective interaction, making it one of the principal indicators of emotional divorce.

5. Previous Studies

Study 1:

A study conducted by Khawla Boulihia, entitled "Virtual Society and Its Role in Promoting Emotional Divorce: Facebook as a Model," was published in the Maghrebi Journal of Historical and Social Studies. The study aimed to define the concept of emotional divorce and examine the role of Facebook in its emergence. The findings indicated that Facebook has assumed a central position within the family and has become an integral part of daily family life. Moreover, it has contributed to reinforcing social isolation among family members. Based on its analysis of several empirical studies,

the research further concluded that Facebook addiction constitutes a social problem associated with emotional deprivation, leading to the weakening of marital relationships, the decline of constructive dialogue between spouses, and an increase in marital conflicts.

Study 2:

A study conducted by Omar Al-Rimawi and Hanaa Al-Shuweiki, entitled "Emotional Divorce among Married Couples in Hebron Governorate in Light of Selected Study Variables," was published in the Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol. 7, No. 12, 2017.

The study aimed to examine differences in respondents' perceptions of emotional divorce according to several demographic variables, including gender, age, place of residence, occupation, and duration of marriage. It also sought to identify the most important recommendations for improving marital relationships and preventing marital failure. The study employed the descriptive method and was conducted on a sample of 400 married couples in Hebron Governorate. Data were collected using a questionnaire.

The findings revealed statistically significant differences in the level of emotional divorce between husbands and wives according to the gender variable, with female respondents reporting higher levels of emotional divorce. Significant differences were also found with respect to the age variable, particularly regarding the communication dimension, with the 36–44-year-old age group exhibiting lower levels of marital communication. The study attributed this finding to the increasing family and household responsibilities experienced by spouses during this stage of life.

Study 3:

A study conducted by Rahima Chergui, entitled "Communication Between Spouses in the Context of Facebook Use," was published in the Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2023.

The study aimed to identify the motives behind married women's use of social media and to examine the impact of Facebook use on social, emotional, and intimate communication between spouses. The study adopted the descriptive method and was conducted among a group of married women in the Ain El Beida area of the Sidi Khouiled district, Ouargla Province. A snowball sampling technique was employed, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews.

The findings revealed that Facebook use reduced communication between spouses, particularly direct face-to-face interaction. The study also found that Facebook diminished expressions of affection and opportunities for meaningful conversation between partners. At the same time, the findings indicated that Facebook could strengthen emotional ties and reinforce marital relationships when spouses were geographically separated. However, when both partners lived under the same roof, Facebook often became an obstacle to the expression of emotions and effective marital communication.

6. Theoretical Framework

Network Society Theory

Network Society Theory constitutes an important theoretical framework for analyzing social relationships among individuals and groups. It focuses on examining patterns of interaction and social ties within the network society and explores how these relationships influence individuals' behaviors and social practices. According to this perspective, society is understood as a network of interconnected relationships operating within a digital environment. The theory was primarily

developed through the work of the American sociologist of Spanish origin, Manuel Castells (Al-Bakkouri & Bilal, 2024, p. 110).

Manuel Castells defines the Network Society as "a society in which the major social structures and activities are organized around electronically processed information networks, where information is generated, managed, and exchanged through microelectronics-based information and communication technologies" (Belhamiti & Bouhada, 2021, p. 1376).

Castells further describes the network as "the social structure of the Information Age—a network society composed of networks of production, power, and experience. These networks construct a culture of virtuality within the framework of global flows, transcending the traditional boundaries of time and space. Consequently, all societies have been profoundly transformed by the pervasive influence of the network society" (Sehli & Bekhouch, 2020, p. 96).

According to Castells, networks possess a remarkable capacity for adaptation and self-renewal, functioning in a manner analogous to biological cells. Each node performs a significant role within the network, while the network itself does not depend on a single node. As Castells explains, "if a node ceases to perform its function, it is gradually excluded or replaced, and the network reorganizes itself in a manner similar to biological processes. The importance of each node depends on its ability to gain trust within the network through information sharing, network programming, and interconnection, as well as through mastering the protocols that activate the network's critical switching mechanisms" (Zaoui, 2024, p. 135).

Castells also argues that the network society is characterized by increasing social connectivity and integration, as individuals seamlessly incorporate digital technologies into their everyday lives. The transformation of social communication is driven by the embedded logic of communication networks—the rules and principles governing their operation—which has given rise to what he terms networked individualism. In this context, individualism emerges as a dominant cultural pattern, while modern communication technologies enable individuals to establish, activate, or deactivate their social connections according to their personal needs and preferences. Consequently, the network society is fundamentally a society of interconnected individuals (Zaoui, 2024, p. 117).

Network Society Theory provides the most appropriate theoretical framework for the present study, which examines the relationship between Facebook use and emotional divorce. Facebook has evolved into a social space that contributes to the restructuring of human relationships, including marital relationships. As individuals become increasingly integrated into virtual networks, face-to-face interaction and emotional engagement tend to decline, creating conditions that foster emotional estrangement and marital silence, both of which constitute key dimensions of emotional divorce. Accordingly, Network Society Theory is employed to interpret the transformations that Facebook has introduced into family relationships, particularly with regard to patterns of social interaction and the evolving nature of marital relationships, given that the family remains the fundamental institution of society.

7. Scope of the Study

7.1. Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in the city of Biskra, Algeria.

7.2. Temporal Scope

The study was carried out over the period extending from March 23, 2026, when the research topic was selected, until the completion and submission of the final research report.

7.3. Study Population

The study was conducted on a randomly selected sample of married couples residing in the city of Biskra, Algeria.

8. Research Instrument

Questionnaire:

The study employed a questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. A questionnaire is defined as "a set of scientifically designed and structured questions developed to achieve the objectives of the research and directly linked to the study hypotheses, variables, and dimensions, which are organized into thematic sections and operationalized through measurable indicators and corresponding questions")SABEG(2023 ,

The questionnaire was administered to 144 respondents, who constituted the study sample.

The following table presents the criteria used to interpret the arithmetic mean scores.

Table 1. Interpretation of Respondents' Mean Scores

Mean Score Range	Level of Interpretation
1.66-1.00	Low
1.67-2.33	Moderate
2.34-3.00	High

Source: Prepared by the researchers.

To assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated using IBM SPSS Statistics, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis of the Questionnaire

Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
11	0.924

Source: Prepared by the researchers using IBM SPSS Statistics.

As shown in Table 2, the questionnaire achieved a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.924, indicating excellent internal consistency and a very high level of reliability. This value substantially exceeds the minimum threshold generally accepted in scientific research, confirming that the instrument is highly reliable and suitable for data collection and subsequent statistical analysis.

9. Presentation and Analysis of the Study Findings

Table 3. The Role of Facebook in the Spread of Emotional Estrangement

Statement	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Mean	Standard deviation	level
	t	%	t	%	t	%			
The Role of Facebook in the Spread of Emotional Estrangement									
1/ Facebook use has reduced the level of	08	5.6%	56	38.9%	80	55.6%	2.70	0.40	High

communication between my spouse and me.									
2/ I feel that my spouse's excessive use of Facebook has weakened our affectionate feelings toward each other.	20	13.9%	60	41.7%	64	44.4%	2.39	0.20	High
3/ I experience neglect from my spouse, which has led me to spend more time using Facebook.	32	22.2%	40	27.8%	72	50.0%	1.78	0.66	Moderate
4/ Excessive Facebook use has reduced the feelings of love and affection between my spouse and me.	4	2.8%	60	41.7%	80	55.6%	2.78	0.52	High
5/ I feel that my spouse's feelings toward me have become weaker	52	36.1	20	13.9%	72	50.0	2.39	0.40	High

Source: Prepared by the researchers using IBM SPSS Statistics.

The findings presented in Table 3 indicate an overall tendency among the study participants to acknowledge the role of Facebook in influencing marital relationships and the level of emotional closeness between spouses. Most of the statements recorded high levels of agreement, reflecting respondents' clear perception that excessive Facebook use has become a significant factor contributing to the weakening of emotional bonds within the family.

The first statement revealed that the majority of respondents believed that Facebook use had reduced the level of communication between themselves and their spouses, with more than half of the sample expressing agreement. This finding may be interpreted in light of the transformation that social media has brought about in patterns of family interaction and communication. Virtual communication has increasingly replaced face-to-face dialogue, resulting in fewer opportunities for genuine emotional

interaction between spouses. Moreover, this shift reflects a form of social isolation within the family despite spouses' continued physical co-presence.

The second statement demonstrated that excessive Facebook use by one or both spouses contributes to a decline in feelings of affection. This finding suggests that continuous engagement with the digital world creates a state of indirect emotional neglect, as individuals who devote substantial amounts of time to virtual interaction become less attentive to real-life emotional communication, thereby weakening feelings of intimacy, mutual appreciation, and emotional closeness within the marital relationship.

The third statement recorded a moderate level of agreement compared with the remaining statements, although approximately half of the respondents acknowledged experiencing neglect from their spouse, which led them to spend more time on Facebook. This finding can be understood within the framework of the reciprocal relationship between emotional estrangement and excessive social media use. Facebook is not always the direct cause of emotional estrangement; rather, it may also function as a means of escaping feelings of neglect and emotional emptiness within the family. In this context, Facebook use may represent an attempt to satisfy unmet emotional needs, serving as a functional substitute for deficiencies in the marital relationship.

The fourth statement revealed a high level of agreement regarding the decline in feelings of love and affection as a consequence of excessive Facebook use. This finding confirms that marital relationships are increasingly shaped by everyday digital practices. Excessive engagement with social networking platforms reduces the time devoted to family interaction and weakens the emotional involvement that constitutes a fundamental pillar of family stability, thereby undermining constructive dialogue and mutual understanding between spouses.

With respect to the fifth statement, a considerable proportion of respondents reported perceiving a decline in their spouses' feelings toward them. From a sociological perspective, this finding reflects a growing sense of emotional dissatisfaction within the marital relationship. Such perceptions appear to be associated with reduced face-to-face communication, increased involvement in virtual relationships, and diminished mutual attention resulting from the pervasive presence of digital technologies in everyday life. Under certain circumstances, these conditions may also increase the risk of marital infidelity.

Overall, the findings of this dimension indicate that Facebook has evolved beyond being merely a platform for communication or entertainment to becoming a significant social actor that shapes family relationships. When its use becomes excessive, it contributes to weakening emotional interaction and family communication, thereby facilitating the spread of emotional estrangement among married couples.

Table 4. The Role of Facebook in the Spread of Marital Silence

Statement	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Mean	Standard deviation	level
	t	%	t	%	t	%			
The Role of Facebook in the Spread of Marital Silence									

6/ I believe that excessive Facebook use causes withdrawal and social isolation between spouses.	08	5.6%	56	38.9%	80	55.6%	2.70	0.40	High
7/I believe that Facebook is a cause of marital problems.	20	13.9%	60	41.7%	64	44.4%	2.39	0.20	High
8/ I consider Facebook to be a cause of marital infidelity.	32	22.2%	40	27.8%	72	50.0%	1.78	0.66	Moderate
9/ Facebook use has reduced the amount of dialogue between my spouse and me.	4	2.8%	60	41.7%	80	55.6%	2.78	0.52	High
10/ My spouse spends more time using Facebook than he/she spends with me.	32	22.2%	40	27.8%	72	50.0%	2.90	0.80	High
11. I believe that Facebook negatively affects the marital relationship.	24	16.7%	0	0.0%	120	83.3%	2.45	0.39	High

Source: Prepared by the researchers using IBM SPSS Statistics.

The findings of this dimension indicate that the study participants demonstrated a clear awareness of the role of excessive Facebook use and its implications for communication within marital life. Most

of the statements recorded high levels of agreement, suggesting that respondents perceive Facebook as a factor contributing to the weakening of dialogue and family interaction between spouses.

The sixth statement revealed that the majority of respondents believed that excessive Facebook use leads to withdrawal and social isolation between spouses. This finding reflects a transformation in patterns of social relationships within the family. Rather than serving as a space for face-to-face communication and emotional sharing, the home has increasingly become an environment in which each spouse is absorbed in his or her own virtual world. This virtual environment provides individuals with a digital identity through which they can control the presentation of their personal information, including the use of pseudonyms, profile images, and other forms of self-representation, thereby allowing greater freedom of expression. Consequently, such patterns of engagement weaken family bonds and foster psychological isolation despite spouses' physical co-presence. Moreover, the predominance of digital communication in everyday life has reduced opportunities for direct interaction and meaningful dialogue between spouses.

The seventh statement revealed that a considerable proportion of respondents viewed Facebook as a source of marital problems. This finding may be explained by the fact that excessive use of the platform creates opportunities for marital infidelity, misunderstandings, emotional neglect, and mistrust, while also contributing to role conflicts within the family as a result of continuous engagement in virtual relationships. Moreover, the contemporary family has undergone profound structural and functional transformations affecting family roles, responsibilities, patterns of interaction and communication, as well as both internal relationships among family members and external relationships with relatives, neighbors, and the wider community. In addition, unregulated and excessive Facebook use may generate tension within the family by diverting time and attention away from family responsibilities and interpersonal relationships.

With regard to the eighth statement, the findings indicated a moderate level of agreement, although approximately half of the respondents considered Facebook to be a cause of marital infidelity. This variation may be attributed to differences in individuals' perceptions of infidelity. Some respondents may regard virtual relationships or intensive digital interaction as a form of emotional infidelity, whereas others do not associate such behaviors directly with marital infidelity. Nevertheless, this finding reflects a growing social concern regarding the potential impact of virtual relationships on the stability of marital life.

The ninth statement demonstrated that Facebook use has reduced the level of dialogue between spouses. This finding supports the prevalence of what is referred to as marital silence, whereby verbal, face-to-face, and emotional communication gradually declines as spouses become increasingly preoccupied with smartphones and social networking platforms. Since constructive dialogue constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of marital understanding, its deterioration may lead to the accumulation of unresolved conflicts and an increasing psychological distance between spouses.

The tenth statement further revealed that many respondents believed their spouses devoted more time to Facebook than to their marital relationship. This finding reflects a growing perception of emotional neglect and diminished mutual attention between spouses. It also suggests a shift in family interaction priorities, whereby virtual relationships increasingly compete with real-life relationships for individuals' time, attention, and emotional investment.

Finally, the last statement showed that the vast majority of respondents believed that Facebook has a negative impact on the marital relationship. This finding reflects a collective awareness of the social risks associated with excessive social media use. Although digital technologies facilitate communication, they may also become a source of family disintegration when they weaken direct interpersonal communication and undermine emotional cohesion between spouses.

Overall, the findings of this dimension confirm that Facebook contributes, to varying degrees, to the spread of marital silence by reducing opportunities for meaningful dialogue, reinforcing social isolation, and encouraging greater engagement with the virtual world. These patterns ultimately have a detrimental effect on the quality of the marital relationship and its social and emotional stability.

General Findings of the Study:

- The study findings indicate that excessive Facebook use has had a noticeable impact on the nature of communication between spouses, leading to a decline in face-to-face dialogue and emotional interaction within the family.
- The findings further revealed that the majority of respondents believed that Facebook has contributed to the spread of emotional estrangement by diminishing feelings of love and affection and weakening the emotional bonds between spouses.
- The study also demonstrated that continuous engagement with Facebook may lead one spouse to experience emotional neglect, prompting withdrawal from family interaction and encouraging the search for alternative forms of communication within the virtual environment.
- The findings showed that Facebook has contributed to the spread of marital silence by reducing opportunities for dialogue and discussion between spouses, thereby weakening mutual understanding and increasing the psychological distance between them.
- Furthermore, the study confirmed that excessive Facebook use reinforces social isolation and withdrawal within the family, as each spouse becomes increasingly preoccupied with virtual relationships at the expense of the real-life marital relationship.
- The findings also indicated that a considerable proportion of respondents associated Facebook with the emergence of marital problems, including misunderstandings, mistrust, and weakened confidence between spouses.
- The study further revealed that, in many cases, the time devoted to Facebook use exceeds the time allocated to family communication, thereby negatively affecting the stability of marital life.
- In addition, the findings suggest that some respondents perceive Facebook as a factor that may contribute to emotional infidelity or heightened marital tension due to the unrestricted exposure to virtual relationships.
- The study also demonstrated that the negative impact of Facebook is not attributable to the platform itself, but rather to the manner in which it is used and the extent to which its use becomes excessive. When overused, Facebook shifts from being a communication tool to becoming a factor that threatens family cohesion by displacing real-life interpersonal relationships.
- Finally, the study concludes that technological advancement and the widespread use of social media have transformed patterns of family relationships. Digital interactions have increasingly competed with direct interpersonal relationships within marital life, contributing to the emergence of new forms of family disintegration and marital silence.

Discussion of the Findings in Light of the Adopted Theoretical Framework:

The empirical findings obtained through data collection and analysis can be interpreted within the framework of Network Society Theory. From this perspective, excessive Facebook use has become an integral component of the social structure of the digital society rather than merely a means of communication. It has fundamentally reshaped patterns of social interaction, including those governing marital relationships. According to this theoretical perspective, digital networks function as social spaces that increasingly operate as functional substitutes for direct interpersonal interaction, occupying a substantial proportion of individuals' time, attention, and daily activities. Consequently, opportunities for face-to-face interaction within the family have gradually declined.

The findings further indicate that increased Facebook use is associated with higher levels of emotional estrangement and marital silence. This relationship can be interpreted as a shift in the locus of social interaction from the physical to the networked environment, whereby interpersonal relationships increasingly assume symbolic and virtual forms. As individuals become more deeply integrated into virtual networks, opportunities for direct communication, emotional exchange, and interpersonal intimacy diminish, thereby increasing the likelihood of emotional divorce.

Network Society Theory also emphasizes that technology is not inherently deterministic; rather, its social consequences depend on patterns of use and the broader social context in which it is embedded. Accordingly, a balanced use of social media may strengthen communication and social connectedness, whereas excessive use can weaken family ties by allowing digital interactions to dominate over real-life interpersonal relationships.

Accordingly, the findings suggest that emotional divorce should not be understood as a direct consequence of Facebook use alone. Instead, it should be viewed as one manifestation of the broader social transformations brought about by the network society, in which digital technologies have reconfigured patterns of communication and interpersonal relationships. These transformations have generated new challenges for the contemporary family, highlighting the need for a comprehensive sociological understanding that extends beyond purely technological or psychological explanations of the phenomenon.

Recommendations

- **Promote social awareness and public education:** Awareness workshops and educational seminars should be organized for married couples in the city of Biskra to promote the responsible and balanced use of social media, particularly Facebook. Such initiatives can help couples better understand the potential impact of social media on their emotional well-being and marital relationships, while encouraging healthier patterns of digital engagement that reduce the risk of emotional detachment.
- **Strengthen education on healthy marital relationships:** Training programs on successful and positive marital relationships should be developed, with particular emphasis on effective communication, emotional intimacy, and conflict management. These programs should also encourage couples to dedicate quality time to one another away from social media and other digital distractions.
- **Engage local media in awareness campaigns:** Local radio stations, television channels, and other media outlets should participate in disseminating educational messages highlighting the

potential negative effects of excessive Facebook use on marital relationships, while promoting a balanced integration of online and offline life.

- **Establish healthy boundaries for Facebook use in daily life:** Couples are encouraged to agree on reasonable time limits for Facebook use and to allocate sufficient time for direct interpersonal interaction. Such boundaries can help preserve the quality of communication and strengthen emotional bonds within the marital relationship.
- **Develop family guidelines for digital media use:** Families should establish clear rules governing the use of Facebook and other digital platforms, such as refraining from using mobile devices during meals or family gatherings. These practices can enhance family interaction and foster stronger interpersonal relationships.
- **Promote direct emotional communication between spouses:** Couples should be encouraged to strengthen their emotional connection through shared activities, such as spending leisure time together, engaging in common hobbies, or traveling. Developing shared interests can reinforce emotional intimacy and reduce excessive reliance on digital communication.
- **Seek professional psychological and social counseling when needed:** Couples experiencing emotional difficulties associated with Facebook or other social media platforms should be encouraged to consult psychologists or social workers. Professional counseling can provide effective strategies for restoring emotional intimacy, improving communication, and rebuilding healthy marital relationships.

Scientific Contribution of the Study:

The scientific contribution of this study lies in providing a sociological interpretation of the relationship between Facebook use and emotional divorce within the Algerian family. Rather than adopting a purely descriptive approach that merely associates social media use with disturbances in family relationships, the study explores the underlying social mechanisms through which emotional estrangement and marital silence may emerge within the context of digital transformation. Furthermore, the study is distinguished by its application of Network Society Theory to interpret the empirical findings and relate them to their broader social context, thereby enhancing the study's explanatory power and providing an analytical perspective that extends beyond the presentation of statistical results.

The study also contributes to enriching the Arabic literature on the sociology of the family and digital transformation by providing recent empirical evidence on the implications of Facebook use for marital relationships within Algerian society. Given the limited body of research addressing this issue in the Arab context, the findings offer valuable insights that may serve as a foundation for future studies examining the impact of digital transformation on family structures and social relationships, thereby contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge in this field.

Conclusion:

The findings of this study indicate that Facebook has become one of the factors contributing to the transformation of interaction patterns within the family. The empirical results demonstrate that Facebook plays a role in the spread of emotional divorce through its two principal dimensions, namely emotional estrangement and marital silence. The findings further suggest that the impact is not attributable to the digital platform itself, but rather to patterns of use and the extent to which it permeates the daily lives of married couples. Excessive engagement with Facebook may therefore

undermine emotional communication and adversely affect the stability and quality of the marital relationship.

The discussion of the findings within the framework of Network Society Theory further revealed that digital transformation has reshaped the nature of social and family relationships. Accordingly, emotional divorce should be understood from a sociological perspective that extends beyond individual or psychological explanations and takes into account the broader structural transformations characterizing contemporary society as a result of the growing prevalence of social media platforms. The originality of this study lies in its sociological examination of the relationship between Facebook use and emotional divorce within the Algerian family, with particular emphasis on the complementary dimensions of emotional estrangement and marital silence. Furthermore, the study integrates a theoretical framework to interpret the empirical findings and relate them to the local social context, thereby strengthening its analytical and explanatory value. It also contributes to enriching the Arabic literature on digital transformation and family sociology, while providing a foundation for future research examining the influence of other digital platforms or comparing different social contexts to achieve a deeper understanding of the transformations affecting family relationships in the digital age.

In light of these findings, the study recommends promoting awareness of the responsible and balanced use of social media, as well as supporting educational and counseling programs aimed at enhancing communication and dialogue skills between spouses. Such initiatives may contribute to strengthening family cohesion and reducing the factors associated with the emergence of emotional divorce.

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