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## **EFFECTS OF FACEBOOK ON FAMILY STRUCTURE OF USERS IN PAKISTANI SOCIETY**

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### **Abstract**

This research helped to find out the effects of Facebook on family structure of the consumers. The aim of the study was to find out how social media is affecting the family bonding in Pakistani society. Survey method was used, and questionnaire was distributed as a tool of data collection. The study took both youngsters and married couples as subjects by using snowball sampling technique from different cities of Punjab Pakistan. According to the findings, children give importance to their Facebook activities and friends rather than family. They are more inclined towards Facebook activities rather having conversations with their family and friends and attending family gatherings. Moreover, Facebook is creating problems between couples as well since they know many cases in which they had disputes or misunderstanding because of Facebook activities. According to the respondents, Facebook is a source of problem between their relationships. Maybe they are unaware of the problems but still they know such cases which have clashes with parents or partners because of Facebook. Hence, in the light of findings it has been concluded that social media is affecting family life of users.



### **Keywords**

Facebook, Family Structure, Pakistani Society.

### **1. Introduction**

Social media is a source of connection between family and friends. Social media helps one to carry professional, personal and cultural

activities. Young generation is growing with an addiction to new technology like computers, ipads and smart phones.

The whole world is rapidly accepting and adopting the advancements towards the technology. This technology has shortened the distances between people.

In December 2011, approximately 82% of world internet users over the age of 15 log on to different social media sites. Today social media is used to interact at community as well as macro level (Dijck, 2012). Facebook is one of the most popular media sites. In 2009 compete.com has ranked this as the most popular social networking site. Zuckerberg (founder of Facebook), child of a psychologist along with his colleagues Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes on 4th February 2004 launched Facebook. Facebook, was built only for a simple purpose that people want to share and stay connected and in touch with their friends, family and the people around them that if people have control over what they want to do or want to share with people, they will want to share more and that if people share more, the distances will be removed and world will become more open and connected. The purpose was to shorten distance between people, but it has created distances among people.

Facebook have negative as well as positive effects on people specially teenagers because they adapted this technology rapidly. The whole world is getting connected because of this technology but it has affected people badly. Mostly students waste their time on Facebook in useless chat with friend, sharing pictures and videos on their walls, adding different unknown friends to their friend' list and random gossiping

with them , these all have affected their health, academic performance and moral values. Lots of us use Facebook as a convenient way of receiving information about the people in our lives we don't call every day -- and people we don't know that well whose lives we enjoy watching from afar. Now mobiles have Facebook application that has made its usage more convenient. This rapid increase in the usage of social media has changed the way people communicate and effects the family communication. By giving positive developments in building social capital through social media it is also introducing new and harmful dimension to real life relationships by destroying the need and motivation of face to face communication leading to crippling of interpersonal communication. Effects of Facebook on communication are also quite visible on Pakistani society.

With the emergence of these social networking websites applications on mobile phones, there are increased health risks especially among children who spend more time on screens. The health problems associated with the excessive use of mobile phones are, weak eye-sight, disturbance in sleep-cycle, obesity, and deteriorated physical and mental growth as well. A child aged five or below due to spend prolonged hours on digital devices can suffer eye diseases; moreover, more time spent on these screens can also cause vitamin –D deficiency due to less exposure to sunlight, said by a doctor. In Japan and Korea 90% children are affected with eye diseases, and the main cause of this is the

excessive use of mobile phones. Hence, there is a need to aware the parents regarding these problems so that they can keep check on their children's activities and reduce their screen time (Khan, 2019).

### ***1.1. Background of the study***

Social media is getting popularity in Pakistan day by day. According to Interworld statics there are 44.6 million internet users in Pakistan. Facebook is one of the popular social networking sites in Pakistan with active users of 35 million which has increased by 17 % annually in 2017 and 91% of users access Facebook by mobile. According to the company itself" Facebook's mission is to make the world more open and connected" (Sociology.com). People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them. Facebook was basically created for Harvard students only, for them to keep in touch when they were away from the campus. But now everyone is using this site to stay connected. New communication technologies are often met with questions about their impact on psychological well-being. (Burke, Kraut, & Marlow, 2011; Deters & Mehl, 2012; Verduyn et al., 2014). A study titled as "The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families" explains the impact of social media on children, teenager and families. Using social media Web sites is among the most common activity of today's children and adolescents. Many parents today use technology well and feel comfortable and capable with the programs and

online venues that their children and adolescents are using. But still there is a large ratio of parents who don't feel comfortable with the social networking sites. Such parents may lack a basic understanding of these new forms of socialization or they still have a bad image of such sites which shows a lack of trust between parents and their children. In addition, these parents often lack a basic understanding that kids' online lives are an extension of their offline lives. He explains this discontentment among parent and children may be because of generation gap, parents are not well aware of new technologies due to which large distances have been created between them (Keefin & Pearson).

Users don't realize the negative effects of Facebook and are being addicted to it. They indulge themselves in the world of Facebook that they create their own small limited world. They don't get socialize rather they have hundreds of friends on Facebook account, but their real-world interaction get start diminishing. This is happening in Pakistani society as well teenagers are not that much socializing now. The personal data becomes public on this social site, threatening privacy. This is not reasonable, unless you want to be contacted by hundreds of people that don't know you. This shows the issue of privacy and it could be get in that way that people are connecting to hundreds of people they even don't know. Privacy is disturbed due to this social network and it may open ways for friendship on large scale. This shows the freedom specially children get because of this negative advantage of

facebook which lack trust between children and their parents (Attia, 2013).

Many studies have been explained the effects of social networking sites on family interaction. Social networking has negative impact on the family structure of American Families as well. According to the researcher, teenagers are more affected by the growing trends. Family activities have been replaced by texting, chats on Facebook and the time which should be given to families is replaced by the internet social networking sites. Many suggestions were given to resolve this issue like parents must have knowledge about what their children are doing on Facebook. The time limit should be given to them, make sure that sites which are being used by children are well enough for their age (Moore, 2009). Due to the increased use of mobile phone, there is a growing stress level as well especially among youngsters. So to check the anxieties among its users, UK Post Office conducted a study in 2010; the study revealed that in the Britain almost 53% mobile phone customers feel troubled and restless when their phone is lost, out of battery or credit and when there is no signal found. It is called "Nomophobia" means no mobile phone phobia. Total 2,163 respondents were taken for the study by which 58% men and almost 47% women found to suffer from the phobia. When found the stressed ones, 9% feel anxious when their phones are off. The study also found that fifty five percent of respondents told that they feel restless when they cannot use their phones to keep in touch with their family or friends (Elmore, 2014).

Social networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace have changed the way families communicate. It is being blamed for relationship problems mainly interpersonal, private, face to face communication and time demands. Though, this phenomenon is not as widespread in third world countries like Pakistan as compared to developed ones. A study carried out by Angela revealed that Facebook is now a primary ways in which parents learn more about their children's lives. Despite the changing lifestyles and ever-increasing personal mobility that characterize modern society, the family remains the central element of contemporary life. It is seen that people often post their personal disputes on what's on your mind" question in Facebook status update rather discussing with their family members, which ultimately wreck their relationships. It is seen that Children preferences are internet friends rather than their family, they feel secure and a level of comfort between them. They announce their achievements and talk about their failure on Facebook status rather discussing with family. This study aims to find out the impact of Facebook on communication pattern between families in Punjab.

### 1.3 Objectives

- To find out whether children are giving more preference to their friends rather than their families.
- To explore whether Facebook activities may be considered as a source of misunderstandings in married life.

#### 1.4 Research questions

- Do children give more preference to their friends rather than their own families?
- Does Facebook considered to be a source of disputes and misunderstanding between husband and wife?

#### 1.5 Hypotheses

$H_0$  Extensive exposure to Facebook is not affecting the interaction between children and their parents.

$H_1$  Extensive exposure to Facebook is affecting the interaction between children and their parents.

$H_0$  Facebook activities are not creating problems in matrimonial relationship of the users.

$H_1$  Facebook activities are creating problems in matrimonial relationship of the users.

## 2. Research Design

Survey method was used for this study. This study is quantitative in nature. A questionnaire was developed on 5-point Likert scale and close-ended questions were used as a tool of data collection in this study. The population of this research was youngsters and married people (who use Facebook) belonged to different cities of Pakistan (Punjab). Population comprises of different families of Pakistani society. Researchers have applied non-random sampling technique for this study. By applying the rules of “snowball sampling” a sample of 250 respondents were formed comprising of 200 teenagers and young people and 50 married couples from different cities of Punjab.

## 3. Results

#### Hypothesis 1:

$H_0$  Extensive exposure to Facebook is not affecting the interaction between children and their parents.

$H_1$  Extensive exposure to Facebook is affecting the interaction between children and their parents.

One - proportion test was applied in Mini Tab Statistical Software.

Confidence level of 95.0

Level of Significance = 0.05

#### Test and CI for One Proportions:

Test of  $p = 0.5$  vs  $p > 0.5$

| Sample          | X        | N   | Sample p |
|-----------------|----------|-----|----------|
| 95% Lower Bound |          |     | P-Value  |
| 1               | 172      | 250 | 0.688000 |
|                 | 0.636298 |     | 0.000    |

**Interpretation:** The one proportion test also known as one sample z-test was used to evaluate whether population parameter was significantly different from hypothesized value. As the P value is less than 0.05 which shows that Null hypothesis is rejected so it is concluded that due to exposure to Facebook the interaction between children and their parents have reduced.

#### Hypothesis 2:

$H_0$  Facebook activities are not creating problems in matrimonial relationship of the users.

$H_1$  Facebook activities are creating problems in matrimonial relationship of the users.

One- proportion test was applied in Mini Tab Statistical Software

Confidence level of 95.0

Level of Significance = 0.05

**Test and CI for One Proportions:**

Test of  $p = 0.5$  vs  $p > 0.5$

| Exact           |     |     |          |
|-----------------|-----|-----|----------|
| Sample          | X   | N   | Sample p |
| 95% Lower Bound |     |     | P-Value  |
| 1               | 149 | 250 | 0.596000 |
| 0.542298        |     |     | 0.001    |

**Interpretation:** The one proportion test also known as one sample z-test was used to evaluate whether population parameter was significantly different from hypothesized value. As the P value is less than 0.05 which shows that Null hypothesis is rejected so it is concluded that Facebook is creating problems in matrimonial relations.

**4. Discussion and Analysis**

The main purpose of this study was to find out the effects of Facebook on family structure of the users in Pakistani society. In order to get people views sample size of 250 was taken in which 200 were teenagers and youngsters while 50 were the married couples who use Facebook. The research was supported by cultivation theory. As this theory suggests that more you are exposed to media more you will get affected. Today's generation is involved in social media therefore the impact of media is more on young generation. This study finds out that 44% respondents used Facebook for more than 2 hours per day. Then the question was asked that have they ever been forbidden by their parents for the excess use of Facebook in which 3% respondents were forbidden many times, 57% were

sometimes. Keeffe and Pearson, in their article "the Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families" explains the impact of social media on children, teenager and families. Many parents use this technology and feel comfortable but still don't take technology as a good symbol. As 57% respondents say that they were forbidden by their parents sometimes which show that their parents are not comfortable with their Facebook activities. The response of question about friend list on Facebook of respondents was that 35% have friends and relatives, no one have only relatives, 43% have friends of friends and friends, 11% have friends, relatives and friend of friends, 4% have friends, random people and friends of friends while 7% have all of above in their friend list on Facebook account.

On asking the question from couples that are they ever forbidden by their partners for using Facebook, 3% respondents were forbidden many times. 28% were sometimes while 60% were never forbidden. This response shows that in couples it is not so common that they are forbidden but still 28% responses shows that there are some couples who are forbidden and this may be because of excess use or not giving time to their family or anything else. The finding was relating to the study which explains the internet impact on relationships particularly marriages. The research concludes that Facebook itself doesn't wreck relations but people who use Facebook wreck other's relations. Media has much

negative aspects than positive aspects. Facebook and other social networking sites can certainly connect you with long-lost friends. But a new study suggests Facebook can also help disconnect you from your better half (Borchard,n.d.).

The response to the question asked from respondents about whether technology can help relationships focus on ideas and common values and not focus so much on superficial physical appearance 24% agreed that technology focus on ideas and common values not on superficial things, 5% strongly agreed with this concept while 17.5% disagreed, 24%strongly disagreed and 29.5% agreed to some extent. While married people' replies were that 10% agreed that technology focus on ideas and common values not on superficial things, 4% strongly agreed with this concept while 16% disagreed, 14%strongly disagreed and 46% agreed to some extent.

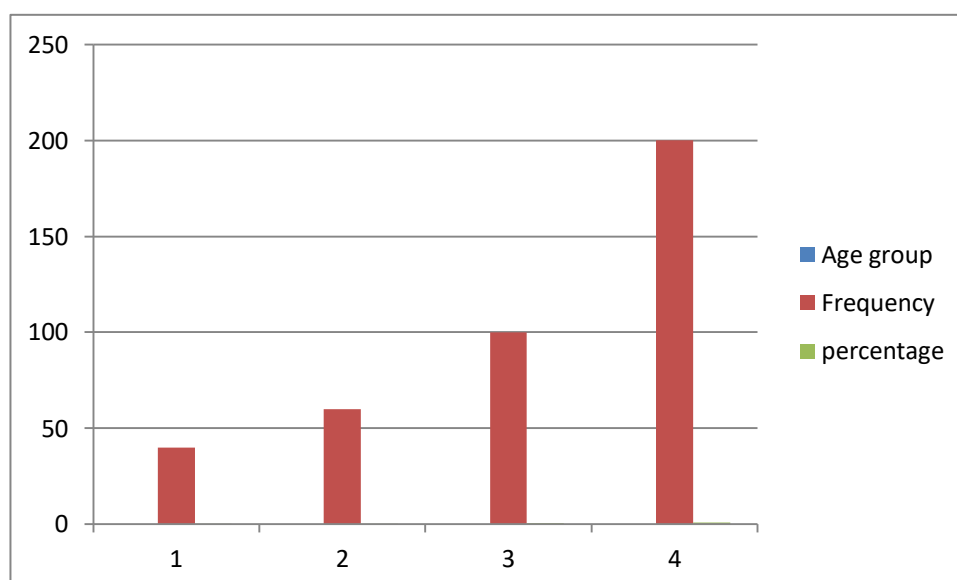
Then they were asked they are they familiar with any case in which the Facebook consumer having clashes with their partner or parents because of excessive use of Facebook or talking to anyone whom they dislike or anything like that 59% respondents were familiar with case that have had clashes because of Facebook while 41% did not. Married people responses were 62% respondents were familiar with the case that have had clashes because of Facebook while 38% did not. It can be seen from the percentage that people do have problems because of Facebook whether they have issues with their parents or partner.

On inquiring from people about technology that does it helpful in long term relationships 46% percent agreed while 3%strongly disagreed that technology is not building good valuable relations. Replies of married people were 44% agreed and 0%strongly disagreed that technology is not building good valuable relations. Majority of people believe that technology is not helpful in building good long-term relations though its useful way of communication but still it's not creating healthy relations. Lip ford and Latulipe (2011) states in the article about the privacy issue people facing due to Facebook. People are facing privacy issues by analyzing two important features that are news feed and Applications. Because of these features contact to friend of friends is easy and its disturbing people' privacy which may not help in building good long-term relations.

**Appendix  
A  
Questionnaire for Teenagers and Youngsters**

**Table 1: Shows the age of the respondents**

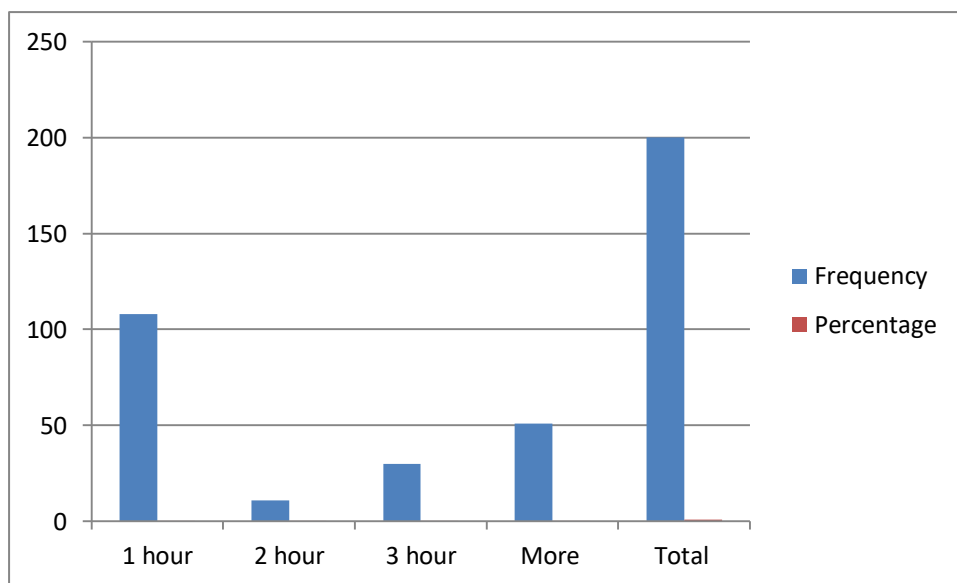
| Age group | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 13-15     | 40        | 20%        |
| 16-20     | 60        | 30%        |
| 21-23     | 100       | 50%        |
| Total     | 200       | 100%       |





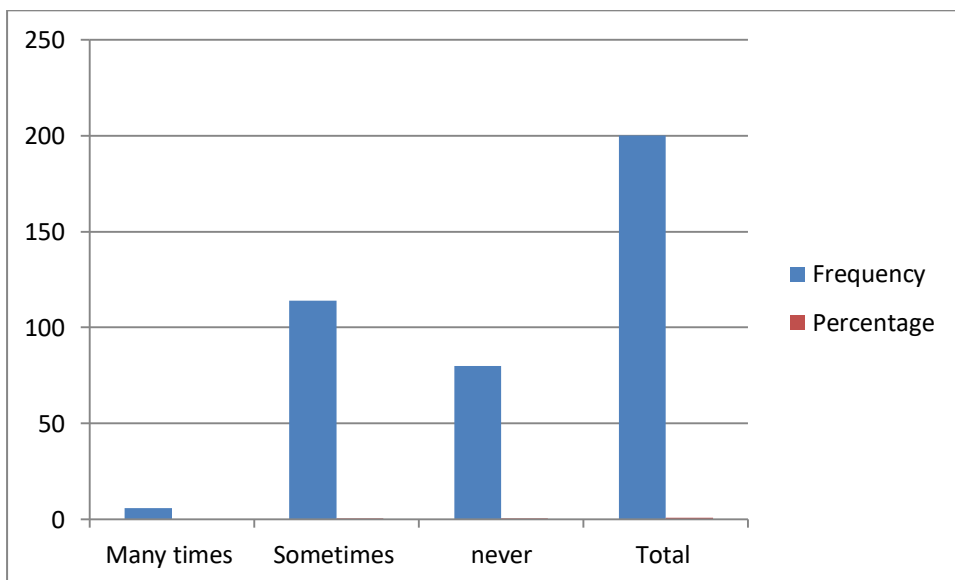
**Table 2: How many hours do you spend on face book?**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 1 hour    | 108       | 20%        |
| 2 hour    | 11        | 30%        |
| 3 hour    | 30        | 20%        |
| More      | 51        | 30%        |
| Total     | 200       | 100%       |



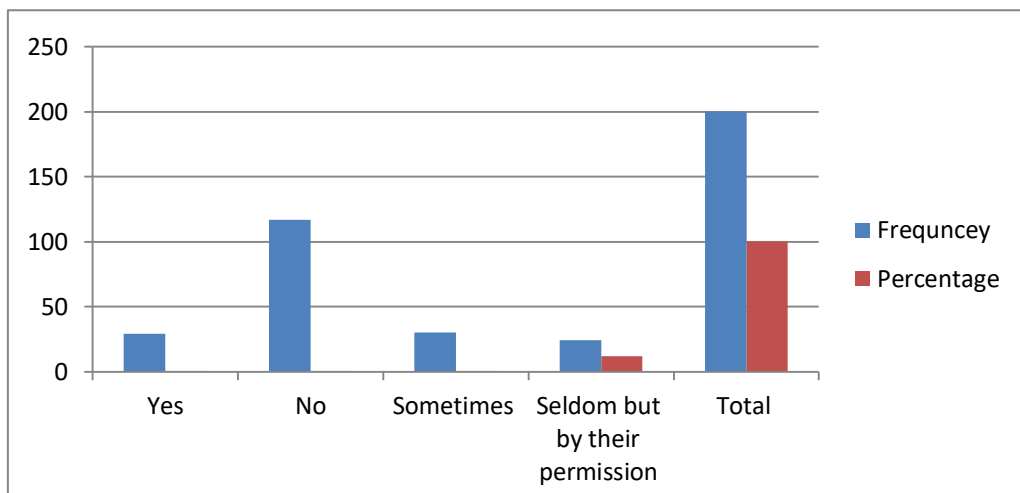
**Table 3: Are you ever been forbidden for excess use of face book by parents?**

| Responses  | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Many times | 6         | 3%         |
| Sometimes  | 114       | 57%        |
| Never      | 80        | 40%        |
| Total      | 200       | 100%       |



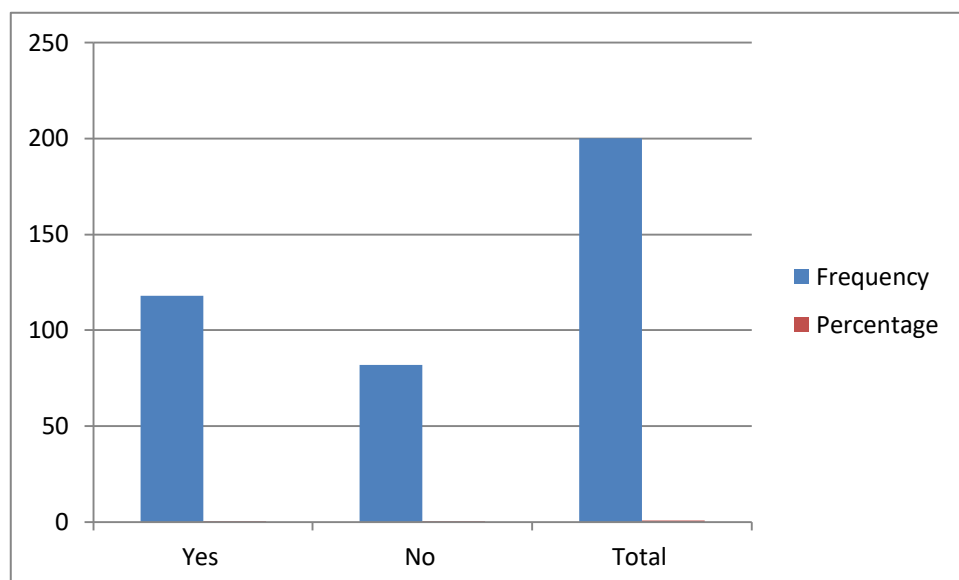
**Table 4: Have you ever post any picture or status or anything like that which your partner, parents or elder brother sister do not allow you to do so on facebook?**

| Responses                      | Frequencey | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Yes                            | 29         | 14.5%      |
| No                             | 117        | 58.5%      |
| Sometimes                      | 30         | 15%        |
| Seldom but by their permission | 24         | 12         |
| Total                          | 200        | 100        |



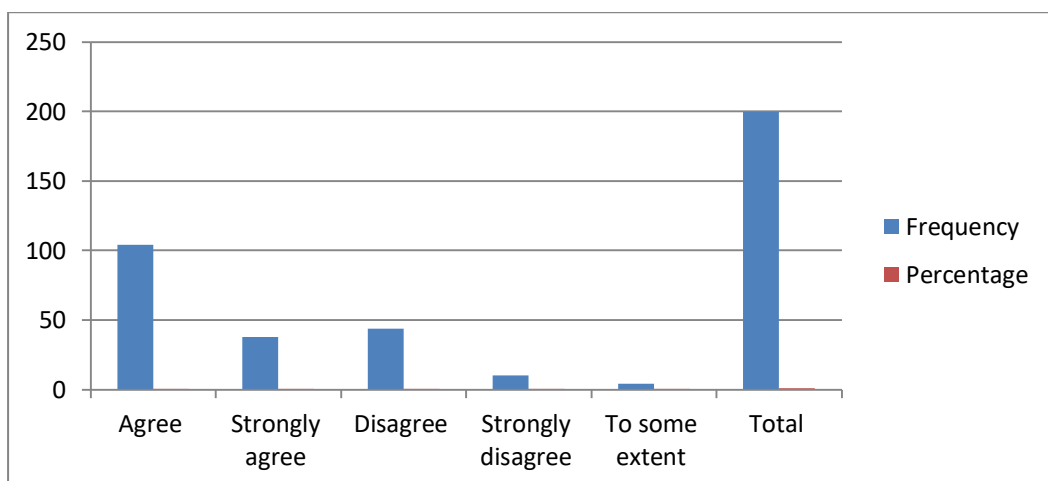
**Table 5: Are you familiar with any case in which the facebook consumer having clashes with their partner or parents because of excessive use of facebook or talking to anyone whom they dislike or anything like that?**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes       | 118       | 59%        |
| No        | 82        | 41%        |
| Total     | 200       | 100%       |



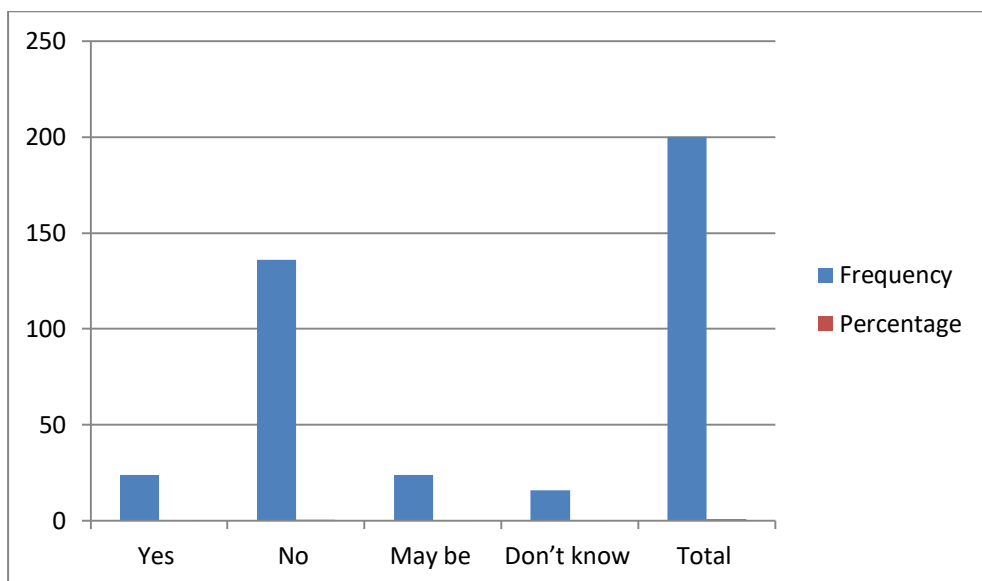
**Table 6: Do you think that because of exposure to facebook the interaction between children and their parents have reduced?**

| Responses         | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Agree             | 104       | 52%        |
| Strongly agree    | 38        | 19%        |
| Disagree          | 44        | 22%        |
| Strongly disagree | 10        | 5%         |
| To some extent    | 4         | 2%         |
| Total             | 200       | 100%       |



**Table 7: Did it ever happen that problems created between your parents because of facebook?**

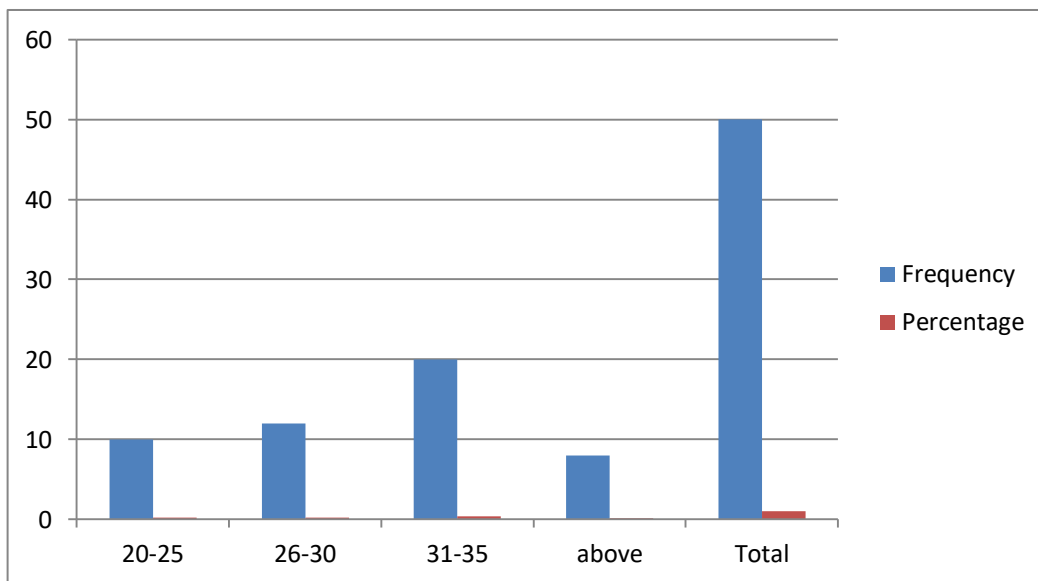
| Responses  | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes        | 24        | 12%        |
| No         | 136       | 68%        |
| May be     | 24        | 12%        |
| Don't know | 16        | 8%         |
| Total      | 200       | 100%       |



**Part B**  
**Questionnaire for Parents and Married Couples**

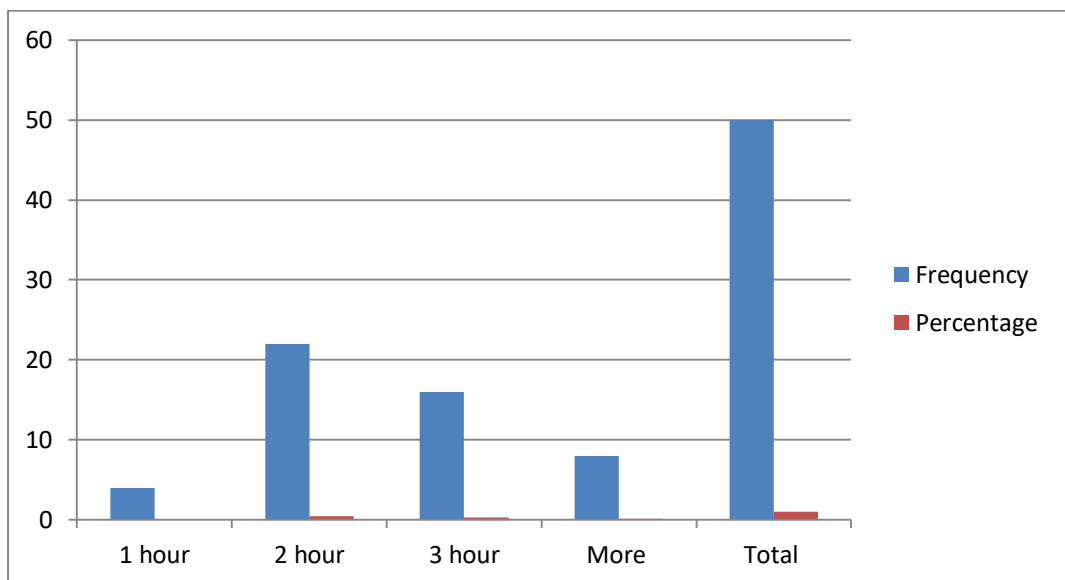
**Table 1: Shows the age of the respondents**

| Age group | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 20-25     | 10        | 20%        |
| 26-30     | 12        | 24%        |
| 31-35     | 20        | 40%        |
| Above     | 8         | 16%        |
| Total     | 50        | 100%       |



**Table 2: How many hours do you spend on facebook?**

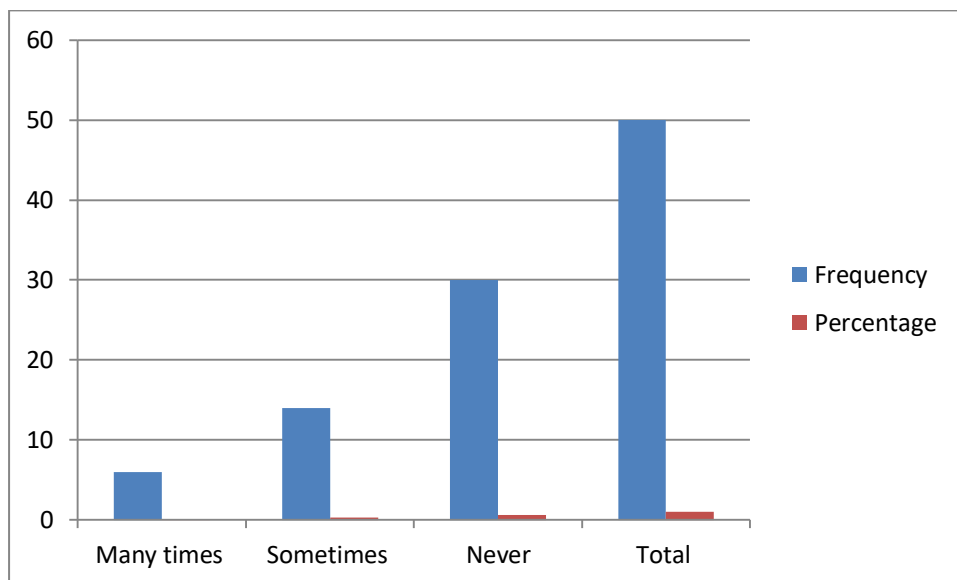
| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 1 hour    | 4         | 8%         |
| 2 hour    | 22        | 44%        |
| 3 hour    | 16        | 32%        |
| More      | 8         | 16%        |
| Total     | 50        | 100%       |





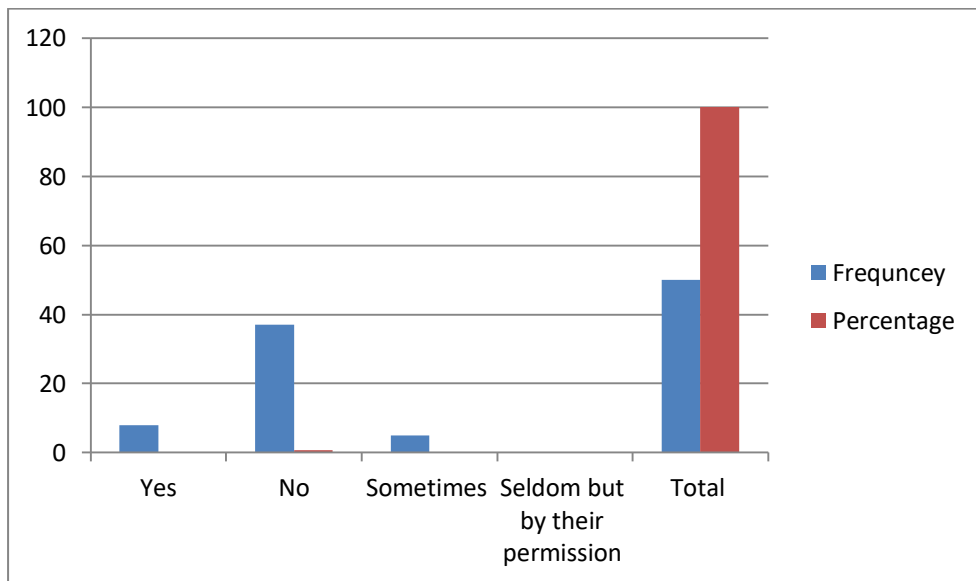
**Table 3: Are you ever been forbidden for excess use of facebook by your partner?**

| Responses  | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Many times | 6         | 3%         |
| Sometimes  | 14        | 28%        |
| Never      | 30        | 60%        |
| Total      | 50        | 100%       |



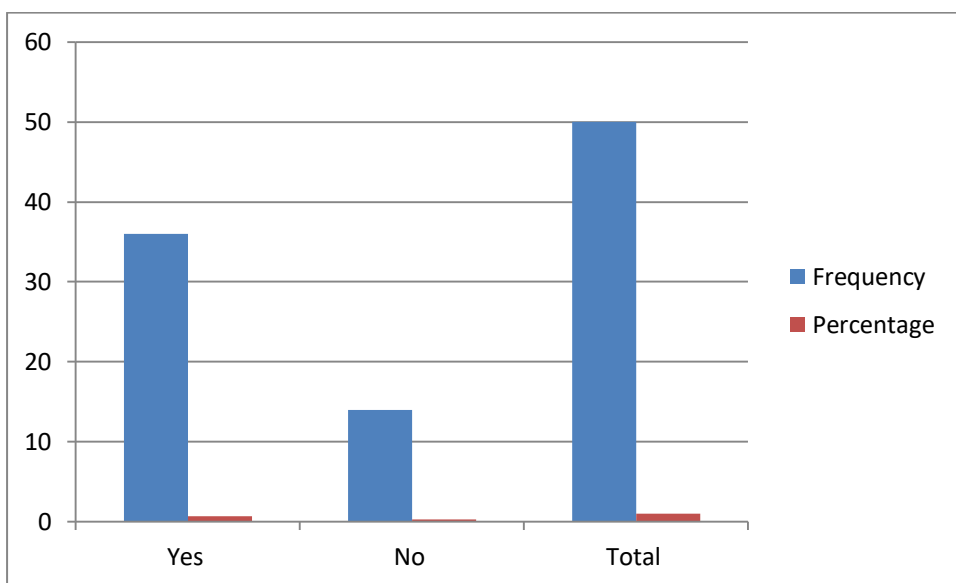
**Table 4: Have you ever post any picture or status or anything like that which your partner does not allow you to do so on facebook?**

| Responses                      | Frequencey | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Yes                            | 8          | 16%        |
| No                             | 37         | 74%        |
| Sometimes                      | 5          | 10%        |
| Seldom but by their permission | 0          | 0%         |
| Total                          | 50         | 100        |



**Table 5: Did it ever happen that problems created between your partner because of facebook?**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes       | 36        | 72%        |
| No        | 14        | 28%        |
| Total     | 50        | 100%       |



### 5. Conclusion

This research helped to find out the effects of Facebook on family structure of the consumers. rather than their family which shows that they give importance to their Facebook activities and friend rather than family. Facebook is creating problems between couples as well because they know many cases in which they had disputes or misunderstanding because of Facebook activities. People who are married agreed to this statement that Facebook is a source of problem between their relationship rather than girls/boys or children. Maybe they are unaware of the

Children do use Facebook while having meal with their families or they give priority to hang out with their friends problems but still they know such cases which have clashes with parents or partner because of Facebook which means Facebook is creating problems may be not in our lives but in someone' lives. It is observed from this study users are more inclined towards Facebook activities rather than attending family gatherings, people who are married and at mature age agreed to this but young children agreed to some extent but disagreed to this

statement more. They didn't agree to this statement but when asked from them have they ever use Facebook during having meals with their family most of them replied with many times and sometimes which shows that they do give preference to Facebook even in family gatherings too. In short social media is affecting family life of users. Literature also supports this statement as Keefin & Pearson, Moore 2019 and Angela expressed the same in their studies. The study is based on cultivation theory given by George Gerbner in 1976 which tells that more time spent on screens can leads towards more changing perception of the reality. Those who consumed social media the most (heavy viewers) have affected in terms of their health, academic performance and moral values. Hence, the relationships have been affected too. It has also been observed from the findings that negative effect of Facebook may lead children not to be socialized and not even interact with their parents. Daily overuse of media and technology has a negative effect on the health of all children, preteens and teenagers by making them more prone to anxiety, depression and other psychological disorder as supported by previous studies such as Burke, Kraut, & Marlow, 2011; Deters & Mehl, 2012; Verduyn et al., 2014 and Khan 2019. They may get frustrated by not getting socialize and not sharing problems with their parents which lead to quarrels with their parents even on minor issue. This lack of understanding and sharing between parents and children has also observed in Pakistani society. Children are getting more

independent because of social media and they don't share or discuss their problems may be because of lack of trust or interaction.

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