



Study of family pattern changes with emphasis on the role of social networks: Qualitative research

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Abstract

Aim: The family is one of the influential social institutions in different societies that has undergone extensive changes in recent decades. Researchers and experts in the fields of humanities and social sciences consider various factors such as the development of urbanization, the development of universities and the promotion of the scientific level of citizens and the development of mass and social media to be effective in these changes. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to understand and discover new concepts formed in the family institution with regard to the key role of social media. What macro and micro categories have social media introduced into the family institution and how has the approach of family members changed? **Method:** This research is a qualitative approach and grounded theory. In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 men and women to collect data. Open, axial and selective coding was used to analyze the data. **Results:** The results of the data coding process showed that out of 131 concepts, 9 micro categories and 3 major categories were constructed and finally the central category of family networking was extracted. According to the participants in the study, in the years before the 1990s, the categories of monopoly interaction, patriarchal domination, and the dominance of religious and traditional values created the conditions for determining tradition. **Conclusion:** "emergence of a new age" and "mobile lifestyle" It has led to "structural and functional modernization of the family" which, with the influential conditions of the categories of "transfer of power", "provision of new opportunities", "value transformation" and "structural transformation in the family" towards "individualization of the family institution" has turned.

Keywords: family, family change, social networks, family networking.

Introduction

In the past, the family institution was structurally widespread in the city and village and was considered the central core of production and economy, the father had a high power in the family and his commands and prohibitions were acceptable to the children. In this family system, the interactions were mostly intra-group and limited, but with the arrival of the manifestations of modernization and the widespread use of technology, especially mobile phones and social networks, extensive changes occurred in the family. These changes took place in the structure and function of the family, meaning that the nuclear family replaced the extended family and many functions of the family were delegated to other social institutions (Thomas, 2013; Kalojeraki, 2009). With the change in the social and cultural structure of Iran's society as a result of improving indicators such as industrialization, urbanization, the development of mass communication tools and the use of modern information and communication technologies, a favorable environment has been created for changes in the traditional values and attitudes of Iranian family members. (Azad & Zohrinia, 2010). Meanwhile, many previous studies emphasize the strong role of mobile technology and social networks in creating a platform for changes in family-related values. Social networks, as one of the types of social media, have provided considerable interactive possibilities for Internet users. Today, cultural changes have made people prefer to be alone and have wide connections with the world around them. Social networks have met this demand. With their services, these networks have a greater impact on their lives and society, as well as social behaviors (Chitsaz & Salek, 2016). The same effects of social networks on changes in the atmosphere governing the institution of the family are also tangible. This research was compiled using a qualitative approach to study the changes in the family pattern centered on social networks. Considering the theoretical foundations and previous studies about the changes of the family institution and the changes of the society and the influence of these two phenomena on the way of their transformations and formation, the importance of researching it is of special importance at any time.

When these developments are accompanied by the perception of meaning that people give to the role of social networks in the family institution and comparing it in two different times, this study is deepened and its various aspects are investigated. The main question of the current qualitative research also emphasizes this issue and seeks to discover more precise concepts and categories of family changes by looking at the influence of social networks and presenting a paradigmatic model of interactions, conditions and consequences of changes in the family institution.

Method

This research is a qualitative approach and grounded theory. In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 men and women to collect data. Open, axial and selective coding was used to analyze the data.

Results

The results of the data coding process showed that out of 131 concepts, 9 micro categories and 3 major categories were constructed and finally the

central category of family networking was extracted. According to the participants in the study, in the years before the 1990s, the categories of monopoly interaction, patriarchal domination, and the dominance of religious and traditional values created the conditions for determining tradition but "emergence of a new age" and "mobile lifestyle" It has led to "structural and functional modernization of the family" which, with the influential conditions of the categories of "transfer of power", "provision of new opportunities", "value transformation" and "structural transformation in the family" towards "individualization of the family institution" has turned.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to study the changes in the family pattern, focusing on the role of social networks with a qualitative approach. In this research, after coding the interview findings, "family mobility" was extracted as the central core. The fact is that modern communication technologies and social media and its accessories, i.e. social networks such as Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp, etc., have covered different areas of people's lives. All families, from parents and children, got involved in cyber space and, in a way, it can be said that they are in control of this space. With the introduction of mass communication technologies and the spread of virtual social networks among family members, many family conditions have faced fundamental changes (Parsakia et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the patterns governing the family of interactions and communication, the component of family power and values, have faced serious changes. This issue can be seen very concretely in the results of previous studies as well as field observations in families.

The dominant model of traditional culture is patriarchy and the dominance of religious and ethnic values. In this era, the institution of the family was not yet faced with technology and instead had characteristics related to the determination of tradition. The advent of the new age and the mobile lifestyle created conditions that led to the modernization of the family structure and function. According to Azad Eramaki, the Iranian family has experienced changes in its structural and functional dimensions under the influence of modernization factors such as urbanization, industrial economy, development of administrative system, development of transportation network, modern health, development of means of mass communication and modern education system. According to the statements of the participants of this research, the learning of mobile technology and social networks among family members created a break in the family institution that did not exist before this period. The set of interactions of the categories of shifting power in the family, providing new opportunities, value transformation and structural transformation in the family has led to the individualization of the family institution.

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