

**Day 1: November 19, 2023**

**Session 1: Technology, Social Media, and Families**



**Saddiga AlGhalib**

**Title: The Impact of Personal Communication Technology on the Family Interaction and Wellbeing in Saudi Arabia: A Qualitative Analysis**

**Abstract:**

A strong and healthy familial bond contributes to an individual's wellbeing and happiness. Positive family support at different stages of life is crucial to having a sense of belonging, improved self-esteem and self-worth, and assuage stress thereby leading to better mental and physical health. The strength of family relationships depends on several factors such as family structure, gender, socio-economic status, culture, proximity etc. In this research, we will focus on the impact of Personal Communication Technologies (PCT) on family dynamics. Rapid technological advances have paved the way for the emergence of a digital culture in which PCTs have become the norm rather than an exception in the Arabian Gulf societies. The fierce competition between tech companies has made interactive PCTs accessible to people across all socio-economic levels and demographics. The prevalence of PCTs has reached to a level that it is almost impossible to find a family today who does not own a PCT tool like a smart phone or tablet to carry around their daily lives. In an era when PCTs have become an increasingly significant part of the lives of young people who seem to operate in a borderless world of technology and social media, many people are concerned about its impact on the safety and wellbeing of Saudi youth. With a whopping 99.9 percent of households having access to internet in Saudi Arabia and an average of more than 7 hours spent daily on it, it is imperative to study the impact of PCTs on family interactions and well-being. The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of PCT usage among Saudi youths on family relationships and well-being. This study will involve an analysis of literature available on the topic with a focus on research conducted in the GCC states. Empirically, this paper draws on interviews with university students and their family members in Saudi Arabia. This research is expected to raise awareness, shape public opinion, and eventually contribute to a family friendly PCT policy formulation in Saudi Arabia.



**Bio:**

*Dr Saddiga Jaber AlGhalib is an educational psychologist, educator and a mental health advocate. She is the Founder of the first Positive Psychology and Wellbeing Research Lab established in Saudi Arabia. She has organized events, workshops, and conferences to raise awareness, remove the taboo from talking about mental health and to connect people with the mental health resources and centers in the country.*

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