

Identifying the Impact of Digital Media Habits on Family Cohesion

Rebecca. Nolan¹ , Andrés. Velasco^{2*} 

¹ Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA

² Department of Clinical Psychology, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia

* Corresponding author email address: andres.velasco@unal.edu.co

Editor

Sefa Bulut 

Associate Professor, Head of Counseling Psychology and Guidance Department, Ibn Haldun University, Turkey
sefa.bulut@ihu.edu.tr

Reviewers

Reviewer 1: Masoud Asadi 

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology and Counseling, Arak University, Arak, Iran.

Email: m-asadi@araku.ac.ir

Reviewer 2: Stephen C. L. Lau 

Professor (Assistant) at Washington University in St, Louis, United States.

Email: lauc@wustl.edu

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the paragraph beginning “Recent studies have emphasized that digital engagement among family members is not uniformly experienced...”, the sentence “Children and adolescents often perceive their parents’ attempts at monitoring... as intrusions” could benefit from cross-cultural comparison. Add empirical evidence showing whether this generational conflict manifests similarly in Latin America versus Western or Asian contexts.

The final line (“The present study aims to identify and analyze how digital media habits influence family cohesion in Colombian households...”) could be reformulated into a clear research question (e.g., “How do everyday digital media habits shape perceived family cohesion among Colombian families?”) to align with qualitative reporting standards such as COREQ.

In Study Design and Participants, the authors mention “purposive sampling... to ensure diversity.” Please describe the recruitment process in more detail—through community centers, universities, or online platforms? Clarifying recruitment channels enhances replicability and ethical transparency.

The paragraph describing interviews (“Each interview lasted between 45 and 75 minutes...”) lacks detail on the interviewer’s positionality or reflexivity. For qualitative rigor, indicate how the researchers’ backgrounds (e.g., being counselors) may have influenced participants’ disclosure and how reflexivity was managed.

The section on trustworthiness mentions member checking and peer debriefing. Specify when these occurred (during analysis or after theme development?) and how many participants validated transcripts. This precision will improve methodological credibility.

The thematic table is comprehensive but dense. Some subcategories (e.g., “Inclusive Family Interaction”) include overlapping codes (“engaging children digitally” vs. “multigenerational involvement”). Consider merging redundant codes or clarifying conceptual distinctions to improve parsimony.

In the paragraph referencing collectivist family values (“...situating the phenomenon within the Colombian cultural context...”), more nuanced cultural analysis would help. For example, discuss whether machismo, familismo, or religiosity mediate how families set digital boundaries.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The paragraph citing (Tanyag & Tanyag, 2025) uses the sociological term “together-but-alone.” You may wish to connect this explicitly to Turkle’s (2011) concept of “alone together,” to strengthen theoretical lineage and acknowledge foundational literature on digital disconnection.

The sentence “The concept of family cohesion has traditionally referred to the emotional closeness, mutual support, and commitment among family members” defines the construct but omits a reference to a classic model such as Olson’s Circumplex Model. Including this would ground the study’s main variable in established family-therapy theory.

In the paragraph beginning “From a cultural standpoint, digital media habits mirror societal transitions toward individualism and immediacy,” the contextualization of Colombian family culture is insightful. However, no supporting demographic or sociological data are cited. Adding a reference on Colombian familial collectivism (e.g., from Latin American family studies) would strengthen cultural validity.

In the paragraph describing the first theme, the quote “We talk more in our family WhatsApp group than we do at the dinner table...” is compelling. Please include anonymized identifiers (e.g., Participant 7, female, age 39) for all quotations to meet qualitative reporting standards.

In the section “digital media as a source of disconnection and conflict,” the analysis could benefit from a deeper interpretive link between behavioral manifestations (e.g., “screen addiction”) and emotional outcomes (e.g., “loneliness, loss of empathy”). Explicitly articulating these causal or correlative connections would enhance analytical richness.

In the first paragraph of the Discussion, you state that the results “offer insights consistent with and extending the existing body of literature.” However, theoretical integration remains limited. Consider relating findings to family resilience theory or social exchange theory to show how digital habits recalibrate reciprocity and cohesion.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.