

Social Networking As An Awareness Mechanism To Develop Mothers' Family Awareness To Protect Children From The Dangers Of Pedophilia - A Socio-Communicative Family Vision

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Absract:

Amidst this accelerating technological momentum, social media is no longer a recreational or temporary option. Rather, it has become an inevitability imposed by the nature of the digital age, forming an important part of our lives, including our family life. It has come to play a vital role in shaping and guiding family awareness, significantly impacting how family members interact and communicate, and even how they deal with broader societal issues and the risks they pose to individuals and children in particular. Recently, the phenomenon of child sexual exploitation has become a major concern that threatens the security and psychological stability of the child on the one hand, and the family on the other. This prompted us to shed light on this phenomenon within a research context and through a socio-communication diagnosis. This scientific treatment focused on the role and effectiveness of social media and its contribution to enhancing family awareness among mothers to protect and immunize children and confront the threat of sexual exploitation and pedophiles. This is achieved through awareness campaigns that make parents more careful to raise a child who is more aware of the dangers and more keen to protect them. Same.

Keywords: social media, family awareness, children, pedophilia, sexual harassment.

1-The Problem of the Study:

The phenomenon of sexual harassment is considered an intractable scourge that affects society across all age groups. The situation is even more serious when it affects children, due to its profound impact on their psychological and personal development and balance. Pedophilia has become a serious disease prevalent among various age groups, and it has become a striking presence in our reality, especially after the numerous cases of child abduction, harassment, and sexual exploitation, which have been highlighted and broadcast by television media, creating much controversy among the public. Cases of child sexual exploitation that have recently been exposed to the public have become more evident thanks to the widespread use of social media and the circulation of painful stories experienced. These sites have also contributed to helping uncover and expose the perpetrators involved. These repeated incidents highlight the importance of sound family upbringing and the role of parents in general, and mothers in particular, in protecting children. This is achieved by enhancing family awareness of the seriousness of the phenomenon and

addressing it, directing attention toward dialogue with children within the family, and providing a safe environment that enables children to express themselves and report any suspicious behavior. From this perspective, and through our socio-communication research approach, our vision seeks to reveal whether awareness campaigns offered by social media can contribute to helping mothers protect and safeguard their children. This approach is based on how social media can be used to build protective immunity against these deviations.

2- Objectives of the Study:

- This study aims to analyze the awareness-raising role offered by social media in the family sphere, with the aim of educating parents and encouraging them to exercise caution and vigilance to limit the commission of reprehensible and shameful acts, and to protect children from heinous practices and deviant pedophilic behavior.

The study seeks to explore how family and maternal awareness positively and effectively influences the use of technology to protect children from potential risks.

It presents a socio-communicative vision for employing social media in child protection, by offering socio-communicative suggestions and solutions for employing social media as an effective tool for enhancing family awareness and protecting children from harmful practices.

1- Significance of the Study:

2- The importance of the study lies in the following aspects:

3-1- The Scientific Importance of the Study:

The scientific importance of this study stems from its cognitive intersection between the disciplines of sociology and communication. This research approach represents a scientific contribution to ongoing academic efforts to spread awareness and enlighten people by employing modern communication media as effective tools for educating and socially protecting children. This is particularly true given the extreme sensitivity of the phenomenon, which has become a concern for parents and mothers in particular. This calls for the adoption of serious scientific approaches to provide cognitive alternatives that respond to real-life needs to strengthen the family's role and protect children through the digital community.

3-2- Socio-communicative significance:

From a societal perspective, our study seeks to:

- Strengthen the role of parents in protecting children from risks through effective monitoring and proper guidance.
- Identify the role and effectiveness of social media in raising family awareness about child protection and how to use and exploit these networks and platforms positively.
- The study contributes to providing preventative strategies and practical recommendations for families on how to protect children from sexual exploitation and educate them on safe behaviors.

4- Conceptual elaboration of the research paper's variables:

4-1- Definition of pedophilia:

Pedophilia is a form of sexual deviation. As a scientific term, it is of Greek origin, comprising two parts: PEDO, which refers to childhood, and PHILIA, which means

love and admiration. This means a disorder of sexual desire toward children. It is also called pedophilia, pedophilia, and the desire and attraction toward children of both sexes, ranging from infants to children aged 13 years. (<https://aja.me/mu9ht>) A pedophile is someone who sexually harasses a child. They may be an adult or adolescent who has a close and trusting relationship with the victim, or who is unknown to the victim. Sexual harassment refers to behavior imposed by one person toward another that carries sexual symbols and characteristics, during which the aggressor exploits power and force without the consent of the other party (The Reality of Sexual Assault on Children in the Gaza Strip)

4-2- Social Networks:

As is the case with social terminology, there is no comprehensive definition for the concept of social networking. However, it can be defined as:

"A network that includes a group of individuals with similar interests, inclinations, and a desire to form friendships through the use of the Internet" (Bahaa El-Din Mohamed Mazid: 2012).

It is also known as a global system and a medium for transmitting information between computers connected to it using data control systems, protocols, and special addresses. It is also considered a system for linking two or more devices using one of the communication systems technologies to exchange information between them. (Fathi Shams El-Din: 2013, p. 48)

Social networking is an electronic service available over the internet that allows subscribers to communicate with one another and form links and relationships through an electronic social system. It allows a subscriber to create pages on multiple websites and then connect them via an electronic social system with other subscribers with similar interests.

4-3- The Family:

- The family: Concepts of the family have varied and multiplied according to the various schools of thought. Sociologists have defined it as a basic social system that satisfies biological and emotional needs. It is the source of morals, ideals, values, and the cultural framework for controlling behavior and raising, educating, and guiding children. (Hoda Mahmoud Al-Nashef: 2011, p. 13)

The Dictionary of Sociology also states that the family is a union of individuals through marriage, blood, and adoption, who interact with each other. This interaction may occur between a husband and wife, or between a father, mother, and children, forming a social unit with specific characteristics. (Joseph Sumpf and Michel Hugues: 1973, p. 131)

Despite the different concepts of the family, they agree that it is the nucleus of society and the first school for children, providing them with security and safety, as it provides them with protection and protection from the challenges they face in society. Through our socio-communicative study, the role of the mother in particular was highlighted, as she is the closest person to the child. 4-4- Awareness: According to the Oxford Student Dictionary, awareness means an individual's ability to use their mental faculties and senses to understand and comprehend what is happening around them (Oxford Students Dictionary: 2007, p. 156).

It includes thinking to distinguish between right and wrong. The same meaning is given by Le petit Larousse illustré, which states that awareness is an individual's clear perception of something, whether about their external world or what is within

them. It is an internal feeling that prompts the individual to judge things and actions, whether good or bad (Le petit Larousse illustré, 2008).

Based on the two previous definitions, it becomes clear that awareness is a mental state that enables an individual to perceive themselves, the reality in which they live, and the environment around them, and to understand events, ideas, and situations, and interact with them in a rational and organized manner.

4-5- Family Awareness: Family awareness is the protective fortress that protects family members from problems. It instills sound and correct concepts in children, shaping their approach to life and forming a cohesive family, thus creating a strong, healthy society (Souriya Farajallah: June 30, 2024, p. 152).

This means the family's ability to make decisions that help build a safe and balanced environment for children in light of modern changes. Family awareness is parents' awareness of the social changes taking place around them, their understanding of their educational and preventative role in protecting their children from the dangers they face, and their guidance of the values upon which children should be raised to protect themselves, on the one hand, and instill a sense of security, enabling them to report any immoral behavior to their parents.

4-6- The Child:

From a legal perspective, positive laws have differed in determining a unified definition of the child. This is due to their differences in determining the age of discretion and maturity due to different social, natural, and cultural factors. Article 422 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that the age of criminal majority is reached at the age of 18, while Article 1 of the Child and Adolescent Law stipulates that minors who have not yet reached the age of 21 years. The two articles differ on the precise definition of the age of majority, while there are legislations such as English, Greek and Polish law that state that the meaning of a child applies to those under the age of 17 years. Whoever exceeds this age has passed the age of childhood and is qualified to bear full responsibility. On the other hand, we find that Spanish, Portuguese and Moroccan legislation has stated that whoever exceeds the age of 16 years has passed the stage of childhood. (Hayat Boujemline: 2017) From the perspective of sociologists, childhood is the early period of a person's life during which they are completely dependent on their parents. During this period, they learn and train for the period that follows, and during this period, a significant part of their life as a social being is formed (Lana bint Hassan bin Saad bin Saeed: 2012, p. 7).

The child is a budding member of society, their personality shaped through interaction with their family and influenced by the cultural and environmental factors surrounding them. The child is a social being in the making, forming and developing within a system of interactive relationships with their family, acquiring their knowledge, identity, orientations, and values from this family. For the child, the family is the primary contributor to the development of their social awareness and the shaping of their personality.

5-Pedophilia from an Academic Perspective:

A Multidimensional Conceptual Study of Diagnosis, Background, and Socio-Familial Implications: Pedophilia is one of the most controversial mental disorders in recent times, with diverse opinions and beliefs regarding its causes, diagnosis, and treatment. Diagnosing it has become a complex process encompassing numerous

psychological and behavioral aspects, intertwined with the social and familial implications of societies. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) classifies pedophilia as a disorder characterized by recurrent and intense sexual fantasies involving prepubescent children. According to the DSM, these fantasies or behaviors must persist for at least six months, and the sexual behavior must involve activity with a child 13 years of age or younger. The same manual states that the person suffering from this disorder must be over 16 years of age or at least five years older than the abused child. (<https://www.psychoside.info/2020/06/pedophilia.html?m=1>)

Psychological evaluations of individuals suffering from this disorder indicate the presence of personality traits such as selfishness, harmful narcissism, lack of experience in dealing with adults, and deviant behavior. These traits render them unable to establish normal relationships with adults. This situation leads to the exploitation of children to satisfy their sexual desires (Nadine-jean-ariegrafeil-1999/p33), creating a dangerous environment that affects the children who are victims of these behaviors. This disorder is not merely an individual psychological condition, but rather a condition and phenomenon that raises numerous questions about its effects on the family as well. One of the most horrific crimes a child may be subjected to is sexual assault, which leaves profound psychological and physical scars on both the victim and their family. These effects significantly impact the child's emotional, mental, and even long-term social development.

These effects include:

• Physical and psychological disorders:

Sexual assault causes children to suffer from several physical disorders, such as genital pain, inflammation, or bruises. Psychologically, victims suffer from severe disorders such as anxiety, sadness, and depression, a loss of self-confidence and confidence in others, not to mention feelings of fear and phobias that arise in the child and a loss of a sense of security around strangers, which impacts their social relationships.

- Sleep and eating disorders: The most common effects among child victims are eating and sleep disorders, insomnia, or nightmares due to the stress they experience.

- Attention and memory disorders: The victim suffers from a decline in their ability to concentrate and pay attention, as well as numerous memory problems. This can lead to a decline in their academic and daily activities, as well as their ability to interact normally with outside parties.

- Hyperactivity: Among the behaviors exhibited by child victims of sexual assault are hyperactivity, due to their constant feelings of tension and discomfort.

- Violent behavior and agitation in the child: The victim exhibits abnormal behaviors, such as aggressive behavior toward others, often as an attempt to express the psychological pain they suffer as a result of the assault.

- Relationship disorders: Among the most serious effects that accompany child victims are difficulty forming healthy relationships with external parties and problems with emotional and social communication, which makes it difficult to build trust with other individuals. (Hubert vangyseghe: 2003, p. 80-81)

The impact of pedophilic abuse is not limited to the child victim alone, but also affects the entire family, which is affected psychologically, emotionally, and socially. Child abuse creates severe trauma for parents, who feel sad for their child

and may feel guilty and self-blame for their inability to protect them. They also experience constant anxiety about their child's psychological and physical health. On the other hand, child sexual abuse threatens family stability and strains relationships within the family, both in terms of the relationship between the parents and the psychological state of the victim's siblings. The profound social impact of pedophilic abuse cannot be overlooked due to the intense pressure the family experiences, as it may suffer from rejection and marginalization by society, leading to isolation. The family also faces significant financial burdens due to the psychological and medical care provided to the child victim, and these financial burdens are often burdensome for the family.

6- Family Awareness Strategies to Protect Children from Sexual Harassment:

An Analysis of Preventive Practices: One of the most dangerous scourges that has surfaced in our societies is the problem of child sexual harassment. This experience is extremely stressful and painful in a child's life and constitutes a turning point in the formation and development of their personality. Therefore, they must be protected and safeguarded from these heinous practices, as the responsibility for their protection falls primarily on the family. In the early years of their lives, children are most in need of protection from all the dangers that generally afflict them, both within and outside the family. This is in addition to their need for love, support, and security, as this is the environment in which people learn their social roles. The family, as a social system, naturally consists of a mother and a father, as they are responsible for protecting their child. God Almighty says, in the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful: "And We have enjoined upon man, concerning his parents. His mother bears him, with weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Say, 'Be grateful to Me and to your parents. To Me is the final destination.'" (Verse 14, Surah Luqman).

The mother is the closest and most preferred partner to the child, and therefore she is the most deserving of the protection function, due to this biological and innate bond between her and her child. She is the most capable of understanding her child's feelings and responding to them with self-motivation and sincere feeling. Therefore, she is the primary actor in raising the child and protecting him from any danger that may befall him in his early years, as a line of defense through conscious sexual education, intelligent monitoring, and creating a safe environment of trust and communication.

6-1- Sexual Education:

Education, in its general sense, is an intellectual culture that provides the child with the education, knowledge, and experience necessary to adapt to the various situations they encounter in society. Sexual education is considered an integral part of all aspects of education, given that the child, or individual in general, is a sexual being who is exposed to sexual situations in their life. Therefore, the latter must be prepared by the family for such situations. Abdul Aziz Al-Qousi defined sexual education as: "The type of education that provides the individual with scientific information, useful experiences, and sound attitudes toward sexual matters, to the extent permitted by their physical, physiological, mental, emotional, and social development. This prepares them for good adjustment in sexual situations and for facing their sexual problems in the present and future, in a realistic manner that leads to psychological health." (Abla Marjan: 2010/2011, p. 37)

Through sex education, families are able to correct their child's behavior and raise them with healthy morals and religion.

They will be able to:

- Learn how and when to say "no" to adults.
- Be aware of the privacy of their own and others' spaces, and practice asking permission before entering.
- Do not undress in front of strangers, nor attempt to undress their peers.
- Learn the names of their reproductive and sexual organs.
- Distinguish between the sexes (male and female).
- Understand the meaning of sexual abuse.
- Be able to protect themselves from sexual exploitation. - Know which parts of the body can be touched and which cannot be touched, whether by themselves or by anyone else.
- Regulate their child's behavior in accordance with religious values and teachings, and fully understand that sexual relations between men and women occur within the framework of marriage.

6-2- Monitoring the child's behavior:

Giving the child the guidance they need to protect themselves is not enough. Parents must ensure that they monitor their children preventively, not snobbishly, in a way that respects their child's behavior. Parents must be able to notice any abnormal changes in their child's behavior, such as social withdrawal, sudden fear of interacting with other people, or changes in sleeping and eating habits. Feelings of anxiety and fear, which sometimes appear in a child and may not be able to express or disclose, should be monitored by parents, as this may indicate that their child has been exposed to an uncomfortable situation. The most important part of protection and care is monitoring their child's clothing and body in specific situations, such as diaper changes or bathing, without stress, in a way that respects their privacy. In this case, the mother or father may notice any abnormal signs that require urgent intervention.

6-1- The communication environment between parents and children:

This is considered one of the strongest means of protection against sexual harassment against children. The more confident and secure a child feels, the more able they are to express and report any suspicious behavior they encounter.

6-2-From Traditional Communication to Digital Worlds:

A Reading into the Origins of Social Networking We have previously mentioned that social networking is an integral part of our daily lives in the modern era, but its historical roots extend back several centuries, beginning with the emergence of the Internet and communications technology in the last decade of the twentieth century, and continuing to the tremendous growth and development witnessed by these networks in the last two decades. The following is a historical overview of the historical roots of social networking: The early 1990s were the beginning, launch, and establishment of the emergence of online social networking sites and networks. In 1995, ClassMates.com appeared, a site dedicated to connecting friends. In 1997, Sixdegrees.com appeared, a site dedicated to creating personal profiles, linking them to friends, and exchanging messages among them. Ryze was later established,

aiming to create social networks for businessmen to facilitate business transactions between them (Marcia Amidon Lusted: 2011, p. 50). 2002 saw the launch of Friendster, and 2003 saw the emergence of MySpace, which developed the concept of communicating with acquaintances.

It gained widespread popularity and became one of the largest social networks in the world. 2004 was the year of the true breakthrough with the emergence of Facebook, which provided an easy-to-use interface, establishing a new model for digital social communication and thus elevating social networking to a global level. After the founding and launch phase, social networking tools evolved. Previously limited to text messages, images and video clips appeared, and various programs such as Yahoo Messenger and Hotmail became widespread. Pioneering networks and platforms emerged, most notably YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok, a platform and website with its own unique features. This era achieved significant successes in social networking. Then, social networking sites developed. After they were used through the web page, each website now has what is called Applications that enable us to access the desired site with ease and speed. Then, their markets expanded and the number of subscribers increased. In 2011, the number of subscribers reached 1.2 billion subscribers on Facebook (Ali Fawaz Talal Al-Adwan: 2022, p. 34), reaching 3,049 subscribers in 2024.

The same year witnessed the subscription of 2.5 billion users on YouTube, 2 billion subscribers on WhatsApp, 2 billion users on Instagram, 1.6 billion subscribers on TikTok, 800 million users on Telegram... (<https://ehsaeyat.com>), social networking sites and networks developed and spread little by little until they became, in their current state, technically linked to mobile applications, and access to them became directly via a smartphone or tablet, provided that they are connected to the Internet.

6- Social Networks and the Exchange of Viewpoints as a Strategy for Developing Family Awareness- A Socio-Communicational Approach:

Child protection is a family function that is not at all easy. It requires continuous support to raise awareness and correct behavior to avoid conditions that could allow for any sexual harassment of the child. This awareness takes various forms and from multiple sources, whether through direct or indirect communication. While television used to play a significant role in conducting social awareness campaigns, time has changed. Social networking sites have recently become an alternative media and a social imperative, even a fundamental pillar of daily communication. Once used only for chatting, today they are used to exchange views. Once communicating with specific parties, communication via social networking sites, exchanging views, and receiving information with hundreds of people at once, has become a powerful force for human behavior and raising awareness based on what we see and hear. Sometimes, social media has the greatest influence in spreading a behavioral, cultural, and social pattern adopted by individuals and society, a fact confirmed by many. Among researchers and thinkers, we find George Gerbner's theory of cultural cultivation. This theory is a major and important theoretical approach that can be used to understand the effects of social media platforms on their users in shaping societal perceptions and behaviors, given that we spend most of our time following these platforms, interacting and participating to form our opinions on the various issues occurring around us. In our study, we relied on the theory of cultural inculcation, which falls within the framework of socio-

communication theories. This theory is based on the premise that continuous and repeated exposure to media messages with a specific content leads to the inculcation of mental perceptions in the recipient, which, in their view, represent a reflection of reality. Given that the current social reality is one of electronic communication, all media content is disseminated via social networks, addressing various social issues such as sexual harassment and child abuse. The repetition of these issues and the stories of victims can effectively contribute to shaping awareness within families about the seriousness of the scourge of pedophilia and the mechanisms and means of protection and prevention. It is likely that they will develop a new understanding of this danger, requiring them to be more careful with their children and to take proactive measures that social networks instill, including new representations of family and parental understanding of sexual education, intelligent monitoring, and the formation of relationships and communication structures with the child.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, as discussed in our research paper, social media networks are a dual-impact tool, despite the risks and challenges they pose. On the one hand, they constitute a risky environment, such as the phenomenon of pedophilia. On the other hand, they offer effective possibilities for raising family awareness and enhancing child protection. Through our socio-communicative approach, we find that employing these media within a conscious family vision can be an effective preventative mechanism that protects children from dangerous behavioral slippage, such as the phenomenon of pedophilia, resulting from the digital interaction these networks enable and provide. This will enhance parents' vigilance and guide them toward conscious educational methods and strategies to protect and safeguard children from the risks of pedophilic exploitation and deviance. Recommendations: Based on the findings of this scientific contribution, and in light of the effective role social media plays in enhancing family awareness and achieving effective protection for children from the dangers of pedophilia, a set of recommendations is needed to contribute to activating this role as an effective awareness-raising mechanism. Among the most prominent of these recommendations are the following:

- Enhancing digital education for parents by organizing workshops and training courses aimed at raising their awareness of the phenomenon of pedophilia and its dangers to children.
- Providing effective awareness-raising content on social media and encouraging these platforms to publish content directed at parents on how to act if a child is subjected to pedophilic abuse, and how to recognize the signs and psychological symptoms of child sexual abuse.
- Parents joining groups or forums that provide support and guidance, enhancing collective awareness about child safety.
- Interact with child protection specialists via Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, where parents can connect with child protection specialists to receive advice and help them deal with the issues their child faces in their environment.
- Encourage open dialogue within families by encouraging children to talk openly about their daily experiences. This way, parents can take all necessary preventative measures for their children in the event of any confrontation or threat.

- Teach children how to protect themselves and their physical privacy, such as avoiding inappropriate touch, and how to respond to suspicious situations to protect themselves, such as escaping from untrustworthy people.
- Consult with experts, such as psychologists or family counselors, if you suspect your child is at risk of pedophilia, to address the issue and follow up as quickly as possible.
- Launch awareness campaigns that encourage families to report any assault or threat to their child.

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