

1 The use of TV and the Internet in the Social Context

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5

6 **Abstract**

7 This study examines the media habits of young people in Saudi Arabia, in particular their use
8 of the Internet and television in the domestic sphere, and how use of the Internet impacts
9 upon other activities. In order to address the research questions, focus group interviews were
10 conducted with Saudi university students. The study found that television has become a
11 central part of social life within the household where television represents a main source for
12 family time, particularly in Ramadan while the Internet is a solitary activity where it is used
13 in more private spaces. Furthermore, Saudi females were also more likely to have their
14 Internet access monitored and circumscribed by family members, with parents controlling the
15 location and the amount of time spent using the Internet.

16

17 **Index terms**— domestication of technology. internet, social context, television, young people.

18 **1 Introduction**

19 HOUGH the Internet has been available since 1997 in Saudi Arabia, there is a paucity of research that explicitly
20 explores the social use of the medium. Despite aspiring to be a modern country in many respects, Saudi Arabia
21 still has one of the most traditional societies in the world and has shown a significant amount of concern about
22 the expansion and use of new technologies [1]. Life in Saudi Arabia is governed by religious beliefs, rules and
23 traditions which are the main factors behind gender inequality, that is, the unequal evaluation of the roles of
24 females and males. Saudi Arabia imposes more restrictions on women's mobility and public activity than any
25 other Arab society, due to the implementation of Islamic principles [2]. These religious and cultural factors affect
26 media technology use among Saudi people, with gender inequality being associated with media use [3] refers to
27 "the importance of cognitive and cultural resources" when addressing "the inequality of Internet usage in Saudi
28 Arabia between different personal and positional categorical pairs, such as gender, education and labour position"
29 ??3, p.65]. Thus, this study affords an opportunity to examine how television and the Internet fit into the family
30 life of Saudi young people. One of the questions of particular interest in this study pertains to understanding
31 how students consume television and the Internet in the social context. Moreover, the Internet might pose a
32 further threat that is compounded with the arrival of satellite TV and especially to Arab governments in respect
33 of ideas given to women.

34 It has opened up opportunities for interpersonal communication as well as exposure to information and
35 entertainment content that may not be available through offline media where Saudi women might discover a new
36 social empowerment through the Internet. Therefore, this study also seeks to explore the use of the Internet been
37 controlled in the way other social activities are controlled in respect of women and men resulting in traditional
38 gender differences characterising online behaviours of each gender.

39 Drawing from domestication of technology this paper presents data from the focus groups to explore the role
40 of the family in shaping or determining TV viewing habits and Internet use. Further, given the culture of Saudi
41 society in respect of gender which is a significant factor that determines the media use within the households,
42 this has also been examined in this study.

43 More specifically, the aim of this study is to investigate the following questions:

3 III. LITERATURE REVIEW ON DOMESTICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

44 RQ3.1. How is Internet and television use shaped by family restrictions? RQ3.2. How does online behaviour
45 fit into the social lives of Saudi young people? RQ3.3. What kinds of family restrictions do Saudi young people
46 face regarding television and Internet use? RQ3.4. Do family restrictions differ between females and males?

47 2 II. Media use in the Social Context among Saudi Young 48 People

49 Although young people's engagement with media devices in the domestic sphere varies greatly, so far there is
50 a dearth of studies which examines the format and extent of media use socially in the Saudi context. It would
51 seem that very little research has been undertaken to establish how Saudi young people use media within the
52 family setting as most of the previous studies have been focused on the how Saudi's young people's Internet use
53 has affected their family relationships. These previous studies agreed that there is no doubt that the Internet
54 provides immense opportunities for social development by easily connecting individuals with family and friends,
55 or bringing together people who share the same interests. However, other effects of the Internet can be clearly
56 seen. The Internet has entered into people's social routines and has had a dramatic impact. It has altered the
57 way in which people communicate with one another, affected family life, social circles, personal habits, faceto-face
58 contact and has affected learning and studying styles and traditions.

59 Reference [4] also examines the nature of the social impact of the Internet use among Saudi young people.
60 Alotaibi considers the Internet as "acting as a time enhancer", which means that using the Internet creates
61 a more productive use of one's time. Alotaibi's results showed an increase in the value of the Internet for
62 enhancing communications such as emailing and social networking, and respondents indicated that using the
63 Internet maximised time efficiency, enhancing activities related to studying by providing access to a wide range
64 of information, as well as giving access to up-to-date news and events. Also, the Internet has enhanced students'
65 relationships with friends, and there was a definite positive association between the intensity of Internet use and
66 the improvement of communications with family in Saudi Arabia. Reference [4] findings concur with similar
67 findings from Western studies. For instance, ??5, p.14] suggested that "Internet use seems to function both as a
68 time displacer (one in which people do give up other activities to accommodate it) and as a time enhancer (one
69 in which people do not seem forced to give up other activities to accommodate it)".

70 Although the regulation of media consumption, particularly within domestic settings, and the role of family
71 positions and gendering of relationships has been an important focus of inquiry for audience researchers in the
72 Western context [6]- [10], very few Saudi studies have examined the restrictions of television viewing among
73 young people [11]. These studies suggested that television regulations reflect an unambiguous focus on gender
74 issues which lies at the heart of the Saudi social order. For example, [11] argued that females used VCRs in a
75 manner that appeared to reinforce traditional gender roles.

76 Young people's television viewing is governed by parents' regulations where families limit the time that the
77 Saudi young are permitted to watch it. However, parental control of TV viewing has been found to be stricter
78 for females than males [11]. Nevertheless, as Internet connectivity increased across Saudi Arabia, most of the
79 previous studies focused on examining Internet usage by faculty, and students provided an insight into the usage
80 patterns and difficulties users may face. The literature shows variations in the approaches to Internet usage issues.
81 Some studies have a more focused scope, either by examining barriers that constrain efficient consumption of the
82 Internet [12]- [16] or by investigating problems that Saudi females experience in their adoption and use of the
83 Internet [17]- [20].

84 3 III. Literature Review on Domestication of Technology

85 The emergence of the domestication notion represented a shift way from models which assumed the adoption of
86 new innovations to rational, linear, moncausal and technologically determined. Rather, it presented a theoretical
87 framework and research approach, which considered the complexity of everyday life and technology's place within
88 its dynamic, rituals, rules, routines and patterns [21]. The theory was initially developed to help understand the
89 adoption and use of new media technologies by households [21]. The aim of the current study is to understand
90 how television and the Internet use fits into family life of Saudi young adult and how the Internet in turn has
91 slotted in. Thus, this study is drawn from domestication theory to understand the use of the Internet alongside
92 with other media in the domestic setting.

93 The approach of domestication of technology was originally developed in order to shed light onto the processes
94 of consumption of home technologies, such as the telephone, the television, the VCR or the home computer [22],
95 [23]. This theory is mainly developed and accepted in European countries in general and Britain in particular,
96 and explained how products are introduced into the home setting and how their use and meaning evolves over
97 time. It is a tool to allow the scholars to trace the process of cultural integration of artifacts as they move from
98 the outside world into the 'moral economy' of the home [21]. One consequence of this is that patterns of use
99 change as families' transition from one life-cycle stage to the other.

100 The domestication approach established by Roger Silverstone and colleagues during the 1980s, then at Brunel
101 University at UK, introduced the concept of domestication to explain the general and symbolic consumption
102 trend in modern society. The domestication approach is based on the social shaping of technology and studies
103 how technological artifacts are incorporated into the everyday routines of the home [21]. This is a confrontation

104 that does not always end well. Domestication of technologies is not necessary to happen in everyday routines
105 and sometimes the process is never complete. Also, despite of those technologies appear domesticated might one
106 day encounter rejection from the household members [24].

107 Gender was the significant factors in most of the domestication technology. A large and growing body of
108 qualitative and quantitative literature has investigated the media in the home and often framed around how it
109 has become domesticated by different gender [25]. The central concern addressed by these studies has been how
110 this particular relationship between gender and technology arises in a social context, especially in the domestic
111 sphere, that gender relations and the structure of power in the domestic context are central to shaping family use
112 of new technology, constructing females and males different experiences of technology use, and influencing their
113 ideas of its meanings, values, and specific uses. Gender has always been an important factor in the adoption and
114 use of household technologies [26]. In particular, gender division of household labour has been seen that it is
115 play a key role on how males and females differing experiences of domestic technologies. For example, females'
116 domestic responsibilities compose a major barrier to their access to the home computer as a part of their domestic
117 chores [26].

118 IV.

119 4 Methodology

120 This research used the focus group method because it involved interviews and organized discussion with a selected
121 group of individuals, to gain information about their use of TV and Internet and the ways in which individuals
122 are influenced by the new media.

123 The subjects of the study were undergraduate students living in Saudi Arabia. The reason for using this group
124 was that previous studies have shown that young adults and teenagers are those in Saudi Arabia most influenced
125 by new media such the Internet [27], [28]. A further reason for this choice was the convenience of collecting
126 large quantities data from academic populations in Saudi Arabia. It is more difficult to sample non-academic
127 populations where the awareness of the importance of research is low. The present study conducted focus groups
128 with undergraduate students from two mixed institutions in Saudi Arabia, one public and one private. The
129 researcher conducted eight focus groups to cover all faculties, and the groups consisted of an equal proportion of
130 males and females: two male groups and two female groups in each institution with mixed disciplines, with each
131 focus group comprising six people studying different disciplines in order to increase challenges in the discussions
132 between the students with their distinct knowledge and experience.

133 5 V. Television use in the Family Life of Saudi Young People

134 Focus group interviews revealed that Saudi students carried out most of their TV viewing in common house space
135 such as the living room or family rooms. They were more likely to pair TV viewing with social interaction than
136 with any other activity and use television as a means of joining in conversations with their family and friends.
137 The results suggest that television offers opportunities for social interaction between family members and friends,
138 suggesting that television offers a number of social aspects such as generating a sense of togetherness, providing
139 topics for conversations and facilitating interaction.

140 The research revealed that participants used television as point of contact between them and their family
141 members, drawing them together for discussions, negotiations and analysis of practical programmes. Television
142 supports two forms of social interaction: first, when participants are chatting with their family during the process
143 of watching television programmes and second, when participants talk or discuss with their friends what they
144 have seen on TV or which programmes they are going to watch. Participants stated that the enjoyment of
145 a television programmes was tinged with the anticipation of discussing it with friends later. Interesting and
146 exciting programmes were the main factor that drove those participants to talk about TV with their friends.
147 "Usually I watch TV at home but sometimes I watch it at my friend's house. Watching TV with my family
148 creates interaction between the family members. Also it leads to discussion about different topics." [MA student
149 -group 4]

150 The way that participants talked about TV with family and friends was consistent with earlier research by [24]
151 who argued that television may support forms of social interaction such as chatting with family during watching
152 television programmes or talking with friends about TV programmes. Moreover, television viewing patterns are
153 often shaped by the time of family gatherings during particular events such as Ramadan. The data indicates
154 that watching television in Ramadan occurs most often in a social context. Hence, TV viewing is more likely to
155 be a family affair rather than solitary activity.

156 "Watching TV is my favourite thing to do in Ramadan and because I am on holiday during this month so I
157 devote my time to watching the special TV programmes with my family and friends. Ramadan TV programmes
158 are primarily geared towards a family audience." (M student-group 5) Although previous 'ethnographic' studies
159 about using television in the households conducted on families from different cultures to those included in
160 the present study, they similarly identified the social activity which is derived from watching television in the
161 household [29]- [31]. For example, [32] previously argued that being able to talk about TV programmes is the
162 thing that respondents will most miss about television since it gives people something to talk about with friends
163 and family. It creates conversations about different topics established by television.

164 6 VI. The Internet use in the Social Lives of Saudi Young People

165 In order to distinguish between television and the Internet as social activities it is necessary also to discuss the
166 role of the Internet in users' social lives. Although TV sets are often in the central locations in the household and
167 invites participants and their family members to watch it together, the data obtained in this research suggested
168 that the Internet activities can be grouped into two main types. Firstly, solitary activities that do not involve
169 direct contact with other people, e.g. browsing the Web and news reading. The Internet is less likely to be a
170 group activity since it is often located in private space and it is hard to share a screen or cobrowse. Hence, the
171 Internet may be considered as a solitary activity. Secondly, social activities that involve direct contact with other
172 people, e.g., the use of email, messengers and chat rooms.

173 The interviews showed that the Internet brings new forms of communication between people through different
174 methods. Saudi young people consider the Internet as a potent communication tool since it creates social
175 activities from different dimensions. The Internet facilitates users keeping connected with other people which
176 means that young people are always accessible at all times, no matter where they are located. Moreover, online
177 communication can be more effective for discussing a wide variety of topics and self-disclosing intimate information
178 than offline discussions.

179 "Watching television is an activity that I do with my family. Browsing the Internet is difficult to be a group
180 activity. Therefore, usually I go online using my own laptop in my bedroom." [L student-group 6] Furthermore,
181 previous studies suggested that the most frequent use of the Internet is for communication purposes and that
182 computer-mediated communication facilitates not only the maintenance of social ties but also the formation of
183 new relationships among people [33], [34]. The current study attempted to assess whether the Internet has a
184 positive or negative impact on the social life of Saudi young adults.

185 The focus group analysis revealed that although TV can be utilised to maintain existing social relationships,
186 the Internet provides the function of expanding participants' social networks. Participants reported that using the
187 Internet can help in enhancing and expanding social circles by providing opportunities to meet new people online
188 and to connect and share information with anyone around the world. The data also suggest that communication
189 with others to keep up and establish social relationships are significant functions of the Internet since it provides
190 new channels for people to communicate with each other.

191 Although the present discussion identified two positive effects on social relationships, earlier studies about the
192 impact of the online communication found a wide range of positive outcome variables. For example, [35] stated
193 that the use of the Internet for communication purposes was associated with mainly positive outcomes over a
194 range of social involvement and psychological well-being in local and distant social circles including face-to-face
195 communication, community involvement, trust in people, positive effects and, unsurprisingly, computer skills.

196 A number of participants stated that social networks make staying in touch with friends much more convenient.
197 Hence, their motivation has increased for retaining relationships through communication on social networks such
198 as Facebook. It seems that using online social networks can have a positive potential impact on people's social
199 lives. The data demonstrates that using social network sites such as Facebook to communicate with others was
200 common among participants. The interviews revealed that Saudi young people not only acquired new friends and
201 extended relationships with friends through the Internet but also that their use of online social networking allowed
202 them to reconnect with old friends. It seems that social networking as a communication tool provides a new way
203 to find old friends and allows users to reconnect with people that they have met in an offline environment.

204 "The Internet allows me to communicate with my friends much more easily. Also, it allows me to reconnect
205 with others that I have not seen or heard from in decades. For example, I use social networking sites such as
206 Facebook. Being online and using social networks such as Facebook allows me keep in touch with my friends. I've
207 already had more contact with people I haven't spoken to since school that at any other time in the last four years."
208 [HU student-group 2] It appears that there are two main features of social networks as a potent communication
209 tool, the first being the convenient communication of social networks to stay in touch with friends and family.
210 Social networking provides participants with the convenience of communicating with each other online through
211 private messages, instant messages and public posts, all from just one website. Secondly, social networking sites
212 such as Facebook provides an efficient way to communicate with friends. The capacity to stay connected with
213 friends was one of the most attractive features to using the social networking sites.

214 Although the Internet can be seen to have a positive impact on relationships excessive Internet use may lead to
215 negative outcomes for the participants such as isolation from others. Reference [36] argued that the individual use
216 of computer and the Internet enhances the desire and inclination for isolation of Arab young people, which reduce
217 the chances of social interaction. In the present study participants suggested that the Internet is predominantly
218 used for interpersonal communication with such applications as email or chats via Messenger. Its intensive use
219 has also been associated with a decline in communication with family members. They reported increased Internet
220 use results in a change in the amount of time spent in conversation with family members or time spent engaged
221 in activities with their family.

222 "Internet use has affected my relationship with my family because I am not spending as much time with my
223 family members as I used to. I cannot take part in some family discussions." [M student-group 8]

224 As it has been discussed previously, using the Internet can be a solitary activity which may detract from the
225 time a participant spends interacting with their family, at least on a face-to-face basis, and could potentially

226 damage interpersonal relationships. The responses of both males and females indicted that Internet use is an
227 activity that consumes time and reduces the amount of time that family and students spend together.

228 **7 VII. Regulation and Restrictions on the use of tv and the 229 Internet among Saudi Young People**

230 Although many previous studies examined the restrictions of media use, most of these studies [6], [8] have been
231 focused on parental regulations on media use. There have been many debates and much research on parental
232 regulation (or mediation) of children and young people's media use [e.g. [37]- [39]. It has been pointed out
233 that parents regulate their child's use of media and other activities in a number of ways. The present study
234 explores restrictions of TV and Internet use including domestic responsibilities, parents' regulations and technical
235 restrictions.

236 **8 VIII.**

237 **9 Regulation of tv Consumption**

238 Studies of media use in Arab contexts in general and in Saudi contexts in particular have examined what the
239 factors may be that restrict patterns of media use in the domestic place and these studies demonstrated the ways
240 that restrictions on media consumption are influenced by gender.

241 As the analysis below suggests, gender differences were evident with respect to the responsibilities or activities
242 that shaped participants' TV viewing habits and Internet use. Areas of key interest here are the ways that
243 the authorities of the family appeared to be monitoring/regulating television and Internet use. In the following
244 sections, participants describe the factors that shape or restrict their media use and the negotiation of its use
245 in the face of parental restrictions on media consumption. The section finishes by examining the strategies that
246 participants' describe for dealing with these restrictions.

247 Factors that regulate Saudi young adults' use of television emerged from the focus group analysis. In these
248 interviews participants described the ways that their TV consumption habits were shaped by their relationships
249 and responsibilities within the home, and in relation to their identities as university students. The regulation of
250 media consumption within domestic settings and the role of family positions and gendering of relationships has
251 been an important focus of inquiry for audience researchers. Participants talked about domestic responsibilities
252 and gender roles in the households as factors that may shape their media use, particularly television consumption.
253 This discussion extends the line of research that focuses on differences in TV viewing among household members
254 [40]- [42]. These previous studies highlighted that the differences between male and female television viewing are
255 the effects of the particular roles that each gender plays within the household and suggested that women do not
256 have time to watch television as a single activity. This is because they are obliged to accomplish other tasks in
257 the home. It is worth noting that these restrictions were being felt in cultures that are quite different to that
258 of the present study, with female participants in those studies describing the same sorts of restrictions that are
259 presented in this work.

260 The findings demonstrated that responsibilities relating to family and the role of gender in the domestic sphere
261 are the main factors in shaping TV viewing, and parents' regulation appears clearly only at certain times such as
262 during exams periods. Both male and female participants described how their TV viewing was shaped by family
263 responsibilities. However, gender differences are notable as females' TV viewing is restricted by their roles in the
264 household. Thus, they watch TV less frequently than males.

265 Only female participants emphasized that their television consumption was shaped by domestic responsibilities.
266 Female students described how they don't truly have time to be a proper 'TV person'. They use the expression
267 "when I am free" to describe the place television fills in their lives because they have other responsibilities. In
268 other words, domestic responsibilities are pressing for female participants. Therefore, their television viewing is
269 limited.

270 **10 "I have no particular time for watching television. If I am 271 busy with my studies or looking after my children I don't 272 watch TV, but when I am free I enjoy watching television 273 for a long time." [N student-group 6]**

274 In the present study the data gleaned from the interviews demonstrates that parental restrictions and control over
275 television viewing behaviour applies only during examination periods. It indicates that parents are focused on
276 scholastic achievement, considering television a distraction during exam periods and this priority may drive many
277 of their decisions about restricting viewing practices. Parents play a key role in shaping how much participants
278 watch television while exams are going on. They apply various practices to limit when participants could watch
279 television or how much viewing was allowed and these constraints were more common during exams. "I watch
280 television every day for long hours but during exam periods I don't have free time for watching television and
281 also my mother doesn't allow me to spend my time watching TV during this time, justifying this [restriction

282 by saying] that I have to concentrate on my studies." ??Z student-group 8] The data suggest that the use of
283 time limits to restrict viewing is particularly prevalent among female students. In addition, what constitutes an
284 appropriate amount of time to spend viewing television is often defined by participants' parents as viewing at
285 a level which does not exceed the time devoted to study. Female participants stated that their parents limited
286 their time in front of the TV on the grounds that watching TV while exams are going on is a waste of time and
287 may affect their academic achievement.

288 11 IX. Restrictions of the Internet use among Saudi Young 289 People

290 The focus group interviews also suggested that there are various restrictions that shape Saudi students' use of
291 the Internet. Parental restrictions implied the definition of rules about Internet usage, similar to those described
292 above in relation to television. As with the time limits on television viewing, these rules relate to the amount
293 of time taken up by Internet use by the participants, but also the activities they engage in. Parents simply
294 monitored participants' online practices rather than sharing their Internet use and admonished them about the
295 disadvantages of using the Internet without employing any technological strategy.

296 Thus, participants identified two strategies by which parents restricted their Internet use. The first strategy
297 is concerned with monitoring and guidance while using the Internet, including evaluative comments. Parental
298 monitoring allowed them to access restricted websites while their parents established a dialogue with them about
299 the risks and the negative aspects of using the Internet. The second strategy involved exercising control over
300 the amount of time spent on the Internet. Parents were active as gatekeepers of Internet use and controlled
301 their time on the Internet, not allowing them to exceed the time limit for accessing the Internet. The differences
302 between these parental regulation strategies and those described in [8] work may be attributed to the differences in
303 culture where the research was carried out where customs and traditions on parents regulation. Also, there were
304 differences in the study samples as [8] participants were children and the participants of the present study were
305 adults over 18 where it might be difficult for parents to apply on such age active co-use, interaction restrictions
306 and technical strategies. "I spend around six hours daily online. My mum gets angry if I spend a long time on the
307 Internet, she always restricts my time online. She always sits away but in a position that allows her to monitor
308 and watch what I am doing online and she gives me advice and guidelines about online activities." [L student
309 -group 6] Again, there were significant gender differences between male and female participants in respect to how
310 these restrictions were felt. It seems that the type of parental regulation utilized was based partially on gender.
311 Parents apply the strategy of controlling the amount of time spent using the Internet more with females than
312 males.

313 Females were also more likely to have their Internet access monitored and circumscribed by parents. In
314 explaining these differences, female participants described how parental restrictions of Internet use were drawn
315 from the culture. Their use of the Internet took place primarily within the home since societal norms, enforced
316 by parents, also curbed their Internet usage in the public space, relating to the segregation of genders in Saudi
317 Arabian culture. Those participants stated, for example, that males frequent Internet cafés to access the Internet,
318 due to the permissibility of males visiting and patronising them as they please.

319 "Mainly I access the Internet from home. We cannot access the Internet from cafés as the males do. In our
320 Saudi society the boys have the freedom to use the Internet and do whatever they want to do." [N student -group
321 6]

322 Having discussed the restrictions on television and Internet use it is necessary to describe how participants
323 respond to these strategies of regulation. Participants describe how they resist the parental restrictions on the
324 use of television and the Internet. Also, the gender differences in how they seek to obtain freedom in their use of
325 media.

326 12 X. Resisting Media Regulation among Saudi Young People

327 While parents' strategies for managing participants' use of media have been discussed, participants of the focus
328 group also employ tactics for evading or resisting parents' regulations. The interviews revealed that, although
329 parents formulated explicit regulations about TV viewing during exam periods, negotiations about watching
330 television were constant in the sense that students' TV consumption was frequently a topic of arguments between
331 the participants and their parents. Participants reported that they continually negotiated with their parents and
332 tried to stretch the time limits or convince them that their viewing would not affect their studies. Similarly,
333 [43] found that control or regulation of media use by parents' leads to discussion, negotiations and even conflict
334 between children and their parents.

335 "My mother and father would get angry when they found me watching television for more than three hours
336 during exam days. They said to me it is better to devote your time for study and I reacted to their rules by being
337 disappointed or upset. I always ask them to give me just half an hour more and try and convince them that this
338 will not affect my studying or my achievements." ??L student-group 8] The data demonstrated that, similar to
339 television, parents' regulation of Internet use also increased the likelihood of negotiations between participants
340 and their parents using different strategies.

341 "My mother always talks to me about the advantages and disadvantages of using the Internet, which websites
342 are appropriate and which websites are not appropriate, especially while I am browsing the net. She tries to advise
343 me about good behaviour when I am going online. I try to prove to them that I am more of an expert in using
344 the Internet more than they are but my parents believe that using the Internet will affect my health." [N student
345 -group 6] It seems that participants' own plans and preferences led to negotiations and attempts to circumvent
346 their parents' rules and regulations. Female participants stated that they had three ways of negotiating with
347 their parents. First, when parents worried that the Internet would distract them from their studies, participants
348 tried to convince their parents that time spent online was not wasted, but that they were using the Internet
349 mainly for study-related activities. The second technique is that participants persuade their parents to believe
350 that they are experts and are highly skilled at using the Internet while their parents expressed concern about
351 physical damage that might be caused by using the Internet for a long time. The third strategy was participants
352 discussed the advantages of using the Internet with their parents when their parents tried to control their use of
353 the Internet because of its perceived risks.

354 Within the home it seems that participants were seeking to obtain freedom of use and privacy in use. The data
355 suggest that female participants were more likely to seek to circumvent restrictions since they were more likely
356 to face parental restrictions. Obtaining freedom of use means participants' ability to use the Internet without
357 restrictions or limitations on the time or patterns of usage while privacy in use means the desire to access the
358 Internet with some degree of personal privacy.

359 Similarly, [44] study found that wherever the computer is placed -in a private or public room of the house
360 -children seek to use the Internet in privacy. In the present research, participants indicated that they prefer to
361 access the Internet from their own room for privacy's sake. Moreover, the discussions revealed that the Internet
362 most frequently used by participants was installed in a separate room, most often the bedroom where they
363 could escape from parents' surveillance and use the Internet privately. However, female participants mainly use
364 the Internet in the living room since their parents don't allow them to use the Internet from their bedroom.
365 Therefore, participants attempt to use the Internet in their bedroom to maintain their online privacy from their
366 parents. Students indicated that they had an Internet connection in their bedroom for many reasons. They
367 always waited for the right time when family monitoring would be much less; taking advantage of the freedom
368 to use the Internet so no one can monitor them and see what they are doing online. In addition, accessing the
369 Internet from their bedroom allows them to spend the whole night online.

370 "In my house laptops are not allowed in our bedrooms; it is always in the living room where we all sit and
371 gather and there are specific times allocated for using the Internet use so, for example, we are not allowed to use
372 it late at night. If there are occasions when we were allowed to move the computer to the bedrooms it would
373 have to be in the daytime, not in the evening." [R student -group 6]

374 The freedom and the privacy of Internet use reported by participants in this study are similar to what previous
375 literature on Saudi Arabia has indicated. For instance, [19] argued that some female participants do not have
376 freedom of Internet use at home because of the family social structure. Household rules, normally enforced by
377 parents, controlled female participants' Internet usage. The present study also exposed gender differences in the
378 domestic rules and regulations of Internet use.

379 13 XI.

380 14 Discussion

381 This study focused on how television and the Internet fit into the social context of Saudi young people and looked
382 at the impact of using those media on their social lives. It is also explored the restrictions and the regulation
383 of using TV and the Internet among Saudi adults. The findings revealed that the Internet can be used for a
384 two-way flow of information that represents a type of interpersonal communication. With TV, however, there is
385 generally a one-way flow of content and social aspects linked to TV take place offline. Television serves a social
386 purpose which was realised in the context of togetherness and conversations with family and friends. Reference
387 [45] confirmed that TV viewing provides a social function and the platform of family togetherness since family
388 television viewing is common in the home in shared or communal spaces such as living rooms and A family rooms
389 and it is more likely to attribute family TV viewing with social interaction than with any other activity.

390 The comparison of the effect of both media on the quality of existing relationships and on close relationships
391 showed that television is important for maintaining and developing existing relationships with family and friends
392 since it is frequently a talking point with their family and friends. On the other hand, the Internet is often
393 used to maintain relationships with friends and expand their social networks. Consistent with this observation,
394 previous studies [46], [47] have shown that the Internet helps to maintain close ties with one's family and friends.
395 Also, it enhances the scope of relationships and broadens the space of social engagements. However, [48] argued
396 that the Internet is less effective than other means of forming and sustaining strong social relationships.

397 This study has given also an account of the ways that patterns of TV viewing and Internet use are restricted
398 or shaped by factors including domestic responsibilities, personal commitments and study activities. TV
399 consumption habits were found to be shaped by relationships and responsibilities within the home and in relation
400 to participants' status as university students.

401 Internet use was found to be shaped by parental restrictions. Although parents' regulation on TV viewing

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402 appears to occur only at certain times such as during exams periods, the parents regulation strategies on TV
403 viewing are quite distinct from the strategies parents apply to regulate the Internet use.

404 Although previous research studies such as [49] suggested that parents use three mediation techniques:
405 restrictive, which involves the parent setting specific viewing times and which programmes are suitable; instructive
406 mediation which requires the parent to explain the motivation of a character, or what character behaviours are
407 acceptable; and social coviewing when parents use the media with their children, parents in the current discussion
408 control and limit the viewing time of their children. Therefore, they use only the restrictive mediation strategy
409 to control participants' TV viewing during exam periods.

410 On the other hand, two strategies have been used by parents to restrict the Internet use of the participants
411 which include monitoring and guidance while using the Internet and control over the amount of time spent on
412 the Internet. In contrast, [8] argued that mediation styles on Internet use share some features with those which
413 are used for television viewing, and also revealing some differences that suggest parents are applying existing
414 strategies to meet the new challenge formed by the Internet.

415 Moreover, significant gender differences were ascertained between male and female participants in respect to
416 parental regulations on both media. Females are more likely than males to face family restrictions on their use of
417 the Internet. Parental regulations for both mediums elicited corresponding resistance in the form of negotiations
418 or conflicts. However, although there are no certain forms of negotiations with parents about restriction on TV
419 consumption, there are many styles of negotiations and resistance about parental mediation on the Internet use
such as persuasion and discussions. ^{1 2}



Figure 1:

420

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