The Use of TV and the Internet in the Social Context

Khulood Miliany

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

Keywords—Domestication of Technology. Internet, Social context, Television, Young people.

I. INTRODUCTION

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

It has opened up opportunities for interpersonal communication as well as exposure to information and entertainment content that may not be available through offline media where Saudi women might discover a new social

empowerment through the Internet. Therefore, this study also seeks to explore the use of the Internet been controlled in the way other social activities are controlled in respect of women and men resulting in traditional gender differences characterising online behaviours of each gender.

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

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

RQ3.1. How is Internet and television use shaped by family restrictions?

RQ3.2. How does online behaviour fit into the social lives of Saudi young people?

RQ3.3. What kinds of family restrictions do Saudi young people face regarding television and Internet use?

RQ3.4. Do family restrictions differ between females and males?

II. MEDIA USE IN THE SOCIAL CONTEXT AMONG SAUDI YOUNG PEOPLE

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

Reference [4] also examines the nature of the social impact of the Internet use among Saudi young people. Alotaibi considers the Internet as "acting as a time enhancer", which means that using the Internet creates a more productive use of one's time. Alotaibi's results showed an increase in the value of the Internet for enhancing communications such as emailing and social networking, and respondents indicated

Khulood Miliany is with the King Abdulaziz University –Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (e-mail: kmelyani@kau.edu.sa).

World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Electronics and Communication Engineering
Vol:8, No:10, 2014

that using the Internet maximised time efficiency, enhancing activities related to studying by providing access to a wide range of information, as well as giving access to up-to-date news and events. Also, the Internet has enhanced students' relationships with friends, and there was a definite positive association between the intensity of Internet use and the improvement of communications with family in Saudi Arabia. Reference [4] findings concur with similar findings from Western studies. For instance, [5, p.14] suggested that "Internet use seems to function both as a time displacer (one in which people do give up other activities to accommodate it) and as a time enhancer (one in which people do not seem forced to give up other activities to accommodate it)".

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

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

III. LITERATURE REVIEW ON DOMESTICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

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

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

The domestication approach established by Roger Silverstone and colleagues during the 1980s, then at Brunel University at UK, introduced the concept of domestication to explain the general and symbolic consumption trend in modern society. The domestication approach is based on the social shaping of technology and studies how technological artifacts are incorporated into the everyday routines of the home [21]. This is a confrontation that does not always end well. Domestication of technologies is not necessary to happen in everyday routines and sometimes the process is never complete. Also, despite of those technologies appear domesticated might one day encounter rejection from the household members [24].

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

IV. METHODOLOGY

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

The subjects of the study were undergraduate students living in Saudi Arabia. The reason for using this group was

World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Electronics and Communication Engineering
Vol:8, No:10, 2014

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

V. Television Use in the Family Life of Saudi Young People

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

The research revealed that participants used television as point of contact between them and their family members, drawing them together for discussions, negotiations and analysis of practical programmes. Television supports two forms of social interaction: first, when participants are chatting with their family during the process of watching television programmes and second, when participants talk or discuss with their friends what they have seen on TV or which programmes they are going to watch. Participants stated that the enjoyment of a television programmes was tinged with the anticipation of discussing it with friends later. Interesting and exciting programmes were the main factor that drove those participants to talk about TV with their friends.

"Usually I watch TV at home but sometimes I watch it at my friend's house. Watching TV with my family creates interaction between the family members. Also it leads to discussion about different topics." [MA student – group 4]

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

"Watching TV is my favourite thing to do in Ramadan and because I am on holiday during this month so I devote my time to watching the special TV programmes with my family and friends. Ramadan TV programmes are primarily geared towards a family audience." (M student- group 5)

Although previous 'ethnographic' studies about using television in the households conducted on families from different cultures to those included in the present study, they similarly identified the social activity which is derived from watching television in the household [29]-[31]. For example, [32] previously argued that being able to talk about TV programmes is the thing that respondents will most miss about television since it gives people something to talk about with friends and family. It creates conversations about different topics established by television.

VI. the Internet Use in the Social lives of Saudi Young People

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

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

"Watching television is an activity that I do with my family. Browsing the Internet is difficult to be a group activity. Therefore, usually I go online using my own laptop in my bedroom." [L student- group 6]

Furthermore, previous studies suggested that the most frequent use of the Internet is for communication purposes and that computer-mediated communication facilitates not only the maintenance of social ties but also the formation of new relationships among people [33], [34]. The current study attempted to assess whether the Internet has a positive or negative impact on the social life of Saudi young adults.

World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Electronics and Communication Engineering
Vol:8, No:10, 2014

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

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

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

"The Internet allows me to communicate with my friends much more easily. Also, it allows me to reconnect with others that I have not seen or heard from in decades. For example, I use social networking sites such as Facebook. Being online and using social networks such as Facebook allows me keep in touch with my friends. I've already had more contact with people I haven't spoken to since school that at any other time in the last four years." [HU student- group 2]

It appears that there are two main features of social networks as a potent communication tool, the first being the convenient communication of social networks to stay in touch with friends and family. Social networking provides participants with the convenience of communicating with each other online through private messages, instant messages and public posts, all from just one website. Secondly, social networking sites such as Facebook provides an efficient way to communicate with friends. The capacity to stay connected with friends was one of the most attractive features to using the social networking sites.

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

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

As it has been discussed previously, using the Internet can be a solitary activity which may detract from the time a participant spends interacting with their family, at least on a face-to-face basis, and could potentially damage interpersonal relationships. The responses of both males and females indicted that Internet use is an activity that consumes time and reduces the amount of time that family and students spend together.

VII. REGULATION AND RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF TV AND THE INTERNET AMONG SAUDI YOUNG PEOPLE

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

VIII. REGULATION OF TV CONSUMPTION

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

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

World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Electronics and Communication Engineering
Vol:8, No:10, 2014

strategies that participants' describe for dealing with these restrictions.

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

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

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

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

In the present study the data gleaned from the interviews demonstrates that parental restrictions and control over television viewing behaviour applies only during examination periods. It indicates that parents are focused on scholastic achievement, considering television a distraction during exam periods and this priority may drive many of their decisions about restricting viewing practices. Parents play a key role in shaping how much participants watch television while exams are going on. They apply various practices to limit when participants could watch television or how much viewing was

allowed and these constraints were more common during exams.

"I watch television every day for long hours but during exam periods I don't have free time for watching television and also my mother doesn't allow me to spend my time watching TV during this time, justifying this [restriction by saying] that I have to concentrate on my studies." [Z student-group 8]

The data suggest that the use of time limits to restrict viewing is particularly prevalent among female students. In addition, what constitutes an appropriate amount of time to spend viewing television is often defined by participants' parents as viewing at a level which does not exceed the time devoted to study. Female participants stated that their parents limited their time in front of the TV on the grounds that watching TV while exams are going on is a waste of time and may affect their academic achievement.

IX. RESTRICTIONS OF THE INTERNET USE AMONG SAUDI YOUNG PEOPLE

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

Thus, participants identified two strategies by which parents restricted their Internet use. The first strategy is concerned with monitoring and guidance while using the Internet, including evaluative comments. Parental monitoring allowed them to access restricted websites while their parents established a dialogue with them about the risks and the negative aspects of using the Internet. The second strategy involved exercising control over the amount of time spent on the Internet. Parents were active as gatekeepers of Internet use and controlled their time on the Internet, not allowing them to exceed the time limit for accessing the Internet. The differences between these parental regulation strategies and those described in [8] work may be attributed to the differences in culture where the research was carried out where customs and traditions on parents regulation. Also, there were differences in the study samples as [8] participants were children and the participants of the present study were adults over 18 where it might be difficult for parents to apply on such age active co-use, interaction restrictions and technical strategies.

"I spend around six hours daily online. My mum gets angry if I spend a long time on the Internet, she always restricts my time online. She always sits away but in a position that allows her to monitor and watch what I am doing online and she

World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Electronics and Communication Engineering
Vol:8, No:10, 2014

gives me advice and guidelines about online activities." [L student - group 6]

Again, there were significant gender differences between male and female participants in respect to how these restrictions were felt. It seems that the type of parental regulation utilized was based partially on gender. Parents apply the strategy of controlling the amount of time spent using the Internet more with females than males.

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

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

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

X. RESISTING MEDIA REGULATION AMONG SAUDI YOUNG PEOPLE

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

"My mother and father would get angry when they found me watching television for more than three hours during exam days. They said to me it is better to devote your time for study and I reacted to their rules by being disappointed or upset. I always ask them to give me just half an hour more and try and convince them that this will not affect my studying or my achievements." [L student-group 8]

The data demonstrated that, similar to television, parents' regulation of Internet use also increased the likelihood of

negotiations between participants and their parents using different strategies.

"My mother always talks to me about the advantages and disadvantages of using the Internet, which websites are appropriate and which websites are not appropriate, especially while I am browsing the net. She tries to advise me about good behaviour when I am going online. I try to prove to them that I am more of an expert in using the Internet more than they are but my parents believe that using the Internet will affect my heath." [N student - group 6]

It seems that participants' own plans and preferences led to negotiations and attempts to circumvent their parents' rules and regulations. Female participants stated that they had three ways of negotiating with their parents. First, when parents worried that the Internet would distract them from their studies, participants tried to convince their parents that time spent online was not wasted, but that they were using the Internet mainly for study-related activities. The second technique is that participants persuade their parents to believing that they are experts and are highly skilled at using the Internet while their parents expressed concern about physical damage that might be caused by using the Internet for a long time. The third strategy was participants discussed the advantages of using the Internet with their parents when their parents tried to control their use of the Internet because of its perceived risks.

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

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

World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Electronics and Communication Engineering
Vol:8, No:10, 2014

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

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

XI. DISCUSSION

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

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

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

Internet use was found to be shaped by parental restrictions. Although parents' regulation on TV viewing appears to occur only at certain times such as during exams periods, the parents regulation strategies on TV viewing are quite distinct from the strategies parents apply to regulate the Internet use.

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

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

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

REFERENCES

[1] Al-Qahtani, S (2011) "Saudi Young People Attitudes towards the Internet in Light of Some Social Factors" .MA dissertation in King Abdulaziz University.
[2] Alsaleh, S (2009) "Gender Inequality in Saudi Arabia: Myth and Reality". Department of Health Informatics, School of Public Health & Health Informatics King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
[3] Al-Otaibi, A. (2010) "Digital Divide in Saudi Arabia: Inequality of Usage". MA Dissertation the University of Sheffield.
[4] Al Otaibi, N (2006). Attitudes towards the Use of the Internet Psychology Research, ISSN 2159-5542, Vol. 2, No. 3, 151-159.
[5] Robinson, J.P., Kestnbaum, M.,Neustadtl, M. & Alvarez, A. (2002) "Information Technology and Functional Time Displacement", *IT and Society*.1(2).
[6] Nikken, P. & Jansz, J. (2004) "Parental Mediation of Children's Video Game Playing: A Similar Construct as Television Mediation." *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, New Orleans Sheraton, New Orleans.*
[7] Lee, S. & Chae, Y. (2007).—Children's Internet use in a Family Context: Influence on Family Relationships and Parental Mediation . *Cyber Psychology & Behavior*, 10, 640-644.
[8] Livingstone S, Helsper E (2008) *Parental mediation of children s internet use. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media 52(4): 581–599.*

World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Electronics and Communication Engineering
Vol:8, No:10, 2014

[9]   Nikken, P., & Jansz, J. (2006).―Parental Mediation of Children‗s Videogame Playing: A Comparison of the Reports by Parents and Children . *Learning, Media, & Technology* 31: 181-202.

[10]   Park, S.(2011).Effects of Home Environment on Internet Use and Dependence of Children and Adolescents . University of Canberra Australia.

[11]   Al-Oofy, Abdellatif; McDaniel, Drew O (1992) "Home VCR viewing among adolescents in rural Saudi Arabia". *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 36, 2, 217-223.

[12]   Al-Asmari, A. M. (2005) "The Use of the Internet among EFL Teachers at the Colleges of Technology in Saudi Arabia. College of Education", Ohio State University. Doctoral Dissertation.

[13]   Al-Dobaiyyn, M., (2003).The use of the Internet to get information by female researcher in Saudi Arabian Universities. MA Thesis, Al-Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University.

[14]   Al-Fulih, K. (2002) "Attributes of the Internet Perceived by Saudi Arabian Faculty as Predictors of their Internet Adoption for Academic Purposes". *Doctoral Dissertation.* Ohio, USA: Department of Education Studies.

[15]   Al-Khabra, Y. A. (2003). *Obstacles of Using the Internet in King Saud University College of Education in Riyadh from the Faculties' Perspective.* Riyadh: College of Education, Department of Educational Technologies.

[16]   Alshawi, A., & Al-Wabil, A. (2008) "Internet Usage in Saudi Arabian Higher Education". *Second National Information Technology Symposium.* Riyadh.

[17]   Goblan, N. (2003) Academic trends in Internet use in Riyadh City. Digital laibrary the reality and the future, II April, Riyadh, KSA.

[18]   Al-Kahtani, N., Ryan, J., & Jefferson, T. (2006). How Saudi Female Faculty Perceive Internet Technology Usage and Potential. *Information, Knowledge, Systems Management*, 227-243.

[19]   Oshan, Maryam S. (2007). *Saudi women and the internet: gender and culture issues.* (Doctoral Thesis). Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University.

[20]   Al-Wehaibi, K., Al-Wabil, A., Alshawi, A., & Alshankity, Z. (2008). Barriers to Internet Adoption among Faculty in Saudi Arabian Universities. In J. Luca, & E. Weippl, *Proceedings of World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia and Telecommunications* (pp. 24-33). VA: Chesapeake.

[21]   Silverstone, R. & Hirsch, E.(1992) *Consuming Technologies,* Routledge, London.

[22]   Silverstone, R., Hirsch, E. and Morley, D. (1992) 'Information technologies and the moral economy of the household', in R. Silverstone and E. Hirsch (eds) Consuming Technologies: Media and Information in Domestic Spaces, London: Routledge.

[23]   Silverstone, R. (1994). *Television and Everyday Life.* New York: Routledge.

[24]   Hack, J. (2007). Taming Technology: Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Families and Their Domestication of the Internet. Retrieved August 11, 2008, from Electronic MSc Dissertation.

[25]   Langan, C. R. (1997). *A Case Study of How People Within the Same Household Differ in Their Use of Television.*

[26]   Cesar, P., Chorianopoulos, K., and Jensen, J.F. (2008).Social Television and User Interaction.ACM Computers in Entertainment 6(1).

[27]   Sait, K. Al-Tawil, S. Sanaulla, M. Faheemuddin. (2007). *Impact of Internet usage in Saudi Arabia: A social perspective,* International Journal of Information Technology and Web Engineering, 2 (2) (2007), pp. 81–115.

[28]   Mohammed, H (2011) Saudi Family life within virtual communities. Paper presented in challenges in the era of globalization conference. Muslim World League in Mecca.

[29]   Habib, L. and T. Cornford (2002) "Computers in the Home: Domestication and Gender", *Information, Technology and People,* 15 (2), pp. 159-174.

[30]   Kennedy, T. (2011) Weaving the Home Web: A Canadian Case Study of Internet Domestication . Doctoral Thesis in Sociology, University of Toronto.

[31]   Adriaens, F, Damme, EV & Courtois, C (2011), The spatial and social contexts of television viewing adolescents‗, Poetics, vol.39, pp.205-227, accessed 6 September 2013,   Science Direct database.

[32]   Gauntlett, D. & Hill, A. 1999.*TV living: Television, culture and everyday life.* Routledge, London, United Kingdom.

[33]   McKenna, K., Green, A. A., & Gleason, M. E. (2002). Relationship Formation on the Internet: What is the Big Attraction. *Journal of Social Issues, 58,* 9-31.

[34]   Parks, M. R., & Floyd, R. (1996). Making Friends in Cyberspace. *Journal of Communication, 46,* 80-97.

[35]   Kiesler, S., Kraut,R., Cummings, J,. Boneva, B,. Helgeson,V,. & Crawford, A.(2001) Internet Evolution and Social Impact. Carnegie Mellon University.

[36]   Al-Qashaan (2010) "To what extent media technology meet young people needs". Paper presented to Media value system between thought and experience conference, Kuwait.

[37]   Abelman, R. (1985). Styles of Parental Disciplinary Practices as a Mediator of Children‗s Learning from Prosocial Television Portrayals. *Child Study Journal, 15*(2), 131-146.

[38]   Austin, E.W. (1993). Exploring the Effects of Active Parental Mediation of Television Content. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 37*(2), 147-158.

[39]   Lin, C.A., & Atkin, D.J. (1989).Parental mediation and rulemaking for adolescent use of television and VCRs. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 33*(1), 53-67.

[40]   Mackay, H. & Ivey, D. (2004). Modern media in the home: an ethnographic study. Rome: John Libbey Publishing.

[41]   Morley, D (1992) *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies,* London: Routledge.

[42]   Gray, A (1987) .Behind Closed Doors: Video Recorders in the Home‗, in Helen Baehr and Gillian Dyer (eds) *Boxed In: Women and Television,* London: Pandora.

[43]   Hagen, I (2007) "We can‗t just sit the whole day watching TV‗: Negotiations concerning media use among youngsters and their parents". *Young* 15(4): 369–393.

[44]   Livingstone, S., & Bober, M. (2006). Regulating the Internet at Home: Contrasting the Perspectives of Children and Parents . In D. Buckingham & R. Willett (Eds.), *Digital generations* (pp. 93-113). Mahwah, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

[45]   Saxbe, D., Graesch, A., Alvik, M (2011) Television as a social or solo activity: understanding families‗ everyday television viewing patterns. Commun Res, 28(2):180–189.

[46]   Bargh, J. & McKenna, K.Y.A. (2004).The Internet and social life. *Annual Review of Psychology, 55,* 573-590.

[47]   Bargh, J., McKenna, K. Y. A., & Fitzsimons, G. M. (2002).Can you see the real me? Activation and expression of the true self" on the Internet.*Journal of Social Issues,58*, 33-48.

[48]   Cummings, J., Butler, B., & Kraut, R. (2002).The quality of online social relationships. *Communications of the ACM, 45*, 103-108.

[49]   Clyne, E., & Jason, L (2011) Reducing children‗s media viewing. Hindawi Publishing Corporation Case Reports in Psychiatry Volume 2011, Article ID 287243, 3 pages doi:10.1155/2011/287243.