

تأثير إدمان وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على مجتمع المراهقين الليبي

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The Effect of Social Media Addiction on the Libyan Adolescent Community

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المخلص:

غير الاستخدام الواسع لمنصات التواصل الاجتماعي الحياة الاجتماعية للمراهقين، مما أثر على سلوكياتهم وحياتهم اليومية، إذ أصبح نشاطاً يومياً مهماً لمعظمهم. وقد تطور هذا الاستخدام المتزايد لوسائل التواصل الاجتماعي إلى إدمان سلوكي لدى العديد من هذه الفئة العمرية. لهذا الإدمان السلوكي آثار اجتماعية سلبية على الرغم من تأثيره الإيجابي على مجتمع المراهقين. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تصنيف أنواع إدمان وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وتقييم تأثيره على السلوك الاجتماعي في هذا المجتمع، مع التركيز بشكل أكبر على التأثيرات السلبية التي تضر بمجتمع المراهقين، مثل الوحدة والتوتر، لدعم المجتمع والخبراء في إيجاد حل لهذه المشكلة. وُزِعَ استبيان على 335 طالباً مراهقاً في ليبيا، واستخدمت أدوات SPSS لتحليل البيانات المجمعة. أظهرت النتيجة أن المراهقين المدمنين أو الذين سيُدمنون يُشكلون أكثر من 60% من مجتمع المراهقين في ليبيا. ورغم وجود بعض الآثار الإيجابية لاستخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على دراستهم، إلا أنها تؤثر على حياتهم الأسرية. كما أنها تُحدث فجوة اجتماعية بسبب انخفاض التواصل المباشر، مقارنةً باستخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي للتواصل مع البيئة المحيطة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ادمان وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، مجتمع المراهقين الليبي، التأثيرات السلوكية.

Abstract:

The widespread use of social media platforms has changed the social lives of adolescents. That affects adolescents' behaviours and daily life because it has become an important daily activity for most of them. The increase in social media usage has developed into behavioural addiction for many of this age range. This behaviour addiction has negative social effects despite its positive impact on the adolescent community. This study aims to categorise the types of social media addiction and evaluate this type of addiction on social behaviour in this community, also focusing more on negative influences that damage the

adolescent community, such as loneliness and stress, to support society and experts in finding a solution for this issue. The questionnaire was distributed to 335 adolescent students in Libya. SPSS tools were used to analyse the collected data. The result showed that addicted adolescents or those who will be addicted make up more than 60% of the adolescent community in Libya. Although some positive effects of using social media on their study, it influences their family life. Also, it creates a social gap due to the decrease in face-to-face communication, compared to using social media to communicate with one's actual environment

Keywords: social media addiction, Libyan adolescent community, behavioural effects.

Introduction:

The global usage of social media platforms has risen in recent years, with 5.17 billion social media users recorded in 2024 (Petrosyan & Ani, 2024). Many events contributed to this increase. In Arabic regions, political uprisings fueled the rise in social media usage to spread or share news (Al-Jenaibi & Badreya, 2012). Globally, there has been an overflow of information on social media during COVID-19, resulting from heightened fear, anxiety, and stress (Alimoradi, Broström, Potenza, Lin., & Pakpour, 2024). Additionally, home isolation and lockdowns necessitated remote communication to accomplish work, meet various requirements, connect with family and friends (González-Padilla, Daniel A., & Leonardo Tortolero-Blanco, 2020), and alleviate the psychological distress experienced during that period (Alimoradi & Lotfi et al., 2022). Moreover, recent trends indicate that colleges, corporations, and governments are increasingly using social media (Al Suzanne Soliman & PharmD, 2022). Thus, it plays a significant role in many aspects of people's daily lives, including information sharing, friendship building, education (DARWEESH & Solyman, 2020), health (Al Suzanne Soliman & PharmD, 2022), business, marketing, employment, and entertainment (Raju & Gaurav, 2024).

Consequently, social media has become a prominent and influential part of the adolescent community, indirectly affecting their behaviour and social interactions (Thakur & Kashyap, 2025) and contributing to issues such as social isolation, reduced productivity, and other negative consequences (Raju & Gaurav, 2024; Thakur & Kashyap, 2025). Moreover, it may become addictive behaviour for many of them. The World Health Organization confirmed that disorders resulting from addictive behaviours are identifiable and clinically significant syndromes linked to distress or disruption of personal functions, arising from repetitive, rewarding behaviours distinct from substance addiction (WHO, 2025a; WHO, 2025b).

Although behavioural addiction and drug addiction work similarly in the brain, social media addiction differs from addictions to alcohol or drugs; it is behavioural and not materially dependent. This addictive behaviour can be defined as turmoil characterised by actions that generate pleasure while alleviating feelings of pain and stress, increasing uncontrollably despite

significant damaging effects (Hilliard & Jena, 2025). Social media addictions often stem from typical behaviours employed for pain relief or escape from reality. Most behaviours are chosen under the conscious control of social, functional, and psychological needs. Therefore, when a behaviour provides satisfaction, it is actively repeated (Pugle & Michelle, 2024). In this context, it can be challenging to distinguish typical social media usage from behavioural addiction. However, problematic social media use can be classified as a behavioural addiction, considering the following elements of addiction:

1. Facing problems in school, work, and relationships (Hilliard & Jena, 2025; Thakur & Kashyap, 2025).
2. Persistence despite negative consequences, such as sleep disruptions (Hilliard & Jena, 2025; Thakur & Kashyap, 2025).
3. Reaching for social media for a mood boost (Hilliard & Jena, 2025; Pugle & Michelle, 2024).
4. Using social media to disconnect or zone out (Pugle & Michelle, 2024).
5. Compulsive connection due to fear of missing out (Hilliard & Jena, 2025; Pugle & Michelle, 2024).
6. Experiencing withdrawal symptoms without social media (Hilliard & Jena, 2025; Pugle & Michelle, 2024).

Currently, the effects of social media addiction are not fully understood. Research has shown a clear relationship between social media usage and certain conditions, such as increased depression (Pugle & Michelle, 2024).

Therefore, it is essential to categorize the social media addiction among the adolescent community and assess the impact of social media addiction on social behaviour and academic performance in this user group, considering safety, economic, and social changes.

Related Works:

Social media usage has become a crucial aspect of social development in most societies worldwide, affecting individuals of all ages. This is particularly evident in the adolescent community, where they are not only increasingly connected but also rely heavily on social media networks as a primary source of information and news (Hajri & Daife, 2024). This increase in adolescents' social media usage has multiple reasons and motivations, including social interaction, escapism, sharing information, and others. These reasons and others differ between boys and girls, as do the media they use (Jarman et al., 2024). Especially with the speedily developed physically, cognitively and psychosocial aspects of this type of users, who are 10 to 19 from childhood to adulthood, which falls within young people, ages 10 and 24 (UN, 2012). This stage is an important transition age when the behaviour forms with a change in social environment and psychological (Kurt Lewin, 1951). It also witnesses a struggle

between harmony and discrimination, causing identity experimentation (Erikson, 1950). Thus, social media has become a platform for adolescents to go through many experiences and play out this struggle, as well as a powerful digital social environment that contributes to shaping their thoughts and behaviours (Popat, Anjali, & Carolyn Tarrant, 2023).

Regardless of the issues adolescents face when using social media, they have many motivations to use it. Some use it to gratify psychological needs, following the uses and gratification theory (Katz et al., 1973). Other motivations have been found, which are social interaction, popularity, appearance feedback, interesting and valuable information sharing (Rodgers et al., 2021), passing the time, and escaping real life (Jarman et al., 2024).

Previous motivations and others make using social media increase despite its problematic impacts, since adolescents face new social pressures from this excess, which leads to their anxiety symptoms growing (Su, 2023; Gupta, Nishi, Sudharma Ballal & Bhavesh Chaure, 2024). Adolescents confirm this since they consider social media a threat to their mental health, with some believing it causes mood and anxiety disorders and is a platform for cyberbullying (Gupta, Nishi, Sudharma Ballal & Bhavesh Chaure, 2024; O'reilly, Dogra, Whiteman, Hughes, Eruyar & Reilly, 2018). Additionally, researchers indicated a high level of ethical and social negative effects of social media usage on adolescents, including bad individual behaviour, spread of unethical principles and porn, and dismantling family ties (Qudaisat, Sameer Yousef, 2023). Moreover, social media use can damage adolescents' self-esteem (Gupta, Nishi, Sudharma Ballal & Bhavesh Chaure, 2024), through appearance comparisons, modified images, criticism, comments, and ratings (Popat, Anjali, & Carolyn Tarrant, 2023; Rodgers et al., 2021; O'reilly, Dogra, Whiteman, Hughes, Eruyar & Reilly, 2018).

Therefore, there has been a recent increase in studies around the world on the excessive use of social media platforms, which may develop into addiction for many, to determine their impact on different age groups and genders. As for adolescents, studies have been conducted on this age group more than others due to their importance. They analysed some factors that may lead to social media addiction, such as empathy, perspective-taking, and some personality traits, openness, extraversion, and neuroticism (Dalvi-Esfahani, Mohammad et al., 2021). Despite the many benefits provided by social media, such as facilitating communication and access to information, its potential for developing behaviour addiction can harm physical and mental well-being (Ngonso et al., 2024), lead to dependence (O'reilly, Dogra, Whiteman, Hughes, Eruyar & Reilly, 2018), neglect of real-life relationships, and, in severe cases, result in a loss of self-control and even depression, thus this addiction interferes with adolescents' daily lives (Zhang & Wanting. 2024), and negatively influences their academic performance (Chowdhury & Emon Kalyan, 2024; Mowafy & Gina, 2018). Some previously negative impacts are confirmed by studies in nearby countries,

such as effects on academic achievement, physical and psychological health. Besides, some impacts were added, such as the influence on the development of each adolescent's personality in terms of morals and behaviour (Qudaisat, Sameer Yousef, 2023; Mowafy & Gina, 2018; Guermazi et al., 2024).

Methodology:

The effects of increased social media usage became very noticeable on many communities and countries. Therefore, this social phenomenon has been more widely studied to determine its effects, especially the negative ones. In this study, content analysis was used as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts” (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 24). The available literature was analysed to determine the impacts found in other communities and to form the basis for designing a useful and suitable questionnaire in the Libyan adolescent community.

The literature content analysis began with the research question (Lune & Berg, 2016). “What are the impacts of overuse of social media?”. Eighteen related literatures were analysed, and 30 codes were identified. The codes were classified into four themes, namely academic impacts, social impacts, behavioural impacts, and health impacts, both physical and psychological. Subsequently, distributed questionnaires (Chowdhury & Emon Kalyan, 2024; Chakraborty, Ghose, Wafik, & Datta, 2024; Hawi, Nazir & Maya Samaha, 2017; Dilawar et al., 2022) to 335 randomly selected adolescents in Libya, according to Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table. Participated 104, or 31% male, and 231, or 69% female. The tool includes demographic information about participants and 40 items to be answered on a five-point Likert scale. Reliability of the instrument was confirmed by calculating Cronbach's alpha, which resulted in 0.887 (Nunnally, 1978). Using the SPSS tool to analysis collected data and evaluate the social media addiction effects on the adolescent community in Libya, to support society and experts in finding the solution for the negative impacts.

Results and Discussion:

Analysis of the collected data revealed variations in social media use among adolescents by age group. Many participants shared a preference for TikTok, while Instagram and Snapchat were found to be more prevalent among older age groups, as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

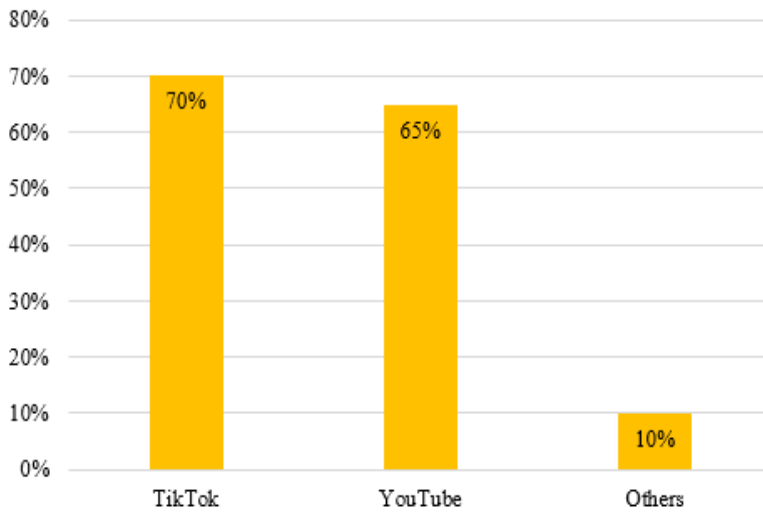


Figure 1: Libyan adolescent users from 10 to 13 years

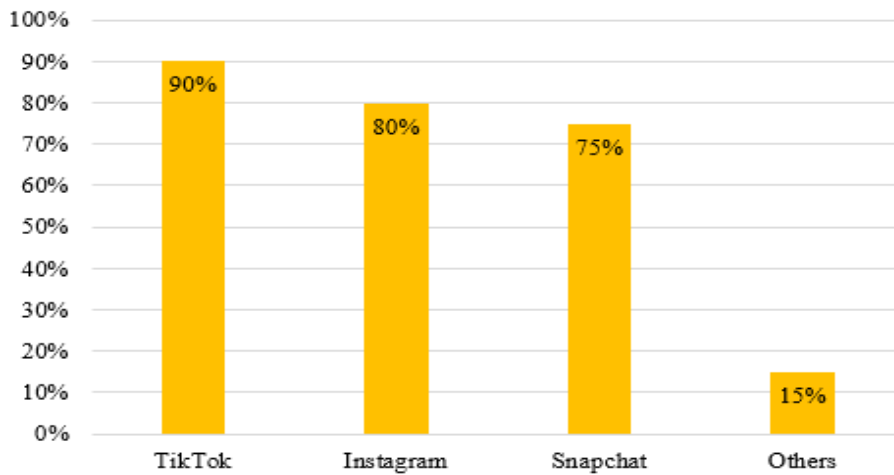


Figure 2: Libyan adolescent users from 14 to 19 years

Additionally, descriptive analysis, which includes the mean and standard deviation for both the independent and dependent variables, is used to define central tendency and dispersion (Khrais, 2012). That provided a good idea of how respondents have reacted to items in the questionnaire, as explained in the table below.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution Analysis of 40 Questions.

	Mean	Deviation
Q1	4.15	0.975
Q2	4.02	1.047
Q3	3.80	1.162
Q4	3.77	1.300

Q5	3.65	1.194
Q6	3.96	1.197
Q7	4.18	1.056
Q8	3.25	1.259
Q9	4.18	1.056
Q10	4.23	1.071
Q11	3.36	1.234
Q12	3.81	1.163
Q13	3.90	1.175
Q14	3.46	1.282
Q15	3.46	1.282
Q16	3.73	1.269
Q17	3.68	1.237
Q18	3.61	1.228
Q19	4.35	0.879
Q20	4.02	1.047
Q21	3.92	1.128
Q22	3.98	1.023
Q23	4.13	1.039
Q24	3.80	1.185
Q25	3.44	1.281
Q26	4.02	1.051
Q27	3.94	1.109
Q28	3.88	1.120
Q29	3.83	1.183
Q30	3.83	1.133
Q31	4.13	0.963
Q32	3.57	1.166
Q33	3.93	1.107
Q34	3.81	1.115
Q35	4.16	0.964
Q36	4.06	1.017
Q37	3.94	1.078
Q38	4.00	1.057
Q39	3.95	1.088
Q40	4.14	0.956
	3.88	1.122

The impact of social media on adolescents' social, psychological, and behavioural aspects was also analysed through their digital opinions and behaviours. The results showed that approximately 80% of adolescents in Libya feel they communicate with others through social media, demonstrating its significant role in fostering a sense of belonging and interaction while maintaining a balance between real-life communication and online interaction. Additionally, 70% of them prefer social media as their primary means of interaction, confirming its powerful impact on daily relationships. It also became clear that social media has become an essential part of the lives of adolescent students in Libya, with approximately 80% of them using it to exchange academic information, particularly via WhatsApp, Telegram, and Facebook. This demonstrates its transformation from a means of entertainment to an educational tool when used wisely. However, they are still often used for social and personal purposes, due to poor formal use by teachers or the lack of a culture of integrating education and technology.

The Libyan youth community, like other societies and groups, faces numerous negative aspects resulting from the excessive use of various social media platforms. On the psychological level, it resembled other societies in some effects while differed in others, as problems of tension, distress and psychological pressure appeared, while no clear effect on self-esteem appeared (Gupta, Nishi, Sudharma Ballal & Bhavesh Chaure, 2024), there was a negative effect of excessive use in other societies. On the social side, negative effects have emerged, similar to those in other societies, such as the disintegration of social ties, which leads to the creation of a gap with their environment (Qudaisat, Sameer Yousef, 2023). Although some communities face cognitive problems due to the use of social media (Qudaisat, Sameer Yousef, 2023; Chowdhury & Emon Kalyan, 2024), for Libyan youth, as for others, social media helps them achieve better academic performance (Mowafy & Gina, 2018; Chakraborty, Ghose, Wafik, & Datta, 2024; Kobiruzzaman, Waheed, Yaakup & Osman, 2021). However, to ensure better progress, schools and parents must collaborate to create a balanced approach to social media environment usage, to assist students in managing their time and using digital educational programs successfully.

Conclusion:

This study concluded that approximately 60% of adolescents in Libya exhibit hazardous or uncontrolled use of social media. This issue may grow depending on the age group and level of use. They use it without a clear purpose, and many have tried to reduce the usage while failed. Additionally, they face withdrawal symptoms, including distress, stress, and tension, as a result of their inability to use it. In this case, they also lose control over their behaviour. Therefore, withdrawal and the loss of psychological balance and behavioural control affect and increase levels of social stress. Despite the clear positives of using social media, most of which are related to academics and

communicating with classmates, teachers, and schools, some negatives cannot be ignored or overlooked. The most significant of these are distraction and loss of focus while using it. They also lose control over their time management because they spend too much time on it. Furthermore, they feel disconnected from their friends without it, and it reduces their feelings of loneliness, leading to a social gap among adolescents in Libya and their environment.

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