Social Media And Its Impact On Moral Values Among School Students In The Emirate Of Abu Dhabi

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The study aimed to identify foreign satellite channels and their impact on the moral values of school students from the point of view of teachers. The researchers used a descriptive survey method, and the results showed that foreign satellite television channels had a significant impact through their impact on achievement, customs and traditions, behavior, and reducing hours of sleep. The results also showed that there were no statistically significant differences in teachers' responses regarding the impact of social media sites impact on moral values among school students in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi due to the gender variable. **KEYWORDS:** social networking sites, moral values, schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Introduction:

Throughout history, the acknowledgment of the profound impact of values on societal dynamics and individual growth has been widespread across diverse cultures and civilizations. From ancient civilizations like Mesopotamia and Egypt to modern societies, the recognition of values as foundational to human progress remains constant.

In the contemporary context, renowned philosophers such as Martha Nussbaum (2023)and Kwame Anthony Appiah (2022) have extensively studied the role of values in shaping societies. Nussbaum's capabilities approach emphasizes the importance of moral values in promoting human flourishing and societal development. Similarly, Appiah's cosmopolitanism advocates for the acceptance of diverse values while emphasizing universal principles of respect and empathy.

Moreover, the rise of behavioral psychology and neuroscience has provided empirical evidence supporting the influence of values on individual behavior. Studies by psychologists like Carol Dweck (2022) on the growth mindset and Daniel Kahneman (2021) on decision-making processes underscore how values shape cognitive processes and behavior.

In today's interconnected world, the importance of values in maintaining social cohesion and stability is more evident than ever. Global challenges such as climate change, political polarization, and economic inequality necessitate collective action grounded in shared values of sustainability, justice, and cooperation (Staggs, 2021).

Educational institutions play a pivotal role in nurturing these values among the youth. Through comprehensive curricula and extracurricular activities, schools not only impart knowledge but also cultivate ethical awareness and social responsibility. Initiatives promoting empathy, tolerance, and critical thinking contribute to the development of well-rounded individuals capable of navigating complex moral dilemmas in society.

Furthermore, advancements in technology and media have facilitated the dissemination of values on a global scale. Social media campaigns, educational apps, and online platforms provide avenues for promoting positive values and countering negative influences. However, they also pose challenges, as the spread of misinformation and digital extremism can undermine efforts to cultivate ethical values among the youth (Piazza, 2022).

Moral values serve as foundational elements in the construction and evolution of human societies, influencing both individual behavior and collective norms. According to Carney (2021), moral development is shaped by various factors including cultural, religious, and educational influences. Kohlberg's theory underscores the significance of religious teachings and educational frameworks in instilling moral values and guiding individuals towards ethical decision-making. This perspective aligns with the notion that moral principles derived from religion and education contribute significantly to the formation of social cohesion and ethical conduct within communities (Carney (2021).

The significance of an individual's moral values resides in their capacity to shape a constructive personal character and orient it towards a righteous trajectory. Furthermore, adherence to moral principles engenders a sense of contentment and psychological assurance for the individual, as it aligns them with the rightful precepts and convictions of society, thereby perpetuating a continual drive for self-improvement and heightened awareness of one's surroundings. Moral values serve to refine the individual both psychologically and educationally, channeling their endeavors towards virtuous conduct and philanthropic actions. Additionally, they function as a mechanism for regulating individual behavior, preventing the dominance of unchecked desires and ambitions over rational faculties. (Althof, 2006)

Moral values hold significant importance within society, serving as guiding principles that underpin its objectives and ideals, and inform its manner of existence, engagement, and interpersonal dynamics. These values play a crucial role in fostering cohesion within the social fabric, facilitating the maintenance of a robust and harmonious communal existence, and equipping the collective with the resilience necessary to navigate societal transformations. Through judicious selection and adherence, moral values contribute to the preservation of societal stability amidst evolving circumstances and challenges (Al-Arishi and Al-Dosari, 2015). The myriad forms of communication, ranging from television and film to online platforms and social media, exert a profound influence on the moral compass of individuals, notably students, through the content they disseminate. Programs and media productions addressing themes of violence, crime, and other morally significant subjects can deeply resonate with viewers, shaping their perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies (Walsh,2020).

Exposure to graphic or glamorized portrayals of violence and criminality, for instance, may desensitize audiences to the consequences of such actions or normalize deviant behavior. On the other hand, programs emphasizing themes of empathy, compassion, and ethical decision-making can inspire virtuous conduct and cultivate a heightened sense of moral awareness among viewers (Kalyani, 2024).

Moreover, the omnipresence of communication channels in contemporary society means that individuals are constantly bombarded with messages and images, creating a pervasive backdrop against which moral values are both reinforced and challenged. This underscores the need for critical media literacy skills to discern and evaluate the ethical implications of the content consumed (Piazza, 2022).

In recent years, the swift advancements in communication and information technology have heralded a profound transformation in human life, exerting direct influences stemming from the digital revolution across social, economic, and cultural spheres. This evolution underscores the interdependence between progress and development in various domains and a nation's capacity to adeptly navigate, regulate, and harness these changes to achieve its objectives (Fawzi, 2014).

In recent years, the emergence of what is commonly referred to as "social media" on the Internet represents a natural consequence of technological advancements and the inherent human need for interpersonal communication, both on personal and professional fronts. This phenomenon has been heralded as the paradigm of contemporary social interaction, enjoying widespread adoption and acclaim as one of the foremost digital platforms utilized by individuals globally. The surge in its user base can be attributed to its inherent functionalities that facilitate rapid dissemination of information, exchange of knowledge and news, fostering communication, interaction, and dialogue among users, all while affording them the freedom to express their ideas and interests unrestrictedly. (Qadri, 2016).

Despite the pervasive importance, extensive reach, and profound influence of social media, a plethora of ethical dilemmas have arisen in their utilization and interpersonal interactions facilitated by them, necessitating intervention to mitigate these ethical concerns.

We acknowledge the significant role of curricula in fulfilling societal objectives, meeting its demands, and aligning with its aspirations. The mandate of educational curricula extends beyond mere knowledge dissemination; it now encompasses a broader mission. Schools, leveraging both human resources and material capacities, are tasked with instilling moral values within students, aiding in the development of robust belief systems, and fostering a comprehensive cultural understanding. This includes not only imparting knowledge

but also equipping students with the capacity to navigate and adapt to the evolving landscape of societal changes () .

Hence, the present study endeavors to ascertain the actuality of social media and its influence on moral values among school students in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

The Study Problem and Its Questions:

Social media has become ubiquitous on the Internet, ingrained as an integral part of global society. Regardless of socioeconomic status, age, or background, individuals across the spectrum incorporate these platforms into their daily routines due to their distinctive features, setting them apart from other online domains. This widespread adoption has prompted internet users worldwide to increasingly gravitate towards social media. In light of this phenomenon and to assess the influence of these platforms on the moral values of school students, the present study aims to address the following inquiries:

1 - What level of impact do social networking sites have on the moral values of school students as perceived by teachers?

2- Are there statistically significant variances in the perspectives of study participants regarding the influence of social networking sites on students' moral values based on gender?

The Importance of study

The significance of this study can be delineated as follows:

Relevance of the topic: Social media platforms are currently a focal point of discussion, rendering the examination of this subject matter particularly pertinent. This holds especially true amidst the evolving landscape and transformations observed within educational institutions, necessitating the integration of this concept to effectively address swift educational changes.

Providing actionable insights: The study's importance also lies in furnishing valuable feedback to schools, enabling them to enhance their efficacy in guiding students and fostering equilibrium within the educational-learning continuum.

Limitations of the study

The study was constrained by the following limitations:

Scope limitations: The research was restricted to school students within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Geographical constraints: The study focused exclusively on schools located in Abu Dhabi.

Temporal restrictions: Fieldwork for the study was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2023/2024.

Procedural definitions:

Social media can be defined as the collective exchange of communicative interactions between individuals, aimed at influencing trends and values by transmitting information, ideas, and knowledge between senders and receivers.

Moral values refer to a collection of principles, values, and societal norms governing acceptable behavior, derived from the prevailing customs and traditions within a specific society.

Previous studies:

The researchers selected studies appropriate to the subject of the study, including:

The study conducted by Laghbi (2017), titled "Social Networking and its Correlation with Aggressive Behavior among Secondary School Students in Al-Arda Governorate, Jazan Region," aimed to elucidate the connection between social networking usage and aggressive behavior. Additionally, the study sought to discern both the positive and negative repercussions of social media use and to characterize the resultant social relationships among secondary school students in the specified region. The findings of both studies indicate a perceived adverse effect on religious practices and the propagation of content incongruent with religious and moral values.

In a research inquiry conducted by Al-Dawoud (2017) entitled "The Reality of School Community Awareness Regarding the Detriments of Social Networking in the Educational Setting," the principal objective was to assess the extent of awareness within the school community regarding the negative implications associated with the use of social networking platforms within educational environments. The study aimed to ascertain students' comprehension regarding the appropriate integration of social media within educational contexts and to evaluate their awareness of the potential risks inherent in technological utilization for educational purposes. Notably, a significant finding of the study indicated that students demonstrate a moderate level of cognitive awareness concerning the judicious application of social media networks within educational settings.

In their study titled "The Impact of Social Media on Social Lifestyle: A Case Study of Female University Students," Chibuike and Mercy (2017) explored the ramifications of social media usage on the social behaviors of female university students. Their study substantiated that the predominant adverse effects of social media networks include excessive time expenditure and disruption of interpersonal relationships among users.

Singh and Siddiqui (2016) conducted a study titled "Social Media and its Impact in Positive and Negative Aspects," which aimed to delineate the advantages and disadvantages of social media. Their findings affirmed that social media significantly influences the values of students.

Similarly, Al-Tayyar (2014) conducted a study titled "Social Media Networks and their Impact on the Values of University Students: Twitter as an example," to illustrate the influence of social media networks on students' values. One of the pivotal conclusions drawn from the study was the notable significance of social networks in shaping the values of students.

Al-Qarni's (2013) study titled "The Impact of University of Tabuk Students' Use of Social Networking on Their Behavior" aimed to elucidate the effects of social networking on youth utilizing a descriptive methodology. The study sample comprised 622 male and female students from the University of Tabuk. The findings revealed that the "WhatsApp" application emerged as the most prevalent medium for social communication, with the majority of participants using social communication platforms for less than three hours daily. Furthermore, the study highlighted entertainment as the primary objective behind the usage of social networks among the sampled population.

This study is notable for its focus on examining the influence of social media on students' behavior across multiple domains, a subject that has garnered considerable attention. Its significance is underscored by its emergence during a period of hiatus in research on this topic, serving as a complementary endeavor to preceding studies. Moreover, it uniquely targets an essential demographic: school students, thus setting it apart from prior research efforts. By concentrating on this pivotal age group, the study seeks to discern the impact of social media on the moral values of students within educational settings.

Methodology:

The descriptive survey method was used due to its suitability to the objectives of the study.
The study sample consisted of 1,000 male and female teachers in the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year.
Table No. (1) shows the distribution of Ainu individuals according to the study variables.

Table No. (1) Distribution of the study sample

Gender	The Number	Percentage
Male	480	48%
Female	520	52%
Total	1000	100%

Study tool:
The study tool was meticulously crafted by the researchers through an exhaustive review of pertinent educational literature. Initially, the tool comprised 18 items comprehensively addressing the domain of social networking sites.

Validity of the tool:
Following the development of the initial version of the tool, it was subjected to validation by presenting it to ten faculty members from universities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Their feedback and observations were sought to ascertain the validity of the tool. Subsequently, based on their insights, the tool was refined to encompass one field and 13 items, ensuring its alignment with the research objectives and enhancing its efficacy for data collection.

Tool stability:
The reliability assessment of the instrument was conducted employing the internal consistency coefficient, Cronbach's Alpha. Analysis revealed a Cronbach Alpha coefficient value of 0.88 for the tool, indicative of high reliability. This robust coefficient underscores the instrument's suitability for scientific research purposes.

Statistical processing:
To answer the study questions,
Arithmetic averages.
Standard deviations.
T-test for means.

Correcting the questionnaire and the criterion for judging the items, areas, and the tool as a whole:

To judge the female students' responses to the items and areas of the questionnaire, the highest degree of agreement was given five degrees and the lowest degree of agreement was given one degree, and the scores are arranged in descending order of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

To determine the degree of opinions, the difference between the two limits was divided by 5 levels, by subtracting the upper limit of the alternatives (5) - the lower limit of the alternatives (1) equals (4).

$4 \div 5$ levels = 0.8. When the minimum represented one mark, then the eight was increased by ten for each mark according to each statement, and thus the weights of the paragraphs became as follows:

(1 - 1.8) The average score is very low.

(1.81- 2.6) The average score is low.

(2.61 - 3.4) Average score within the average category.

(3.41 - 4.2) The average score is high.

(4.21-5) The average score is very high.

Discussion

This chapter aims to present the results that represented the responses of the study members to the tool's items, after applying the study procedures and analyzing the statistical data collected. The following is a presentation of the results of the study, according to the order of the questions as follows:

Results related to the first question: What level of impact do social networking sites have on the moral values of school students as perceived by teachers?

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted for each item of the tool. They are arranged in order and only for the arithmetic means and standard deviations, and Table (2) shows this.

Table (2) Arithmetic means and standard deviations for each item of the tool

The Number	Paragraphs	SMA	Standard Deviation	Class
12	Social networking sites affect students' morals and behavior	4.44	1.13	High
2	Social networking sites affect academic achievement	4.32	0.90	High
4	Social media sites display topics that negatively affect societal customs and traditions.	4.15	0‘76	High
11	Social networking sites offer new knowledge and sciences that affect students' moral values	4.13	0.99	High
6	Social networking sites offer programs that hinder the enrichment of academic disciplines	4.03	0.91	High
7	Social media sites display inflammatory and violent programs in a way that affects the behavior of the students watching.	4.01	0.90	High
9	Social networking sites negatively affect the duration of reading and studying for students	3.98	0.97	High
10	Social networking sites negatively affect the external appearance of students.	3.90	1.03	High
3	Social networking sites negatively affect social communication.	3.75	1.00	High
8	Social networking sites reduce sleep hours for student viewers.	3.72	0.82	High
13	Social networking sites offer programs that work to eliminate family disintegration.	3.65	0.92	High
5	Social networking sites reduce the educational role of the family.	3.63	0.87	High
1	Social networking sites distance students from their national issues.	3.62	1.05	High
The tool in general		3.95	0.81	High

Table No. (2) clearly illustrates the range of arithmetic means derived from the responses of the study sample participants, spanning from 4.44 to 3.62. Notably, Paragraph No. (12) emerged with the highest ranking, asserting that social networking sites exert an influence on the morals and behavior of students, evidenced by its arithmetic mean of 4.44. Following closely is Paragraph No. (2), affirming the impact of social networking

sites on academic achievement, garnering a mean score of 4.32. Conversely, Paragraph No. (1), which posits that social networking sites create a disconnect between students and their concerns on a national level, attained the lowest ranking with an average score of 3.62, securing the thirteenth and final position.

Considering the collective findings, the field's arithmetic mean reached 3.95, signifying a significant influence on moral values. Researchers assert that social media holds considerable sway over students' morals and behavior. Additionally, it is noteworthy that students tend to gravitate towards entertainment-oriented platforms, thus distancing themselves from educational content. This inclination towards entertainment platforms underscores their substantial impact on students' moral values. These findings align with those of a previous study (Al-Tayyar, 2014), which similarly confirmed the noteworthy influence of social networks on students' values.

Results related to the second question: Are there statistically significant variances in the perspectives of study participants regarding the influence of social networking sites on students' moral values based on gender? To answer this question, an independent samples t-test was used, and Table 3 shows the results.

Table (3): Results of the t-test for independent samples to detect differences in the estimates of study individuals according to a variable   Gender.

Variable	The Level	SMA	Standard Deviation	Degrees of Freedom	Value of "T"	Significance Level
Gender	Male	3.93	0.41	998	0.868	0.152
	Female	3.97	0.44			

From the data presented in Table (4), it is evident that there exist no statistically significant variances in the responses of the study participants concerning the gender variable. The researchers attribute this lack of differentiation to the shared acknowledgment among both male and female participants regarding the influential role of social media on the moral development of school students within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, encompassing cognitive, moral, and social dimensions.

Recommendations:
In light of the findings and implications elucidated by the investigation, the researchers propose the following recommendations:
1. Educational institutions should prioritize the instruction of both male and female students through diverse activities and programs concerning the ethical dimensions of social media usage. Emphasis should be placed on strategies for discerning credible information and avoiding engagement with unfamiliar individuals to safeguard cognitive processes and ideological integrity.
2. Implementation of information boards within educational settings is warranted to provide guidance to students on navigating the complexities of social media platforms effectively.
3. Regular parental forums should be established to educate caregivers on the significance of monitoring their children's engagement with social media platforms. These sessions should underscore the detrimental effects of unchecked usage on cognitive processes, belief systems, interpersonal relationships, and academic performance.
4. Teachers are encouraged to integrate implicit instruction on responsible social media utilization into their classroom discourse, thereby fostering critical awareness among students.
5. Student advisors should devote attention to arranging educational seminars addressing various facets of social media, including its societal impact and potential benefits, aiming to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills for informed engagement.

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