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**Internet and its relationship to social alienation a field study for students of the
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Laghouat**

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Abstract :

This study examines the relationship between internet use and social alienation among university students at Amar Telidji University of Laghouat, Algeria.

Using a descriptive-analytical method, a purposive sample of 60 students from the Department of Sociology and Demography completed questionnaires assessing internet usage patterns and manifestations of social alienation.

Results revealed that 41.7% of participants used the internet for more than three hours daily, with 71.7% primarily accessing social networking sites. A significant majority (65%) reported that internet use affected their behaviour, while 30% experienced loneliness during internet disconnection.

Findings indicated that 63.3% of respondents felt people no longer adhere to customs and traditions, 78.3% lacked organisational affiliations, and 55% endorsed the principle that "the end justifies the means." Cross-tabulations revealed correlations between internet usage duration and various indicators of social alienation, including cultural disconnection, social alienation, normlessness, and reduced real-world social interaction.

The study concludes that excessive internet use, particularly for social media, contributes to alienation, weakened social bonds, and rebellion against traditional values among Algerian university students

.Keywords:internet use, social alienation, university students, social media, Algeria

1.Introduction:

The current era is witnessing a radical transformation driven by a tremendous technological revolution and a knowledge explosion that has impacted all aspects of life. At the heart of this transformation, the internet has emerged as a pivotal communication tool that has revolutionised human interaction. It has contributed to turning the world into a "global village," where geographical barriers fade, facilitating the exchange of information and promoting cultural convergence.

However, despite the positive opportunities and immense benefits offered by the internet, its other side reveals growing social and psychological challenges. Excessive or misguided use of this technology has given rise to numerous negative consequences, including wasted time, declining professional and academic performance, and the erosion of genuine social relationships in the real world. These challenges are magnified in developing nations, where the misuse of the internet has sometimes led to profound cultural issues, such as rebellion against local traditions and the adoption of foreign values, placing individuals in a state of conflict between their personal identity and their society.

Amidst these effects, the phenomenon of "social alienation" emerges as one of the most serious psychological and social issues associated with immersion in the virtual world..

2.Statement of the problem

Alienation is a pervasive theme across philosophy, sociology, and psychology, reflecting its profound impact on human consciousness and social relationships. As a social phenomenon, social alienation encompasses cultural, social, and personal dimensions. These dimensions manifest as a loss of control, social alienation, meaninglessness (a failure to grasp the significance of one's actions), and normlessness (the use of illegitimate means to achieve goals). The rise of technology, particularly the internet, has been cited as a key driver in the global spread of alienation, leaving individuals feeling more disconnected from themselves and their communities than ever before.

University students represent a particularly vulnerable demographic due to their high level of internet engagement. While the internet offers unprecedented access to information, it also functions as a double-edged sword. The proliferation of social media has fostered an environment where deep, personal relationships are often supplanted by superficial connections in a virtual space. This dynamic is especially acute for youth in developing nations, who may experience instability and withdrawal, leading to increased social alienation. The erosion of face-to-face social interaction among students is a critical issue, as their well-being is essential for societal progress. The potential for social alienation to lead to broader problems, such as social disintegration and the deterioration of values, constitutes the central problem this study addresses.

Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- Is there a significant relationship between internet use and social alienation among university students?
- To what extent does the duration of internet use influence the level of social alienation among university students?

3.Hypotheses

The study will test the following hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 1:** A significant relationship exists between internet use and social alienation.
- **Hypothesis 2:** The duration of internet use has an impact on increasing social alienation among university students.

4.Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this research are:

- To investigate the relationship between internet use and the phenomenon of social alienation.
- To determine the level of social alienation among university students.
- To identify the primary manifestations of social alienation among university students.

5.Study Concepts

5.1.The Internet

Conceptual Definition:

The Internet is a global communication network that connects thousands of computer systems, allowing millions of users worldwide to exchange information continuously. It has become an essential medium for universities, research centres, large corporations, banks, and governmental institutions. The Internet can be viewed as an extensive system of interconnected networks that link computers through telephone lines or other means, enabling users to send and receive information instantly, thereby overcoming geographical distance (Aissani, 2009, p. 20).

Operational Definition:

In this study, the Internet refers to a networked system that enables individuals to exchange information and news through computers connected to global communication systems.

5.2.Alienation

Conceptual Definition:

Alienation is defined as an individual's sense of rejection by society, accompanied by withdrawal or rebellion against social norms. The alienated person experiences detachment not only from others but also from the self. In social sciences, the term is used to describe interpersonal relationships in which an individual is placed in opposition to others or groups, leading to a degree of emotional alienation (Ali, 2008, p. 20).

Operational Definition:

Alienation, as used in this study, refers to a subjective feeling of estrangement or detachment from social environments and prevailing cultural norms.

5.3.Social Alienation

Conceptual Definition:

Social alienation represents an individual's perception of weak interaction with others and a general social coldness—manifested in diminished emotional bonds, reduced affection, and weakened social cohesion. This condition often leads to feelings of social rejection, emotional emptiness, and a sense of marginalisation or alienation (Hadidi, 2012, pp. 346–361).

Operational Definition:

Social alienation is defined operationally as a disturbance in social relationships, reflected in daily practices of withdrawal, rejection of societal values, and detachment from one's cultural environment. It is expressed through symptoms such as social alienation, normlessness, and a lack of interest in engaging with one's social surroundings.

6.Literature Review

The relationship between internet use and social alienation has been a subject of scholarly debate since the dawn of the digital age. The internet, a tool with a profound capacity to connect individuals across vast distances, paradoxically presents a risk of fostering alienation and disconnection from one's immediate social environment. This literature review examines key studies that have explored this complex relationship, from foundational research on the "internet paradox" to contemporary analyses of social media, and includes specific cultural contexts from the Arab world.

.7.Early Research and the "Internet Paradox"

One of the most influential early studies in this field was conducted by Kraut et al. (1998). Their longitudinal research, known as the HomeNet study, tracked families during their first years of internet use. The findings were surprising at the time; the study revealed that greater internet use was associated with declines in participants' communication with family members in the household, a reduction in the size of their local social circles, and an increase in depression and loneliness. The authors termed this the "internet paradox," suggesting that a technology designed for communication was actually diminishing social involvement and psychological well-being. This study set the stage for decades of research into the potential negative social consequences of digital life.

Building on this, Sherry Turkle (2011) argued that digital technology allows for "connection" without the demands of genuine intimacy, leading to a state of being "alone together." Turkle's ethnographic research suggests that people substitute deep, meaningful, real-world relationships with a multitude of superficial online connections. This displacement of authentic social interaction is a core mechanism through which internet use can lead to feelings of alienation, as individuals may feel surrounded by "friends" yet profoundly lonely.

.8.Social Media and Evolving Forms of Alienation

With the rise of social media platforms, the focus of research shifted. Kross et al. (2013) conducted a study on Facebook use and found that it predicted a decline in users' subjective well-being. The more time young adults spent on Facebook over two weeks, the less satisfied they were with their lives. This effect was not observed with direct social interaction. The study points to social comparison as a potential driver of these negative feelings; the curated, idealised lives presented on social media can make individuals feel inadequate and disconnected from their own reality.

Providing strong causal evidence, an experimental study by Hunt et al. (2018) found that limiting social media use to approximately 30 minutes per day resulted in significant reductions in loneliness and depression among college students compared to a control group. This research moves beyond correlation to demonstrate a direct causal link between the quantity of social media consumption and adverse psychological outcomes, including feelings of social alienation.

However, the evidence is not entirely one-sided. Studies have also found that the internet can be a vital tool for maintaining social ties, particularly for individuals with high levels of social anxiety or those who are geographically isolated (Bessi re, Kiesler, Kraut, & Boneva, 2008). The outcome often depends on *how* an individual uses the internet—whether for active social engagement (e.g., messaging a close friend) or passive consumption (e.g., scrolling through a feed of strangers), with the latter being more consistently linked to adverse outcomes.

9. Contemporary Perspectives: FoMO and Problematic Use

More recent research has identified specific psychological mechanisms tied to modern internet use. The concept of "Fear of Missing Out" (FoMO), a pervasive apprehension that one might miss out on rewarding experiences that others are having, has become central to understanding digital anxiety. A study by Elhai et al. (2021) found that FoMO acts as a significant mediator between problematic smartphone use and anxiety. Individuals with high levels of FoMO are more likely to engage in compulsive checking of social media, which in turn diminishes their engagement with the present moment and can lead to feelings of alienation from their immediate, real-world surroundings.

Adding another layer to problematic use, Primack et al. (2017) discovered that the use of multiple social media platforms was a stronger predictor of depression and anxiety than the total time spent on them. They hypothesised that this may be due to the increased cognitive load of task-switching, the unique cultural norms of each platform, and the greater potential for unfavourable social comparisons across a broader range of contexts. This suggests that the fragmentation of one's digital social life across many platforms can itself be a source of psychological distress and alienation.

Furthering the distinction between types of internet use, recent work has solidified the importance of the "active vs. passive" framework. Burke and Kraut (2016) found that while receiving targeted, composed communication from close friends (active engagement) was associated with improvements in well-being, one-click feedback and passive consumption of content were not. This is supported by a meta-analysis from Twenge and Campbell (2019), which concluded that the

digital displacement hypothesis—the idea that screen time displaces time spent on more beneficial activities—best explains the negative correlation between digital media use and adolescent well-being.

10.Cultural Context: Studies from the Arab World

Research from non-Western contexts offers crucial insights into how cultural values shape the internet's effects. A master's thesis by Moncer (2012) at the University of Batna, Algeria, surveyed university students about their use of modern communication technologies. The study found that while students primarily used the internet for academic research (46.36%), heavy technology use was linked to feelings of alienation. A significant majority reported that continuous use of communication technology increased their sense of alienation (64.80%) and that modern communication tools made them feel their lives were meaningless without them (77.65%). This suggests a deep dependency that displaces traditional social structures.

Similarly, a study by Al-Najjar (2007) on Libyan university students investigated the relationship between internet exposure and cultural alienation. Applying the framework of Cultivation Theory, the study found a statistically significant correlation between the intensity of internet exposure and the level of cultural alienation. Students who were more heavily exposed to the internet showed greater signs of disconnect from their local culture. The study also found that satisfaction with internet content was linked to alienation, with "entertainment and passing time" being the primary reason for satisfaction. These findings highlight how, in certain cultural contexts, the internet can act as a vehicle for foreign values that may clash with local traditions, thereby exacerbating feelings of alienation from one's own society.

The literature presents a complex picture of the internet's relationship with social alienation. Early research identified an apparent "internet paradox" where a tool for connection fostered alienation (Kraut et al., 1998). Later work has nuanced this perspective, focusing on mechanisms like the displacement of authentic relationships (Turkle, 2011) and social comparison (Kross et al., 2013). More contemporary studies provide experimental evidence of this causal link (Hunt et al., 2018) and have sharpened the focus, identifying phenomena such as FoMO (Elhai et al., 2021) and clarifying that passive content consumption is a primary driver of adverse outcomes (Burke & Kraut, 2016). Furthermore, research indicates that the breadth of platform use, rather than just time spent, is a significant risk factor (Primack et al., 2017). Studies from the Arab world (Al-Najjar, 2007; Moncer, 2012) enrich this understanding by demonstrating that the internet's impact is shaped by cultural context. The consensus is that while the internet is a powerful tool for connection, its passive, excessive, or fragmented use—driven by modern anxieties like FoMO—poses a significant risk for increasing feelings of loneliness, meaninglessness, and disconnection from society.

11.Method

12.Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-analytical method to examine the relationship between internet use and social alienation among university students. The descriptive-analytical method aims to describe the nature of the phenomenon being studied by analysing its data, identifying relationships between its components, and examining the connection between variables to uncover correlations (Morris, 2006, p. 99). This approach was selected to systematically investigate the correlation between internet use and social alienation among the target population

13.Participants

Population

The research population consisted of students at Amar Telidji University of Laghouat, Algeria. According to Madeleine Gravitz (cited in Abdelghani, 2007), a research population is a group of elements that share one or more characteristics that distinguish them from others and on which the research is based.

14.Sample and Sampling Procedure

A purposive sample of 60 students was selected from the Department of Sociology and Demography within the Faculty of Social Sciences. As Ma'n (2004, p. 199) explains, purposive sampling entails the researcher deliberately selecting participants based on the study's objectives, rather than through randomisation. Consequently, this type of sampling does not give all members of the population an equal chance of being included.

The sampling technique was chosen because it best fits the nature of the research topic, which focuses on internet use and its relationship to social alienation. Inclusion criteria required that participants:

- Be enrolled students at the University of Laghouat
- Use the internet daily for at least one hour per day
- Use the internet for academic, entertainment, or other purposes

The selection of sociology students was intentional to facilitate communication, given the researcher's academic affiliation with this field.

Sample Characteristics

The final sample consisted of 60 university students with the following demographic characteristics:

15.Gender distribution.

Table 1

Distribution of the Sample by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	23	38.3%
Female	37	61.7%
Total	60	100%

Source. Data prepared by the researchers using SPSS (2022).

The sample included 23 male participants (38.3%) and 37 female participants (61.7%). The higher proportion of female participants reflects the broader

enrollment trends at the University of Laghouat, where official statistics confirm that female enrollment exceeds male enrollment in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

16.Age distribution.

Table 2

Distribution of the Sample by Age

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
19–25	44	73.3%
26–32	14	23.3%
33–39	2	3.3%
Total	60	100%

Source. Data prepared by the researchers using SPSS (2022).

The majority of participants (73.3%, $n = 44$) were aged 19–25 years, followed by those aged 26–32 years (23.3%, $n = 14$), with the smallest group aged 33–39 years (3.3%, $n = 2$). This distribution reflects the typical age range of undergraduate and early graduate students.

17.Marital status.

Table 3

Distribution of the Sample by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	46	76.7%
Married	12	20.0%
Divorced	2	3.3%
Total	60	100%

Source. Data prepared by the researchers using SPSS (2022).

Most participants were single (76.7%, $n = 46$), followed by married students (20.0%, $n = 12$), and divorced students (3.3%, $n = 2$). This finding is consistent with the age demographics, as most respondents were under 25 and completing their education before entering professional life.

Measures

18.Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument for this study. According to Abdelghani (2007, p. 18), the questionnaire is one of the primary methods researchers rely on to gather data and information directly from their sources, allowing respondents to provide answers on topics that contribute to the verification of study hypotheses.

The questionnaire was designed to include a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions with predefined answers and response options. This structure enabled respondents to express their opinions accurately and clearly, thereby facilitating the collection of information related to the phenomenon under

investigation. Particular attention was paid to the order, precision, and variety of questions to ensure that they reflected the study's variables and indicators.

19. Questionnaire Structure

The questionnaire consisted of three main sections:

1. **Demographic information:** Items assessing personal and demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status).
2. **Independent variable (Internet use):** Items measuring patterns of internet use, including duration of daily use, time of day used, years of use, primary internet activities, and perceived behavioural effects.
3. **Dependent variable (Social alienation):** Items assessing manifestations of social alienation, including feelings during internet disconnection, adherence to customs and traditions, organisational affiliation, perceived effects of internet use on social relationships, and endorsement of normlessness.

20. Validation

A group of academic experts reviewed and validated the questionnaire before its administration to ensure content validity and appropriateness for the target population.

21. Procedure

➤ Data Collection

The fieldwork was conducted in 2019. The research process began with a comprehensive review of the literature and previous studies, followed by the design and validation of questionnaires. After receiving expert approval, questionnaires were distributed to the purposive sample of 60 students in the Department of Sociology and Demography at the University of Laghouat. Participants completed the questionnaires voluntarily, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their participation.

➤ Temporal Scope

The study was conducted over the course of 2019, encompassing literature review, questionnaire design and validation, data collection, data entry, and analysis.

➤ Spatial Scope

Data collection took place at Amar Telidji University of Laghouat, specifically within the Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology and Demography.

22. Data Analysis

Data were entered and analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 22). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were calculated to characterise the sample and examine patterns of internet use and manifestations of social alienation. Cross-tabulations were performed to examine relationships between internet use duration and various indicators of social alienation. The analysis focused on identifying correlations between the independent variable (internet use) and the dependent variable (social alienation) to test the study's hypotheses.

23. Results

This section presents the findings from the analysis of data collected from 60 university students regarding their internet use patterns and manifestations of social alienation. The results are organised according to the study's two primary hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: A significant relationship exists between internet use and social alienation.

Daily Internet Usage Patterns

Table 4

Distribution of Students by Daily Hours of Internet Use

Hours	Frequency	Percentage
< 1 hour	12	20.0%
1–3 hours	23	38.3%
> 3 hours	25	41.7%
Total	60	100%

None. Hours is the hours of internet use. Data prepared by the researchers using SPSS (2022).

Table 4 presents the distribution of daily internet use among participants. The largest group of respondents (41.7%, $n = 25$) reported using the internet for more than three hours per day. This was followed by those using the internet for 1–3 hours daily (38.3%, $n = 23$), while the smallest group (20.0%, $n = 12$) reported using the internet for less than one hour daily.

These results indicate that a majority of respondents engage in prolonged daily internet use. According to their self-reports, this usage often occurs at night, which may contribute to reduced social interaction among family members. A student who spends over three hours online, sometimes at the expense of study time, may be at risk of developing internet addiction. Consequently, a significant portion of the sample may be progressing toward internet addiction. This aligns with findings from numerous studies suggesting that four hours of daily internet use is a sign of addictive behaviour.

Psychological Effects of Internet Disconnection

Table 5

Students' Reported Feelings During an Internet Service Interruption

Feeling	Frequency	Percentage
alienation	11	18.3%
Depression	10	16.7%
Loneliness	18	30.0%
Anxiety	9	15.0%
Normal	12	20.0%
Total	60	100%

Note. Feeling is when the internet is unavailable. Data prepared by the researchers using SPSS (2022).

Table 5 displays participants' reported feelings during internet service interruptions. The most common feeling reported was loneliness (30.0%, $n = 18$), followed by feeling normal (20.0%, $n = 12$), alienation (18.3%, $n = 11$), depression (16.7%, $n = 10$), and anxiety (15.0%, $n = 9$).

The prevalence of loneliness and feelings of alienation upon internet disconnection suggests strong attachment and dependency on this technology among students. This dependency may lead to withdrawal from their physical reality, stemming from weakened real-world social connections. Many studies indicate that the use of modern communication technologies reduces social interaction to the point where they become a substitute for genuine social relationships. This alienation, often accompanied by social rejection, is a clear manifestation of social alienation, which has a profound impact on an individual's personality and relationships with others.

Primary Internet Activities

Table 6

Most Frequently Used Internet Services by Students

Service	Frequency	Percentage
Social Networking Sites	43	71.7%
Entertainment and Leisure	9	15.0%
Academic Research	8	13.3%
Total	60	100%

Note. Service refers to the most commonly used internet services among students. Data prepared by the researchers using SPSS (2022).

Table 6 presents the most frequently used internet services by students. The vast majority of respondents (71.7%, $n = 43$) reported using the internet primarily to

browse social networking sites. This was followed by entertainment and leisure (15.0%, $n = 9$), with the lowest percentage of students (13.3%, $n = 8$) using the internet for academic research.

These findings highlight the central role of social media platforms, such as Facebook, in the lives of respondents, who use them for entertainment, leisure, and acquiring new skills and knowledge. This aligns with broader usage statistics and previous research, such as a study conducted on middle school students in Laghouat by Boukhalkhal, Ben Yahia, and Ben Shattouh (2019), which found that 51% of the students used the internet for social networking.

Behavioural Impact of Internet Use

Table 7

Perceived Impact of the Internet on Student Behaviour

Impact	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	39	65.0%
No	21	35.0%
Total	60	100%

Note. Impact represents the question of (has the internet affected your behaviour?). Data prepared by the researchers using SPSS (2022).

Table 7 shows participants' perceptions of the internet's impact on their behaviour. A significant majority of respondents (65.0%, $n = 39$) affirmed that the internet has an impact on their behaviour, while 35.0% ($n = 21$) reported no behavioural impact.

This suggests that most participants acknowledge that extensive internet use affects their conduct, primarily due to reduced interaction with their families. A user with a smartphone can spend long hours alienated from their immediate physical and social environment. This behaviour can create disruptions in the university student's life, widening the gap in familial relationships due to prolonged immersion in the virtual world. Furthermore, the internet serves as a platform for disseminating foreign cultural values, which can influence behaviour.

Cultural Differences and Internet Exposure

Table 8

Cross-tabulation of Cultural Difference and Time Spent Online

CD	< 1 hour	1–3 hours	> 3 hours	Total
Yes	6 (50%)	16 (69.6%)	15 (60%)	37 (61.7%)
No	6 (50%)	7 (30.4%)	10 (40%)	23 (38.3%)
Total	12 (100%)	23 (100%)	25 (100%)	60 (100%)

Note. CD represents cultural differences. Values are frequency (percentage). Data prepared by the researchers (SPSS 22).

Table 8 illustrates the relationship between the duration of internet use and perceptions of cultural differences. Overall, a majority of respondents (61.7%, n

= 37) agreed that their culture differs from others, while 38.3% ($n = 23$) disagreed. This belief was most prevalent among those who use the internet for 1–3 hours (69.6%, $n = 16$ out of 23), followed by those using it for more than 3 hours (60%, $n = 15$ out of 25), and those using it for less than 1 hour (50%, $n = 6$ out of 12). Connecting this to the findings in Table 7, where respondents confirmed the internet's effect on their behaviour, it can be inferred that a strong relationship exists between internet use and cultural influence. The respondents' awareness of cultural differences may be heightened by their exposure to foreign cultures online. This exposure can lead to a fascination with the values of others, particularly those of Western societies, which may influence the individual's own cultural identity.

Social Preferences and Internet Use Duration

Table 9

Relationship Between the Internet Use Duration and Preferring Companionship

Companionship	< 1 hour	1–3 hours	> 3 hours	Total
Family	8 (66.7%)	16 (69.6%)	15 (60%)	39 (65%)
Friends	1 (8.3%)	3 (13%)	4 (16%)	8 (13.3%)
Alone	3 (25%)	4 (17.4%)	6 (24%)	13 (21.7%)
Total	12 (100%)	23 (100%)	25 (100%)	60 (100%)

Note. Values are frequency (percentage). Companionship represents the students who prefer this type of relationship. Data prepared by the researchers (SPSS 22). Table 9 presents the relationship between internet use duration and preferred companionship. Overall, the majority of respondents (65.0%, $n = 39$) preferred spending time with their family, while 21.7% ($n = 13$) preferred being alone, and 13.3% ($n = 8$) preferred spending time with friends. When examined by internet use duration, the preference for family companionship was consistent across groups: 66.7% ($n = 8$ out of 12) for those using the internet less than 1 hour, 69.6% ($n = 16$ out of 23) for 1–3 hours, and 60% ($n = 15$ out of 25) for more than 3 hours. Despite this stated preference for family companionship, there is a noted tendency for individuals to reduce direct interaction within the family setting by continuously engaging with their phones. This creates a situation where a person is physically present but mentally disengaged, absorbed in the online world. This phenomenon, which can be described as "social alienation within a group," has become widespread across all segments of society and represents a concerning trend.

Hypothesis 2: Duration of Internet Use and Social Alienation Manifestations Adherence to Customs and Traditions

Table 10

Respondents' Opinions on People's Adherence to Customs and Traditions

Adherence	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	22	36.7%

Adherence	Frequency	Percentage
No	38	63.3%
Total	60	100%

Note. Adherence represents Adherence to Customs and Traditions. Data prepared by the researchers using SPSS (2022).

Table 10 presents respondents' opinions on people's adherence to customs and traditions. The majority of respondents (63.3%, $n = 38$) indicated that people do not adhere to customs and traditions as a result of their internet usage, compared to 36.7% ($n = 22$) who stated that people maintain adherence to customs and traditions.

The majority of respondents perceive that people no longer adhere to traditional customs and traditions, arguing that these constraints limit individual freedom and contradict the globalised society. This non-adherence to customs and traditions manifests as rebellion, characterised by Western imitation and an absolutist view of freedom without consideration for societal appropriateness. These findings indicate that most sample members experience rebellion, a manifestation of social alienation.

Organizational Affiliation

Table 11

Student Affiliation with Associations and Organisations

Affiliation	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	21.7%
No	47	78.3%
Total	60	100%

Note. Affiliation represents the question of (Do you belong to organisations, associations, or specific groups?). Data prepared by the researchers using SPSS (2022).

Table 11 demonstrates patterns of student affiliation with associations and organisations. The vast majority of respondents (78.3%, $n = 47$) do not belong to any associations, compared to 21.7% ($n = 13$) who maintain organisational affiliations.

These data indicate that a substantial proportion of students lack affiliation with any organisations or associations, contributing to apathy and reflecting weak community attachment and social alienation. Social alienation encompasses multiple variables related to social interaction, manifested through the absence of social relationships, failure to establish friendships with others, aversion to interpersonal contact, withdrawal from people and the surrounding environment, and indifference to current events. These results indicate that sample members experience social alienation.

Perceived Effects of Internet Usage

Table 12

Respondents' Opinions on the Effects of Internet Use

Internet Effects	Frequency	Percentage
Individual alienation	18	30.0%
Decline of social relationships	16	26.7%
Reducing the physical distances	15	25.0%
Acquisition of new skills	7	11.7%
Establishing relationships	4	6.7%
Total	60	100%

Note. Internet Effects represents the internet as a way that affects social themes. Data prepared by the researchers using SPSS (2022).

Table 12 presents respondents' opinions on the effects of internet use. The most significant proportion of respondents (30.0%, $n = 18$) identified the internet as contributing to individual alienation. This was followed by deterioration of social relationships (26.7%, $n = 16$), reduction of physical distance (25.0%, $n = 15$), acquisition of new skills (11.7%, $n = 7$), and establishment of new relationships (6.7%, $n = 4$).

Most respondents acknowledged that the internet contributes to individual alienation resulting from improper usage, which leads to the fragmentation of social relationships among community members and generates feelings of loneliness. These findings are corroborated by the results in Table 5, which demonstrate emptiness, a lack of security and social relationships, distance from others, and a loss of interaction with family and friends. These results indicate that most sample members recognise the internet's role in fostering individual dependency.

Internet Use Duration and Moral Relativism

Table 13

Relationship Between Internet Usage Duration and Agreement with "The End Justifies the Means"

Agreement	< 1 hour	1–3 hours	> 3 hours	Total
Agree	7 (58.3%)	12 (52.2%)	14 (56%)	33 (55%)
Disagree	5 (41.7%)	11 (47.8%)	11 (44%)	27 (45%)
Total	12 (100%)	23 (100%)	25 (100%)	60 (100%)

Note. Agreement represents the agreement with the statement “the end justifies the means”. Data prepared by the researchers using SPSS (2022).

Table 13 illustrates the relationship between internet usage duration and agreement with the statement "the end justifies the means." Overall, the majority of respondents (55%, $n = 33$) endorsed this principle, while 45% ($n = 27$) disagreed. When examined by internet use duration, agreement was highest among those using the internet for less than 1 hour (58.3%, $n = 7$ out of 12) and those using it for more than 3 hours (56%, $n = 14$ out of 25), with the lowest agreement rate among those using the internet for 3 hours (52.2%, $n = 12$ out of 23).

These results indicate that most respondents endorse the principle that "the end justifies the means," even when the means are illegitimate. This reveals that a segment of students seeks to achieve their objectives through any method, even at the expense of societal norms and values. This demonstrates anomie, a manifestation of alienation that begins with disrespect for prevailing and recognised societal values and attempts to break certain constraints perceived as barriers to achieving desired goals. These results indicate that most sample members disregard societal standards, as evidenced by the findings.

Discussion

Analysis of Hypothesis 1: Relationship Between Internet Use and Social Alienation

The results of Tables 4–9 demonstrated that a relationship exists between internet use and social alienation. The findings revealed that 41.7% of respondents used the internet for more than three hours, with 78% utilising it during nighttime hours. The majority of sample members had been using the internet for eight years. Additionally, 65% of respondents indicated that the internet had affected their behaviours, attributed to individuals' addiction to internet use, as they experience feelings of loneliness when internet connectivity is disrupted.

Table 5 indicates that a substantial proportion (71.7%) of students accessed the internet for social networking sites. Some studies suggest that over time, individuals may lose their ability to interact effectively with others due to reduced face-to-face interaction, instead engaging primarily with virtual platforms. These indicators reflect the alienation of university students, making integration into real society increasingly difficult. Therefore, a relationship exists between internet use and social alienation. Consequently, the first hypothesis was confirmed.

Analysis of Hypothesis 2: Duration of Internet Use and Social Alienation Manifestations

The results of Tables 10–13 demonstrated that internet use increased manifestations of social alienation among students. The findings revealed that 63.3% of respondents do not maintain customs and traditions, claiming these constrain their freedom, while 78.8% lacked interest in joining associations, weakening their sense of belonging. Regarding the effects of excessive internet use, 30% experienced social alienation. Furthermore, 55% endorsed the principle that "the end justifies the means," suggesting that students achieve legitimate objectives through illegitimate methods. What was once socially unacceptable has become acceptable for achieving specific goals, indicating an absence of normative controls. What was previously considered wrong has become right. When anomie pervades society, social relationships and values experience conflict, and crimes, assaults, and moral dissolution proliferate. The loss of norms, customs, and traditions that govern society negatively affects individuals' daily behaviours. It promotes the principle that "the end justifies the means", indicators that explain their state of social alienation resulting from excessive internet use.

These findings confirm the results of numerous researchers who observed that the internet has transformed social life, driving people toward alienation and severing family bonds. It has also contributed to the alienation of authentic social values, replacing them with selfishness and utilitarianism, while materialistic values have come to dominate interpersonal relationships. This has led to the collapse of social relationships, rebellion against societal values, and individual alienation and loneliness upon internet disconnection. Therefore, the duration of internet use affects the increase in manifestations of social alienation among students. Consequently, the second hypothesis was confirmed.

24. Conclusion

Technological developments and the accompanying progress have led to widespread internet use, which has permeated all aspects of life. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between internet use and social alienation among students, considering that young people rapidly interact with technological developments and often experience alienation through virtual interactions provided by the internet. Important findings were reached regarding the relationship between students' duration of internet use and social alienation. The most significant findings include the high percentage of students using social networking sites, where individuals interact with virtual friends, thus contributing to the social alienation of university students. Additionally, the internet affects students' behaviours, potentially causing them to experience social alienation. Its manifestations are embodied in alienation and normlessness, from which social problems emerge, such as extremism, terrorism, migration, and numerous phenomena that may lead society to a state of anomie.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Conduct studies aimed at revealing the causes of increased manifestations of social alienation among students.

- Conduct studies aimed at examining students' abandonment of customs and traditions.
- Conduct studies aimed at revealing the anomie (normlessness) experienced by society.

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