

**The Role of Social Media in Promoting Safe
Driving Behavior: Facebook as a Model
- An Exploratory Study in the City of Laghouat-**

**دور وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في تعزيز سلوك القيادة الآمنة:
فيسبوك كنموذج: دراسة استكشافية في مدينة الاغواط**

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Abstract:

This study aimed to identify the role of social media networks, particularly Facebook, in promoting safe driving behavior among young drivers. The study adopted an exploratory descriptive approach, using a questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire was administered to a purposive sample consisting of 20 young taxi drivers in the city of Laghouat. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including percentages, arithmetic means, and standard deviations. The findings revealed that Facebook contributes to enhancing certain aspects of safe driving behavior, while its influence remains limited on other aspects.

Keywords:

Social media networks, Facebook, traffic awareness, safe driving behavior, young drivers.

ملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد دور شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي، ولا سيما فيسبوك، في تعزيز سلوك القيادة الآمنة بين السائقين الشباب. واعتمدت الدراسة نهجاً استكشافياً وصفيّاً، باستخدام استبيان كأداة أساسية لجمع البيانات. تم توزيع الاستبيان على عينة محددة تتألف من 20 سائق تاكسي شاباً في مدينة لاغوات. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها باستخدام أساليب إحصائية وصفية، بما في ذلك النسب المئوية والمتوسطات الحسابية والانحرافات المعيارية. أظهرت النتائج أن فيسبوك يساهم في تعزيز جوانب معينة من سلوك القيادة الآمنة، في حين أن تأثيره يظل محدوداً على جوانب أخرى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي، فيسبوك، الوعي المروري، سلوك القيادة الآمنة، السائقون الشباب.

Introduction

Traffic accidents represent one of the most serious problems facing countries worldwide in the contemporary era due to the physical, psychological, and social damages they cause, which negatively affect public health. In Algeria, the increasing number of traffic accident victims in recent years, along with the diversity of contributing factors, necessitates the search for effective methods and mechanisms to reduce and limit the consequences of these accidents, particularly since studies have confirmed that the primary cause is the human factor.

According to statistics provided by the General Directorate of National Security, 18,881 traffic accidents were recorded, resulting in 751 fatalities and 22,970 injuries (Algerian Radio, 2025). The importance of this issue is further emphasized by the fact that the majority of those involved in traffic accidents are young people. Many drivers tend to engage in risky driving behaviors, and studies indicate that some young drivers deliberately violate traffic laws and commit dangerous actions that ultimately lead to traffic accidents. This behavior may be attributed to the psychological and social characteristics commonly associated with this age group, particularly impulsiveness and risk-taking tendencies aimed at achieving independence and self-affirmation through challenge and adventure despite the severe consequences that may result from such behaviors.

Social networking sites are among the outcomes of social change and technological development, and they have become influential communication tools in daily events, occupying a large portion of the lives of Algerian youth. Through these networks, young people discuss various issues and share their interests within a limitless virtual space. Consequently, social media platforms have become an important driver of social change due to their speed in disseminating information and the diversity of its presentation, which contributes to education, the development of traffic awareness, and the promotion of safe driving behaviors.

Accordingly, the present study addresses the role of Facebook in promoting safe driving behavior among a sample of young taxi drivers in the city of Laghouat.

1. Research Problem

The research problem is defined through the following questions:

- To what extent are young taxi drivers exposed to traffic awareness posts on Facebook?
- What are the opinions of young taxi drivers regarding the content of traffic awareness posts on Facebook?
- To what extent does Facebook contribute to promoting safe driving behavior among young taxi drivers?

2. Research Objectives

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To explore the level of exposure of young taxi drivers to traffic awareness posts on Facebook.
- To examine the opinions of young taxi drivers regarding the content of traffic awareness posts on Facebook.
- To investigate the role of Facebook in promoting safe driving behavior among young taxi drivers.

3. Significance of the Study

- The significance of the study lies in addressing a modern communication medium—Facebook—which has spread widely and

increasingly, prompting an examination of its awareness-raising role and its contribution to promoting safe driving behavior among young drivers.

- The importance of the study also stems from its focus on a key population group—young drivers—who have been shown by studies to be primarily responsible for traffic accidents. Therefore, focusing on this group may contribute to the development of strategies aimed at reducing traffic accidents.

4. Definition of Study Concepts

4.1 Social Media Networks

Social media networks refer to websites on the Internet that emerged with the second generation of the web (Web 2.0), allowing communication among users within a virtual community that brings them together according to their interests or affiliations (university, country, media, company, etc.). Communication occurs through direct interaction services such as sending messages, sharing personal profiles, and accessing others' information and updates. These networks vary in form and objectives; some are general networks aimed at global communication and friendship building, while others focus on specialized communities such as professional, photography, or media networks (Kanaan, 2014).

According to Palase (2006), social networks are “programs used to build communities on the Internet where individuals can connect with one another for various purposes” (Noumar, 2012).

In this study, social media networks are defined as highly interactive websites that facilitate the creation of virtual communities and enable communication among users (groups, friends, etc.) through messaging services, profile sharing, and access to shared information.

4.2 Facebook

According to the Dictionary of Media and Communication, Facebook is “a social networking website established in 2004 that allows the publication of personal pages. It was initially created for university students, faculty, and staff, but later expanded to include all individuals” (Barakat, 2016).

It is also defined as a virtual community where individuals can meet and interact by exchanging photos, videos, and other information, communicating with friends and family, participating in collaborative activities, and interacting around shared interests (Bouamar, 2014).

In this study, Facebook is considered one of the most widely used social networking platforms worldwide, enabling communication among users from different regions through text, voice, or video interactions, as well as allowing users to share news, information, images, and videos on their personal pages to receive reactions and comments from others.

4.3 Driving Behavior

Bouzrifa and colleagues define driving as an integrated system involving the vehicle, the environment, and the individual. It depends on feedback resulting from the responses of the vehicle and the surrounding environment, which the driver perceives through multiple sensory inputs, particularly vision, hearing, and bodily sensations related to pressure, speed, and braking. Additionally, memory plays an important role in recalling different driving techniques and traffic signals (Zaabata, 2011).

4.4 Safe Driving Behavior

Safe driving behavior refers to the individual's consistent commitment to actions that ensure safe driving and prevent accidents affecting oneself or others. These behaviors include maintaining the vehicle, respecting traffic signals, adhering to appropriate speed limits, wearing seat belts, avoiding driving difficulties during adverse weather conditions, maintaining mental alertness and physical stability, and demonstrating socially acceptable behavior toward other drivers (Boughazi & Ammamra, 2014).

5. Field Study Procedures

5.1 Study Method

Since the present study seeks to explore the role of social media networks (Facebook) in promoting safe driving behavior among young drivers, the exploratory descriptive method was adopted.

5.2 Study Sample

The study relied on a purposive sample consisting of 20 young taxi drivers in the city of Laghouat. Thirty questionnaires were distributed, and 20 valid responses were retrieved and used for statistical analysis. The characteristics of the sample are summarized as follows:

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18–25	7	35%
Age	26–30	11	55%
Age	31–35	2	10%
Education	Middle	1	5%
Education	Secondary	8	40%
Education	University	11	55%
Marital Status	Single	6	30%
Marital Status	Married	8	40%
Marital Status	Divorced	6	30%
Driving Experience	2–5 years	10	50%
Driving Experience	More than 5 years	10	50%
Accident Exposure	Never	11	55%
Accident Exposure	Once	7	35%
Accident Exposure	2–5 times	2	10%

5.3 Study Instrument

To conduct the exploratory study, a questionnaire consisting of 19 questions distributed across four dimensions was designed as follows:

- Dimension One: Related to general demographic data and included five variables: age, educational level, marital status, actual driving experience, and number of times exposed to traffic accidents.

- Dimension Two: Focused on the extent to which young drivers browse traffic awareness posts on Facebook and included Questions 1–
- Dimension Three: Concerned with identifying young drivers' opinions regarding the content of traffic awareness posts on Facebook and included Questions 5–11.
- Dimension Four: Addressed the extent to which Facebook contributes to promoting safe driving behavior among young drivers and included Questions 12–14 (Question 14 contained 10 sub-items).

The validity of the instrument was verified by presenting it to a panel of experts in psychology and sociology, and the questionnaire was modified according to their recommendations.

5.5 Statistical Methods Used in the Study

To process the data and answer the research questions, the researcher employed percentage analysis and measures of central tendency, including arithmetic means and standard deviations.

6. Presentation and Discussion of Study Results

6.1 Presentation and Discussion of the First Research Question

The first research question states: *“To what extent are young drivers exposed to traffic awareness posts on Facebook?”* The following section presents the data and findings related to this question.

Table 2. Presence of Traffic Awareness Posts

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	100%
No	0	0%

The data presented in Table (2) indicate that all respondents agree on the presence of traffic-safety awareness posts on Facebook, with

100% of participants answering “Yes.” Facebook is a social networking platform that offers a range of services enabling the exchange and dissemination of information, including images, videos, and text. This information covers various aspects of users’ daily lives and contributes to raising their awareness. Among the most important of these aspects is traffic awareness and road safety, which has become a significant social issue primarily related to human behavior. Since Facebook is an open network that includes all segments of society, it is natural that its content features traffic-awareness posts directed at drivers.

Table 3. The Extent to Which Young Drivers Follow Posts Addressing Traffic Safety Awareness.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	3	15%
Often	10	50%
Sometimes	7	35%
Never	0	0%

The data in Table (3) indicate that the majority of respondents (65%) regularly follow posts related to traffic safety awareness, while 35% reported that they follow such posts only occasionally. This can be explained by the fact that the study sample consists of young individuals, who tend to be more responsive to social change. Nowadays, especially with the widespread use of smartphones, young people spend much of their time on Facebook, which allows them to remain continuously exposed to various types of posts, including those related to traffic safety awareness.

Table 4. Nature of Young Drivers’ Engagement with Traffic Safety Awareness Posts

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Great interest	9	45%
Normal	8	40%
No interest	3	15%

The data in Table (4) show that 45% of respondents follow traffic safety awareness posts on Facebook with great interest, 40% follow

them with moderate attention, and 15% follow them without much interest. This can be explained in light of the characteristics of the study sample, as the respondents are taxi drivers whose occupation requires constant presence on the road, increasing their risk of exposure to traffic accidents. Consequently, traffic awareness remains a crucial mechanism for their protection.

6.2 Presentation and Discussion of the Second Research Question

The second research question states: *“What are the opinions of young drivers regarding the content of traffic safety awareness posts on Facebook?”* The following section presents the data and findings related to this question.

Table 5. Young Drivers’ Satisfaction with the Content of Traffic Safety Awareness Posts on Facebook

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	19	95%
No	1	5%

The data in Table (5) show that 95% of respondents are satisfied with the content and language of the traffic safety awareness posts, while 5% believe that the posts are written in a complex language that is not easily accessible to everyone. Facebook, being an open platform that does not require a specific educational level, provides content in a clear and simple language that can be understood by all users.

Table 6. Types of Arguments Used in Traffic Safety Awareness Posts on Facebook

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Religious	18	90%
Legal	2	10%

The data in the table above show that the most commonly used arguments in traffic safety awareness posts on Facebook are **religious arguments**, accounting for 90%, followed by **legal arguments** at 10%. Religion and law serve as two key social control mechanisms that society uses to regulate individual behavior. The law, through its

deterrent measures such as imprisonment, fines, or suspension of driving licenses, compels drivers to comply with traffic safety rules.

Religion is also considered one of the most effective social tools for guiding, organizing, and regulating the behavior of individuals and groups, thereby maintaining social order and stability. As Sabir notes, “the primary function of religion is to provide humans with inner peace, mental clarity, and a sense of security” (Al-Rashidi, 2010).

Table 7. The Impact of the Fear Appeal Technique on Young Drivers

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	7	35%
Often	8	40%
Sometimes	4	20%
Never	1	5%

The data in Table (7) show that the majority of respondents (75%) are influenced by the fear appeal technique used in these posts, 20% are influenced occasionally, while 5% report that they are not influenced at all. The fear appeal is a persuasive argumentative method that highlights, in a striking and alarming manner, the consequences of failing to adhere to safe driving rules, such as permanent disabilities or orphaning children.

Table 8. Respondents’ Opinions on Traffic Safety Awareness Posts on Facebook

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Important	20	100%
Not important	0	0%

The table shows that all respondents agree that traffic safety awareness posts on Facebook are important for drivers. This consensus may be attributed to the fact that the respondents are taxi drivers who have a pre-existing interest in this topic, making it particularly relevant to them.

6.3 Presentation and Discussion of the Third Research Question

The third research question states: “To what extent does Facebook influence the promotion of safe driving behavior among young drivers?”

The following section presents the data and findings related to this question.

Table 9. Contribution of Posts in Providing Young Drivers with New Information on Traffic Safety Awareness

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	19	95%
No	1	5%

The data in the table above show that 95% of respondents consider Facebook to be a source of traffic safety awareness, providing drivers with new information related to safe driving behavior. This can be explained by the fact that more than half of the study sample are university-educated, making them the group most interested in seeking knowledge. Additionally, the posts often include images and audio, and allow users to leave comments, which increases young drivers’ engagement and provides them with new insights regarding traffic safety awareness.

Table 10. Young Drivers’ Reactions to Following Traffic Safety Awareness Posts

Reaction	Frequency	Percentage
Fear	9	45%
Responsibility	8	40%
Boredom	2	10%
Anxiety	1	5%

The figures in the table above show that traffic safety awareness posts on Facebook elicit varied reactions among the respondents: 45% feel fear, 40% feel a sense of responsibility, 10% experience boredom or aversion, and 5% feel anxiety. These responses are all positive indicators of Facebook’s effectiveness in influencing driver behavior.

Fear can act as a deterrent, reducing risky driving behaviors, while a sense of responsibility changes the driver's perception of the road—from viewing it as a private space to seeing it as a shared social space with pedestrians—thereby reinforcing the obligation to comply with traffic safety rules.

Table 11. Means and Standard Deviations of Safe Driving Behavior

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Wearing seatbelt	1.50	0.51
Respecting speed limits	2.00	0.56
Avoiding phone use	2.65	0.58
Checking brakes	2.75	0.85
Respecting signals	1.95	0.51
Stopping when tired	1.65	0.58
Checking tires	2.45	0.60
Checking fuel	1.65	0.48
Checking lights	2.55	0.60
Keeping right lane	2.30	0.57

The data in Table 11 indicate the following:

- The mean scores for items 3, 4, and 9 were 2.65, 2.75, and 2.55, with standard deviations of 0.58, 0.85, and 0.60, respectively. These values are higher than the hypothetical mean of 2.5, indicating that Facebook contributed to promoting the following safe driving behaviors: not answering mobile phones while driving, checking brake safety, and inspecting vehicle lights before driving.
- The mean scores for items 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 were 1.50, 2.00, 1.95, 1.65, 2.45, 1.65, and 2.30, respectively. These values are below the hypothetical mean of 2.5, indicating that Facebook did not significantly influence these specific safe driving behaviors.

CONCLUSION :

This study highlighted the role of Facebook in promoting safe driving behavior among a sample of young taxi drivers in Laghouat. Using an exploratory descriptive approach, the study revealed the following findings:

- 1.All respondents agreed on the existence of traffic safety awareness posts on Facebook.
- 2.Most respondents follow posts addressing traffic safety awareness on Facebook.
- 3.95% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the content and language of traffic safety posts, considering them important for drivers.
- 4.The posts primarily rely on religious and legal arguments to promote traffic safety.
- 5.These posts provide young drivers with new information about safe driving behavior.
- 6.Respondents' reactions to these posts varied, with the following sequence: fear, responsibility, boredom/aversion, and anxiety.
- 7.Facebook contributed to enhancing certain aspects of safe driving behavior, specifically:
 - oNot answering mobile phones while driving.
 - oChecking brake safety before driving.
 - oInspecting vehicle lights before driving.

It is important to note that the findings of this study are exploratory. Therefore, future research should include larger and more diverse samples and examine the influence of other social media platforms, contributing to the development of more effective and sustainable traffic safety awareness programs.

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