Social media and its impact on the cultural and value system of society



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Abstract:

The world is witnessing a series of rapid changes in the field of information and communication technology, which has affected all components of society and made information move from one society to another in fractions of a second using a group of means such as social media sites, which are one of the most common means among different segments of society, especially young people.Despite these benefits, it is not without some negatives that have begun to greatly affect the values of society and threaten its cohesion from intellectual and cultural invasion, which requires rationalizing its use by working to develop awareness among society of the serious harms that can result from it.Therefore, through this research, we seek to identify the benefits and harms of social media, as well as to provide some mechanisms that help preserve the values and culture of society from various forms of invasion.

key words*:* Social media; Value system; Society; Cultural invasion; Mechanisms.

Introduction:

The world is witnessing significant developments in information and communication technologies, transforming the globe into a small village from which people derive diverse cultures, ideas, and knowledge as they arise. Social media is one of these technologies that has witnessed widespread spread in recent years across various societies and across diverse spectrums. It has become an integral part of their daily lives, given the ease of communication it provides between individuals and the

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services it provides in terms of the rapid dissemination and exchange of information via the Internet in a short period of time.

The rapid development of social media has created an interactive environment among its users through the use of modern communication mechanisms, networks, and multimedia to deliver and exchange information as quickly and cost-effectively as possible, in accordance with quality and qualitative standards that aim to measure the inputs and outputs of these media and to develop them to meet the needs of their users and increase their consumption rate.

Social media has had a significant impact on transferring cultures from one country to another and preserving cultural heritage. UNESCO is working to use YouTube to archive intangible heritage by storing video clips and producing unofficial archives of digital heritage. It confirmed through its study that social media can protect intangible heritage and achieve significant interaction with it. [1]

A Finnish study on the role of social media in societal change also confirmed that the Internet has tremendous potential to foster social movements and facilitate communication between individuals of similar culture and thinking through the use of social networking sites. [2]

Bushra Al-Rawi, in her study on the role of social media in change, concluded that social media has contributed to raising awareness among people and has created new values, such as accepting others, regardless of their race or religion, if their demands are the same. [3]

In a study on the impact of social networking sites on developing social responsibility among young people, which aimed to examine the impact of using the social networking site "Facebook" on developing social responsibility among those aged 15 to 25 years.

The results showed the impact of these media on developing social responsibility among young people and called for conducting a study among other segments of society. They also called for the need to spread awareness among young people about the role of social networking sites and their impact on developing their personalities and guiding them to use these sites optimally. [4]

It is worth noting here that despite the diversity and variety of social media sites, despite the commonalities of ideas and cultures, they also contain alien ideas and cultures that may influence moral and social values, especially among young people.

A study on the impact of using social media networks on shaping the moral value system of Saudi youth showed that 86.33% of the targeted

sample confirmed that these networks were able to create a public sphere that had an impact on the moral value system. [5]

A study on the sociological analysis of the crisis of moral values among Egyptian youth also confirmed the existence of a crisis of moral values in Egyptian society, manifested in the spread of corruption in its various forms resulting from the exchange of messages with others, as well as globalization, where this crisis is widespread among the unemployed as a result of the lack of equality in opportunities and rights. [6]

In Algeria, a study titled "Social Networking Sites and Values: The Relationship Between Reality and Virtuality," which aimed to determine the impact of these sites on shaping the value system, showed a difference regarding the impact of Facebook on the value of respecting others, which is linked to the degree of individuals' use of it. It also showed a positive impact of this network, represented by its strengthening of the value of honesty in dealings among students. [7]

A study titled "The Impact of Social Media Use on Social Relationships" also showed that many individuals' real-life relationships have been transformed into relationships in the virtual world.[8]

Hence, it becomes clear that social media has provided its users with ample opportunities to interact and move across borders without restrictions, with minimal effort and time, which has had a significant impact on their values and cultural affiliation, both positively and negatively. Therefore, through this paper, we will seek to understand the impact of social media on society's cultural and value systems by answering the following questions:

What is social media?

What are the negative and positive effects of social media on individuals?

What are the mechanisms that help preserve societal values and culture from various forms of invasion?

1- Research Objectives:

Through this research, we aim to:

- Identify the types of social media and demonstrate the importance of exploiting them, benefiting from their services, and investing in them positively.
- Demonstrate the impact of social media and its importance in defining and preserving societal values and cultural heritage.
- Providing some solutions to reduce the negative impact that social media can have and highlighting its role by revealing the role it can play in promoting society's value and cultural system.

2- Significance of the Research:

The importance of this research lies in the following:

- It complements numerous studies that have addressed topics related to the impact of social media on shaping the values and cultural aspects of societies.
- To examine the role social media can play in changing the behaviors and values of its users, given the fundamental changes in individual behavior across countries as a result of the information they receive on various issues.
- To contribute to identifying mechanisms for leveraging social media networks to limit intellectual and cultural invasion among various segments of society.

3- Defining search terms:

3-1- Social media:

This term refers to a group of websites on the internet that allow communication between individuals in a virtual environment. These platforms include, but are not limited to, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, WhatsApp, and others. It is worth noting that the term social networking is composed of two terms: the term communication and the term social. It is an online communication participation that allows the participant to create his own website that allows him to link it to an electronic social system that includes other members with whom he communicates locally at the national level or externally at the global level.

Social networking sites are programs used to create virtual groups on the Internet, allowing individuals to communicate with each other for various reasons [9]

This is done through direct communication or by viewing other people's news and available information. These types include:

- Facebook: The most popular and widely used social networking site in the world.
- Twitter: A microblogging service that allows you to send short tweets.
- YouTube: A site that allows you to record, store, and share large numbers of videos.
- TikTok: A site that allows you to share a collection of short videos.

3-2- Impact:

Impact refers to the combination of two or more elements [10]. It is anything that can bring about a change in people's behaviors, knowledge, opinions, and beliefs, providing them with new information that creates

new knowledge and attitudes [11] whether in the long, medium, or short term.

3-3- The cultural system:

It is the set of characteristics and attributes that distinguish individuals in a given society from other individuals in other societies. It includes religion, language, and cultural values. These elements shape a person's awareness and sense of belonging to the society to which they belong [12]

A cultural system is a sense of belonging to a local, national or regional group, with its distinctive language, moral values, customs and shared history, and a sense of compliance with and participation in it, as well as the way in which one belongs to society and the world as a whole.

Our cultural identity is represented by our Islamic identity and pride in belonging to it, the Arabic language as a means of communication, and the Muslim cultural heritage, with all its ideas, values, customs, and traditions.

Social media can threaten our cultural identity if it succeeds in isolating people, distancing them from fundamental issues, and deepening the gap between individual values and behaviors, especially in light of fraud and the use of fake information and accounts.[13]

3-4- Community values:

These are social and moral standards established by a community based on a set of principles, standards, traditions, and needs. These standards are imposed on individuals within the same community, and are used to judge their behavior, whether accepted or rejected, and to inform decisions and guidance regarding them [14]

Community values in virtual practices refer to the various behaviors, rules, and attitudes of the community of users of these spaces, expressed through posts and comments on social media.

4- Study Methodology:

This study relies on the descriptive approach, as it is suitable for providing, interpreting, and analyzing data on the subject. It describes contemporary or current phenomena and events and provides data on specific characteristics in reality, in terms of their occurrence, availability, and distribution within a statistical community.

5- Study sample:

The study sample consisted of Algerian youth who use social networking sites. Due to their large number and the difficulty of identifying them, the sample was limited to 50 young men and women, aged between 19 and 25 years.

6-Research Tools:

The questionnaire was used as a tool for this study, as it is an effective means of collecting data and obtaining the information required by the study. It is also appropriate for the nature of the research community and the characteristics of the sample. The questionnaire includes a set of questions that the respondent is asked to answer in a manner determined by the researcher, based on the research objectives.

We prepared the questionnaire in its initial form after reviewing previous studies related to the study's topic. Care was taken to include a set of questions that revolve around verifying the questions the study seeks to answer. The research form consisted of four axes, formulated to achieve the objectives this study seeks to achieve.

7- Presentation and discussion of results

This study addresses the topic of social media and its impact on society's cultural and value systems. Based on the data collected, the most important findings will be presented, interpreted, and discussed in light of the theoretical framework of the research and previous studies.

Regarding the type of social media used by the respondents, the results show that the majority of respondents prefer to use Instagram, TikTok and Facebook, while a small percentage of them prefer other sites such as WhatsApp, Twitter and Viber. From here, we conclude that Instagram, TikTok and Facebook are more used than other sites, and this may be due to the fact that they are sites that combine seriousness, fun and other characteristics.

As for the positive effects of social networking sites, the results showed that the majority of respondents confirmed that social networking sites allowed them to learn the customs of other peoples and the cultures of different societies, which enriched their intellectual and cultural experience.

The results also showed that social networking sites allowed the respondents to keep up with what was happening in the world, especially since they do not interact with traditional media as much as they interact with electronic media, and they have begun to communicate through these sites to obtain developments that occur on the political, economic, social and cultural levels.

A study on the role of social media networks in fulfilling the needs of Jordanian youth showed that there are five needs that Jordanian university youth fulfill through the use of social media sites. The first place is the cognitive needs that aim to obtain information, followed by

emotional needs, personal needs, then social needs such as communication, and in the last place is the need to fill the void[15]

Social networking sites have also allowed for the enhancement of the spirit of communication for the purpose of benefiting from scientific and research matters, as well as getting to know and communicate with people in one country or in other countries on different continents of the world, which contributes to consolidating and developing social skills, exchanging communication and knowledge, and eliminating temporal and spatial barriers to increase people's closeness and interaction. This allows for getting to know the customs, civilizations, and cultures of other peoples.

A study titled "The Impact of Using Electronic Social Networks on Social Relationships," conducted on a sample of female students at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, demonstrated that the reasons that motivate female students to use Facebook and Twitter are primarily due to the ease of expressing their opinions and attitudes, strengthening their old friendships, the ease of searching for new friendships, and intellectual and cultural openness.

The study results also showed that social media allowed the respondents to develop their ability to express their opinions by sharing content that expresses the thoughts and beliefs of social media users, which may be different and conflict with the thoughts and beliefs of others. Social media sites are a powerful space for expressing everything that happens to their users. A study conducted by the University of Texas confirmed that social media users resort to these sites to express their true personality and satisfy their basic needs. Hana Hussein Qarni also confirmed that social media networks made information and data available instantly and provided the opportunity for individuals to express themselves and provide information, thus contributing to shaping public opinion and decision-making[16]

Social media also allows for intellectual convergence between individuals from different classes and communities, bridging the cultural and civilizational gap between them. Social media ensures the transmission of multiple cultures, values, and behavioral patterns among its users around the world in a short time and at a lower cost, thus promoting the cultural values of the world's various peoples and regions.

A study on the role of social media in spreading cultural awareness, conducted on a sample of 426 Saudi youth, showed that social media is an effective means of promoting culture and recognizing cultural diversity [17]

The results of the study also showed that social media facilitates and improves the learning process. A study aimed at identifying the impact of designing a collaborative e-learning environment based on some Web 2.0 tools such as Facebook and blogs, and investigating whether they have an impact on developing personal knowledge management and learning skills, has shown that these tools are effective. An experiment was conducted on a sample of 40 students at Tanta University. They were randomly assigned to two groups. The first experimental group was taught using the Moodle learning management tool, which was linked to Web 2.0 tools, namely wikis, Facebook, and blogs. The second experimental group was taught using a traditional e-learning environment using the Moodle learning management system, the chat tool for synchronous communication, and the forum tool for asynchronous communication.

The study results confirmed the effectiveness of both educational environments, with the superiority of the e-learning environment based on Web 2.0 tools in developing personal knowledge management skills.

Hence, the positive role played by social networking sites becomes clear, as they allow users to browse these sites, access various news and information, communicate with relatives and friends, share and exchange opinions, information and ideas, and create virtual friendships and work environments that save time, effort and money.

Regarding the negative effects of social networking sites, the results showed that the majority of the respondents confirmed that social networking sites affected their interaction and sitting with their family members. These sites also distracted them from visiting their relatives and friends, which led to a decline in the rate of daily interaction between them and their families and relatives, weakening their social relationships, and a decline in the personal interaction skills of individuals and groups.

Some studies have shown that failure to monitor social media can lead to the disintegration of social ties. A study aimed at identifying the impact of social media use on social relationships, conducted on a sample of 1,600 young people who use these sites, revealed that half of the sample interacted more with their parents, relatives, and colleagues via social media, often through text messages. Social media has imposed isolation on the family while it is under one roof, and many studies hold it responsible for the greatest burden of the phenomenon of family estrangement and moral decadence. Some studies have also indicated that

some means of communication are one of the reasons for divorce among spouses, and a major reason for the decline in family interaction[18]

The results of this study also showed that social networking sites have led to a decline in their academic achievement due to their addiction to them and the difficulty of giving them up. They find themselves spending a long time filling the void they are experiencing at the expense of their academic achievement. The grades obtained by university students addicted to browsing social networking sites are lower than those obtained by their colleagues who use these networks rationally.

These sites can also affect identity elements, the most prominent of which is the use of colloquial language instead of classical Arabic and the combination of Latin letters and numbers instead of using Arabic letters. Several studies, including a study on the effects of social networking sites on the cultural identity of university students, have revealed that most of the young people surveyed prefer to write in foreign letters[19]

A study on the role of social media networks in mobilizing Palestinian public opinion towards social and political change also confirmed that the most common language used in the communication process among Palestinian university students when they use social media networks is Arabic, out of their belief in the role it plays in shaping public opinion [20]

The study results also showed that most of the respondents exploit social networking sites to satisfy the entertainment aspect. A study on the effects of reliance on social networking sites in China, by conducting a comparison between before and after reliance on them, indicated that social networking site designers use social games with the aim of attracting and capturing the largest number of users. And that its use for entertainment purposes rather than obtaining useful information has become more prevalent after the emergence of social networking sites [21]This is also what a study that aimed to identify the motives behind Egyptian youth's use of Facebook concluded, as it confirmed that the motive of entertainment and amusement comes at the top of the list of motives that drive youth to use these sites.

The study results also showed that respondents access social networking sites to form virtual friendships and add unknown people, with the potential consequences. A study on the impact of social networking sites on values among university students indicated that one of the most significant negative effects of these networks is forming illicit friendships with the opposite sex and neglecting religious aspects.

The exploitation of social media networks to defame and insult individuals and personalities, as well as the use by some users of pseudonyms or impersonations of well-known figures, the dissemination of misleading news, or the use of the site for the purpose of blackmail and defamation. Regarding the mechanisms to be adopted to limit various forms of invasion

The study's results indicated that families must work to refine their children's personalities, strengthen their sense of belonging, and foster their religious awareness by intensifying dialogue sessions that touch on religious values, embody the nation's culture and history, and encourage them to confront the challenges of the digital environment.

They must also raise awareness of the negatives of social media, the implicit goals of some pages, and how to avoid the risks that can be encountered in cyberspace. They must also encourage joining useful pages, ensure rational use of social media, and schedule religious, educational, and recreational activities that enhance family communication and explain the positive role of these activities.

At the research and educational level, the study results showed that we must benefit from successful international experiences in activating the role of universities and research centers in studying problems related to the use of social networking sites, and the proposed solutions to overcome those problems.

And the creation of alternative applications, platforms and systems to those foreign applications, platforms and systems that respond to the values and culture of society and can be controlled, with the necessity of employing social media in the teaching and learning processes and conducting studies to identify the obstacles to its use, and including the use of social media in the curricula and encouraging its use in searching for information and communication.

Conducting studies that monitor and analyze what is published on social media, revealing the trends and value systems of the designers of these sites, and their social, religious, and economic impact on their users.

At the media level, the results emphasized the need to impose control over media content, organize awareness campaigns and courses aimed at promoting Islamic values and local culture, and use social media sites for issues that serve the country, religion, and culture. We must also work to refute false news and information, clarify and present the facts in various audio-visual media, and highlight the impact that social media can have on the personality and identity of its users.

As well as activating various media and communication tools and working to assist institutions, bodies and organizations in imposing control over the sites frequented by social media users and highlighting the pros and cons of using these tools by publishing brochures and posters and developing guidance programs that encourage the rational use of these sites.

At the legal level, the findings indicated the need to establish laws and regulations for opening pages and websites and to impose strict penalties on violators. They also called for the enactment of strict laws to monitor content published on social media sites that offends religious and national values, individuals, and personalities.

From here it becomes clear to us that social media is among the most effective means of communication between individuals and helps them exchange ideas and experiences. The opinions of users of these sites vary regarding the pros and cons of these means.

A study aimed at identifying the impact of the Internet on society indicates that most individuals use social networking sites for the purpose of communication, research, or exchanging information with others, or for entertainment and amusement. However, they contribute to cultural invasion and cause social and moral problems in the event of excessive use [22]

The use of social media will undoubtedly affect the values and culture of society if a set of controls and mechanisms are not imposed on its users in general and on those who transgress the limits of decency and morality in particular. In addition to the necessity of establishing deterrent laws to enforce the optimal use of these means, It is also necessary to activate awareness campaigns, whether by the family or by bodies and organizations affiliated with various sectors.

Conclusion:

From the above, it is clear that social media has a significant impact on disseminating the culture and values of societies. These media have become increasingly prominent in recent years and have contributed significantly to bringing about change in societies across various fields, particularly in the cultural and value spheres. This has been followed by a shift in the mindsets and practices of peoples, both at the individual and collective levels.

To demonstrate the impact of social media on society's cultural and value systems, this research aims to answer the following questions: What is meant by social media?

What are the negative and positive effects of social media on individuals?

What mechanisms help preserve societal values and culture from various forms of invasion?

After conducting the research, it was concluded that social networking sites are one of the most important means used due to their wide spread among individuals, as they facilitate the creation of websites and pages, the dissemination of information, the exchange of ideas, and the facilitation and improvement of the learning process.

It also allows people to stay informed about what's happening in the world, meet and communicate with people of different nationalities, and express their opinions by sharing content, which contributes to intellectual convergence among individuals.

Despite all the positives of social media, it is not without its drawbacks, which primarily include addiction to social media and its exploitation for entertainment purposes, which has led to a decline in individuals' personal interaction skills.

The use of colloquial language to disseminate information, express ideas and opinions, and exploit social media to defame and insult individuals and personalities has also become widespread. Social media has become a means of undermining societal stability and altering individuals' culture and values, which calls for the adoption of mechanisms and controls affecting various institutions, bodies, and organizations to mitigate the risks.

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