

Social and Ethical Impacts of Snapchat Use Among Algerian Children

التأثيرات الاجتماعية والأخلاقية لاستخدام سناب شات من قبل الأطفال الجزائريين

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Abstract:

We conducted a study to explore the impact of a specific application on Algerian children's social interactions and development. Using structured observation tools and unstructured interviews, we collected data from a purposive sample of twenty children aged two to twelve and their parents. The study was conducted virtually with a descriptive-analytical approach, providing in-depth insights into the application's use and effects.

Our findings revealed that the application influenced children's relationships with their families, friends, and society. It played a significant role in their socialization process, affecting interactions and social norms perception. Parents reported both positive changes, such as improved communication skills and increased peer engagement, and concerns like reduced face-to-face interactions.

The study highlighted the dual nature of the application's impact, offering both opportunities for connection and challenges like screen time management. Parental guidance emerged as crucial in balancing these effects. Overall, the research emphasizes a balanced approach to technology use, suggesting that with proper oversight, digital applications can be valuable for children's social development.

.Keywords: SNAPCHAT; CHILDREN; SOCIAL; IMPACT.ETHICAL.ALGRIAN

ملخص :

تصدر عن كلية العلوم الاجتماعية والإنسانية جامعة محمد البشير الإبراهيمي برج بوعريبيج



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The use of snapchat by algerian children and its social and impacts**D : SAIDA HIMEUR****أعمال الملتقى الوطني حول تكنولوجيا الاعلام والاتصال وتنشئة الطفل الجزائري المنعقد يوم 30 أفريل 2024**

تهدف الدراسة الكشف عن التأثيرات الاجتماعية والأخلاقية لسناب شات على الأطفال الجزائريين . باستخدام أداة الملاحظة المنظمة والمقابلة، جمعنا بيانات من عينة هادفة مكونة من عشرين طفلاً أقل من اثني عشرة سنة، بالإضافة إلى آبائهم. أجريت الدراسة بشكل افتراضي باستخدام المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، مما أتاح رؤية عميقة حول استخدام التطبيق وتأثيراته. كشفت نتائجنا أن التطبيق يؤثر على العلاقات التواصلية مع عائلاتهم وأقاربهم. وقد لعب دوراً هاماً في عملية التنشئة الاجتماعية لديهم، اثر بشكل كبير على تفاعلاتهم وفهمهم للمعايير الاجتماعية. أبلغ الآباء عن تغييرات إيجابية، مثل تحسين مهارات التواصل وزيادة التفاعل مع الأقران، إلى جانب مخاوف مثل العزلة، سلطت الدراسة الضوء على الطبيعة المزدوجة لتأثير التطبيق، حيث يوفر فرصاً للتواصل إلى جانب تحديات مثل إدارة وقت الاستخدام ويظهر التوجيه الأبوي كعامل حاسم في تحقيق توازن بين هذه التأثيرات، تؤكد الدراسة بشكل عام على أهمية اتباع نهج متوازن في استخدام التكنولوجيا، مشيرة إلى أنه مع الإشراف المناسب، يمكن أن تكون التطبيقات الرقمية مفيدة لنمو الأطفال الاجتماعي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سناب شات؛ الأطفال؛ اجتماعي؛ تأثير؛ أخلاقي؛ الجزائر

1. INTRODUCTION

The remarkable technological advancements we are experiencing today have contributed to the emergence of digital life practices that have changed our lifestyle and increased the migration of individuals to the virtual world, primarily represented by social networking sites and interactive applications. These platforms have seen a rapid increase in users due to the diverse options and numerous uses they offer, satisfying user desires and needs for free and at incredible speed in a fast-paced world that glorifies digital humanities.

Today, individuals live within a digital environment from which they acquire their culture and identity, integrating almost entirely into

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it. Applications like TikTok, Snapchat, and other social media sites have become important institutions of modern socialization, offering educational and enriching content that is continuously updated to keep pace with contemporary developments.

What distinguishes our current era is the fragility and weakness of social relationships, making the media in general and social media sites in particular highly influential. Experts are especially concerned about children due to their lack of awareness about the proper use of modern technology, which raises speculations and concerns about the impact of interactive applications on children's behavior and social upbringing. Concerns are heightened with the use of Snapchat, which allows users to share visual content and themselves widely in different contexts.

Childhood is a unique stage compared to other stages of human life. Proper formation and upbringing of a child require continuous supervision and protection from various influences, especially in their digital interactions.

Research and studies on the effects of the internet on children's behaviors have been a focus for researchers since its inception. Gabriel Tarde's study (1860) on the impact of media on the spread of juvenile crime is among the earliest. Research on the effects of both traditional and modern communication methods continues globally. However, studies on new media remain limited due to its rapid developments and

various complexities, necessitating intensified efforts from researchers to thoroughly analyze and investigate this field.

Our study aims to reveal the social effects of Snapchat on two levels: the individual level and the child's interaction within their family and social environment.

2. Research Problem

Despite the integration of modern technologies into our daily lives and the increasing reliance on them, with most societal groups benefiting from their immense advantages, social networking sites and applications are among the products of modern technology that have facilitated communication between individuals within an interactive digital environment. This allows users to express themselves and their desires, providing uses in all areas of life. Snapchat, one such application, allows instant messaging of photos and videos, enabling individuals to share their stories and life details with friends through various effects that make the content appealing and quickly shared.

However, children's use of this site may have different effects due to the specific nature of this important stage, which is characterized by psychological and physiological growth requiring continuous monitoring. This study aims to answer the primary question: What are the social effects of children using Snapchat?

3. Importance of the Study

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Our study is highly significant at present as it addresses a crucial stage in human life—childhood, the foundation of building societies and a fundamental component for their advancement. Proper upbringing is necessary to form a sound and beneficial individual. Our study reveals the potential social effects of children using Snapchat and highlights the role of the application in the socialization process of individuals, thereby alerting parents and relevant bodies to the dangers of improper and unregulated use, aiming to activate parental and self-regulation among child users.

2.2 Study Objectives:

The primary objective of the study is to uncover the impact of Algerian children's use of Snapchat at the individual, familial, and social levels.

3.2 Study Methodology and Tools:

We employed the descriptive analytical method as it is most suitable for the study topic, allowing for deeper information collection about the subjects using the tools of participant observation and unstructured interviews. We conducted these on a sample of twenty children aged between five and twelve years, along with their parents.

4.2 Study Population and Sample:

Our study falls under exploratory studies. To achieve the study's purposes, we selected a purposive sample conducted on a group of

Algerian children who use Snapchat regularly. We conducted in-depth interviews with them and their parents, communicating with them virtually through our Snapchat account and sharing what they publish.

5.2 Previous Studies:

EU KIDS ONLINE Study

A European Union project on children online from 2009-2011, addressing internet risks and safety. The study was conducted on a sample of twenty-five thousand children aged nine to sixteen across twenty-five European countries. It aimed to understand children's internet activities and the risks involved. The research revealed emotional, sexual, educational, and legal risks. Using a stratified random sample and tools like questionnaires and personal interviews, the study concluded with various results, including the increased likelihood of encountering disturbing material such as pornography or bullying with age and internet usage. About 14% of children faced one or more risks at ages 9-10, rising to 63% at ages 15-16. Most children did not report their online harassment or distress, and parents were generally unaware of their children's online experiences and underestimated the risks. About 31% of children experienced online bullying, and 16% saw sexual images (John, 2018).

Study on Social Relations Between Social Media Use (Snapchat) and Social Problems Among Youth:

Conducted by researcher Abeer Mohamed Abdel Samad Ahmed, this study aimed to identify the relationship between social media use

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and social problems among youth, including their social and familial relationships and academic achievement. Using a social survey method with a sample of 311 male and female students from Qatar University, the study found that Snapchat is preferred over other apps, with an average usage of five hours. The reasons for use included playing electronic games, ease of communication, and leisure. There was a moderate relationship between social media use and social problems.

5.2 Temporal and Spatial Scope of the Study:

The study was conducted from September 1, 2021, to September 16, 2021. Interviews were conducted with respondents residing in Sétif via Snapchat and#### Definition of Study Concepts:

Social Media:

Al-Shahri defines it as a system of electronic networks via the internet that allows subscribers to create a personal site and then connect it through an electronic social system with other members who have the same interests and identities, or to gather with college friends or others. (Shafra, n.d., p. 59)

Snapchat Application:

It is known as the most popular video and photo-sharing site in the world, enabling users to share, view, and download their snaps (Duffy, 2008). Operationally, it is an application that allows children to send

snapshots and videos that automatically delete from Snapchat's server after 24 hours.

3. Study Results:

1.3 Motivations for Children's Use of Snapchat:

The respondents prefer Snapchat and use it regularly over other sites, and confirmed that they do not have accounts on other platforms like Facebook or Instagram. The children's preference for Snapchat is due to its ability to view their favorite photos and videos, add drawings, emojis, texts, and use filters, making the content appear highly attractive. It also offers control over viewing conditions and features for interacting with content by sharing and commenting, and sharing content with friends without fears, as the application deletes it quickly and does not allow it to be stored by the recipient.

The children interviewed use Snapchat for about three to four hours through their parents' phones, mostly in the morning and afternoon alone. In response to our question about their motivations for using Snapchat, all respondents agreed that entertainment and play were their primary motivations, as well as the desire to share their daily lives and details with friends. This preference is due to the lack of outdoor play spaces and the busy schedules of their parents, making Snapchat their favorite site because of its ease of use and features.

Among the key factors contributing to the spread of Snapchat is the nature of the posted photos and videos. The short video has become more valuable than long television content, which takes half an hour or more on TV. Statistics undoubtedly prove that short, professionally produced videos are more popular than personal videos in general (Al-Sudani, 2016, p. 120).

2.3 Children's Patterns of Using Snapchat

The interview results indicated that most of the sample consistently use Snapchat for more than three hours intermittently. These results align with other studies conducted on social media, attributed to Snapchat's features, such as interaction and choosing desired content regardless of time and place, making Snapchat easy to use and accessible anytime. Most children access their accounts through their mothers' phones, using the application mostly in the evening and morning. They have been using the application for over a year. This indicates the need for parental control and awareness of the risks of improper use, as children reported using the application freely without parental intervention or supervision during their entire usage period.

3.3 Study Results Related to the Impact of Snapchat Use on Children, Both Individually and Within Families:

Snapchat helped the interviewed children acquire educational skills such as drawing and writing, make new friends, and learn foreign languages. They believe it enhanced their abilities, made them feel self-

worth, and gave them confidence, thinking they are superior to their non-using peers. However, they also acknowledged that it wasted their time and negatively impacted their academic performance. It affected their play habits by mimicking what they see during play with their peers, preferring to stay home more than playing outside.

In open dialogues with the children's parents, they expressed dissatisfaction with their children's behaviors and interactions with them. They reported increased irritability, stubbornness, and disrespect towards parents. The family, as the natural and fundamental element of society, is affected by and affects all its cultural and social dimensions (Al-Shehab, 2011, p. 50).

Most of the time, children are isolated, exchanging photos and details of their lives, reducing their interaction with their families and significantly affecting their relationships with relatives, making them more fragile. They imitate and repeat what they learn from songs and phrases of power and violence, demanding their parents buy toys and clothes to emulate their favorite stars, and choose clothing with images of their role models.

Continuous use of Snapchat has impacted their family relationships, reducing their interaction with family members in favor of virtual relationships, weakening their personal communication skills, leading to feelings of alienation, severe conflicts with parents, and neglecting filial piety. These findings align with the study by Abeer Mohamed, which reached similar conclusions.

Parents explained that they allow their children to continue using Snapchat despite their young age due to the children's habituation and fear of their crying and irritability, as well as the application helping their children acquire some skills.ial BehaviorsSoc

our children. Sending their photos to strangers can result in risks due to their limited awareness and understanding. These risks materialize when another person contacts them, and the child engages in personal or peer communication. This category of risk includes more complex exploitation, with children being tracked through advertising, harassed, stalked, threatened, abused, arranged for off-line meetings, and provided with false information (et al., 2018, p. 225)

The improper use of Snapchat threatens the safety and security of Snapchat affects children's behavior and their communication with their social environment. Mothers we interviewed confirmed that their children have become more aggressive with other children and imitate behaviors they see on the application.

Intensive use of Snapchat has negatively impacted children's academic performance, as they spend long periods browsing their accounts. Wasted time, if not used productively, can lead to deviant .behaviors and problems that may result in lost potential

The children interviewed indicated that they prefer to stay alone, engrossed in browsing their Snapchat accounts, which has distanced them from social life. Their real-world communication with friends and relatives has decreased, and they are content with virtual

interactions. Excessive use of Snapchat has also introduced them to new values that differ from our societal norms, influenced by foreign habits.

Social groups aim to meet the needs of their members, and while families used to independently satisfy these needs, they now rely almost entirely on society. Social media has become a primary participant in the family's responsibilities (Al-Shehab, 2011, p. 55). The excessive use of Snapchat and children sharing their lives with strangers pose several risks that threaten the security and safety of the .entire community

Snapchat raises parents' concerns about their children's safety and privacy. They worry that predators might exploit their children's photos, unsure if the application truly protects users by deleting snaps and not allowing their retention. Other concerns include hackers and intruders accessing their children's data through their friends.

Overall, the risks of improper Snapchat use include

Hacking users' accounts and exploiting their photos for blackmail.

Leaking children's private photos and sharing them on the internet.

Communicating with strangers, leading to potential harm to them and their families.

Being one of the most hackable applications.

Exposure to bullying, verbal abuse, and pornography.

4. CONCLUSION

Examining the social impact of Snapchat on children is undoubtedly complex, as it's difficult to isolate the children studied from various influencing factors.

Additionally, there are numerous cultural and recreational alternatives, such as books and sports, which children can participate in without experiencing negative effects.

Interactive applications have dominated our children's lives, leading to addiction, wasting their time, affecting their relationships with their parents, reducing communication, decreasing their intelligence, and lowering academic performance. These applications cannot be relied upon for raising our children.

Children are like sponges; they absorb everything around them and are shaped by what they see. From our observations of Snapchat stories, we regret to note that most content is morally harmful, promotes immodesty, encourages violence, spreads fear, and is generally unhelpful and superficial.

Intensifying awareness campaigns about proper usage.

Monitoring the content of photos and videos and blocking .harmful material

Including media literacy education for elementary school .students

Educating parents on the importance of limiting screen time, sharing viewing experiences with their children, and selecting beneficial content.

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