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ARTICLE

Algerian Youth Addiction to Social Media: TikTok as a Case Study

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine Algerian youth's addiction to social media, focusing on the TikTok platform, and to explore its impact on young people's social lives and deviant behaviour within society. It also sought to investigate the primary motives driving the use of TikTok, which has recently sparked significant debate, especially within Algerian society. Today, the TikTok application is found on most smartphones and is heavily used across various demographic and age groups. One of the key findings of this study is the identification of several underlying factors associated with the use of this platform, including social interaction, imitation, loneliness, and addiction.

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Introduction

Amidst the significant technological developments witnessed globally, the diversification and use of social media platforms have extended far beyond the mere exchange of information and communication among individuals. Numerous applications and platforms have emerged, gaining considerable popularity across all age groups. These advancements have transformed the world into a global village, enabling individuals to communicate

with others from different countries and continents and stay informed about the latest news and developments around the globe.

Recently, an application known as TikTok has emerged, generating significant controversy and widespread popularity among all age groups. Launched in 2016, the platform achieved remarkable global reach within just two years, with exceptionally high usage and download rates compared to other social media platforms. Its use has

become a widespread trend across various demographics, owing to the features and functionalities it offers, which entice individuals to excessive usage and, ultimately, addiction.

Today, this application is found on the majority of smartphones. It enables users to create distinctive videos and access various music and film clips. One of TikTok's defining characteristics is the rapid virality of videos, which allows users to gain followers and fame quickly. This prospect of quick recognition strongly incentivises increased engagement with the platform. Young people are among the most active and affected users, a demographic essential to societal development, construction, and progress.

Given the negative impacts experienced by this group, including notable behavioural changes within society, there is a growing concern. Many young individuals now live within a false virtual reality, gradually distancing themselves from our customs, traditions, and the moral guidance of our religion. This negative influence has prompted us to highlight the urgent need to study youth addiction to social media in general, and TikTok in particular, as well as the significant effects arising from this usage.

Methodological Approach and Statement of the Problem

Global transformations have led to significant changes in both ontological and epistemological dimensions, impacting the social and cultural foundations of societal systems, particularly among youth. Young people are among the most adaptable demographic groups regarding technology; they are open to the world and receptive to change and development.

Youth are influenced by the prevailing culture and societal systems, including media and communication technologies, which play a pivotal role in shaping their cultural outlook. Humans interact with and are generally influenced by their surrounding environment and its dominant culture. Algerian youth mainly engage in new technologies and modern communication tools. However, Algeria's lack of diverse cultural centres has led to social media platforms becoming the primary means by which youth enrich their cultural experience. This emerging culture is dynamic and vibrant rather than static, characterised by various elements, including patterns, beliefs, and behaviours.

Social media platforms encompass a broad spectrum of cultures and ideas, which inevitably influence the minds of young people. This can lead to transformations in their lives, modes of thinking, and, most significantly,

their behaviours. In this sense, social media affects youth across multiple aspects of life. As Abdel Rahman Azy aptly notes: "Every discovery in communication causes a specific cultural shock writing created a language of symbols; the invention of printing transformed oral traditions into written form; radio and television introduced an audiovisual culture; and finally, the advent of computers and information networks gave rise to an interactive culture."¹

In contemporary times, the Internet has firmly established itself within all societies, owing to its rapid data transmission, vast information resources, numerous applications, and diverse services. This is particularly true of social media platforms, which have become indispensable for many, especially among youth. Young people today spend extended hours on their mobile phones, a behaviour resulting from excessive and unrestrained use of the internet and social networking sites. These platforms offer users the opportunity to express their concerns and identities through the creation of personal accounts based on specific systems, which, over time, often develop into a form of addiction. This phenomenon is classified as a type of internet addiction, one of the most recent forms of behavioural addiction first described by Goldberg in 1994.²

An individual suffering from this form of dependency finds it challenging to spend a day without engaging with these platforms. Social networks consume their energy and skills within a virtual realm, increasingly disconnected from real life. This addiction has recently evolved, manifesting in a range of social and health-related disturbances. Among youth's most popular and recent platforms is TikTok, a social media application found on most smartphones, particularly those used by young people. As the central subject of this study, TikTok is a social network developed by a Chinese company that has recorded extraordinarily high usage rates, surpassing those of many other social media platforms. According to available statistics, TikTok had 1.2 billion active users.³ In 2022, the platform will allow users to publish musical and non-musical video clips, participate in challenges, and host live streams that can generate financial profit. It also offers a sense of autonomy, essentially free from parental oversight.

¹ Asmaa Ben Daddach, *The Impact of the Internet on the Culture of Algerian University Youth* (Master's thesis, University of Martyr Rahma Lakhdar, Mostaganem, 2015-2016), 18.

² Sarah Marhabawi and Karima Qantazi, "Addiction to Social Media Platforms," *Annals of the University of Guelma for Social and Human Sciences*, no. 25 (December 31, 2018): 341.

³ Hani Mahmoud, "Number of TikTok Users," *Abuomar.Ae*, March 15, 2022, accessed May 1, 2023, <https://abuomar.ae>.

Based on the foregoing, we have chosen to adopt the interactionist theory, as it serves the objectives of our study. This contemporary theoretical framework focuses on complex issues such as the analysis of behaviour, interaction, social attitudes, small groups, individual stances, disconnections, and various other social challenges. Max Weber notably asserted that understanding the social world necessitates comprehending the orientations of the individuals we interact with. Accordingly, social phenomena are interpreted by analysing social action within society.⁴ This phenomenon has grown to become significantly more hazardous than traditional social ills.

In light of the above, we pose the following research question:

What is the impact of social media addiction on Algerian youth, with TikTok as a case study?

Hypotheses

- Addiction to the use of the TikTok application leads to deviant behaviour among youth in Algerian society.

Methodology Employed in the Study

No scientific research is complete without the adoption of an appropriate methodological approach. The method employed in this study is the descriptive method, which is based on examining a phenomenon or reality as it exists in the real world. It aims to describe the phenomenon accurately and express it qualitatively or quantitatively. The qualitative approach provides a detailed account of the phenomenon. It clarifies its characteristics, whereas the quantitative approach offers a numerical representation, indicating the magnitude of the phenomenon and the degree of its correlation with various other phenomena.⁵

As our study aims to identify the leading causes behind the emergence of this phenomenon and the key conditions influencing it, the descriptive method proves instrumental in achieving this goal and precisely defining the research problem. It has thus served as a practical

approach for analysing our topic and attaining the desired outcomes.

Techniques and Tools Employed in the Study

Selecting the appropriate tool and obtaining accurate information and results is challenging for scientific research. Given our reliance on the descriptive method, we utilised the interview as the primary research tool, as it serves our subject with greater precision. Since the phenomenon under investigation, youth addiction to social media, particularly TikTok, is especially prevalent among active users, direct face-to-face interviews with participants were deemed essential for collecting the required data. Unlike questionnaires, interviews allow for a deeper understanding of the respondents' circumstances and impressions, enhancing their responses' credibility. The interview is regarded as one of the most precise tools used in scientific research.

English defines the interview as a guided conversation conducted by one individual with another or with a group to obtain information for scientific research or assistance in counselling, diagnosis, and treatment processes.⁶

Research Population

Any scientific study must clearly define its research population. In this study, the research population was identified as being located in western Algeria and consisted of seven young individuals: four males and three females.

Sample

As is well known, the sample constitutes one of the most critical elements of scientific research.

Given the small size of the research population, the entire population was included in the study. Consequently, a purposive sample was selected, consisting of seven active TikTok users, four males and three females, who met the following criteria:

- They belong to the youth demographic.
- They are active users of the TikTok application.
- Each individual produces distinct content.

The purposive, deliberate or judgemental sample is based on intentional selection. The researcher purpose-

⁴ Reda Ben Tami and Nawal Qada Ben Abdallah, "Social Sciences: A Reading in the Role of Symbolic Interactionism," *Minerva Journal*, no. 1 (2017): 192.

⁵ Ammar Boukhoush and Mohammed Mahmoud Thunaibat, *Scientific Research Methods and Techniques of Preparing Research*, 4th ed. (Algiers: University Publications Office, 2007), 138.

⁶ Ibid., 76.

fully selects individuals believed to be representative of the broader population.⁷

Fields of the Study

1. **Spatial Scope:**
2. This refers to the study's location, namely, the Wilaya of Aïn Témouchent. The interviews with the participants were held in the municipality of Aïn Témouchent. Of the seven participants, two were from the Wilaya of Oran, three from Aïn Témouchent, one from Tlemcen, and one from Sidi Bel Abbès.
3. **Temporal Scope:**
4. This refers to the period during which the fieldwork was carried out. The data collection began on 15 March 2023 and continued until 5 May 2023.

Presentation and Analysis of Field Study Results

- The Effect of TikTok Use on the Deviation of Algerian Youth

Impact of TikTok on the Social Lives of Active Users:

✓ Loneliness:

Loneliness affects many individuals due to various personal and social circumstances. It is considered one of the most significant and widespread social phenomena, especially among young people. Loneliness is among the key issues facing contemporary individuals and serves as a gateway to the accumulation of several psychological and social problems. It often results from emotional and social isolation, with affected individuals preferring to remain detached from their surroundings. They lack motivation to engage with others or to form interpersonal relationships. Even when they express a desire to interact, it tends to be for brief periods, after which they return to their habitual isolation from society.

This condition can have severe consequences on an individual's mental and physical health. Some researchers even argue that its effects are more harmful than alcohol or smoking. Detachment from social groups and the associated sense of loneliness leaves the individual vulnerable to facing life's challenges alone, thereby stripping away the security offered by collective belonging. TikTok has played an active role in exacerbating these feelings

among many of its users. The platform has contributed significantly to their social isolation from the external environment.

The immense technological advancement has led to the emergence of generations that interact more effectively with the internet, social media platforms, and computers than with one another. Many TikTok users have consequently fallen into patterns of isolation and loneliness. The respondent (Y., 21 years old, single) said, *"I stay isolated, alone, and far from home. I constantly feel this loneliness, and I always use [TikTok] to occupy my time."*

Thus, for many users, TikTok has become a tool that distances them from social engagement. They no longer perceive social relationships as fulfilling their emotional or psychological needs; instead, they withdraw into the world of TikTok, where the platform's various features offer them alternative sources of stimulation and gratification. This was reinforced by respondent (B., 26 years old, single), who said: *"Once I open TikTok, I do not leave. I just stay focused until I finish the video I am working on and post it for people to watch. I stay busy with TikTok, alone, making and uploading videos."* He added: *"It is unfortunate, but there is no other place where I can show the things I enjoy doing except through TikTok videos on my page."*

This aligns with the increasing consensus among sociologists that loneliness is defined by the degree of an individual's social isolation from others, that is, the extent to which their need for social engagement, interaction, and communication with others remains unfulfilled.⁸

This illustrates a relationship between the intensive use of the TikTok application and the heightened sense of loneliness experienced by young users despite their attempts to form connections through the platform. However, these virtual interactions have proven insufficient to alleviate their feelings of isolation. Although social media platforms offer certain advantages, they cannot replace genuine social relationships or effectively reduce loneliness among youth.

Many scholars have affirmed that increased reliance on online chatting through social media platforms exacerbates feelings of loneliness. This occurs as individuals withdraw from real-world interactions in favour of their digital environments, diminishing their engagement with

⁷ Quoted in Rawiya bint Ahmed Al-Qahtani and Dr. Saud bin Dhiyan, "Methodological Stereotyping in University Theses," *Journal of the College of Social Work for Social Studies and Research*, Fayoum University, no. 20: 446.

⁸ Quoted in Samia Shirin Ben Dahnoun, *Some Psychological Traits (Depression, Psychological Loneliness) and Their Relationship with Self-Esteem in Light of Gender and Educational Level* (University of Oran 2, 2016-2017), 29.

in their immediate social surroundings. This withdrawal particularly impacts familial communication, as most individuals primarily access social media within their homes. This disrupts their relationships with family members, one of the foundational units of society, and further intensifies their feelings of isolation.

Slater (1976) developed his analysis of psychological loneliness through a study of American characters, concluding that American society has failed to meet the emotional needs of its members. He argued that the core issue lies in the individual's sense of separateness. Every person harbours a desire for social participation and connection, yet this desire has been thwarted within American society. As a result, each individual is left to follow their path alone, leading to psychological loneliness. Slater thus concluded that psychological loneliness is a by-product of technological advancement.⁹

✓ Social Interaction:

By nature, human beings do not prefer isolation except in pathological cases. Instead, they tend towards social interaction, as they spend much of their time living within groups, whether informally, deliberately, or formally, such as within the family or workplace. These settings form a social communication network expressed through various forms, including representation, communication, and competition.

Social interaction is a continuous and ongoing process that occurs wherever individuals gather and engage with one another. A sense of belonging constitutes social and psychological proximity to the group; every individual seeks to communicate and integrate with others, which serves as a remedy for anxiety and stress. Social interaction plays a crucial role in social development and the acquisition of interpersonal skills. It leads to the differentiation of societal strata, assists individuals in achieving self-actualisation, reduces feelings of isolation, and teaches behaviours that regulate relationships between people.

Social media platforms, in general, and TikTok, in particular, have played a significant role in creating a virtual community that enables individuals to forge new friendships, exchange and share their interests, and support communication and engagement among users. This dynamic can strengthen social ties, broaden exposure to different cultures, and foster international friendships.

Furthermore, these platforms facilitate various activities to enhance interpersonal closeness.

Respondent (S., 30 years old, married) confirms this: *"Since I started using TikTok and doing live streams, people recognise me. Whenever I go out, people approach me; some call me and want to meet me. I've become accustomed to interacting with people daily on TikTok. We talk and laugh during the live streams and in the videos."*

In the same context, respondent (T., 23 years old, single) stated: *"My social circle used to be very small, but since I started using TikTok and became known, more people have come to know me. I made new friends, expanded my connections, and began to feel more engaged with others. I no longer feel lonely at all. I talk with my followers and do live streams and everything."*

The testimonies of these respondents confirm that for some TikTok and social media users, there has been a significant transformation in their social relationships and interactions within society. As they previously indicated, real life detached from social media did not offer them opportunities for self-expression nor the means to change their social circumstances or meet their fundamental emotional needs. Instead, they remained confined within narrow social boundaries. In contrast, social media platforms offer active users numerous opportunities for engagement by sharing videos, images, and live broadcasts, which foster interaction between creators and their audiences.

This is also reflected in the account of respondent (S., 25 years old, single), who said: *"I was always a lonely and introverted person. I was going through a severe phase of depression in my environment. But once I started using TikTok, my life changed. It made me a very social and interactive person it changed my life."*

This respondent noted that the real-world environment failed to provide the desired social interaction. It is well known that such interaction is influenced by multiple variables such as education, social status, and more. However, these variables often hold no weight in virtual environments and social media platforms. Indeed, they may even be fabricated or misleading.

Youth, by nature, struggle to adapt to contemporary society; they reject what is harmful and real and instead seek out and aspire toward what is ideal. The environments within our communities are saturated with problems that frequently affect young people. When youth perceive that their fundamental needs are unmet and observe the frustrations experienced by their peers, this

⁹ Quoted in Meriem Merakchi, *The Use of Social Networks and Its Relation to the Feeling of Psychological Loneliness among University Students* (Master's thesis, University of Mohamed Khider, Biskra, 2013-2014), 104.

often leads to an early disengagement from real-world society and a lack of active participation within it. As a result, they turn to virtual platforms, which offer a variety of symbols and forms of interaction that fulfil their social needs and foster a sense of engagement.

This phenomenon aligns with the principles of symbolic interactionism, which is considered one of the most suitable theoretical frameworks for examining social presence within virtual communities. Individuals interact via social networks using text, audio, video, or digital avatars, each of which holds meaning and symbolises their experience. Users behave in virtual spaces based on the meanings these elements carry for them, and in doing so, they form digital selves through continuous interaction with others.¹⁰

✓ Addiction

Traditionally, addiction has been understood as a brain disorder resulting from the use of drugs, alcohol, or overdoses, negatively affecting the physical and mental health of the individual. However, addiction is no longer confined to substance abuse alone. Today, we observe forms of addiction that impact an individual's psychological and social well-being without the involvement of any narcotics or alcohol.

Social media platforms have evolved far beyond mere tools for chatting and communication. Their excessive use has led a significant portion of users to develop a form of behavioural addiction. This became particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when usage surged dramatically. Users began to perceive these platforms as a means of relaxation. However, their continuous use affects the brain: regular interaction with social media can generate feelings of pleasure and positivity, which in turn reinforces the cycle of addiction.

Over the past 25 years, the rate of social media use among youth has risen to approximately 91%, while rates of anxiety have simultaneously increased to 70%. This correlation suggests a possible link between these two phenomena. This connection becomes more apparent when observing individuals who begin to neglect their academic or professional responsibilities, withdraw from family life, or persist in using these platforms even during shared meals. When such individuals display anxiety when unable to access these platforms and prefer communicating online rather than face-to-face, it becomes

evident that they are engaging in excessive use, signifying dependency and an inability to disconnect.

Such behaviour inevitably affects the individual's mood, alters real-life relationships, and disrupts basic routines such as eating and sleeping patterns. Over time, visible symptoms of psychological and social distress begin to emerge. This was affirmed by the respondent (S., 30 years old, married), whom *I cannot stay to stay away from TikTok. I cannot sit still even on the road or have things to do. I have to take out my phone, open TikTok, make a video, post it, and then go live and chat with my followers. I show them where I am going and what I am doing, and spend that time with them until I reach my destination. Then I live live, make another video, upload it, and post stories.*"

This excessive use reinforces a pattern of engagement in the virtual world that exceeds interaction in the real one. Similarly, respondent (Y., 21 years old, single) shared: *"Sometimes I try to avoid using TikTok because I've got things to do, but I can't. I start to feel stressed. I don't feel right until I pick up my phone again and go back to using TikTok like usual."*

Likewise, respondent (S., 25 years old, single) confirmed the same experience: *"Sometimes I try to push myself to quit TikTok, but honestly, I can't. I get very anxious, feel lost, and don't know what to do I get sick and don't feel normal until I start using it again to relax."* She added: *"I can't go without it. I don't sleep well, I skip meals sometimes, and I find myself completely absorbed in it."*

This pattern of excessive use and addiction to TikTok has begun to affect its users negatively. They experience anxiety even during short periods of disconnection, whether due to the internet being down or their phone battery dying, leading to feelings of unease and imbalance. It also disrupts their sleep, as they often use the application late at night. Moreover, their real-world relationships and interactions suffer as they increasingly turn to online communication through the platform. This retreat into the digital realm may ultimately result in feelings of loneliness and detachment from their communities.

This observation is supported by John Garhol, an American professor of psychology, who noted that individuals who engage with social media platforms for extended periods tend to overuse them to be unable to disengage. According to various studies conducted in this field, those most susceptible to addiction are individuals suffering from depression, anxiety, and boredom, such as housewives. Others argue that individuals with a particular aptitude for abstract thinking are also vulnerable to

¹⁰ Quoted in Lamia Tatala, "Social Media and Its Impact on Traditional Media: A Study of Media Models," *Journal of Human and Social Studies*, University of Oran 2, no. 10, University of Algiers 3 (June 16, 2019): 179.

addiction due to their attraction to the intellectual stimulation offered by the vast quantities of information available on these platforms.

Addicted individuals often lose their sense of time, and their excessive use results in numerous personal and social problems. It appears that the designers of social media platforms have intentionally embedded addictive elements such as stimulation, novelty, change, appeal, and speed into these networks. These features are strategically designed to attract millions of users, generating substantial financial profits for the platform creators.

✓ Imitation

Blind imitation through social media platforms, particularly TikTok, has become increasingly prevalent. Users frequently mimic what is known as "trends" or popular music, often without regard for the values they were raised in or the religious teachings that shape their cultural identity. In Algeria, there has been a noticeable increase in the replication of such trends among youth, regardless of their nature, leading to bizarre and extreme behaviours.

One notable example is the imitation of the well-known Algerian TikTok influencer "Marouane El-Batni," who followed a trending video format accompanied by a rap song. What sparked widespread controversy, however, was his choice to perform this trend inside a mosque, reciting verses of the Qur'an while background music played. This incident provoked public outrage across Algeria, with many calling for a legal investigation and appropriate punishment, arguing that his actions desecrated the sanctity of the religious space. This case underscores the severe dangers of blind imitation of such trends and music, as they contribute to many young individuals' moral and behavioural deviation within society.

Other examples include students imitating the "fainting challenge," where they pretend to collapse in front of teachers or, while approaching the blackboard, act perceived as disrespectful to educators and educational institutions. Another alarming trend is the "choking challenge," in which one peer strangles another in a test to see who can endure the most prolonged and experience sensations of near-unconsciousness, all in an attempt to win the challenge.

Moreover, many active TikTok users have adopted songs with offensive or inappropriate lyrics in their videos. This behaviour, aimed solely at going viral and increasing viewership, has become increasingly common.

According to the mindset and reasoning of many active users on these platforms, those who do not imitate popular trends or recently viral songs are seen as ignorant or lacking openness. This was clearly expressed by the respondent (T., 23 years old, single), who said: *"When I make a video, I just use the trending song without bothering to check its lyrics. Same with h trends, I copy them no matter what. I do not have a problem."* This illustrates the extent of blind imitation among TikTok content creators.

Respondent (S., 25 years old, single) echoed this sentiment: *"As long as I am on TikTok and looking to gain followers, I have to imitate trends and use popular songs, especially Raï music, or whatever is going viral, just to increase my views."* She added, *"I also need to follow fashion trends and wear eye-catching clothes that attract followers and are on trend."*

This obsession with unthinkingly following trends, regardless of their content and whether they align with cultural norms or values, has become a serious concern among Algerian youth. The issue was further confirmed by respondent (A., 25 years old, divorced), who remarked: *"Most people on TikTok are just trying to boost their views and followers. On TikTok, all you have to do is imitate whatever is trending or what your followers request."* He added: *"Followers always ask you to copy specific things, and you are expected to do it to keep them engaged and increase your view count."*

As observed, the pursuit of higher view counts and follower numbers on TikTok has driven many users to engage in blind imitation, regardless of the nature of the content. There is little hesitation in using vulgar *raï* songs and sharing them publicly, where thousands of followers view them. Likewise, users imitate video trends that may contradict religious principles or even promote violence and harm, yet they continue to do so. The obsession with increasing views compels content creators to imitate trends or comply with virtually any request from their audience, regardless of the nature or appropriateness of that request.

One of the most concerning manifestations of this phenomenon is the public appearance of young women in videos wearing revealing or provocative clothing, often justified as "following fashion trends." Many active users on social media adopt such styles to attract viewers, even when these outfits expose the body in ways that conflict with the values of religion and the social norms of Algerian society.

The issue does not stop at fashion or trending content. Imitation has extended to the exposure of private lives,

sharing personal routines and daily details without regard for individual privacy. Many users now live in a virtual world, waking up to film their breakfast, outings, and every activity throughout the day. Essentially, they document nearly every moment of their lives for public display, disregarding personal boundaries.

Such overexposure can result in harmful consequences, including cyberbullying, criticism, and verbal abuse from the online community. By turning their private lives into public performances, users not only compromise their dignity and privacy but also become increasingly detached from the norms of real-world social conduct.

This was affirmed by the respondent (S., 30 years old, married), who stated: *"I always have to share my daily activities with my followers whether I am at home or going out and the main things I do, either by posting a vlog or going live. This makes my followers feel like I am sharing my life with them, which helps me gain their views and increase my follower count."* She added: *"Most of the videos in which I share my daily life get the highest number of views and comments. Even though I have been subjected to criticism and cyberbullying many times, it has not affected my viewership, so I don't give too much weight to negative comments."*

This form of blind imitation has become akin to personal commodification, where private life is traded for visibility and fame, even if that means enduring online criticism, bullying, or public intrusion. Users are willing to expose their most intimate moments in exchange for views and attention, reinforcing a dynamic that values popularity over personal boundaries.

From a sociological perspective, Dr Abdessalam Filali explains that pursuing virtual attention and acceptance in the digital world is the primary motivator behind adolescents and young adults promoting themselves through video content and imitating what celebrities post online. He notes that these individuals are highly influenced by what is circulated on social media, relying on trends to guide their clothing choices, musical preferences, and even the places they choose to visit.

Filali emphasises that the real danger lies in the normalisation and spread of inappropriate behaviours, which are perpetuated through imitation and amplified by the structure of social media platforms that reward visibility regardless of the content's moral or cultural alignment.¹¹

¹¹ "Experts Warn: Trend Videos Generate Dangerous Behaviours," published November 25, 2022, accessed May 14, 2023, <https://www.annasronline.com>.

In the theory of influence by others, Perloff argues that individuals possess cognitive structures that include a set of beliefs suggesting that the media can manipulate viewers, deceive them, and influence their thoughts. Accordingly, it is necessary to impose censorship and restrictions on the media. This view is supported by Davison's hypothesis, which states that individuals' perception that others are more exposed to the harmful effects of specific media content leads them to make decisions about monitoring and regulating exposure to such content.¹²

Findings in Light of the Hypothesis

We shall now present the general findings of the study about the hypothesis previously described in the methodological section:

- Frequent use of the TikTok application can isolate individuals from their external environment and lead to feelings of loneliness and introversion.
- Excessive use of the TikTok platform results in addiction, making it difficult for the individual to disengage and leading to anxiety and depression when attempting to withdraw.
- Active TikTok youth blindly imitate everything trending, regardless of its nature, without regard for personal privacy, societal values, or the teachings of Islam.
- Users often comply with follower demands, even when those demands contradict moral principles and the values they were raised on.
- Follower growth is relentlessly pursued, and high views count by any means necessary, regardless of the consequences.
- Continued use of the application contributes to behavioural deviance among youth.
- Through TikTok, young users adopt values and habits that contradict societal norms, including wearing tight or revealing clothing, mimicking inappropriate language, and dancing publicly.

Based on the foregoing and the findings obtained, it is clear that the hypothesis that addiction to the use of TikTok leads to youth deviance is supported. Regular application use has significantly affected young people, contributing to their moral and behavioural deviation through imitating songs, trends of all kinds, and public appearances in provocative attire. Thus, the use of TikTok plays a notable role in youth deviation.

¹² Dr Riham Ali Nouair, "University Youth's Use of Social Media and Its Relation to Their Attitudes Toward Security Risks in the Framework of the Third-Person Effect Theory," *Scientific Journal of Radio and Television Research*, no. 16 (October–December 2018): 356.

Conclusion

From our analysis of youth addiction to social media, particularly the TikTok application, and from our attempt to identify the main effects resulting from the use of this platform, as well as the key motivations and causes behind its constant and excessive use, several important conclusions can be drawn. Various social media platforms have emerged in recent years, and individuals use them for communication, sharing, and keeping up with the latest developments. However, TikTok has achieved rapid and widespread popularity, surpassing many other platforms in a remarkably short period. It has become a dominant force among the youth of today's society.

Through our study and the findings we reached, it has become evident that excessive use of TikTok has led to users being unable to disengage from the platform, resulting in a form of addiction. This has caused some individuals to isolate themselves from their surroundings and experience feelings of loneliness. Others have used this virtual world to interact socially and overcome introversion. Nonetheless, the overall impact on youth has been significant. Some young individuals have adopted deviant behaviours, with many engaging in blind imitation of trends, regardless of their nature, and presenting a virtual life far removed from reality, all in pursuit of rapid fame and perceived social status.

Moreover, the monetisation opportunities TikTok offers through various easy methods have further motivated users to stand out on the platform by any means necessary. This pursuit of visibility, popularity, and financial gain has contributed to the platform's deep-rooted influence on youth behaviour, values, and identity.

Today, we live in a reality increasingly dominated by virtual life. The attraction of individuals, particularly youth and across all age groups, to social media platforms, especially TikTok, is growing rapidly and significantly. The expanding influence of these platforms poses a mounting threat, raising serious concerns about their impact on personal, social, and cultural levels.

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