The Impact of Social Media on The Social Values: Field Study on UAE society

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Abstract

Information technology significantly affects the lives of individuals, unlike traditional methods of social communication. Globalization and its technological tools have led to rapid communication between individuals and societies, openness to others, and the transfer of information. Therefore, this study came to investigate the question: What is the role of social media programs in changing the values of cooperation and respect in Emirati society? Through the descriptive approach, a random sample of 50 individuals from the city of Abu Dhabi in the Emirates was surveyed to identify the role of technology in spreading social values. After analyzing the data using The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) V. 26, the results showed that using social media programs increases the opportunities for cooperation among individuals while being aware of the privacy and security of their information when using these programs. On the other hand, the respondents’ opinions showed a low level of respect among social media users.

Keywords: social media programs, social values, respect, cooperation, globalization

Introduction

The world is witnessing technological developments and rapid transformations in the fields of communication and information technology. These changes have significantly affected the lives of young people, their attitudes, their behavior patterns, and social values they acquire on social media platforms (Amin, 2016). With unparalleled speed, influence and breadth, social media has been able to transmit cultures and ideas, making it a powerful means of influencing social behavior and values (Ade & Zeena, 2018). There is no doubt that social media has provided attractive products to outperform traditional methods of communication, as it has exploited global and local events more quickly than other traditional media to convey facts and events, whether political, economic, social, or cultural (Abdelkader et al., 2012).

Among the most prominent social media outlets that have become popular in the twenty-first century are Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube (Mese & Aydin; Al Hasibuzzaman et al., 2022)
TikTok, and many others, through which individuals can find what meets their desires and interests and follow various activities, programs, and news all over the world. This study aims to identify the impact of social media on social values in Emirati society. Its findings will be presented in a way that is useful to social institution workers, decision-makers, researchers, and anyone interested in the topic (Al-Miqdadi, 2013).

**Study Problem**

The problem of the study is how social media influences society's values, especially cooperation and respect, and whether the impact is positive or negative (Cattell, 2001; Hutter et al., 2013). Thus, this study investigates whether social media usage fosters positive social values or promotes negative social values such as exclusion and solitude. This problem arises from the rapid transformations that Emirati society has witnessed with the spread of social media. Researchers need to understand the impact of these media on local values and culture. This involves examining how the social behavior of individuals and groups in society changes due to their use of social media and how it develops social values. Hence, the research question is: How does social media use affect Emirati social values?

**Study Objectives**

1. Measuring the extent of use of social media programs among Al Ain University students.
2. Analyzing the impact of social communication on the values of cooperation and respect among Al Ain University students.
3. Estimating the effect of using social media programs on the values of privacy and security among Al Ain University students.

**Study Questions**

1. What is the extent of the use of social media programs in Emirati society?
2. Do social media programs affect the values of cooperation and respect in Emirati society?
3. How do social media programs affect the values of privacy and security in Emirati society?

**Literature Review**

In general, many studies have examined the role of social media programs. This study is unique in that it addresses the role of these programs in social values, specifically in Emirati society. Bakhoush (2017) investigated the impact of Facebook on the social values of university students. The study employed a social survey method, using a sample of 50 male and female students. The results revealed that using Facebook has a positive impact on the values of participation, communication, social awareness, and moral sense among university students. Al-Nasser (2019) also examined the impact of social media on family social relationships among students at the Saudi Electronic University. The study used a descriptive approach and included a sample of 315 male and female students. The findings of the study showed that social media brought the generation of parents and children closer together and enabled them to express themselves. On the other hand, Al-Gamal (2020) was interested in the negative effects of using social media sites. The research used a social survey method and revealed a moderate negative impact of using social networking sites on cultural, religious, personal, and moral values,
respectively. In the same field, the study of Benrazek (2022) identified the impact of the use of social media on the formation of social values among Algerian youth. A survey approach and an electronic questionnaire were used to collect data from 375 university students. The findings suggest that Facebook is the most commonly used and widely spread social media platform, and that social media plays a positive role in promoting and enhancing positive social values. The study by Al-Zyoud and Arshad & Siddiqui (2020) aimed to reveal the impact of the use of social networking sites on educational values from the point of view of students at Jazan University. The study sample was composed of 500 male and female students. It adopted the descriptive approach. The findings showed that the use of social networking sites had a high impact on educational values in the cultural field and a moderate impact in the economic and social fields. Al-Hussein (2020) studied social networking sites and their impact on social values among university students. The study applied a descriptive analytical approach. A random sample of 100 male and female students was selected. The results of the study revealed that social networking sites have a significant impact on changing social values among university students. The study found that these sites can have both positive and negative impacts on social values.

On the other hand, Faraj (2020) examined family relationships resulting from social networking sites from the perspective of students' parents. The study followed the descriptive analytical approach with a sample of 350 of the students' families. The results showed that there is statistical significance that the social networking sites create barriers between parents and children. The study recommended raising awareness about the appropriate use of social media. Al-Fathi (2021) studied the effect of young people's exposure to TikTok videos on their smartphones on their perception of social values in society. The survey method was used with a sample of 400 students. The findings revealed that moral values were the most emphasized in the TikTok videos, followed by religious, cultural, social, and citizenship values. The study did not find any statistically significant gender differences between males and females regarding their exposure to TikTok videos and their impact on their social values. Khalida (2022) studied the use of social media and its impact on family relationships. The study used the descriptive approach through a random sample of 120 male and female students. The results indicated statistically significant differences between males and females in their use of social media and its impact on social values. Finally, Al-Qahtani (2023) investigated the effect of social media on the value system among middle school female students. The descriptive approach was applied to a sample of 378 individuals. The study concluded that there was a strong impact of social media on student values, with the social values axis being one of the most prominent dimensions affected by the TikTok application, with an average rating of 4.28, indicating strong approval of its impact.

**Method**

**Study Design**

For investigating the role of social media programs in changing social values, especially cooperation and respect, a descriptive approach was utilized in this research. The researcher focused on the influence of social media and its impact on social values in Emirati society from the point of view of Al-Ain University students. The independent variable is social media, while the dependent variable is social values.
Study Approach

The social survey approach, one of the most appropriate methods for this purpose, was used due to its ability to observe and investigate the social conditions affecting a particular community. This approach clarifies the relationship between the study variables. It achieves its objectives by implementing a questionnaire on a sample of Al-Ain University students in the Emirati community to measure the effect of using social media programs on the values of cooperation and respect.

Study Sample

The study population is a sample of (50) male and female students at Al Ain University, Abu Dhabi. However, three samples had to be excluded from the study as they did not complete the questionnaire questions. Tables 1 and 2 show the distribution of the sample based on their demographic data.

Table 1

Distribution of the Study Sample According to the Gender Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is noted from Table 1 that the majority of the study population members are female (33 students), with a percentage of (66%), while the number of males is (17 students), with a percentage of (34%). Despite the difference, the share of females is close to that of males, meaning the data distribution is normal. The majority of the population is between 31 to 40 years old (54.0%), 28 individuals out of the total study population, followed by the age group (21-30) (42.0%), and then the age group (41-45) (07.0%).

Data Collection Tool

The questionnaire is considered one of the most widely used methodological tools in collecting information and data related to the subject of the study. It generally consists of a set of clearly and systematically designed questions. The electronic form was prepared and distributed to a group of students to measure the impact of social media on cooperation, respect, privacy, and security among Al-Ain University students.
In the final version, the questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part is demographic data (gender and age), the second part discusses the extent of use of social media programs, and the third part examines the effects of social media programs. The questionnaire items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree).

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire (the study tool), it was presented to a group of five specialists at the university. Their comments were taken into account, by which the questionnaire was modified. The reliability of the questionnaire was also examined through the Cronbach alpha value using the SPSS program. The alpha value was (.87), which is a high value indicating that the questionnaire is reliable and applicable to members of the study population.

### Table 3
*The Overall Reliability Coefficient of the Study Tool*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.87</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Data Collection Procedures

Once the final version of the questionnaire was prepared on the Internet, specifically on Google Drive, the link was sent to the target study population (65 members). Only 59 responses were submitted, and 10 were excluded as incomplete. The remaining answers were tabulated and coded on Excel sheets before being analyzed on SPSS.

### Statistical processing

Using SPSS, the researcher transcribed and analyzed the data. Cronbach's alpha was used to ensure reliability, frequencies, and percentages to answer the rest of the study questions.

### Results

Results related to the first question: What is the extent of the use of social media programs in Emirati society?

For the results of the first question, the frequencies and percentages of the daily usage rate of Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and TikTok were tested. Tables 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 show this.

### Table 4
*The average daily use of Facebook by members of the study population*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usage Duration</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
According to Table 4, only a few members of the study population use Facebook for three to five hours or more. Specifically, only one person used the program for five hours, and one used it for four hours. The majority of respondents (36) reported using Facebook for only one hour per day, and 7 used it for two hours a day. This means that 43 sample members of the study population use Facebook for two hours or less (86% of the group). It is concluded from the data that Facebook is the least used among Al Ain University students.

**Table 5**

The Average Daily Use of WhatsApp by the Study Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usage Duration</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Hour</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Hours</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Hours</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Hours</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five hours or more</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table 5, 18 individuals from the study population (36%) responded that they use WhatsApp for three hours or more, while 22 sample members (44%) reported using WhatsApp for one or two hours daily. These percentages indicate that the WhatsApp program is the most widely used program among the study population and the most famous application due to its ease of use.

Table 6

*The Average Daily Use of Snapchat by Members of the Study Population*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usage Duration</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Hour</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Hours</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Hours</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Hours</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Hours or More</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows the average daily use of Snapchat. It is noted that a 10 individuals (20%) of the study sample members use Snapchat for one hour per day; 13 individuals (26%) use it for two hours; 14 individuals (28%) use it for three hours; 7 individuals (14%) use it for four hours; 4 individuals (8%) use it for five hours or more.

Table 7

*The Average Daily use of TikTok by Members of the Study Population*
Table 7 shows that 18 members (36%) of the study sample use the TikTok program for an hour daily; 9 members (18%) use it for two hours; 10 members (20%) use it for three hours; 6 members (12%) use it for four hours; 4 members (8%) use it for five hours or more.

Results related to the second question: Do social media programs affect the values of cooperation and respect in Emirati society?

Table 8

The Use of Social Media Programs and the Extent of Opportunities for cooperation among students
Table 8 shows that the majority of the study population members (36 individuals) (72%) answered (agree and strongly agree). On the other hand, only 3 individuals (6%) of the study population members answered (disagree and strongly disagree). This indicates that social media applications promote cooperation among university students.

Table 9

*The Extent to Which Social Media Programs Reduce the Level of Respect among Students*
According to Table 9, the majority (29 members) of the study population (58) believe that the social media program reduces the level of respect among students. On the other hand, 21 individuals in the study population believe that these programs do not reduce respect among students. From the researcher’s point of view, through symbolic interaction theory, the importance of social interaction lies in shaping the self and behaviors between individuals, and the role of direct communication contributes to understanding people, and that communication behind screens reduces respect among students.

Table 10

Results related to the third question: How do social media programs affect the values of privacy and security in Emirati society?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 shows the majority of the study population believe that social media programs negatively affect personal privacy. The percentage of those who strongly agree and agree together is 62% of the study sample, while the percentage of those who disagree and strongly disagree is 28%. Through these results, the need to raise awareness of the negatives of programs and their impact on the privacy of individuals must be noted. A study conducted by Al-Hussein (2020) also emphasized the necessity of directing students toward positively using social media programs.

### Table 11

*Adhere of Standards for Ensuring Information privacy When Using Social Media Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (11) shows that 45 individuals (70%) of the study members apply privacy protection standards for information in social media programs, and (5) individuals (10%) do not adhere to privacy protection standards. This indicates that community members are aware of the importance of protecting personal information while using social media applications and the necessary procedures to do so.

### Discussion

The internet's social network has expanded rapidly in recent years, witnessing an explosion of social networking sites as virtual meeting places. A growing body of literature suggests that social networking services are playing larger and wider roles in various aspects of people’s lives and communities. These aspects include facilitating and promoting various forms of self-presentation, relationships, social interactions, and satisfying curiosity. They are increasingly providing individuals in Arab communities with a platform for freedom of speech and expression (Al Omoush et al., 2012).

Regarding the extent of usage of social networking programs, it emerged that the majority of the study community members use the TikTok program for more than 5 hours a day, while only
a few use Facebook, Snapchat, or WhatsApp programs. These results contradict the Roblyer et al., (2010), which suggested that the Facebook program is widely used and spread among social networking programs. This result aligns with Al-Hussein's study (2020), which showed that many members of society prefer to use TikTok for extended periods each day.

Regarding the impact of social media programs on the values of cooperation and respect in UAE society, the results showed that social media programs contribute to increasing the values of cooperation between individuals. This finding is consistent with the results of the Bakhush Study (2017), which indicated that Facebook and online applications positively affect some social values. The results also showed that social media programs limit privacy between individuals, contrary to previous studies, specifically the Bakhush Study (2017).

There is no doubt that the social space allows individuals to express their opinions freely; social control almost disappears. Sometimes, individuals exhibit antisocial behavior by criticizing others in a hurtful way, and such verbalization is unacceptable. The social attitude here is indirect and lacks the spirit of realistic social interaction, which enhances the power of authority among individuals who carry an antisocial culture. This aligns with what researchers in the theory of symbolic interaction and value theory have pointed out regarding mechanisms for controlling the behavior of deviant individuals (Yang & Lin, 2022; Akram & Kumar, 2017).

Additionally, the discussion highlights the importance of trust in social media. Social communication applications consist of a set of relationships between social entities such as individuals, groups, and institutions (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). However, the processes of sociality involved in social communication programs are, to some extent, independent of the group and are characterized by a high level of freedom, although they are associated with it. Most individuals here belong to the same social group and share the same interests (Nguyen et al., 2022); however, they also have social ties with members of other social groups. Sociologists argue that social communication programs often develop communication and interaction skills among users and expand their social networks. Nevertheless, trust, originally built on the principle of respect, remains a key element for the sustainability of these relationships.

Conclusion and Implications

The study sought to determine the role of social media platforms in promoting the values of respect, privacy, cooperation, and security. The findings indicated that people are highly conscious of the significance of security and privacy when using social media programs. This study had certain limitations, which should be taken into account when interpreting the results. Due to the nature of this study, it was not possible to explain the causal relationships between social media addiction variables and students’ academic performance. Additionally, the data was collected via a questionnaire, which might affect the accuracy of the results. However, the researchers attempted to resolve this limitation by encouraging participants to answer the questionnaire while the researchers were attending classes. Based on the results, the study recommends using an in-depth interview tool or a mixed method of collecting information that can provide more accurate results and conducting similar studies to only one specific social media application or website.
Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could appear to influence the work reported in this paper.

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