

## The impact of social media on adolescent's mental health

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تأثير وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على الصحة النفسية للمراهقين

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المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد أثر استخدام منصات التواصل الاجتماعي على الصحة النفسية لطلاب المرحلة الثانوية (ذكوراً وإناثاً). ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، تم استخدام المنهج الوصفي. كما استخدم الباحث مقياس الصحة النفسية العربي كأداة للدراسة، وصمم استبياناً لقياس استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي شملت عينة الدراسة طلاب المرحلة الثانوية المسجلين في المدارس الثانوية العراقية للعام الدراسي ٢٠٢٣/٢٠٢٢، والذين يستخدمون مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، أُجريت الدراسة على عينة عشوائية مكونة من ٣٦٢ طالباً وطالبة من عدد من المدارس العراقية، استخدم برنامج SPSS الإحصائي لتحليل البيانات خلصت الدراسة إلى وجود أثر ذي دلالة إحصائية لمواقع التواصل الاجتماعي على الصحة النفسية لطلاب المرحلة الثانوية، حيث وُجد أثر كبير على كلٍ من الصحة النفسية (السلوك والشخصية) والصحة الاجتماعية (العلاقات مع الأسرة والأصدقاء)، مع أثر متوسط على الصحة النفسية. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود اختلافات ذات دلالة إحصائية في التأثير الاجتماعي على الصحة العقلية لطلاب المرحلة الثانوية، ويعزى ذلك إلى الجنس. الكلمات المفتاحية: وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، المراهقون، الصحة النفسية.

### Abstract

This aim of the study is to find the impact of social media platforms use on secondary students (Male &Female) mental health. In order to achieve the study objective, the descriptive method was used to suit the purposes of the study. The researcher also used the Arab Mental Health Scale as the study tool and designed a questionnaire for Social Media Usage Scale. The study community consisted of secondary students who are studying in Iraqi secondary schools for the academic year 2022/2023 and who use social networking sites. The study was conducted on a sample of (362) male & female students at a number of Iraqi schools, and it was chosen randomly. SPSS statistical package was used. The study concluded that there is a statistically significant impact of social networking sites on secondary students mental health, and it was found that there is high impact on both emotional well-being (behavior and personality), and social well-being (relationships with family, relatives and friends) with moderate impact on psychological well-being. The results of the study showed that there are statistically significant differences in the social impact of social networking sites on secondary student's mental health attributed to gender. KEY WORDS: Social Media, Adolescent's, Mental Health.

### Introduction

Social media's pervasiveness has drastically changed how teenagers interact, absorb information, and negotiate the challenges of self-discovery. Unquestionably, social media has advantages, especially when it comes to promoting community building and communication, but worries about its possible detrimental effects on teenage mental health are also growing (Lee et al., 2022). This complex interaction of beneficial and harmful consequences calls for a careful analysis that explores the advantages and disadvantages of this rapidly changing digital environment. A complex picture is painted by recent studies. Social media platforms have the potential

to foster positive social interactions by allowing teenagers to find communities that interest them, maintain relationships with friends and family, and develop new ones (Lee et al., 2022). Additionally, teenagers can use social media as a platform for self-expression and identity exploration, giving them the chance to try out various personalities and get approval from their peers (Valkenburg et al., 2020). Healthy emotional development and the enhancement of self-esteem can be greatly aided by this sense of community and constructive social contact (Primack et al., 2020). However, there are a number of possible drawbacks that could go along with these advantages. Teens who use social media excessively have higher rates of anxiety and sadness; this is especially true when their exposure is accompanied by cyberbullying, unfavorable social comparisons, or exaggerated depictions of reality (Keles et al., 2020; Vanderloo et al., 2021). Peers' and influencers' carefully manicured and frequently romanticized online personas can exacerbate poor self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy. They may also lead to harmful social comparison and skewed perceptions of body image (Tiggemann & Erwin, 2021). Additionally, the persistent pressure to keep up an active online presence in order to receive social validation can exacerbate anxiety and FOMO, which can have a detrimental effect on one's emotional wellbeing (Przybylski et al., 2013). A multifaceted strategy is required to minimize potential hazards and optimize the advantages of social media for teenagers due to the intricate interplay between its positive and negative elements (Primack et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2022). In order to guarantee a healthy and positive relationship with social media platforms, it is imperative to improve media literacy, encourage open communication between parents and teens, and promote responsible online behavior (Livingstone et al., 2020; Rideout & Khan, 2021). Furthermore, encouraging sources of identity validation and self-worth outside of the online community can enable teenagers to negotiate the digital terrain with more emotional stability and resilience (Tiggemann & Erwin, 2021; Valkenburg et al., 2020). Recognizing the complex relationship between social media and teenage mental health allows us to work toward encouraging a responsible and constructive interaction with these ubiquitous platforms, maximizing their potential for empowering self-expression and positive connections while reducing the risks involved (Keles et al., 2020; Vanderloo et al., 2021). According to Przybylski et al. (2013), this calls for more research, cooperative efforts between researchers, educators, and parents, and ultimately, equipping teenagers with the knowledge and abilities to successfully navigate the intricacies of the digital world while maintaining their emotional stability.

#### Literature Review:

There is no denying that earlier research is crucial to the study, and this one has benefited from it theoretically, particularly from works that are somewhat related to the subject of the current investigation. According to a review of earlier research on the diverse impacts of social networking sites and networks in some Arab and international nations, social networking sites have a range of effects on young especially adolescents both positive and negative, on different facets of their lives, including social interaction and relationship building. In addition to the international studies reviewed, several Iraqi and Arab studies have also addressed the relationship between social media usage and mental health. For instance, Al-Jubouri (2019) explored the effects of prolonged social media use on university students' psychological well-being in Baghdad, finding significant correlations between excessive usage and increased anxiety levels. Similarly, Ahmed & Al-Tai (2021) conducted a study on the role of social media in shaping adolescents' self-esteem in Basra, revealing both positive and negative influences depending on the duration and type of use. (Valkenburg, et al., 2022) provided Literature review on how social media use affects adolescent mental health and filled the gap with an up-to-date umbrella review, a review of reviews published between 2019 and mid-2021. The search yielded 25 reviews: seven meta-analyses, nine systematic, and nine narrative reviews. Results showed that most reviews interpreted the associations between social media use and mental health as 'weak' or 'inconsistent,' whereas a few qualified the same associations as 'substantial' and 'deleterious' (Anguyo, et al., 2023) explores the extensive engagement of young individuals with various social media platforms and critically analyses its potential implications for their psychological health. The discussion encompasses a spectrum of dimensions, including the alarming prevalence of cyber bullying, the detrimental influence of distorted body image perceptions, the pervasive fear of missing out (FOMO), and the concerning addictive tendencies associated with social media usage. Furthermore, the chapter sheds light on the optimistic side of social media, elucidating its capacity to foster online support communities and spearhead campaigns promoting mental health awareness. The study of (Ali, 2023) aimed to identify social media and its interactive dimensions on young people in Aden Governorate, by knowing the nature of young people's use of social media with an attempt to highlight the extent of its dimensions and repercussions on their social relations and cultures, the sample reached 300 individuals, the number of males was 180, and 120 females. The researcher relied on the analytical and historical descriptive

approach through the use of the questionnaire and interview tool to collect information, and this study reached a number of results, the most prominent of which was the detection of the presence of interactive social and cultural dimensions (positive and negative) of social media on young people in Aden Governorate, with a percentage of 78 %. Regarding this study, it will cover this topic in a more thorough and integrated way because it concentrated on the impact of social networking sites and networks in a use that includes the subjective aspects related to personality, behavior, and the environment related to relationships with the adolescent's family, relatives, and friends. Additionally, it is anticipated that this study would provide information about how social networking sites affect Iraqi adolescents specifically.

#### Mental health

Emotional, psychological, and social components of our being are included in mental health, which is sometimes defined as a condition of well-being. It has an effect on our daily lives, relationships, and capacity for problem-solving by influencing our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines it as "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (World Health Organization, 2020), though there is no consensus on what constitutes a definition. Examining mental health's numerous facets is necessary to comprehend it: Emotional well-being: Emotional well-being pertains to our capacity to properly regulate our feelings, feel happiness and contentment, and establish constructive coping strategies for unpleasant emotions such as anger, sadness, and anxiety. Emotional control abilities are directly related to teenage mental health and academic achievement, according to a 2022 study by Xie et al. (Xie et al., 2022). Psychological well-being: The factor of psychological well-being includes our capacity for thought, memory, and problem-solving. It also entails sustaining realistic beliefs and actions, as well as a strong feeling of self-worth. According to research by McLaughlin et al. (2020), self-compassion and other cognitive processes have a critical role in supporting the mental health of adolescents. Social well-being: This component pertains to our capacity to establish and preserve wholesome bonds, have meaningful interactions with people, and give back to our communities. Research conducted by Bukowski et al. (2003) shows that supportive interactions and positive social ties are essential for the mental health and development of adolescents. For everyone, mental health is very important, but throughout adolescence—a time of major physical, emotional, and social changes—it becomes even more vital. Adolescents are negotiating issues such as growing their identities, peer interactions, academic pressure, and independence. Good mental health gives them the ability to: Cope with stress and adversity: Teenagers face a range of stressors, such as familial disputes and pressure to perform well in school. In order to overcome these obstacles and develop resilience, people in good mental health are better able to cope with stress and regulate their emotions (Ungar, 2011). Develop healthy relationships: Adolescent wellbeing depends on having strong social ties and effective communication abilities. These skills are enhanced by mental health, allowing them to form wholesome bonds with loved ones, friends, and romantic partners (Fletcher et al., 2017). Achieve academic success: Increased motivation, focus, and concentration are all related to mental health and are necessary for academic success. According to McLaughlin et al. (2020), adolescents who are in good mental health are better able to manage the demands of the classroom and achieve academic success. Make healthy choices: Good mental health encourages healthy lifestyle choices and encourages the making of positive decisions. According to Khoury et al. (2015), adolescents who are in good mental health are less likely to participate in dangerous behaviors like substance misuse or self-harm. Develop a positive self-image: Create a good self-image for yourself: Adolescence is a period of identity creation and self-discovery. A positive self-image is fostered by good mental health, which also increases self-worth, self-assurance, and a sense of purpose (Crocker & Knight, 2003). Unfortunately, mental health challenges are prevalent among adolescents. According to the World Health Organization, one in seven 10-19 year-olds experience a mental disorder (World Health Organization, 2021). These challenges can have lasting consequences if not addressed, impacting their academic performance, relationships, and future prospects. Investing in adolescent mental health is not just a moral imperative, but also a wise investment in the future. By promoting awareness and education: Openly discussing mental health and providing adolescents with accurate information about mental health challenges and available resources can DE stigmatize these issues and encourage help-seeking behavior (Jorm et al., 2018). Fostering supportive environments: Family, schools, and communities play a crucial role in creating supportive environments that nurture adolescents' mental well-being. This includes offering emotional support, promoting healthy communication, and providing access to mental health services (Durlak et al., 2011). Empowering adolescents with coping skills: Equipping adolescents with coping skills like stress management, effective communication, and problem-solving can enable them to

navigate challenges constructively and build resilience (Ungar, 2011). Providing access to mental health services: Ensuring accessibility to qualified mental health professionals and affordable mental health services is crucial for early intervention and support when needed (MentalHealth.gov, 2023).

Adolescence:

Adolescence is a crucial juncture in individual development, marking a transitional phase that blends characteristics of both childhood and maturity (Arnett, 2000). Adolescents yearn for emancipation from adult dependence and aspire to the autonomy enjoyed by adults, often feeling caught in a liminal space between these worlds (As'ad, 2003). This period is often described as a unrestrained journey of identity exploration (Erikson, 1968). Individuals embark on a quest to define their sense of self, develop their personalities, and navigate the complex web of social and emotional changes (Collins & Steinberg, 2006). This process is shaped by their unique experiences, including upbringing, cultural influences, and exposure to diverse values, norms, and behavioral expectations (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). These formative experiences ultimately pave the way for their future trajectories. Thus, the post-pubertal stage marked by fast development in all spheres—physical, psychological, intellectual, and social—can be referred to as adolescence (Steinberg, 2011). Adolescents benefit from this growth by being able to strengthen their life skills and becoming more independent. This study focuses on secondary school pupils in the age range that is classified by conventional developmental classifications as middle adolescence (Santrock, 2019).

Social media

The phrase "social media," which is both widely used and has several meanings, captures the dynamic fabric of communication in the digital age. It is more than just a platform; rather, it is a thriving ecosystem where connections, knowledge, and ideas are shared (boyd, 2014). Fundamentally, it represents the entwined processes of content creation, sharing, and consumption in online communities. However, its uses go far beyond basic social communication. Social media facilitates the democratization of knowledge by providing a global forum for viewpoints that would not have otherwise been heard (Papacharissi & De Zuniga, 2009). Educational materials are easily accessible, encouraging self-directed learning and international cooperation (Bennett, 2011). Companies use social media to communicate with customers directly, develop brand narratives, and do targeted marketing (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). However, the area of connection and belonging is where it may have the greatest impact. Social media creates connections between people who are physically apart, fostering existing friendships and establishing new ones across borders (Valkenburg & Peter, 2015). It offers a platform for self-expression, enabling people to discover communities that resonate with their distinct selves, explore identities, and share passions (Boyd, 2014). Because it builds community and self-esteem, this sense of belonging can be especially important during adolescence (Lenhart et al., 2010). Social media has become an undeniable force in shaping the lives of adolescents worldwide, and Iraq is no exception. The nation has more than 20 million active social media users, and its youthful population is very active in the online community. This study examines the most popular social media platforms utilized by Iraqi youth and considers how they affect their lives and mental health.

The significance of the study

1- This study is one of the recent studies that shed light on social networking sites and their impact on the individual's mental health represented by (emotional well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being)

2- This study may contribute to enriching the Arab library with valuable information regarding the humanitarian and educational aspects, as social networking sites are one of the modern topics that attract the attention of members of society in general, especially the segment of parents and youth.

3- To reveal the most important common features of the behavior of adolescents who use social networking sites and networks, and their impact on behavior, personality, and psychological state, as well as social relationships, in terms of identifying the level of adolescents' tendencies to use these sites.

The objectives of the study:

1- Knowing the effects of using social networking sites and networks on secondary students in terms of mental health (personal and behavioral) and environmental (relationships with family, relatives and friends) aspects.

2- Identifying the existence of statistically significant differences between the effects of social networking sites and networks, and some demographic characteristics (gender) of secondary students. Research problem: Social media websites have quickly grown in popularity and emerged as the key destination for people to spend their time browsing. These websites are viewed as a means of interpersonal communication and the exchange of ideas and information. The capacity to quickly access the needed content, be it documents, personal information,

movies, or photographs, is one of the most important features that people associate with them .In 2022, its user base had expanded to 9.4 billion individuals. As an increasing number of people around the world rely on these websites for information and daily communication, this usage has had a profound effect on many facets of our lives, including altering the way individuals live and communicate with one another. As a consequence, there have been numerous positive and negative consequences, with the mental health of individuals in general and young people in particular being particularly affected. It has emerged as a subject that is currently gathering significant attention. The fundamental influence that the field of mental health has on human society as a whole is its significance for the individual. It encompasses the psychological state in which an individual experiences contentment, harmony, and adjustment with both oneself and others, in addition to a sense of joy and liberation from both physical and mental ailments Youth, particularly adolescents, are among the demographic groups whose psychological well-being is impacted by social media use. They attempt to work in order to satisfy the different wants they have that stem from a number of factors, particularly psychological ones. The adolescents' stage is a crucial time in a person's life when their personality starts to solidify and show through in their acquired abilities and knowledge. Additionally, this type is more receptive to new ideas because it is defined by activity and strength.

This raises the subsequent inquiry:

"What is the impact of social media platforms use on adolescents mental health ?"

In order to address this primary inquiry, we put forth the subsequent sub-questions:

1-How much do social networking sites and networks affect secondary school students mental health (emotionally -psychological and social well-being).

2-Are there statistically significant social differences at the significance level (0.05) for the use of social networking sites and networks among secondary students attributed to some demographic characteristics (gender)?

General Hypothesis of the Study

Formulating the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ):

•Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no statistically significant effect of using social networking sites on the mental health of adolescents.

•Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): There is a statistically significant effect of using social networking sites on the mental health of adolescents.

Methodology

Study approach

The descriptive I method was chosen by the researcher based on the nature of the topic under investigation. This is one of the steps that contribute to the research's success, and it is appropriate for the type of the problem to be solved in this research is (Knowing the effects of using social networking sites and networks on adolescents mental health in terms of emotional aspects related to personality and behavior and the psychological well-being aspects and social well-being related to relationships with family, relatives and friends).Study population and sample:Adolescents are considered young individuals in secondary schools. A community in which some were chosen for the current investigation. For the current study, a number of secondary schools in Baghdad were selected to apply the questionnaire to a sample of male and female students .The sample was drawn randomly by 377 students from each of these schools.The final sample consisted of 362 individuals after excluding (15) questionnaire forms that the researcher was unable to analyze statistically because some of the respondents did not complete their data.Table (1)Distribution of study sample individuals according to demographic variables

variable		Frequencies	Percentage
School Type	Boys	232	64
	Girls	١٣٠	36
	Total	362	100
Gender	Male	172	48
	Female	190	52
	Total	362	100
Age	14-15	83	23
	15-16	117	32

	16-17	128	35
	More than 17	34	10
	Total	362	100
Section	Scientific	188	52
	Humanity	174	48
	Total	362	100
Academic Level	4 <sup>th</sup> Year	71	20
	5 <sup>th</sup> Year	144	40
	6 <sup>th</sup> Year	147	40
	Total	362	100
Academic Achievement	Acceptable	64	18
	Good	124	34
	Very Good	143	39
	Excellent	31	9
	Total	362	100
Time exposure	Less than 3 hours	92	25.41
	3 to 6 hours	123	33.98
	7 hours or more	147	40.61
	Total	362	100.00

The data in Table No. (1) Indicate that the percentage of females was the highest, reaching 52%. As for the age variable they constituted 35 % of the sample, and students from the 6<sup>th</sup> year level were the highest percentage from 16-17 years .As for the type of section, the highest percentage was from the scientific classes, reaching 52%.The results also showed that the highest percentage was for students who had very good academic assessment, and their percentage was 39 %. As for the time spent on social networking sites we notice that the largest group of students (40.61%) spends 7 hours or more daily on social networking sites. About 33.98% spend 3 to 6 hours, while 25.41% spend less than 3 hours. The data suggests that the majority of students spend 7 hours or more on social networking sites daily, with fewer students spending less time. This behavior can be explained by several factors, social media platforms have become a primary way for students to connect with friends, family, and peers. Many students feel the need to stay updated with the latest trends, news, or peer activities, which leads to prolonged usage Also Social networking can become a habit or routine for many adolescents, consuming large parts of their day.

### Research Tool

The scale of social networking sites and their impact on adolescents (secondary students) mental health was built by referring to theoretical literature and previous studies (Al-Qudah, 2002; Al-Bishabsha, 2003). The research scale consists of three parts:Part One: includes demographic information, shown in Table 1 Part Two: includes the research questions consisting of (53) paragraphs, all of which are related to social networking sites and their impact on adolescents mental health. The tool was designed based on some of the mental health 90-sl questionnaire in the style of a five-point Likert scale, in which the following dimensions were addressed:The first dimension deals with social networking sites and their impact on adolescents Emotional well-being, which includes paragraphs 1-23 (paragraph)The second dimension relates to social networking sites and their impact on adolescents Psychological well-being, and includes paragraphs 24-40 (paragraph)The third dimension relates to social networking sites and their impact on adolescents social well-being and it includes paragraphs 41-53 (paragraph)

**Validity of the study tool:** The scale was presented in its initial form when it consisted of (66) paragraphs to (six arbitrators) from the faculty members in the departments of social service, sociology, and psychology, in order to express their opinions on the validity of the content and the belonging of the phrases to the scale, and the extent of their suitability to measure what they were designed to measure, and the degree of their clarity. Then, appropriate amendments were suggested, and the criterion of (45%) was adopted to indicate the validity of the paragraph, meaning that (45%) of the arbitrators' amendments were taken into account. Based on the arbitrators' opinions, some paragraphs were modified in terms of wording to increase their clarity, and some paragraphs were excluded to avoid repetition. As a result, the scale became composed of (53) paragraphs distributed over three main dimensions. The researcher considered the arbitrators' opinions and amendments as

an indication of the validity of the content of the study tool. The suitability and diversity of its paragraphs, after making the required adjustments, and achieving a balance between the contents of the scale in its paragraphs, which indicates the apparent validity of the tool.

#### Reliability of the research tool:

To calculate the Reliability of the study tool, the researcher used the Cronbach Alpha test to extract the Reliability coefficients for the scale dimensions. Table 2 shows the test results.

(Table 2) Reliability coefficients for the dimensions of the study tool using Cronbach's alpha test

Variables	Reliability coefficient using Cronbach's alpha
Social networking sites and their impact on emotional well-being	0.87
Social networking sites and their impact on psychological well-being	0.90
Social networking sites and their impact on social well-being	0.83
The tool as a whole	0.95

The table shows that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient values for the sub-dimensions of the scale ranged between 0.83-0.90 . Reliability coefficient value using Cronbach's alpha for the total score of the scale is 0.95 The five-point Likert scale used in the study was graded according to the rules and characteristics of scales as follows: Very large, which receives a score of 5; large, which receives a score of 4; medium, which receives a score of 3; low, which receives a score of 2; very low, which receives a score of 1. **Statistical tools :** Descriptive statistics methods were used to answer the study questions, as follows: extracting frequencies and percentages to describe the study sample, using the Cronbach Alpha test to ensure the stability of the tool, arithmetic averages to identify the level of responses of the study sample to the paragraph and axis, standard deviation to identify the level of dispersion of the study sample ' responses from their arithmetic mean, One Sample T-test to identify the impact of social networking sites on secondary students, in addition to the Independent Sample T-test to identify the differences in the impact of social networking sites on adolescents according to their different demographic characteristics.

#### Research results:

To answer the study questions, arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted to identify the responses of the study sample members on "Social networking sites and their impact on secondary students", and the following are the answers to the following study questions:

Results related to the first question: To what extent do social networking sites and networks impact secondary students mental health?(Table 3) Shows the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the responses of the study sample members on "The extent of the impact of social networking sites and networks on secondary student's mental health" arranged in descending order.

No	The impact of social networking sites on the mental health of secondary school students	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Order	Impact
1	Social networking sites and their impact on emotional well-being	٤,٢٠	0.٦٥	1	high
2	Social networking sites and their impact on psychological well-being	3.23	0.74	٣	average
3	Social networking sites and their impact on social well-being	٤,١٠	0.٧٠	٢	high
	Total score of the scale	3.84	0.73		high

Table 3 shows that The impact of social media on the (Emotional Well-being) The arithmetic mean (4.20) indicates that the impact of social media on the emotional dimension is at a high level. The standard deviation (0.65) is relatively low, indicating a high homogeneity among the sample responses. This indicates that students have close views on the impact of social media on their emotional state. Rank (1) It shows that the emotional dimension is the most affected compared to other dimensions, reflecting students' high sensitivity to the emotional effects resulting from the use of social media. The effect of social networking sites on the (Psychological Well-being) shows The arithmetic mean (3.23) indicates that the effect is within an average level. The standard deviation (0.74) is slightly higher compared to the other dimensions, indicating that there is

a variation in students' opinions about the extent to which social networking sites affect their psychological state. Rank (3): It comes in last place, which means that the psychological effect is less clear or less strong compared to the emotional and social effects. This may be related to students' adaptation to the psychological pressures resulting from use. The effect of social media on the social dimension (Social Well-being) shows, The arithmetic mean (4.10) is within a high level, indicating that social media sites enhance or significantly affect students' social interaction and relationships. Standard deviation (0.70): shows a moderate degree of variance in the answers, but not large enough to be considered a problem. Rank (2): It comes in second place after the emotional dimension, reflecting the importance of social media sites in shaping students' social relationships. Overall Score The arithmetic mean (3.84) reflects a general high-level impact of social media on the mental health of high school students. Standard deviation (0.73): shows a slight variation in students' evaluations, but it is still within acceptable limits.

General interpretation of the results:

The greatest impact on the emotional dimension: reflects the high impact of emotions (such as happiness, sadness, or stress) resulting from the use of social media, which is expected due to the nature of the content that is constantly displayed. The social impact is clear: confirms the role of social media in enhancing social relationships and interaction, despite the possibility of its negative impact in some cases. The psychological impact is moderate: This may be related to factors such as students' psychological resilience or the nature of the challenges they face on these platforms (such as cyber bullying or social comparison). Results related to the second question Is there a statistically significant effect at the significance level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) on the psychological health of secondary school students using social networking sites? Table (٤) One sample T-test to identify the impact of social networking sites on the mental health of high school students

Dimension	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Calculated T-value	Hypothetical Mean ( $\mu$ )	Critical T-value	Degree of Freedom (df)	p-value	Statistical Significance
Emotional Well-being	4.20	0.65	35.29	3.00	1.96	361	*0.0001	Statistically Significant
Psychological Well-being	3.23	0.74	5.90	3.00	1.96	361	*0.0001	Statistically Significant
Social Well-being	4.10	0.70	29.73	3.00	1.96	361	*0.0001	Statistically Significant
<b>Total score</b>	3.84	0.73	22.11	3.00	1.96	361	*0.0001	Statistically Significant

\* Functional at the significance level ( $\alpha$ ) 0.05 or less, hypothetical (t) value=3.00

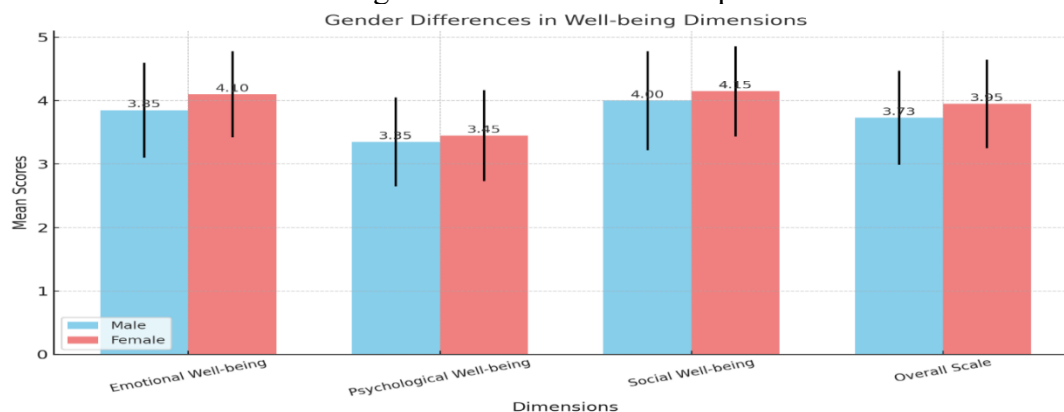
Results: The statistical analysis of the data indicates that the use of social networking sites has a statistically significant impact on the mental health of secondary school students, specifically across the three dimensions of mental health, Emotional, Psychological, and Social. As the results indicate, the mean score for emotional well-being was 4.20, with a standard deviation of 0.65. The calculated t-value was 35.29, significantly higher than the critical t-value of 1.96, with a p-value of 0.0001. This suggests a strong positive impact of social networking sites on emotional well-being, with the result being statistically significant. The mean score for psychological well-being was 3.23, with a standard deviation of 0.74. The calculated t-value was 5.90, which exceeds the critical t-value of 1.96, and the p-value was 0.0001. This indicates that social networking sites also have a significant effect on students' psychological well-being. The mean score for social well-being was 4.10, with a standard deviation of 0.70. The calculated t-value was 29.73, well above the critical t-value of 1.96, and the p-value was 0.0001. This further supports that the use of social networking sites positively influences social

well-being in a statistically significant way. The total mean score across all dimensions was 3.84, with a standard deviation of 0.73. The calculated t-value was 22.11, significantly greater than the critical t-value of 1.96, with a p-value of 0.0001. This reflects that the overall effect of social networking sites on the mental health of students is statistically significant. The results show that there are statistically significant differences at the level of (0.05) between the arithmetic means of the scale axes and the hypothetical arithmetic mean (3.00), as the arithmetic means were higher than the hypothetical arithmetic mean. Accordingly, it is clear that there is a statistically significant effect on the mental health of secondary school students by their use of social networking sites and networks. Results related to the third question: Are there statistically significant social differences at the significance level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) in the impact of social networking sites and networks on the mental health of secondary school students attributed to some demographic characteristics (gender, age and academic achievement)? To answer the question, the Independent Sample T-test and One Way ANOVA were used to identify the differences in the impact of social networking sites on the mental health of secondary school students attributed to some demographic characteristics (gender) Table (٥) The Independent Sample T-test shows the differences in the impact of social networking sites on the mental health of secondary school students attributed to gender.

Dimension	Gender	Number	Mean	St.D	Freedom Degree	Value Of T	Sig
Emotional Well-being	Male	172	3.28	0.60	360	-2.483	0.013
	Female	190	3.35	0.66			
Psychological Well-being	Male	172	3.12	0.83	360	-2.373	0.018
	Female	190	3.16	0.87			
Social Well-being	Male	172	3.22	0.82	360	2.030	0.043
	Female	190	3.20	0.77			
Total score	Male	172	3.21	0.70	360	-2.316	0.021
	Female	190	3.23	0.70			

### Interpretation of the Results

Social Networking Sites and Their Impact on emotional well-being The t-value is -2.483, and the p-value is 0.013 (less than 0.05), indicating a statistically significant difference between males and females in how social networking sites affect personality and behavior. Females scored slightly higher (M = 3.35) than males (M = 3.28) Social Networking Sites and Their Impact on psychological well-being, The t-value is -2.373, and the p-value is 0.018 (less than 0.05), showing a statistically significant difference. Again, females (M = 3.16) scored higher than males (M = 3.12). Social Networking Sites and Their Impact on the social-well-being :The t-value is 2.030, and the p-value is 0.043 (less than 0.05), indicating a statistically significant difference. Males (M = 3.22) scored slightly higher than females (M = 3.20). Overall Scale :The t-value is -2.316, and the p-value is 0.021 (less than 0.05), showing a statistically significant difference. Females (M = 3.23) scored marginally higher than males (M = 3.21). The results reveal that there are statistically significant differences between males and females at the  $\alpha = 0.05$  level across all dimensions of the study. Females generally scored higher than males in the overall impact of social networking sites on emotional-well-being (personality and behavior) and social well-being (relatives and friends, and family). While the differences are statistically significant, the mean scores are close, suggesting that the practical differences may not be very large. These findings emphasize the nuanced effects of gender on how social networking sites influence various aspects of mental health. as shown in Fig (1)



### Conclusion:

The findings indicate that social networking sites have a statistically significant impact on the mental health of secondary school students particularly on their emotional and social well-being Emotional Well-Being ,this dimension shows the highest impact of social media, Adolescents are highly affected emotionally, experiencing amplified feelings of happiness, sadness, or stress depending on their engagement with social media content . Social media also has a strong impact on social well-being, enhancing or sometimes straining relationships with family, friends, and peers. While still significant, the impact on psychological well-being (e.g., self-esteem, cognitive functioning, and resilience) is moderate compared to the other two dimensions. These dimensions showed strong positive effects, with the t-test results clearly rejecting the null hypothesis and confirming that the use of social networking sites is not only a relevant factor but also a statistically significant one when it comes to influencing students' mental health. Given that all p-values were below the standard threshold of 0.05, we can confidently conclude that the effect of social networking sites on the mental health of students is meaningful and substantial. These results suggest that the role of social media in shaping students' emotional, psychological, and social well-being should be further explored, and interventions should be developed to maximize the positive effects while addressing potential risks. In addition it found Females are slightly more affected emotionally and socially by social media compared to Males .Males, on the other hand, show slightly more psychological resilience but are still impacted.

### Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study, the following detailed recommendations are proposed:

- Organize regular workshops for students, teachers, and parents on the balanced use of social media, focusing on both its benefits and potential risks.
- Increase access to school-based counseling services to address issues stemming from social media usage.
  - Develop partnerships with local mental health organizations to provide adolescents with professional support.
- Spreading the culture of reading by referring to books as a source of information.
- Encourage further research on the long-term effects of social media usage, especially in Iraqi contexts.
  - Establish monitoring programs to assess trends in adolescent social media behavior and mental health outcomes over time.

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