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Research Paper

How Social Media Addiction Shapes Productivity and Innovation Among Knowledge Workers: Evidence From A Survey Study at Korek Telecom

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Abstract

In particular, the widespread availability of social media among non-knowledge workers has made it an unavoidable primary form of interaction in everyday work. But ire has been built over possible negative side effects from overusing the apps on staff performance and general work effectiveness. Despite numerous studies on this question, the evidence remains inconclusive and sometimes contradictory, especially in developing-country contexts where work environments and digital practices may vary. Hence, the present study seeks to examine how social media addiction affects two significant aspects of performance: employee productivity and innovation. A quantitative methodology was used, and data were collected through a survey of 225 randomly selected knowledge workers at Korek Telecom Company in Iraq. The questionnaire was developed based on previous literature and adapted according to the study area. The data analysis was conducted using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 4. It has been shown that social media addiction greatly affects the productivity of employees. Innovation, on the other hand, became a diffusing element that did not have an effect on innovation. This leads to overuse, which may affect the competence in executing a task, but does not have the same impact on idea generation. The findings offer important insights for organizations seeking to improve social media management.

Keywords:

Social Media Addiction, Productivity, Innovation, Knowledge Workers



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المستخلص

أصبح الاستعمال الواسع لوسائل التواصل الاجتماعي جزءًا لا يتجزأ من الحياة العملية اليومية، لا سيما بين العاملين في مجال المعرفة. ومع ذلك، تتزايد المخاوف بشأن الآثار السلبية المحتملة للإفراط في استخدامها على أداء الموظفين ونتائج العمل بشكل عام. ورغم أن الدراسات السابقة قد تناولت هذه المسألة، إلا أن نتائجها لا تزال متباينة، بل ومتناقضة أحيانًا، خاصة في سياقات الدول النامية حيث قد تختلف بيئات العمل والممارسات الرقمية. لذا، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على كيفية تأثير إدمان وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على جانبين مهمين من الأداء: إنتاجية الموظفين والإبداع. اعتمدت الدراسة منهجًا كمياً، وجمعت بيانات الدراسة عن طريق استبيان وُزِعَ على عينة بطريقة عشوائية مكونة من 225 عاملاً في مجال المعرفة في شركة كورك للاتصالات في العراق. وقد صُمِّم الاستبيان بناءً على دراسات سابقة، وتم تكييفه ليناسب سياق الدراسة. لقد خلُلت البيانات باستعمال النمذجة الهيكلية للمربعات الصغرى الجزئية، عن طريق برنامج SmartPLS 4. تُظهر المعطيات أن إدمان الوسائل الخاصة بالتواصل الاجتماعي له تأثير كبير في إنتاجية الموظفين. في المقابل، لم يُلاحظ أي تأثير يُذكر على الإبداع. تشير هذه النتائج إلى أن الإفراط في استعمال الوسائل الخاصة بالتواصل الاجتماعي قد يُقلل من القدرة على إنجاز المهام، بينما يبقى تأثيره على توليد الأفكار محدوداً. تقدم الدراسة رؤى عملية للمنظمات التي تهدف إلى إدارة استعمال هذه الوسائل بشكل أكثر فعالية.

الكلمات الرئيسية:

إدمان وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، الإنتاجية، الابتكار، العاملون في مجال المعرفة

1. Introduction

Social networking platforms is one of the features of the digital era and a significant aspect of how people communicate and share information with one another (Jong et al., 2021). Along with its proliferation came a new problem of sorts: social media addiction. Broadly speaking, social media addiction is defined as a behavior involving excessive and uncontrolled usage of the platforms, during which use slowly starts to interfere with other major areas of daily life. An emerging pool of data describes the association of this visual dependence with detrimental psychological and behavioral results including, psychological prioritization, diversion, strain and reduced self-control (El-Shihy, 2026; Zubair et al., 2023). These effects are particularly critical in jobs where prolonged cognitive effort, attention and deep information processing is required. In fact, it has been found that too much use of social networking sites on working days can impair the performance of employees and reduce efficiency (Setyorini et al., 2022; Shoaib et al., 2025). Concurrently with this shift toward a knowledge-based economy, it has produced an identifiable category of employee known as the knowledge worker. Most of their works are based on analysis, problem solving techniques, and decision making by relying on the executive specialist knowledge (Drucker, 2012).

In these settings, continuous and uncontrolled use of social networking sites may aim to serve as a considerable source of distraction that interrupts work performance. Huang et al. (2024) found the effect of social networking sites addiction on workers creative and innovative behavior is not a one way process. The impact is not always direct, but their findings imply that gradually eroding engagement with work through overcoming such employees can ultimately diminish creativity. In other words, people taper off on the energy, commitment, or involvement they put into what they do.

That view was echoed by Upshaw et al. (2022) the relation between social media addiction and creative performance in real-life is also revealed through creativity on the Internet. What their results indicate is that excessive use can slowly chip away at an individual's creativity. The interesting part of the social media variable is that if used for posting ideas, opinions and creation it can be more of a connector — while scrolling mindlessly through social media provides much of a distraction they can remain connected in their desires to create in art or writing and share with others what interests them.

As for productivity, the findings once more bend towards a detrimental consequence. Priyadarshini et al. (2020) highlighted that procrastination over or too much time consuming with social media makes everything to disciplined during work hour results in missed deadlines. In reality, it could incentivize employees to expedite their work, which may lead to cutting corners. Moreover, repeated checking of social media creates disturbances which make it more difficult to concentrate that further decreases productivity at work.

Also regarding productivity, the evidence again is against social media, as being excessively active on a number of platforms bares the risk of wasting time during working hours that may lead to delays in meeting deadlines. In practice, this can

encourage workers to fulfill their tasks in a hurry, occasionally to the detriment of quality. Moreover, checking social media with too many interruptions becomes difficult in staying focused which can reduce work efficiency to greater extent. However, it would be hotly contested, as not all the research agrees about this issue. Washington (2021) even goes more the other way, arguing our continued machines—digital in general and social media specifically—might not be all bad after all, that some measure of increased productivity may occur through our constant engagement. The reasoning seeming to be that, as employees are now surrounded by a technology-driven working world, being in continuous contact with alerts and notifications coming from the various devices would help them remain alert to their responsibilities.

In another study conducted Jahagirdar et al. (2024) studied the correlation between social networking sites use and employees psychological well-being. Analyzing a sample of 205 faculty members in India, their study found strong links between more extensive social media use and worse stress, depression and anxiety. Simultaneously, the research shows why employees overuse social media in the first place. The most common reasons are, for seeking entertainment to pass the time, boredom; sharing knowledge and socializing—things that mostly can be considered basic needs of mankind ok a lot less than problematic behavior.

Empirical evidence in fact suggests that knowledge workers have a focused job driven by their attention spans to perform optimally and the frequent unregulated use of social networking sites is detrimental (Setyorini et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the existent literature is unable to come up with an agreement on what are the effects of the addiction of social networking sites in productivity and higher order cognitive processes such as innovation for knowledge workers.

A rigorous review of the literature reveals four unique gaps that this research seeks to fill. Theoretical Implications First, the linkage between social media addiction, employee performance and creativity is not conclusive and has reported small effects in previous studies. Secondly, there is an evident geographical bias; the majority of scholarship has examined pricing in Western contexts, and consequently, there is a significant gap in terms of Arab-specific research—especially about the Iraqi context. Third, and sectorally, the mobile telecommunications industry is still relatively unexplored in this area. Finally, no previous investigation has explored 'knowledge workers' as a specific population, in the depth and methodological rigor that was carried-out in this analysis.

Depending on these, this study purely aims to see some empirically based influence of social networking sites addiction on the productivity and innovation of knowledge workers relying on survey data collected from Korek Company employees. The study thus contributes to the MIS literature, by understanding how digital behavior patterns importantly interact with performance outcomes in knowledge-intensive organizational settings.

Depending on the above, the current study addresses the following research questions:

1. Does social media addiction have a significant effect on the productivity of knowledge workers?
2. Does social media addiction have a significant effect on the innovation of knowledge workers?

2. Theoretical Background

This section clarifies the key concepts concerning the study variables based on relevant and recent literature.

2.1 Social Media Addiction

Among the countless challenges of modern times, technology dependence is one of the most important challenges. The main reason for this is the widespread use of smartphones and easy internet access. Addiction of social media is considered to be the offspring of addiction of Internet, which is caused by an obsession or excessive engagement with social networking platforms. (Baz, 2018).

Social networking sites addiction is defined as a form of behavioral addiction that interferes with personal and professional functioning due to excessive reliance on social media platforms. This is often characterized as deep immersion in virtual environments at the expense of the fulfillment of real responsibilities and social and professional relationships (Ji et al., 2023). From a psychological perspective, addiction to social media is considered a disorder that originates from interconnected cognitive, emotional and behavioral processes, which lead to persistent engagement, mood swings, persistent use and intra- or interpersonal conflicts in several areas of life. (Tutgun Ünal & Tarhan, 2025).

More concretely, addiction of social networking sites can be defined as excessive use of social media platforms for entertainment, communication and self-expression, which leads to a violation of self-regulatory control (Saqib et al., 2024). Organizationally, such excessive use is particularly problematic when it impedes task performance, concentration, and work-related cognitive processes, resulting in reduced overall work performance.

2.2 Productivity

Productivity is represent one of the most important aspects of worker performance; However, there is no universally accepted definition. Typically viewed as a relationship between output and input (Pritchard, 1995), individual productivity is relatively easy to measure in industrial organizations, because inputs such as labor and capital and outputs as material products can be clearly identified and quantified (Kim et al., 2019).

Conversely, it is much more complex to measure productivity in knowledge- and information-intensive contexts. The output of knowledge workers is often intangible, context-dependent and linked to the tasks performed, which makes direct measurement difficult (Drucker, 2013). Thus, personal productivity in knowledge-based work reflects the ability to effectively generate valuable cognitive results

through optimal use of one's mental, skill-based and temporal resources (Kianto et al., 2019).

The difficulty in assessing knowledge worker productivity is due to the unique characteristics of knowledge work, which include considerable autonomy and uncertainty (Ramírez & Nembhard, 2004). In contrast to traditional workers, knowledge workers have a great deal of freedom to choose tasks and organize their work schedules. They may also need to respond to new or suddenly given assignments, which makes the productivity measurement process more complex (Palvalin et al., 2015).

2.3 Innovation

Innovation are closely linked processes that promote improvement and growth in the workplace. Creativity is involve formulation of original and new ideas (Nasifoglu Elidemir et al., 2020), while innovation involves the implementation and practical application of these ideas to improve processes, practices or products and meet new needs (Anderson et al., 2014).

Creativity is associated with the ability of individuals to create new solutions to problems, while innovation represents the transformation of these creative ideas into concrete results. Creativity and innovation are therefore often regarded as respectively the starting and ending point of a multi-stage process (Li & Hsu, 2016). In knowledge work, creativity and innovation are embedded in the knowledge life cycle. Creativity relates to the creation of new knowledge, which represents the transformation of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge (Siesfeld et al., 2009). Innovation involves the use of newly created knowledge to achieve competitive advantage or develop improved or new results (Obeidat et al., 2015).

3. Research Conceptual Model

Figure 1 shows the conceptual research model, developed based on a comprehensive literature review. This model considers addiction of social media as the independent construct, and productivity and innovation among knowledge workers are dependent variables.

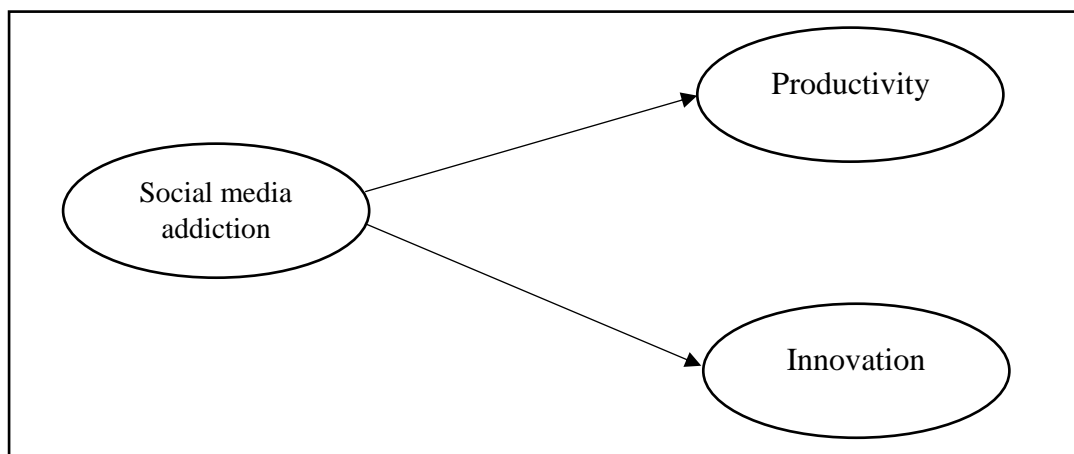


Figure 1 Research Conceptual Model

3.1 Social Media Addiction and Knowledge Workers' Productivity and Innovation

Addiction of social networking sites is the excessive use and constant monitoring of social media platforms, evident from compulsive behaviors replacing essential individual activities (Zivnuska et al., 2019). Research has found such addictive behavior related to negative psychological and behavioral outcomes, including stress, mental preoccupation, attention distraction, and diminished self-regulatory capacity (Zubair et al., 2023).

Such outcomes are particularly damaging to job performance in cognitively taxing, data-intensive jobs. Study that focuses the negative impact between addicted social networking sites use in work hours is a relatively recent phenomenon, yet many studies have highlighted the adverse effects of this addiction (Setyorini et al., 2022). Such notifications require shifting attention between multiple tasks, drawing cognitive resources away to be less productive, taking longer to finish the work and becoming less focused (Carrier et al., 2015).

Further, immoderate engagement with social media results in inefficient use of labor time and contributes to procrastination (Fuentes Chavez et al., 2025). Procrastination is defined because the voluntary postpone of planned sports despite the anticipation of negative effects, and includes irrational choice-making and behind schedule challenge final touch (Zhang et al., 2023). Additionally, excessive middle of the night social media use and prolonged screen publicity lessen cognitive performing on the following day, inflicting slower data processing, impaired working memory, and weakened numerical capabilities (Fuentes Chavez et al., 2025).

Taken together, these negative consequences of social media addiction can significantly harm knowledge workers' professional performance, resulting in reduced productivity levels and reduced innovation (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Murtaza et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2023). Depending on this discussion, we proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis1: Addiction of social media has a negative effect on the knowledge worker's productivity.

Hypothesis 2: Addiction of social media has a negative effect on the knowledge worker's innovation.

4. Methodological framework

This section explain the research methodology adopted in this study, including the development of measurement instruments, procedures of collection of data, and data analysis techniques.

4.1 Design of the Research

The current study used quantitative methods, using data collected through questionnaire distributed on a random sample. The cross-sectional approach used, the study started in October 2024 and ended in July 2025.

4.2 Measurement Development

This study adopted a questionnaire-based survey as the data collection tool. The items of the questionnaire were developed based on established scales and previous empirical studies, with minor modifications to ensure their suitability for the context and research purposes. All the items were measured using Likert scale five-point, start with "strongly agree" ended by "strongly disagree". Table 1 shows the measurement scales used for each latent variable. The questionnaire illustrated in appendix A.

Table (1). Measurement scales and sources

Construct	Number of Items	Source
Social Media Addiction	6	(Shahnawaz & Rehman, 2020)
Productivity	4	(Endicott & Nee, 1997)
Innovation	5	(Sherman, 1999)(Zhou & George, 2001)

Source: Authors' own work

4.3 Data Collection

The field of the study represented by Korek Telecom in Iraq, and the population of this company is 500 employees. Data were collected through both electronic and paper-based questionnaires from the targeted research population. A random sample was used and the 225 responses were received and it is suitable for statistical analysis.

5. Data Analysis

In order to test the conceptual research model and hypotheses, this study used partial least squares (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS4 software. The analysis was performed in two steps. The first step evaluated the measurement model to assess validity and reliability, whereas the second step tested the structural model and proposed hypotheses.

5.1 Sample Demographic

In this description the researchers try to identify the important personal characteristics of the research sample. Table 2 illustrated that the proportion of men is much higher than women, and this is related to the composition of the population examined. The highest age group among employees is 25-34, which indicates that a large part of the company's workforce is young people. Probably most of them are recent graduates who could not secure government jobs. This is confirmed by the fact that the highest level of education, represented by a bachelor's degree, makes up 78% of the total.

Table (2). Sample Demographic

Category	Item	Frequency	%
Gender	M.	185	82.2
	F.	40	17.8
Age	<25	6	3

	25–34	92	41
	35–44	89	39
	>45	38	17
Educational level	Diploma	34	15
	Bachelor	175	78
	Higher Diploma	5	2.2
	Master	10	4.4
	Ph.D.	1	0.4

Source: Authors' own work

5.2 The evaluation of Measurement Model

In order to assess the measurement model we use the PLS-SEM algorithm, and the validity of convergent, reliability and validity of discriminant which tested using various statistical measures.

Internal consistency was tested using composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha. According to Hair et al. (2017), both indicators must be above the cutoff value of 0.70. The validity of convergent was based on the average variance extracted (AVE), which equal 0.50 or higher for items to converge properly Fornell and Larcker (1981). In order to verify the convergent validity, the study depends on the degree of related each indicator with its construct, through the outer loading, which must exceed the threshold 0.70 as it recommended (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3 and figure 2 shows that outer loading of all indicators exceed the cutoff, furthermore all AVE are above 0.50 which means sufficient convergent validity. Table 3 shows that the Cronbach's alpha values of all constructs were bigger than 0.70 which indicates acceptable consistency.

Table (3). Construct Reliability, Loadings, and AVE

Constructs	Indicators	Loading	VIF	Cronbach's (α)	(rho_a)	AVE
SMA	SMA1	0.801	2.160	0.882	0.887	0.630
	SMA2	0.721	1.829			
	SMA3	0.751	1.913			
	SMA4	0.816	2.382			
	SMA5	0.816	2.198			
	SMA6	0.850	2.807			
P	P1	0.845	2.654	0.853	0.861	0.694
	P2	0.877	2.808			
	P3	0.812	1.956			
	P4	0.794	1.850			
CI	CI1	0.935	1.519	0.788	0.751	0.560
	CI2	0.479	1.381			
	CI3	0.743	1.623			
	CI4	0.720	1.515			
	CI5	0.809	1.613			

Source: Authors' own work

In order to assess the multicollinearity the research used Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) analysis, the results show that all values are under recommended criteria which is 5 (Pallant, 2020), this indicates there are no multicollinearity among the variables.

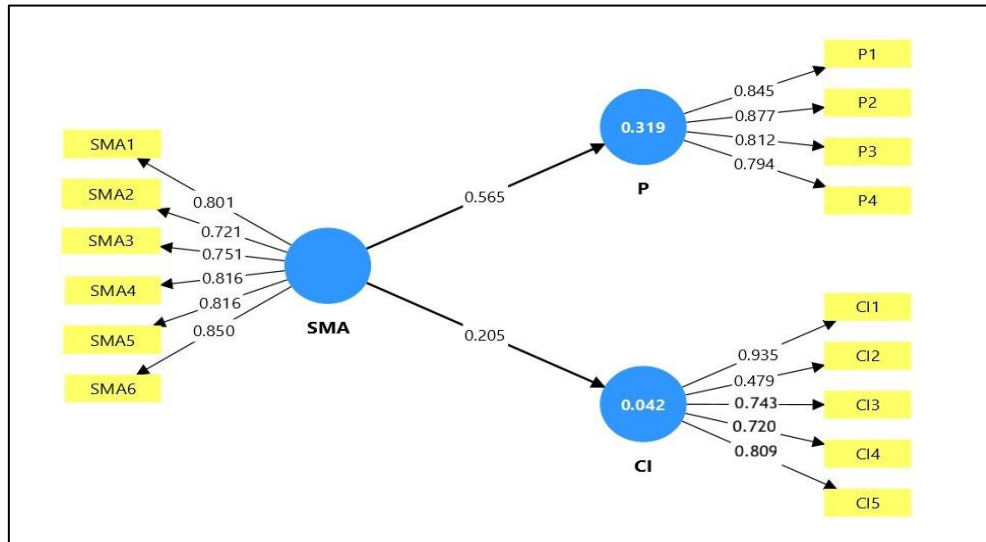


Figure (2). Measurement Model

5.3 Validity of Discriminant

The discriminant validity is a criterion which is used to assess the validity of constructs. The most well-known test of discriminant validity is Fornell–Larcker, which conduct through the square root of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each latent variables, and it should bigger than correlations values. The results in table 4 show that all square root of AVE are bigger than inter construct correlations, which mean the discriminant is established.

Table (4). Validity of Discriminant

	CI	P	SMA
CI	0.502		
P	0.158	0.833	
SMA	0.205	0.565	0.794

Source: Authors' own work

6. Structural Model Assessment

The bootstrapping procedure was used to test conceptual model. The bootstrapping technique is a non-parametric resampling procedure that is often used in PLS-SEM to test a research hypothesis by assessing the statistical significance of the path coefficients (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

The R² indicates the ability of independent variables to explain the change in the dependent construct. The R² greater than 0.10 is considered suitable for explaining the

variance in the dependent construct (Falk & Miller, 1992). The f^2 is a statistical indicator used to determine the magnitude of the effect of an independent latent construct on a dependent latent construct within the structural model in structural equation modeling (Sarstedt et al., 2023). If (f^2) value is greater than or equal to (0.35), this indicates a large effect. If (f^2) value is between (0.35) and (0.15), this indicates a moderate effect. If (f^2) value is between (0.15) and (0.02), this indicates a weak effect. Finally, if the value of (f^2) appears to be less than (0.02), this indicates that there is no significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Sarstedt et al., 2022). The results show that the values of (R^2) and (f^2) were within the recommended limits.

Table (5). R^2 and F^2

Construct	R^2	f^2
CI	0.247	0.014
P	0.295	0.408

From Table 6 and Figure 3, the result indicates a significant impact of social media addiction on knowledge workers' productivity ($\beta = 0.565$, $t = 7.925$, $p < 0.001$). These results provide evidence to support H1. However, the findings suggest that there is no significant influence of social media addiction on innovation, when applied to knowledge workers ($\beta = 0.205$, $t = 0.798$, $p = 0.425$). Thus, H2 is rejected.

Table (6). Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypothesis	The effect	β	STDEV	t-value	P-value	Result
H1	SMA \rightarrow P	0.565	0.071	7.925	0.000	Supported
H2	SMA \rightarrow CI	0.205	0.257	0.798	0.425	Not Supported

Source: Authors' own work

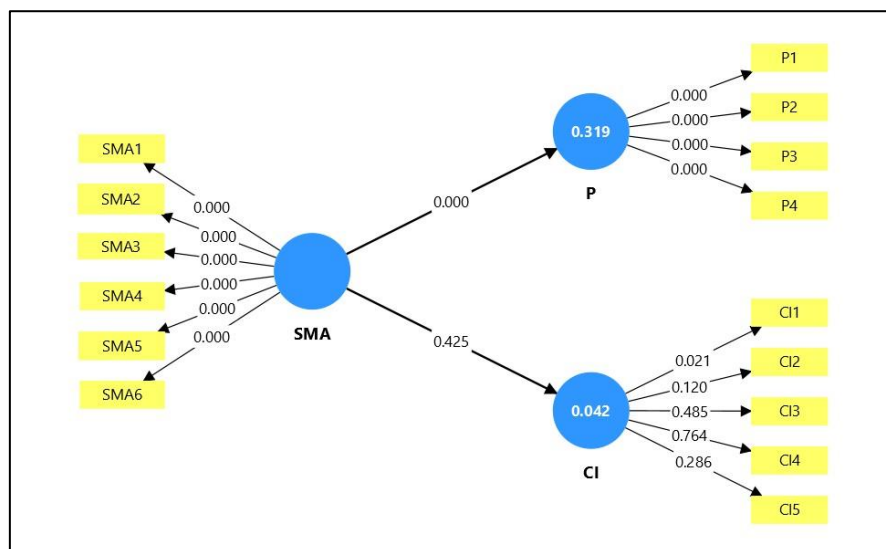


Figure (3). Structural Model

7. Discussion

In the current research, there is evidence indicating the strong positive influence of social media addiction on the productivity of knowledge workers. This finding indicates that higher addictive interaction with social media results in negative consequence on individual productivity. These consequences could be represented by unhealthy work behavior such as time wasting, interruptions and persistent attention splitting.

Similar to previous studies on social media addiction and work productivity, where a negative correlation was reported (Finkelsztein et al., 2025; Priyadarshini et al., 2020). Depending on the Management Information Systems perspective, this research highlights the importance of digital behavioral manifestations and the performance level of individuals within knowledge-intensive work surroundings. Increased social media use results in cognitive breaks that impact focus, prolong work completion time, and lower productivity, especially in knowledge work.

From other side, the study results found there is no statistically significant effect of social media addiction on the innovation of knowledge workers. This was previously found in other literature, which positioned social media use in both the negative and positive extremes of the innovation outcome spectrum (Huang et al., 2024) (Upshaw et al., 2022). The gap in literature could be attributed to the paradoxical nature of social media. Excessive social media use could be a distraction, however, social media is also a source of inspiration, idea exchange, and knowledge sharing which may mitigate the negative impact on innovation.

In addition, innovation is complicated multidimensional constructs that result from a wider range of organizational, psychological or environmental factors beyond individual digital use behaviors. The use of social media addiction cannot simply predict organizational culture, leadership support, job autonomy, and using digital tools for collaboration with employees in order to influence the innovation. Therefore, the no significant correlation found in this study may be an indication of contextual and organizational-specific factors that moderate or suppress the impact of problematic SNS use.

8. Conclusion

This study aims to address the potentially negative influence that social media addictions can have on work effort and innovation by knowledge workers in tightness organizational environment. The results of the field survey show that there is a strong aversion between social media addiction and productivity among individuals. So, excessive people use of social media platform promotes productivity loss because of time-mismanagement, cognitive overload from and extensive multitasking diminishing the power and quality of decision making.

The findings are intriguing, in that social media dependency doesn't seem to matter in the determination of innovation. This indicates that innovative output is not just a consequence of individuals' digital practices but rather is grounded in a wider system consisting of organizational supports, job design, and shared communication

pathways. At the same time, however, these results highlight the importance of separating pathological dependence from strategic use of social media in an MIS context. Compulsive use diminishes our productivity; thoughtful and nicely conditioned digital communication can enhance inventiveness — given the correct surroundings.

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- Data availability

There is no data generated in this paper.

- Author Declarations

- Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

- Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate

Not applicable.

- Consent for Publication

Not applicable.

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Prof. Bassam A. Alyoubzaky is a Professor in the Department of Management Information Systems at the University of Mosul. His research focuses on E-commerce, Decision

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Prof. Akram M Zeki is a distinguished scholar and mentor with an extensive academic record, having supervised over 30 postgraduate students, authored 12+ books, contributed to 150+ Scopus-indexed publications and 45 book chapters, and received multiple university and national awards.

Appendix A: Research questionnaire

Section One: Demographic Information

1. **Gender**
 - Male
 - Female
2. **Age Group**
 - Less than 25 years
 - 25–34 years
 - 35–44 years
 - 45 years and above
3. **Educational Level**
 - Diploma
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Higher Diploma
 - Master's degree
 - PhD

Section Two: Social Media Addiction

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I check social media immediately after waking up in the morning.					
2	I use social media whenever I feel stressed or upset.					

3	I have been spending increasing amounts of time on social media these days.					
4	I need to spend more time on social media than before to feel satisfied.					
5	I feel uncomfortable when I do not have time to use social media.					
6	I ignore my sleeping time because I feel the need to stay on social media.					

Section Three: Knowledge Worker Performance

First: Creativity

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I always strive to present new ideas to improve performance.					
2	I often come up with creative solutions to problems.					
3	I suggest new ways to achieve goals.					
4	I regularly contribute creative ideas.					
5	I develop new ways of doing work with limited resources.					

Second: Productivity

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I feel that my productivity relative to the time spent is lower than expected.					
2	I take longer than expected to complete tasks.					
3	I sometimes forget to complete assigned tasks.					
4	I sometimes take longer breaks than usual.					