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Social Media Addiction: Youths' Perspectives

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History <i>Published Online:</i> March 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords Social media Entertainment Free access Free time Mood modification Content update Social media addiction</p> <hr/> <p>JEL Codes: M31, M37 & L82</p> <hr/> <p>*Corresponding Author <i>Email:</i> b_alkurdi@ju.edu.jo</p>	<p>The study analyzed the variables associated with some factors affecting social media addiction such as entertainment, freedom of access, free time, communication with others, the need to modify the mood and update the content. The study relied on a sample of 443 university students distributed over three specializations: medical specializations, applied specializations, and social and human specializations. The study concluded that the independent factors taken into account all had a positive impact on social media addiction, with the greatest effect being mood modification, followed by the desire for entertainment. The study sample included 63.9% females compared to 36.11% males. The sample also included 37.9% of social and human specializations, 36.56% of applied specializations, and the remaining 5.0% of medical specializations.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media addiction is a growing negative phenomenon that has greatly affected all segments of society, especially young people. Studies have shown that excessive use of social media sites negatively affects the mental, psychological and social health of young people and adolescents. The most important negative effects of excessive use of these sites are anxiety, depression and social isolation (Andreassen et al., 2016). Social media addiction can fundamentally affect the way people communicate. Excessive use of social media can disrupt the natural state of real-life social interactions, promoting feelings of loneliness and isolation. People who spend a lot of time on social media tend to feel dissatisfied with their personal relationships (Primack et al., 2017). For their part, Kuss & Griffiths (2011) considered that the use of social media for entertainment can also cause addiction through the contribution of the continuous use of these platforms to the development of addictive behaviors, as browsing entertainment posts and videos becomes part of daily life. The ease of access to social media, especially during leisure time, is one of the most important reasons that increase the probability of individuals becoming addicted to these media, especially adolescents, especially with easy access to social media sites in light of the availability of smartphones and mobile devices (Andreassen, 2015). One of the most important determinants of the general mood of social media users is the extent to which the content provided is updated. Therefore, the continuous updating of the content increases interaction, which also increases the possibility of addiction as a result of the feeling of happiness and satisfaction at first, but the matter turns into addiction in the negative sense in advanced stages. (Tandoc et al., 2015). This study attempts to analyze the factors influencing social networking site addiction by focusing on social communication with others, promotion, leisure time, ease and free access to these sites, in addition to mood modification associated with the continuous updating of the content provided by these sites.

1.1 What social media mean?

Social media are known as digital platforms that facilitate interaction and sharing of content for people. Therefore, these sites and platforms are considered communication tools that allow users to create personal files with the ability to communicate with others, and share various media such as texts, images and videos (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media sites contribute to building a wide network of personal and social relationships, whether on the individual or group-social level, which made these site part of daily life in various societies around the world. Thus,

it has become a prominent role in exchanging information and ideas that have greatly affected social behavior and intellectual and cultural construction (Boyd & Ellison, 2010).

1.2 what social media addiction mean?

Social media addiction is defined as a continuous and urgent desire to use and browse these sites in a way that consumes long periods of time during the day, which ultimately leads to feelings of anxiety and depression as a result of wasting time. Therefore, it can be said that social media addiction is a psychological condition (behavioral disorder) that makes a person tend to excessively use these sites in an uncontrolled or irregular manner, which negatively affects daily life and appears negatively in social relationships (Andreassen, 2015). According to Kuss & Griffiths (2011), individuals addicted to social media see these sites as a means of escaping psychological pressures, which exacerbates the problem, especially as a result of the health problems caused by this addiction, which are mainly caused by lack of sleep and irregularity. As for Primack et al. (2017), the authors considered that the unregulated use of social media is positively associated with increased levels of anxiety and depression among young people.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of previous studies have analyzed a set of many indicators that lead youth to addict social networking sites, by reviewing the psychological and social effects of this addiction, and shedding light on the factors influencing excessive usage behaviors and their impact on mental health and social relationships. The following sections discussed these a set of these indicators in details:

2.1 Social connection with others

According to Zhu et al. (2023), social ties are declining due to a number of reasons, the most important of which are environmental barriers, low social effectiveness, and the inability to find suitable social activities, which makes social media a good tool to compensate for this weakness in actual communication. The review study conducted by Seabrook et al. (2016) aimed to identify and summarize research that addressed the role of social networking sites in depression and anxiety. This study also aimed to analyze the effects of well-being provided by social networking sites on the mental health of users of these sites by reviewing research published between January 2005 and June 2016 that addressed the effect of social networking sites on both anxiety and depression. The study found that levels of anxiety and depression are associated with the pattern of interaction on social networking sites, as positive interactions were associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety compared to negative interactions. Therefore, this study showed that the use of social networking sites may have a positive aspect depending on the communication environment and the extent of clear understanding and correct use of these sites. In a study conducted by Han (2023) on a sample of 634 WeChat users, it was shown that personal participation in the content provided by WeChat determines the reciprocal effect between the degree of agency, support, and social communication with others. Individuals who discuss personal matters with others have a greater chance of meeting social support.

2.2 Social media entertainment

Often the entertainment related to social media is intended for emotional needs that are expressed by the tendencies of users in the search for new experiences that achieve fun and entertainment through social media (Böhmer, 2022). Entertainment provided through social media includes videos, comedy shows, sports, documentaries, etc., making these sites suitable means of providing entertainment (Ojomo & Sodeinde, 2021). A several studies have shown that using social networking sites for entertainment only has more negative consequences than using these sites for communication, because using them for entertainment only and communicating with strangers in this way causes a sharp deterioration in real personal (Peter & Valkenburg, 2012). However, entertainment can be one of the main drivers of brand-related interactions on social media, as it provides fun, convenience and quick access, which leads to the creation of dense content based on the combination of entertainment and other related drivers (De Vries et al., 2017).

2.3 Users' free time

Exploiting free time by visiting social networking sites has a positive aspect when that time is used for commercial activities such as marketing and purchasing through those sites (Stachowiak-Krzyżan, 2019). Several researchers argue that exploiting free time to use social networking sites is one of the factors that politicians rely on because of the fragmentation and weakening of social relations it causes. While other researchers considered that engaging in social networking sites has no role in political life, but rather leads to a more cohesive and engaged (Eze & Obono, 2018). On the other hand, Cao Fernández et al. (2022) believed that although social media addiction fills users' free time, it contributes to changing social habits through what can be called imaginary poisoning through the diverse content provided, between imaginary and realistic. To clarify more, Primack et al. (2017) divides the users of the social media users (specially game player) into two categories. The first category is called the category of basic players, which also includes the segment of obsessed players, and the second category is the less addicted players.

He considers investing free time in playing one of the most important criteria for these divisions from his point of view.

2.4 Social media free access

Access to information is generally regulated by laws and regulations on the freedom of information flow, but social media is not subject in most cases to these laws, which makes access to information faster and more available (EI-Mikawy, 2011.) Although social media sites provide freedom of access legally, the site's policy itself prohibits the provision of content that is not in compliance with the site's policy (especially Google sites) and often prohibits any content that incites negative issues such as hatred and terrorism or any material that violates intellectual rights and copyrights Alshahree (2013) pointed out the importance of free access via social media in purchasing operations and e-commerce through the importance of quick access to sales and shopping outlets to view all specifications related to the product to be obtained.

2.5 Social media content updated

Content updating tools have undergone rapid developments in recent years following the spread of web applications and platforms, so that traditional advertising methods have become outdated and little-used tools (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Some researchers believe that updating content in addition to diversifying the platforms used is an important condition for achieving the highest level of effectiveness of marketing indicators, especially since it has been shown that repetition in updating content has positive effects on audience' attitudes towards products (Ashdaq et al., 2023), therefore content writers should constantly update their content, especially when they notice the popularity of any topic related to their content, especially with regard to promotional content. Loannidis et al. (2009) addressed the concept of dynamic content updating by sharing users with a common service provider to update their content in a sequential manner based on the service provider's allocation of sufficient connection capacities, noting that the service provider itself benefits from the social network to provide the content update service despite its limited use of resources while maintaining a slow deterioration of quality. As a result of their study, Loannidis et al. (2009) concluded that more social users do not necessarily receive more frequent updates.

2.6 Users' moods modification

Moods are emotional states that must be distinguished from emotions, especially since moods have special features, the most important of which is that they are not directed towards tangible things (Steinert & Dennis, 2022). People with depression are generally characterized by a lack of self-esteem, which makes them show high levels of fear of social interaction in addition to their feeling of being bullied, which encourages them to resort to social networking sites to improve their mood (Blood & Blood 2016; Ruiz et al., 2019). A study conducted by Nazlıgöl et al. (2022) showed that individuals who are addicted to social media show clear changes in mood, as the association between mood modification and social media addiction was positive with a significant value, while the association between guilt and mood change was negative, but these results differed between males and females, as females use social media more to modify mood compared to males. To add more, some scholars such (Thorisdottir et al., 2019; Bennett et al., 2020) as highlighted the influence of social media use on mood status and noted that although social media platforms and applications may regulate digital emotions, however, they mentioned that social media may lead to depression and distress.

3. THE STUDY HYPOTHESES

The study hypotheses are based on analyzing the relationship between the use of social networking sites in its various dimensions and addiction to using these sites. Based on this and the main objective of the study and based on a review of previous literature, the study hypotheses were developed as follows:

3.1 Social connection with others and social media addiction

Communicating with others via social media involves sharing feelings (Steinert & Dennis, 2022), and as a result of sharing feelings, a state of comfort can be achieved that leads to habituation that turns into addiction as a result of the human need for emotional disclosure. On the other hand, the desire to escape from social concerns may push social media users to avoid communicating with others or even sharing their opinions (Willard, 2007; Fischer & Reuber, 2011), thus, to demonstrate the extent of the impact of using social media, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: Social connection with others positivity influence social media addiction.

3.2 Social media entertainment and social media addiction

Entertainment methods through social media have evolved to include many types of content such as comedy, sports, movies (Ojomo & Sodeinde, 2021), which has made these sites a primary destination when searching for entertainment. Although these sites have been largely associated with entertainment situations in addition to other features such as developing skills and knowledge and social interaction (Andreassen et al., 2016), which in turn may reach a point that causes addiction to these sites. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated to analyze the effect of using social media sites for entertainment on addiction to these sites:

H2: Social media entertainment positivity influence social media addiction.

3.3 Users' free time and social media addiction

Although the Internet and social networking sites consume a lot of time (Eze & Obono, 2018), there is a large segment of social networking site users who invest this time in entertainment matters (Fu, 2019). Therefore, excessive use of social networking sites for entertainment and gaming purposes can contribute significantly to addiction. In order to analyze the relationship between free time and social networking site addiction, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3: Users' free time positivity influence social media addiction.

3.4 Social media free access and social media addiction

Social networking sites allow for the virtual simulation of real life through the freedom of access available to them (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), thus this simulation can generate a feeling among users of these sites that they can be satisfied with social networking sites instead of real life, which causes them addiction. To demonstrate the effect of freedom of access and the facilities it entails in addition to social networking sites, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H4: Social media free access positivity influence social media addiction.

3.5 Social media content updated and social media addiction

Social media users view the ability to constantly update content as a positive feature that they invest in in various fields and levels, especially in light of the availability of applications that enable content to be updated more flexibly (Andreassen et al., 2016). To understand the role of content updating and flexibility in social media addiction, the following hypothesis was used:

H5: Social media content updated positivity influence social media addiction.

3.6 Users' moods modification and social media addiction

Social media sites are considered one of the most important tools that contribute to managing moods, not modifying them (Ojomo & Sodeinde, 2021), which may justify the continuous use of these sites. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was formulated with the aim of analyzing the relationship between mood modification provided by social media sites and addiction to these sites:

H6: Users' moods modification positivity influence social media addiction.

3.7 The study model

Based on the discussion in the literature part, it can be denoted that the concept of using social networking sites stems from several factors, the most important of which are freedom of access, available use in free time, the spread of technology and smartphones,...etc. In light of the widespread use of social networking sites, it has become noticeable that these sites have become a permanent, daily, and sometimes almost instantaneous destination for a large segment of people, which indicates the possibility of a type of addiction to these sites. Addiction has multiple factors, but the study focused on analyzing a number of potential factors for causing addiction to social networking sites, which can be summarized through the study model as seen in figure (1):

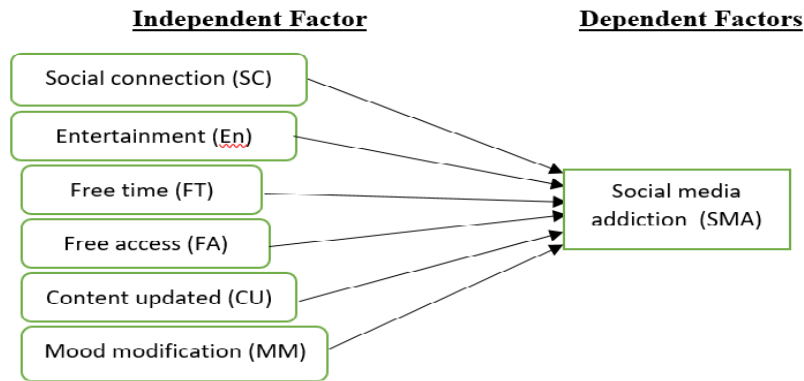


Fig (1) The Research Model

4. METHODOLOGY

By reviewing the previous literature that dealt with social media, addiction to it, and the factors of this addiction, and based on the objective on which the study was built, the statistical inference method was used to test the study hypotheses that investigate the factors affecting addiction to social media sites by applying it to a simple random sample of 443 university students. Partial least squares (PLS) were used to test the study hypotheses based on structural structural equations. The initial data on the study factors were obtained through a questionnaire designed to measure these factors, which included 35 variables distributed over seven factors, six of which represent the independent factors (Social connection (SC), Entertainment (En), Free time (FT), Free access (FA), Content updated (CU), (MM) Mood modification, and the dependent factor Social media addiction (SMA).

4.1 Sample and data collection

The study relied on a random sample of 443 university students to collect primary data on the study factors. The questionnaires were filled out through personal interviews over a period of ten days. Note that the number of questionnaires distributed was 460 questionnaires, but 16 of them were not valid for analysis due to the respondents not responding to a large number of questions. Therefore, the actual response rate was (96.304%).

4.2 Study Instrument

The study was built on the basis of its hypotheses using the structural equations method - including seven latent factors, six of which are independent factors whose significance will be analyzed in relation to the dependent factor (social media addiction). Each of the seven dimensions included five direct variables, which were included in the questionnaire used to collect data after the answers were designed on a five-point Likert scale, so that the possible answers on the scale were distributed as follows: (disagree (1), neutral (2), agree (3).

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results section presents the descriptive statistics of the study sample and its distribution by gender (males and females) and by specialty (scientific specialty, medical specialty, humanities and social sciences specialty), in addition to the reliability and consistency tests and concluding with the results of testing the study hypotheses. The SPSS 21 package was used to describe the sample, and the Smart PLS 4 program was used to complete the other tests and test the hypotheses.

5.1 Demographic data for respondents

The percentage of female representation in the sample is the largest, as their number reached 63.88% compared to 36.11% for males. As for the specialty with the highest percentage in the sample, it was the humanities and social sciences specialty with a percentage of 37.94%, followed by the scientific specialty with a close percentage of 36.56%. As for the medical specialty, it had the lowest percentage 25.5%, the following table (1):

Table (1) Respondents' distribution on demographic variables

Variable(s)	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	283	63.88%
	Male	160	36.11%
Age categories	Medical specialty	113	25.5%
	Humanities and social sciences specialty	168	37.94%
	Scientific specialty	162	36.56%

5.2 Internal consistency of reliability

The following table (2) shows the saturation values of each of the basic variables with the latent factor associated with it, in addition to the stability indicator of the questionnaire used to collect the data, along with the internal consistency and reliability indicators accompanying the analysis of the structural equations through the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the AVE coefficient.

Table (2) Reliability and internal consistency results

Variables	Factor	Item Name	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha >.7	Composite Reliability (Cr) >.7	AVE >.5
I feel I can easily reach out to my friends and family when I need support	Social connection (SC)	X1	-0.176	0.79	0.82	0.601
I interact with others on a regular basis, whether by phone or social media		X2	-0.147			
I feel like I am part of a community or social group that supports and encourages me		X3	0.703			
My social connections have a positive impact on my mood		X4	-0.537			
I enjoy the moments I spend with others and consider them important to my well-being		X5	-0.251			
I enjoy watching movies or TV shows as my main form of entertainment	Entertainment (En)	X6	0.556	0.713	0.732	0.555
I regularly participate in recreational activities such as sports, arts or crafts		X7	0.145			
Recreational activities help me improve my mood and feel happy		X8	0.546			
I use social media or video games as a means of entertainment		X9	0.104			
I prefer to spend leisure time alone rather than participating in group activities		X10	0.785			
I spend a large portion of my free time browsing social media	Free time (FT)	X11	0.354	0.763	0.707	0.735
I enjoy watching entertaining or educational content on social media during my free time		X12	-0.029			
I use social media to connect with friends and family during my free time		X13	-0.144			
My experience on social media positively or negatively affects my mood during my free time		X14	-0.429			
I think I spend more time on social media than I should during my free time		X15	0.782			
"I feel like I can easily access social media anytime, anywhere."	Free access (FA)	X16	0.141	0.799	0.819	0.611
"Having free access to social media impacts my ability to connect with others."		X17	0.194			
"I use mobile data to access social media when I'm not connected to Wi-Fi."		X18	0.408			
"I take advantage of having free access to social media to get new information and news."		X19	0.454			
"I don't face challenges accessing social media due to network restrictions or costs."		X20	0.879			
"I notice that content on social media is updated frequently."	Content updated (CU)	X21	0.546	0.706	0.714	0.52
"New content updates influence my level of engagement with the pages or accounts I follow."		X22	0.599			
"I prefer content that is updated regularly, such as news or promotions."		X23	0.604			
"I find fresh content more credible and trustworthy than outdated content."		X24	0.4			
"Regularly updating content influences my decision to follow certain social media accounts."		X25	0.404			
"I feel like the content I follow on social media has a huge impact on my mood."	Mood modification (MM)	X26	0.033	0.738	0.7	0.721
"I use social media as a way to boost my mood when I'm feeling down or stressed."		X27	0.494			
"I tend to engage with positive or inspirational posts to lift my spirits."		X28	0.554			
"The comments and interactions I get on my posts impact my mood."		X29	0.445			
"I find that spending time on social media helps me get through tough times."		X30	0.777			
"I feel like I need to check my social media accounts multiple times a day."	Social Media Addiction (SMA)	X31	0.588	0.735	0.719	0.798
"My social media use affects my ability to focus on daily tasks."		X32	0.27			
"I feel anxious if I don't have access to social media for a long time."		X33	0.238			
"I would rather spend my time on social media than doing other activities like reading or exercising."		X34	0.835			
"I notice that my excessive social media use negatively impacts my personal relationships."		X35	0.284			

The previous table (2) shows the loadings of the variables measured on their factors that varied between low and high values, hereinafter some points related to each factor:

1-Social connection (SC)

The loading values for all variables of this factor were negative except for the variable (I feel like I am part of a community or social group that supports and encourages me) which was the most closely related to its factor, as its loading value on its factor was (0.703). As for the remaining four variables, the loading values ranged between - 0.147 and -0.537, and these values can be viewed positively as they are not high enough to indicate the presence of a high common variance.

2-Entertainment (En)

The variable (I prefer to spend leisure time alone rather than participating in group activities) showed the highest saturation value on its factor with a positive value (.785), which means that this variable had the greatest impact on the entertainment factor. It was followed by a good value with close saturation by the variables (I enjoy watching movies or TV shows as my main form of entertainment, Recreational activities help me improve my mood and feel happy) with saturation values (0.556 and 0.546 respectively).

3-Free time (FT)

The variable (I think I spend more time on social media than I should during my free time) was the most saturated with the leisure time factor, with a saturation value of 0.782, and the other variable that was positively saturated on this world was (I spend a large portion of my free time browsing social media) with a below-average saturation value of 0.354.

4- Free access (FA)

The variable (I don't face challenges accessing social media due to network restrictions or costs.) showed a high saturation value of 0.879, while the variables (I take advantage of having free access to social media to get new information and news, I use mobile data to access social media when I'm not connected to Wi-Fi) showed medium saturation values of 0.548, 0.408, respectively.

5-Content updated (CU).

All variables on the factor (content update) were saturated with positive correlations, and the greatest saturation was for the variable "I prefer content that is updated regularly, such as news or promotions." with a saturation value of 0.604.

6- Mood modification (MM)

The saturation values on the Mood modification (MM) factor ranged from a high value for the variable I find that spending time on social media helps me get through tough times with a saturation value of 0.777 and the lowest saturation was for the variable I feel like the content I follow on social media has a huge impact on my mood with a saturation value of 0.0333. The rest of the variables were positively saturated on the factor and had medium values.

7- Social media addiction (SMA)

The variable "I would rather spend my time on social media than doing other activities like reading or exercising" was saturated on the addiction factor with a positive and significant value of 0.835. The variable "I feel like I need to check my social media accounts multiple times a day" was saturated with a value of 0.588. As for the rest of the variables, their saturation was at the lowest limits, which means that these two factors are the most closely related to the addiction factor compared to the other proposed variables.

5.3 Factors correlation using the Fornell–Likert criterion

The most important results shown in table (3) are that social media addiction was positively correlated (directly related) with each of the other six factors, but with varying correlation coefficients (variable degrees of correlation). The mood modification factor was the factor most closely related to social media addiction, with a correlation coefficient of 0.692, followed by entertainment, with a correlation coefficient of 0.613, while the factor least related to addiction was content updating, with a correlation coefficient of 0.23.

Table (3) Correlation coefficients results

	Social connection (SC)	Entertainment (En)	Free time (FT)	Free access (FA)	Content updated (CU)	Mood modification (MM)	Addiction
Social connection (SC)							
Entertainment (En)	0.322						
Free time (FT)	0.341	0.501					
Free access (FA)	-0.088	-0.377	0.573				
Content updated (CU)	0.414	0.113	0.462	0.491			
Mood modification (MM)	-0.12	-0.187	-0.082	0.375	0.343		
Addiction	0.531	0.613	0.411	0.555	0.23	0.692	

5.4 Hypotheses Testing (Path Coefficient)

Below are the results of testing the hypotheses of the study that investigates the relationship between the six factors in addiction to social media, where the hypotheses are tested by relying on the values of the Student t-test and its corresponding significance level, which is compared to the theoretical significance level of 0.05 as seen in table (4).

Table (4) Hypotheses Test outputs

	Original sample(O)	Sample mean	STDEV	T statistic	P value	Decision
Addiction- Social connection (SC)	0.962	0.728	0.762	5.015	0	supported
Addiction- Entertainment (En)	0.980	0.896	0.979	3.839	0.027	supported
Addiction- Free time (FT)	0.783	0.830	0.256	7.127	0.003	supported
Addiction- Free access (FA)	0.998	0.418	0.360	4.567	0	supported
Addiction- Content updated (CU)	0.307	0.418	0.333	3.019	0.043	supported
Addiction- Mood modification (MM)	0.492	0.376	0.507	8.293	0	supported

Notes: Significant level at $\alpha=0.05$.

As seen in table (4) and in figure (2), all independent factors were associated with the dependent factor (addiction to social media) in a significant and fundamental way, through the values of the Student t-tests and their corresponding significance levels, which were all less than the theoretical significance level of 0.05, taking into account the variation in the association between each independent factor and the dependent factor.

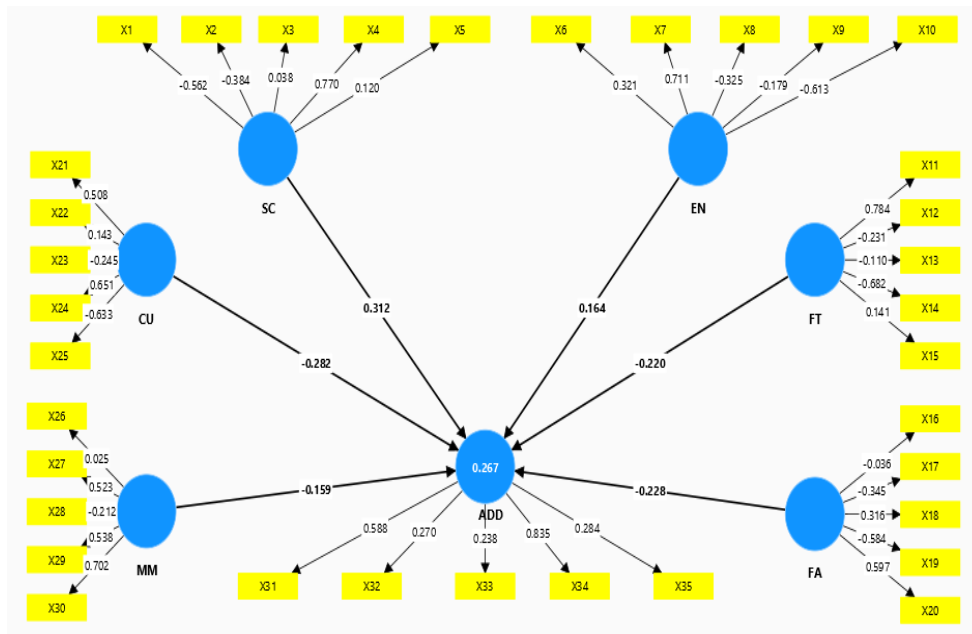


Fig (2) The Bath diagram between buying food and costumer's criteria's

Based on a review of previous literature, the study analyzed the relationship between the factors that potentially influence social media addiction. The focus was on factors related to entertainment, freedom of access, leisure time, content updating, social networking, and mood modification. The results showed that all of these factors had a positive and significant (statistically significant) effect on addiction to these sites, but the association varied. The factor most closely related to addiction was the mood modification factor with a significant correlation coefficient of 0.69. Entertainment came in second place in its association with addiction with a correlation coefficient of 0.6, followed by the freedom of access factor with a correlation coefficient of 0.555. The content updating factor was the least influential factor in social media addiction with a correlation coefficient of 0.23.

6. CONCLUSION

The results of this study were consistent with expectations based on theoretical foundations and previous studies and literature on similar topics. It has been found that customer intention was related to the demand for buying local food with negative correlation coefficient. From the researcher's perspective, the reasons behind these results may be due to the disparity between social factors in UAE society and other societies. It can be said that although knowledge positively impacts purchase intention, gaps in understanding persist.

Preferences and motivations vary in influence, and although intention strongly predicts behavior, external barriers can hinder actual purchases, necessitating targeted marketing strategies. Accordingly, the UAE government can enhance the promotion and marketing of local food products. Local organizations and associations can also contribute to promoting local products by working to increase awareness of their importance, both for health and the local economy. On the other hand, the previous analysis showed the inter-correlations between the independent factors, and as a result of that analysis, social communication was negatively associated with both mood modification and freedom of access. The reason may be that freedom of access causes a state of boredom, which does not lead to intensifying communication with others, and the mood may decline as a result of communication with some social media users.

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