Using Social Media Sites and Its Relation with Social Isolation and Selfishness in Youth: A Predictive Study

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Abstract

This study aimed at highlighting the correlation between social isolation and selfishness in youth and the intensive use of social media in a sample of university students, and revealing the possibility of predicting the level of social isolation and selfishness among young people through their use of social media. The research sample consisted of 600 male and female students. The descriptive method was applied using a scale of Social isolation and Selfishness questionnaire, as well as some questions that measure exposure, its intensity, times and special places of social networking sites. The researchers applied methodological steps in constructing the scale and questionnaire from previous studies and refereeing it by experts. The main findings include: 1) there is a positive correlation between the intensive use of social media sites and social isolation and selfishness in the research sample; 2) the heavy use of social networks negatively contributes to predicting the level of selfishness and social isolation in the future among young people; 3) the larger proportion of subjects (almost 67.3%) reported that social media networks had a negative effect on their relation with reality; and 4) Facebook leads the list of Respondents' preferred social media, followed by WhatsApp.

Keywords: social media, social isolation, selfishness, youth, psychological effects

1. Introduction

Rapidly evolving digital technologies have caused major changes in the field of media over the past two decades (Fayez, H., 2022), whereby the increase of information has made traditional media decline, as opposed to digital media, which peaked as a result of the emergence of AI media (Al Adwan, M. N., et al., 2024). Recent years have witnessed the development in worldwide telecommunications networks through internet and the emergence of "social media sites" signaling that the internet became a social means for communication and acquaintance, exchanging knowledge, information and news (Elmahdy, A, et al., 2024). The interactivity provided by social media allows audiences to create and share experiences on platforms like Facebook, Flicker, and Whatsapp (Hassan, T.H., et al., 2024).

One point of view about virtual society which social networking sites, such as Facebook, have created that it represents a negative society resulting in losing one's ability to interact and deal with social life in reality and others, and lowering the levels of social adjustment of the user. However, social media, e.g. Facebook, may have a positive effect on social aspects. Individuals on these sites may create virtual societies that achieve social connection and communication based upon their interests, thoughts and attitudes (Al Adwan, M. N., et al., 2025).

With the widespread use of social media, communication patterns and methods of building social relationships have changed. Although these platforms provide unprecedented opportunities for communication and self-expression, they have also raised growing concerns about their negative impact on traditional social ties. Several studies indicate that excessive use of social media may lead to a weakening of face-to-face interactions and increased feelings of loneliness and social isolation among young people (Pradhan, S., & Liu, Y. 2025), (Wu, P., et al. 2024). Several studies have also explored gender differences in social media use. (Akman, I., & Turhan, C. 2018) and (Dumford, A. D., 2023) have shown that males tend to use these sites more intensively for entertainment and general communication purposes, while females prefer to use them for building social bonds and obtaining emotional support. Other research suggests that females are more sensitive to social relationships, which may make them more likely to feel isolated when lacking positive interaction (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012), while findings have shown that males may tend to exhibit higher

levels of selfishness associated with engaging in digital environments

On the other hand, recent research has shown that the constant pursuit of attention and social acceptance in the digital space fosters selfish tendencies, as individuals increasingly focus on presenting their digital selves and satisfying their own desires at the expense of caring for others (Twenge & Campbell, 2018; Ryan et al., 2014). This overlap between social isolation and selfish behaviors driven by social media use represents a critical issue worthy of research and analysis, especially among young people, who are the heaviest users of these platforms.

The importance of this issue is also highlighted in the Arab context, as recent studies indicate that young people in Arab societies are more engaged in social media use, making them more susceptible to phenomena such as social isolation and digital selfishness. However, research examining this topic from the perspective of the predictive relationship between excessive social media use and these psychological and behavioral phenomena remains limited, leaving a research gap that needs to be addressed.

Hence, this study aims to uncover the predictive relationship between social media use, social isolation, and selfishness among young people.

2. Literature Review

A literature review helps make the researcher aware of the state of science regarding the topic of their research, thus determining what they can add to the scientific and academic heritage (Abdelhay, H. F, et al., 2025). In the current study, the literature review is divided into subsections as follows:

2.1 Social Media

Social media has evolved into a cornerstone of daily existence, providing channels for connection, Social media has various definitions in the literature(Mohini, M., & Sinha, A. R., 2025). The researcher attributes this to the novelty of these sites and that scientists attempt to define it each according to his/her point of view (Fayez, H., 2024).

Zaher Rady defines a social networking site as a system of electronic networks allowing the user to create their own page, hence connect it through an electronic social system to another member with the same interests and hobbies (Issa, T., et al., 2021).

Khaled Al–Mugdadi states that they are electronic sites in which internet applications provide services for its users allowing them to create a personal page available to the public inside a particular site or system, provide a means of communication with page creators' acquaintances or with other users of the system, and provide services to exchange information between users of this site or system via the internet (Al-Miqdadi, K. 2013).

Another study defines it as a website allowing its users to create private pages and spaces inside the site itself, hence communicating with friends and sharing the content and communications.

Sherief Al-Laban states that they are services on the web allowing individuals to construct public or semi-public personal data through a specific system and make them able to develop a list for those who would like to share, communicate with, and see their data, and also allow them to see and communicate with the content others create through the system (Al-Labban, S., 2012).

The researchers consider social networks as tools which the internet contributed largely to their creation. Like any innovation, they have their pros and cons. As to the advantages, they can capture large audiences of various ages offering them synchronous interaction and communication with each other through audio, photo, and video files. In addition, they connect with other electronic sites, and offer their users other advantages allowing them to have more freedom (Fayez, H, 2023).

Networks of social media originate in 1995. The first site of this kind was classmates.com to connect classmates. Its aim was to help friends and colleagues who studied together at a particular phase of their lives but got separated by academic life circumstances in distant places. The site satisfied the desire of these individuals to communicate with each other electronically. Established by Randy Conrads, classmates.com is still present till now and has 50 million users in the USA and Canada belonging to 200,000 educational institutions representing all educational stages from kindergarten to university (Rayan, M.,2012).

In 1997, Andrew Fenrich established SixDegrees.com in New York to offer direct links among its users. In this site, personal users' profiles appeared, as well as the ability to send private messages to a set of friends. Although these sites provided services similar to present social networking sites, they could not yield profit to their owners and some of them were closed (Jarrar, Y., 2022).

The most important social media sites include: blogs, forums, Wiki, other sites in which large companies offered to support social connection and sharing with users of the site such as Facebook and Twitter, and sites that are concerned

with collective editing, writing and executing the shared presentations Google and Yahoo (Fayez Abdelhay, H, 2021), AJAX sites in fields of office applications that are made collaboratively, social interaction networks, sites of image sorting, presentation and sending them to others such as Flicker, sites for publishing video clips such as YouTube, and other websites and technologies that receive an individual interest for exchanging, sharing, and posting among users (Abdel Hamid, M.,2009).

The researcher considers the emergence and growth of social media networks was an accumulative process caused by successive technological revolutions, meaning that these networks were aimed to supplement traditional means of communication and did not appear suddenly.

2.2 Social Isolation

Social isolation in the psychological dictionary is defined as losing communication with others whether voluntary or involuntary. (Desouki, K., 2005). In the brief encyclopedia of sociology, isolation means a degree of separation between individuals or groups in terms of interaction, communication or cooperation, affective and social integration leading to permanent isolation of the individual (Abdelhay, H. F, et al., 2023). Lack of psychological integration with others leads to mental disturbance and the result of this disturbance from psychological perspective is the person isolation from society due to feelings of alienation from others whom he/she communicates with, whether the work group or the community (Ghaith, M., 2003).

Social isolation is an aspect of alienation that refers to avoiding communication with others, distance from participation in any social activities as a result of the individual's feeling of alienation from others (Primack, B. A., et al., 2017).

Arfan Zidan specified that social isolation means voluntarily and willingly dissociating from others due to the weak connection between the individual and their community, indifference from their surroundings, and reducing the levels of engagement in any social activities or interactions with others (Primack, B. A., et al., 2019). But in this study, social isolation refers to the score the student obtains in the scale including positive and negative statements of the individual relation with society and others.

2.3 Selfishness

Selfishness refers to the tendency to adopt and promote positive opinions about oneself, and it usually includes a favorable opinion about one's traits and self-importance. Selfishness is closely related to 'egotism' or narcissism - and some certainly argue that 'when selfishness is mentioned, social narcissism comes to mind' (Petrina, S., 2004). Selfish persons have a strong tendency to talk about themselves in a self-reinforcing manner, may also be arrogant and boastful, with a grandiose sense of their own importance. Their inability to acknowledge the accomplishments of others increases their self-esteem; whereas their sensitivity to criticism may lead them to a state of narcissistic anger when they feel insulted (Leary, M., 2007).

The concept of selfishness describes a person who works to acquire values far beyond what he/she gives others. Egotism may be satisfied by exploiting the sympathy, irrationality or ignorance of others, as well as coercive force and fraud (Alloway, T., et.al,. 2014). Egotism contrasts with altruism - or the act of acquiring fewer benefits than is deserved – and differs from selfishness, which refers to the relentless pursuit of self-interest. Many practical forms of selfishness may agree, but they do not necessarily involve a sense of self-aggrandizement (Carlson, R., 2022).

2.4 Relationship Between Social Media With Social Isolation and Selfishness

Social media is one of the most prominent tools of social interaction in the digital age, as young people use it extensively for self-expression, building relationships, and consuming information. However, the increased use of these platforms has raised growing concerns in the academic literature about their potential negative impact, particularly in relation to increased feelings of social isolation and the emergence of behaviors associated with digital selfishness or egocentrism (Andreassen, C., et. Al., 2017).

It is important to emphasize that the relationship between social media use and isolation or selfishness is not necessarily causal, but may be interactive. Individuals who experience isolation or a tendency toward selfishness may be more likely to use these platforms intensively. This requires a deeper analysis that takes into account personality traits and the cultural and social context (Spiliotopoulos, T., and Oakley, I., 2021).

The literature suggests a complex interactive relationship between social isolation and selfishness in the context of social media. While isolation may lead to intensive use of platforms in search of interaction, such use may also lead to self-centered patterns that further increase isolation (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). Digital platforms also encourage social comparison and magnify the cognitive gaps between one's self-image and that of others, generating feelings of inadequacy and isolation on the one hand, or self-aggrandizement on the other, as a psychological reaction.

3. Purpose of the Study

The research aims to measure the relationship between exposure and extensive use of social networking sites in a sample of Minia University students and their level of social isolation and selfishness. And uncover the predictive relationship between social media use, social isolation, and selfishness among young people. And Monitoring the rate of use of social networking sites, the most prominent sites followed by the respondents, and their motives for following them.

4. Methodology

The present study is a descriptive-predictive study concerned with observing, interpreting and analyzing data, and describing it quantitatively to obtain the research findings. In the present study, the researcher uses information survey and the comparative survey method to achieve the research objectives.

Based on the literature and previous research, the current study sought to examine the relationship between social media use and both social isolation and selfishness among young people, focusing on predicting these variables through usage intensity and examining gender differences in this context. Based on this, the hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

4.1 Research Hypotheses

H.1: There is a statistically significant direct correlation between young youth's level of social media use and their feelings of social isolation and selfishness

H.2: The degree of youth's use of social media sites contributes to predicting their high levels of social isolation.

H.3: The degree of youth's use of social media sites contributes to predicting their high level of selfishness.

H.4: There are statistically significant differences between males and females in their level of social media use, in favor of males.

H.5: There are statistically significant differences between males and females in the social isolation and selfishness scale, in favor of males.

4.2 Research Instruments

The researcher used the following instruments: 1) a questionnaire consisting of questions that aimed at measuring the rate of exposure to social networking sites, the most popular site; 2) the Social Isolation Scale, that consists of two dimensions: psychological alienation and introversion; and 3) the Selfishness Scale that consists of three dimensions (exaggerated self-love, possessiveness, and tendency to isolate).

Two primary psychometric instruments were used in the present study:

Social Isolation Scale (21 items): The scale was constructed/adapted to measure perceptions and experiences of social isolation in the youth sample. Items were selected based on relevant literature and previous scales of perceived social isolation and loneliness (Alsadoun, D.A., et al. 2023), (Social Isolation Scale, 2021), (Pradhan, S., & Liu, Y. 2025), and were reviewed by subject-matter experts for content validity and cultural appropriateness.

Selfishness Scale (23 items) :The scale was developed/adapted to capture self-centered attitudes and behaviors associated with selfishness in online and offline contexts. Items were derived from theoretical constructs reported in the literature (Kashirskaya, I.K. 2023), (Yang, X., Mei, S., Wu, L. et al. 2025) and refined through expert review.

Content validity

Both instruments were reviewed by a panel of experts in media studies and psychology to ensure clarity, relevance, and cultural suitability. Minor wording adjustments were made based on expert feedback.

Scoring instructions (3-point Likert scale)

Each item is answered on a 3-point Likert scale:

1 = Disagree, 2 = Neutral, 3 = Agree.

For each participant, an item score is the numeric response (1–3).

The scale total score is computed by summing the item scores for that scale.

The scale mean can be reported by dividing the total score by the number of items; higher values indicate higher levels of the measured construct (greater perceived isolation / greater selfishness).

4.3 Validity and Reliability of Research Tools

First: The internal consistency validity: To ensure the validity of the research instruments, the researchers calculated their internal consistency using Pearson's correlation coefficient. The internal consistency of the social isolation scale ranged between (0.54: 0.81), while the internal consistency of the selfishness scale ranged between (0.61: 0.78), all of which have

significant correlation values at the level of 0.01, which confirms that the tools have the appropriate validity.

Secondly: Reliability: To check the instruments' reliability, the researchers used Cronbach's alpha coefficient, Cronbach's alpha was chosen as the measure of internal consistency because it is the standard, widely accepted coefficient for multi-item scales and quantifies the degree to which items measure a single latent construct. The value of the reliability coefficient was about (0.922) for the social isolation scale, whereas the reliability coefficient of the selfishness scale was about (0.887). Both values reflect high reliability of the research tools.

4.4 Research Sample

This study relied on a standardized questionnaire administered to a random sample of 600 undergraduate students at Minia University in the Arab Republic of Egypt. The sample was gender balanced (300 males, 300 females). The sample included students from various faculties, including the Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education, and Faculty of Science, providing a suitable degree of diversity in academic specializations and backgrounds.

In terms of age group, the sample ranged between 18 and 24 years, with the largest percentage (approximately 72%) being in the 19-21 age group, the most common age group among undergraduate students. In terms of academic level, the sample was distributed as follows: 28% were first-year students, 25% were second-year students, 24% were third-year students, and 23% were fourth-year students, thus ensuring representation across all academic levels.

Regarding demographic characteristics, approximately 61% of students reported living in urban areas, compared to 39% living in rural areas, reflecting the geographic distribution of the university's student population. The vast majority of the sample (95%) were unmarried, while the percentage of married individuals was 5%, a factor that may have influenced their social interaction patterns.

A simple random sampling method was used to ensure equal opportunities for participation for all members of the research community, reducing the possibility of bias and increasing the sample's representativeness of the student population at Minia University. This diversity in the sample's demographic characteristics also provides a suitable basis for studying differences in social media use, feelings of social isolation, and selfishness according to gender, educational level, and sociocultural background.

After collecting the sample, the "Spss-V.25" program was used, the following statistical parameters were used: internal consistency validity, Cronbach's alpha coefficient to calculate reliability, Frequencies and percentages, Mean, Standard deviation, Ranking, Pearson correlation coefficient, regression analysis, and T-test.

5. Results

This section provides a detailed presentation of the quantitative results obtained through statistical processing, both at the level of means and standard deviations of the study's scales, and at the level of the statistical tests applied to verify the validity of the hypotheses. The results will be presented in the form of tables, followed by an interpretive analysis linking these results to the contents of the theoretical framework and previous studies.

Table (1). Having an account on one of the social media networks

Response options	The sample	
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	600	100%
No	0	0%
Total	600	100%

The previous table indicated that all participants had an account on social media sites.

Table (2). The rate of subjects' use of social media sites

Response options	The sample	
	Frequency	Percentage
Always	460	76.7%
Sometimes	128	21.3%
Rarely	12	2%
Total	600	100%

Table (3). The subjects' use of their real names in their personal accounts

Response options	The sample	
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	480	80%
Rarely	120	20%
Total	600	100%

Table (4). The most popular social networking site for participants

Sites	The sample	
	Frequency	Percentage
Face book	414	68.6%
Twitter	148	24.7%
Instagram	148	24.7%
WhatsApp	372	62%

*The participant can select more than one alternative   n=600

Table (5). The purpose(s) of using Social networking sites

Goals	The sample	
	Frequency	Percentage
Social	428	71.3%
Commercial	120	20%
Cultural	260	43.3%
Functional	164	%21.3
Recreational	420	70%

*The participant can select more than one alternative n=600

Table (6). The negative effect of social networking sites on the individual's social relationships with others

Response options	The sample	
	Frequency	Percentage
Always	4	0.7%
Sometimes	448	74.7%
Rarely	148	24.6%
Total	600	100%

Table (7). The positive effect of social networking sites on individual's relationships with others

Response options	The sample	
	Frequency	Percentage
Always	148	26%
Sometimes	440	73.3%
Rarely	4	0.7%
Total	600	100%

Table (8). How participants prefer to spend their leisure time

Response options	The sample	
	Frequency	Percentage
Socializing with people and friends	448	37.3%
Spending time on the internet	528	44%
Balance between socializing and the internet	544	45.3%

*The participant can select more than one alternative   n=600

Table (9). The effect of social media sites on the participant's relationship with reality

The effect	The sample	
	Frequency	Percentage
Positive effect	208	34.7%
Negative effect	248	41.3%
No effect	144	24%
Total	600	100%

Table (10). The disadvantages of social networking sites from the participants' perspective

Disadvantages	The sample	
	Frequency	Percentage
Wasting time	384	64%
Negative effects on health	192	32%
Affecting the person's thoughts	252	42%
Wasting money	196	32.7%
Social isolation	404	67.3%
Not visiting my friends and neighbors	160	26.7%

*The subject can select more than one alternative n=600

Table (11). Using social media sites scale

Items	Total sample		
	Mean	S.D	Order
1) How many times did you stay connected to the internet longer than the time you devoted?	2.14	.71	3
2) How many times did you neglect your homework to spend more time on the internet?	2.11	.69	4
3) How many times did you prefer spending time on the internet than with your family?	2.08	.80	7
4) Do you make new relations through internet?	1.86	.76	20
5) How many times do they complain about the period you spend on the internet?	2.06	.76	9
6) How many times do you check social networking sites before anything you need to do?	2.02	.78	12
7) How many times are your competence and production at work reduced by social media?	2.07	.77	8
8) If someone asks you about what you do on the internet, how often do you feel in a defensive or cautious position?	2.03	.77	11
9) You feel that your life without internet will be boring, empty and gloomy.	2.01	.82	13
10) Do social networking sites result in one's dissociation from his/her family and friends?	2.00	.80	15
11) I prefer interacting with virtual reality than spending time with others.	1.99	.82	16
12) In your opinion, do you think the recent widespread of social media sites is due to feelings of social isolation?	2.05	.79	10
13) Social networking sites affect the individual's relationship with the surrounding community.	2.18	.74	1
14) Social media sites play a role in reducing the individual's relationships with others.	1.91	.76	17
15) Social networking sites reduce the individual's news and information sources as they depend only on social media.	2.00	.73	14
16) Family has an important role in monitoring their children's use of social networking site.	2.09	.80	5
17) Can you live without social media sites?	1.90	.81	18
18) I prefer talking with others through social media.	2.18	.79	2
19) I have a world of friends and relations over social networking sites	2.08	.76	6
20) Social media sites affect the level of my relations and communications with others.	1.90	.80	18
Total	2.03	0.77	

The aforementioned table shows the following: means of using social networking site scale ranged between (2.18: 1.86). Item 13, (Social networking sites affect the individual's relationship with the surrounding community) came in the first place. Additionally, 70% of the studied sample individuals research sample responded that they left their works for staying on the internet, 67% stated that the first thing they do is checking their page on social media. However, item 4 (Do you make new relationships over the internet) came in the last place.

Table (12). The Mean and standard deviation of social isolation scale

Dimension	Total sample		
	Mean	S.D	Ranking
Dimension 1: Psychological alienation	1.97	.71	1
Dimension 2: Introversion	1.90	.69	2
Total	1.93	0.70	

It is clear from the table that the mean total score of the social isolation scale was 1.93, which reflects a moderate degree of social isolation among the research sample. The dimension of psychological isolation came first, then introversion.

These findings are consistent with the Anderson's study (2001) which found that spending long periods of time on the internet became an alternative to social activities leading to the reduction of social engagement.

Table (13). Mean and standard deviation of Selfishness scale

Dimensions	Total sample		
	Mean	S.D	Order
Dimension 1: Exaggerated self-love	2.11	0.98	2
Dimension 2: Possessiveness	2.06	0.91	3
Dimension 3: Tendency to isolate	2.13	1.01	1
Total	2.1	0.70	

Table 13 outlines the means of the Selfishness Scale and its dimensions. The mean total score of the selfishness scale was 2.1, which reflects a moderate sense of selfishness among the research sample. The dimension of the tendency to isolate came first, followed by exaggerated self-love, and finally possessiveness.

analysis. Previous literature has shown that social isolation and selfishness are multidimensional constructs rather than unidimensional phenomena. For example and emphasized that social isolation encompasses both psychological alienation and behavioral withdrawal. Similarly, research by highlighted that selfishness can be expressed in different forms, including excessive self-love, possessiveness, and socially withdrawing tendencies that prioritize individual interests.

The analysis of Previous literature revealed a two-dimensional structure for social isolation and a three-dimensional structure for selfishness:

- **Social Isolation**

    1. Psychological Alienation: reflects feelings of detachment, emotional estrangement, and the absence of supportive social ties.

    2. Introversion: refers to a behavioral tendency toward withdrawal, preference for solitude, and avoidance of broader social interactions.

- **Selfishness**

    1. Exaggerated Self-Love: indicates an inflated self-focus and prioritization of personal interests above others.

    2. Possessiveness: reflects a controlling and ownership-oriented attitude, with reluctance to share resources or opportunities.

    3. Tendency to Isolate: describes withdrawing from social participation as a means of reinforcing self-centered behaviors.

    These dimensions are closely related to the research objectives. Social isolation, captured through psychological alienation and introversion, helps explain how the use of social media may foster detachment rather than integration. Meanwhile, selfishness dimensions illustrate how excessive reliance on these platforms can nurture self-centered values—such as exaggerated self-love, possessiveness, and isolation—that directly align with the study's hypotheses about the relationship between social media use, social

Testing the Research Hypotheses:

- **H.1: There is a statistically significant correlation between the level of social media use and the feeling of social isolation and selfishness in the research sample.**

Table (14). Correlation coefficients between the rate of using social networking sites and social isolation and selfishness in the research sample (n= 600)

Variables	use of Social Media sites		
	Correlation value	Sig	Type of Sig
social isolation	0.48**	0.01	statistically significant
selfishness	0.39**	0.01	statistically significant

** Statistically significant at p-level (0.01)

As shown in the previous table:

    • There is a statistically significant direct correlation between the rate of using social networking sites and the feeling of social isolation and selfishness in the research sample.

Thus, the first hypothesis is supported.

This finding is consistent with Anderson's study (2001) showing that using the internet for a long time became an alternative to social activities leading to lowering social interaction and increasing the feeling of loneliness and depression.

- **H.2: The level of youth's use of social media sites contributes to predicting their level of social isolation.**

Table (15). Binary regression analysis of the independent variables (degree of youth's use of Social Media sites), and the dependent variable: (level of social isolation) (n = 600)

independent variable	dependent variable	constant value	R	R2	Contribution percentage	B	Beta	(F) Value	(T) Value
degree of youth's use of Social Media sites	level of social isolation	1.753	0.755	0.570	57%	0.227	.755	**462.11	**21.49

** Statistically significant at p-level (0.01)

Table 15 shows that the independent variable (degree of youth's use of Social Media sites) contributed 57% to the variance of the dependent variable (level of social isolation), as the multiple correlation coefficient (R) value between the two variables was (0.755) and the value of covariance (R2) was (0.570). Both the values of the T-test and the f-test were statistically significant at p-level (0.01). Therefore, it is possible to predict the level of social isolation among young people, the study sample, through the intensive use of social media, using the following regression equation:

The dependent variable = the value of the constant + (the value of B of the dependent variable X the independent variable), which means; The level of social isolation = 1.75 + (0.227 x social media use score).

This indicates that the level of social isolation among young people can be predicted by the heavy use of social networking sites. Hence, it can be noted that the intense use will lead to an increase in the feeling of social isolation in the future. Thus, the second hypothesis is supported.

- **H.3: The degree of youth's use of social media sites contributes to predicting their level of selfishness.**

Table (16). Binary regression analysis of the independent variable (degree of youth's use of Social Media sites), and the dependent variable (level of selfishness) (n = 600)

independent variable	dependent variable	constant value	R	R2	Contribution percentage	B	Beta	(F) Value	(T) Value
degree of youth's use of Social Media sites	selfishness	4.14	0.758	0.575	57.5%	0.249	.758	**471.54	**21.71

** Statistically significant at p-level (0.01)

As shown in the previous table the independent variable (degree of youth's use of Social Media sites) contributed 57.5% to the variance of the dependent variable (level of selfishness), as the multiple correlation coefficient (R) between the two variables was (0.758) and the value of the covariance (R2) was (0.575). Both the values of the T-test and f-test were statistically significant at p-level (0.01). Therefore, it is possible to predict the level of selfishness in the study sample, through the intensive use of social media, using the following regression equation:

The dependent variable = the value of the constant + (the value of B of the dependent variable X the independent variable), which means; The level of selfishness = 4.14 + (0.249 x social media use score).

This indicates that the level of selfishness among young people can be predicted by the heavy use of social networking sites. Therefore, it can be noted that the intense use will lead to an increase in the feeling of selfishness in the future.

- **H.4: There are statistically significant gender differences between the respondents in the level of using social media sites.**

Table (17). Gender differences in using social media sites (n= 600)

Variables	Male (n=300)		Female (n=300)		t value	Significance type
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation		
Using sites of social media	2.81	0.41	2.68	0.53	**2.43	Statistically significant in favor of males

** Statistically significant at p-level (0.01)

To check this hypothesis, arithmetic means, standard deviations, (t)-value and the significance level of motives of social media use in the study sample were calculated. Table (17) shows these means, standard deviations, (t) value and significance level. As shown in the previous table; there are statistically significant differences between males and females in the level of using social media sites **in favor of males**. It is also shown that (t) values of the total score and the sub dimensions score have significant differences between male and female students in motives of using social media networks. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is supported.

- ▪ **H.5: There are statistically significant gender differences between the respondents in social isolation and selfishness scales.**

Table (18). Gender differences in the social isolation and selfishness scores (n= 600)

Variables	Male (n=300)		Female (n=300)		t value	Significance type
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation		
social isolation	39.95	5.6	36.51	5.7	**5.24	Statistically significant in favor of males
selfishness	42.13	4.22	40.02	5.17	**3.35	

** Statistically significant at p-level (0.01)

As shown in the previous table, there are statistically significant differences between male and female students in the mean scores of the social isolation and selfishness scales in favor of males.

6. Discussion

The present study found a positive correlation between the intensive use of social media and the levels of social isolation and selfishness among university students. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Griffiths, M., 2017), (Irani, T. et al., 2014), which showed that excessive use of social networks leads to reduced interaction in the real-world and heightened feelings of isolation.

The study highlighted that intensive use of social networks can negatively predict future levels of selfishness and isolation, consistent with the Social Displacement Theory and Andreassen et al. (2017), which assert that increased digital interaction diminishes traditional social bonds. This is also supported by (Shensa., et al. 2016) observation that extensive exposure to social media is associated with higher perceptions of isolation. However, the contribution of this study lies in placing this phenomenon in its Arab context, which has received insufficient attention in previous literature.

Arab youth live under varying pressures, including family expectations, academic competition, and limited traditional channels of expression, making digital spaces more attractive as "alternative spaces" for exercising identity and self-realization. The results indicated that Facebook and WhatsApp were the most widely used platforms, reflecting global patterns while simultaneously expressing local specificities. These platforms enable semi-private forms of interaction, This is what studies have confirmed (Yang, X., et al. 2025) and (Kashirskaya, I.K. 2023), (Alsadoun, D. A., 2023).

The results also reveal the predictive role of social media use in promoting egocentrism in young people, which is consistent with (Andreassen et al. 2017) finding that digital addiction is associated with decreased empathy and increased narcissistic tendencies, where constant exposure to curated images and profiles contributes to fueling competitiveness and self-centeredness, at the expense of cooperative and collective values.

Results confirm the negative role of the heavy use of social networking sites. Over time, social isolation and selfishness leads to a person's preference to distance her/himself from the social environment and the tendency to isolate, which enhances his/her sense of selfishness and possessiveness. The excessive use of social media may isolate the individual from others, leading to preference of oneself and one's choices and rejecting any advice from others. Therefore, the results came to support the hypothesis about the possibility of predicting an increase in the feeling of social isolation and selfishness as a result of the extensive use of social media sites.

Results confirm that there are statistically significant differences between male and female students in the mean scores of the social isolation and selfishness scales in favor of males. Consequently, the increase in the feeling of social isolation and selfishness might be due to students feeling that social networking sites are freedom windows that make them overcome their conflict with their families. Such conflicts make them feel bored, lonely and isolated, having no one to resort to, having feelings of emptiness, being abandoned by friends, having few close others, disagreements with family members and peers, being misunderstood and misperceived, withholding opinions, not sharing their opinions with friends, family, and university professors, making superficial social relations in reality and profound and strong on social media networks. They feel that social media networks provide them with satisfaction and conformity with friends on these networks, as well as achieving social acceptance and desirability in this virtual environment. Hence affective

sharing compensates feelings of rejection, deprivation and neglect in the real world. If students face difficulty achieving positive results that satisfy them and their families, this may reflect on their spirits, consequently increasing negative feelings and loneliness.

A large proportion (67.3%) of the sample reported that social networks negatively affected their real-life relationships. This reflects a growing self-awareness of digital distortion of reality, as supported by several studies (Turkle, 2015; and Shensa et al., 2017).

Regarding the most popular social media sites among participants of this study, Facebook ranked first, followed by WhatsApp, mirroring the global usage patterns. However, this may raise concerns about the psychological impacts of social comparison and excessive connectivity.

The findings reflect aspects that are specific to the Arab socio-cultural context, where digital spaces often serve as an escape from psychological and academic stressors, potentially enhancing digital dependency.

In light of the research findings, it can be argued that young people's relationship with social media is influenced by their cultural and psychological contexts. In Arab environments—such as Egypt and the Gulf, for example—family factors, social traditions, and psychological pressures play a role in deepening young people's reliance on the virtual world as an "alternative" space for expression.

Academic and emotional stress at the university level also makes students more vulnerable to resorting to social media as an escape, which may weaken their social immunity and reinforce individualistic patterns that tend toward selfishness or withdrawal. Therefore, the following recommendations can be made:

- Digital media literacy should be integrated into university curricula to educate students about the balance between reality and virtual reality.
- Psychosocial support programs for university students aimed at enhancing real-life communication and empathy skills should be developed.
- Qualitative and applied research to understand the profound psychological and cultural impact of social media in Arab societies should be encouraged.
- Awareness campaigns about regulating screen time should be launched and realistic alternatives for interaction, such as student activities and discussion forums, should be made available.
- Families and teachers should monitor behavioral changes associated with the intensive use of these media.

7. Conclusion

This study sought to measure the relationship between the use of social networking sites and feelings of social isolation and selfishness. The study found that there is a direct correlation between intensive use of social networking sites and feelings of social isolation and selfishness. It also found that intensive use predicts an increase in feelings of isolation and selfishness. More research is recommended about this topic. It is also necessary to establish the unit of psychological and academic counseling in universities to guide and direct students for the optimal use of social networking sites, to provide continuous assistance to help them reduce the level of loneliness and improve their communication skills, and help them cope with academic and emotional crises.

Moreover, the role of the academic advisor is necessary in informing students about the positive and negative consequences of social media sites. Conducting further studies that highlight the risks of misusing social networking sites, e.g. internet addiction, its symptoms and reasons, methods of treatment and its effect on personality and society.

Authors contributions

Dr. Mohamed Ahmed Khalifa and Dr. Shaimaa Ezzat Basha and Dr. Hossam Fayez were responsible for the study design and revising. Prof. Hossam Fayez was responsible for data collection. Prof. Mohamed Ahmed Khalifa drafted the manuscript, and Prof. Shaimaa Ezzat Basha revised it. All authors read and approved the final manuscript. Dr. Mohamed Ahmed Khalifa, Dr. Hossam Fayez, and Dr. Shaimaa Ezzat Basha contributed equally to this study and share first authorship.

Competing interests

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

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Obtained.

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The Publication Ethics Committee of the Redfame Publishing.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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