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## The New Generation's Use of Social Media and Islamic Values benefits and drawbacks

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### Abstract

This research paper has studied how social media influencing the life of today's youth. How is the new generation contributing to the formation and destruction of morality? Considering the objectives of Islamic Shari'ah how can benefits be obtained from social media and how to avoid its pitfalls such as an internal anxiety, depression and inferiority complex that young people see posting flashy pictures and stories on it. Our young generation begins to feel that they do not meet the standards set by the society, and this feeling hurts their self-esteem.

**keywords:** Social Media, Young Generation, Islamic Contents, Benefits and Drawbacks.

### Introduction

Observing others' seemingly "perfect" lives on social media disrupts the mental peace of today's youth, as it leads to self-comparison based on unrealistic standards. When our young people compare the reality of their lives to the glamorous and deceptive images and stories posted on social media, they become trapped in an internal conflict. This comparison not only damages their self-esteem but also creates psychological pressure that can cause various mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression and feelings of inadequacy. Our young generation starts to feel that they do not meet the societal standards set by others and this feeling wounds their sense of self.

The perilous consequences of social media's pervasive influence on adolescents cannot be overstated, as its far-reaching impact extends beyond the superficial realm, profoundly affecting their emotional and psychological well-being. The fallout of such comparisons is a debilitating sense of mental turmoil and insecurity, which intermittently induces transformative changes in the younger generation's personality, ultimately compromising their overall happiness.

As the world traversed the trajectory of progress, social media and the internet underwent a metamorphosis, ushering in innovations and enhancements that revolutionized the way people interact. The contemporary younger generation, beset by anxiety and mental pressure, increasingly allocated a substantial portion of their daily lives to the internet, seeking solace from their tribulations. The advent of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp, borne out of the internet's evolution, afforded the younger generation an unprecedented opportunity to create a veritable world of their own, replete with novel experiences and interactions.

The burgeoning influence of social media has, in effect, created a parallel universe, where the younger generation can curate a virtual persona, often blurring the lines between reality and fantasy. This phenomenon has far-reaching implications, warranting a nuanced examination of the intricate relationship between social media, mental health, and the emotional well-being of adolescents. The growing significance of social media and the internet has brought about profound changes in the economic priorities and habits of families. Nowadays, it is widely perceived that individuals require modern mobile phones, iPhones, iPads, and high-speed computers to fully reap the benefits of the internet, which were once exclusive to a specific elite. This escalating digital necessity has economically enticed even individuals from lower and middle-class backgrounds to regard a portion of their lives as incomplete without these devices and packages. The most significant drawback of this phenomenon is that it has further accentuated economic disparities at the societal level. What was once a luxury, owning a mobile phone or similar devices, has now become a norm, with multiple personal devices present in every household. On one hand, this has led to an increase in individuals' personal necessities, while on the other hand, it has also necessitated additional expenditures for internet connections and packages.

In Pakistan, approximately 60 million individuals utilize the internet, indicating that the trend of digital convenience has permeated extensively. This economic reality underscores that, although essential necessities like food and basic commodities may be scarce, internet packages have become an indispensable aspect of modern life. This phenomenon highlights that, in today's society, digital connectivity has established a new standard, not only socially but also economically, relegating traditional necessities to relative insignificance. The utilization of technology has not only become an indispensable part of human life with the passage of time but has also brought about revolutionary changes in various sectors, including education, healthcare, commerce and entertainment. However, while technology facilitates ease for humans, its adverse effects are numerous, manifesting intermittently on social and personal levels. The increasing presence of technology has confronted humans with a new reality, characterized by diminished personal relationships, mental stress and physical health issues. The most pronounced impact has been on social relationships, where individuals establish connections on digital platforms rather than engaging in face-to-face conversations, resulting in increased loneliness, isolation and emotional burdens.

Moreover, excessive technology use is having detrimental effects on the physical and mental development of children and adolescents, as evident in the anxiety and mental distress caused by the rampant use of online games and social media. Furthermore, the escalating impact of technology has raised concerns about human freedoms, as the accumulation of data, privacy issues and increasing online surveillance pose new challenges to individuals' personal lives. Thus, while technology offers numerous benefits, its negative aspects are also intensifying with each passing day and these cannot be ignored. While humanity has applauded the conveniences, comfort and ease of modern life, a darker side has also emerged, profoundly impacting human values and moral conscience. The rapid evolution of technology, particularly social media, has yielded numerous benefits for humanity; however, it has also paved the way for evils and moral decay. The most

pressing issue that has emerged in the presence of social media is the decline of human values and the degeneration of traditions. This platform has created an environment where people brazenly violate moral boundaries, effortlessly disrespecting others without any remorse or sensitivity. Distorting individuals' personalities, leveling unsubstantiated accusations against opponents and manipulating facts have become commonplace on social media. Furthermore, the erosion of self-respect, the proliferation of hateful and misleading content and the establishment of superficial relationships under the guise of “friendship” on social media are causes of growing concern, with profound and complex impacts on society.

This situation is indicative of a society where the lack of moral education and training has resulted in a dearth of awareness among the younger generation and youth. The solution to this problem does not lie in merely imposing restrictions on the use of technology or social media. Instead, it is essential to raise awareness about the positive and negative aspects of social media, thereby elevating individuals to a level of consciousness. Parents, teachers and responsible individuals have a duty to inform youth about the dangers of social media and highlight the importance of its proper use. This will enable them to safeguard their moral boundaries and human values in an unbridled digital world. Despite the growing popularity and increased use of social media, the lack of proper and timely awareness about its implications has plunged youth into a severe crisis. Due to this unawareness, the younger generation is inadvertently compromising its social, moral and religious traditions and values, as a significant portion of the content disseminated on social media transcends moral boundaries, directly impacting an individual's personality and social relationships. Although the use of social media has become a necessity in the current era and its use is a reality that cannot be denied, its correct use is only possible within the framework of Islamic values, traditions, thoughts and ideologies. It is essential to inform the younger generation about the benefits and negative effects of social media so that they can shape their activities according to religious teachings and moral principles. If social media is used in accordance with Islamic teachings, it can not only be a means of worldly success but also a cause of spiritual growth and religious development. On the contrary, if it is used without any regulations, it will not only affect the individual's moral condition but also have negative effects at the social level, which can be detrimental on a collective level.

Therefore, it is necessary to associate social media use with an educational, constructive and moral approach so that youth can benefit from it and achieve success in both this world and the hereafter. We will discuss the effects of social media on our social and moral lives and the motivations that lead us to share positive and negative content, keeping in view the modern requirements. Creating a social media account. It is impossible to deny the importance and usefulness of social media, as it has become a powerful tool for rapidly transferring information, ideas, and cultures worldwide. Through this medium, individuals possess the capability to disseminate their thoughts and ideologies swiftly. It can also serve as a vital platform for promoting goodness, knowledge and progress.

If someone creates a social media account to provide information based on Islamic values, invite people to goodness, or utilize it to promote contemporary education and knowledge, then it is not only a virtuous act but can also prove beneficial for societal development and welfare.

However, social media also has a darker side, where it is used to promote evil, tempt people into sin, or spread indecency. Such actions not only harm an individual's moral and spiritual well-being but also have negative consequences on a societal level. The Quran severely condemns such actions and warns of punishment for those who engage in them. Allah has guided us to use our words, hands and other means to promote goodness and the use of social media platforms should also adhere to these principles. If social media is used for malicious purposes, it will not only affect

the spiritual and moral well-being of the person using it but also have negative impacts on the overall moral health of society. Therefore, it is essential to use social media with the right intention, purpose and in accordance with Islamic teachings, so that it can be a means of spiritual and worldly benefits and help prevent evil. However, if the intention is to tempt people into sin, spread evil, or promote indecency through social media, then the Quran has severe warnings regarding this:

1 إِنْ نَالِ الَّذِينَ يَحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ وَهُمْ لَا يُعْلَمُونَ.

“Indeed, those who delight in spreading scandalous rumors about the believers will face a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah knows, while you do not know.” Similarly, spreading and publicizing obscene speech is considered a following of Satan's footsteps. Allah commands:

2 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ  
 “O you who believe, do not follow the footsteps of Satan. And whoever follows the footsteps of Satan- indeed, he enjoins immorality and wrongdoing.”

This verse also describes spreading immorality and indecency as following in the footsteps of Satan. In his commentary, Imam Tabari explained:

3 القول يقول تعالى ذكره للمؤمنين به: يا أيها الذين صدقوا الله ورسوله، لا تسلكوا سبيل الشيطان وطرقه، ولا تقتفوا آثاره، بإساعتكم الفاحشة في الذين آمنوا وإذ اعتكموها فيهم وروايتكم ذلك عن جاء به، فإن الشيطان يأمر بالفحشاء، وهي الزنا، والمنكر من

“Allah, the Exalted, says to the believers: O you who believe in Allah and His Messenger, do not follow the path of Satan and his ways. Do not tread in his footsteps by spreading scandalous rumors about those who believe and by adopting and narrating such rumors from those who bring them. Indeed, Satan commands immorality, which includes adultery and sinful speech.”

Creating Fake Accounts:

Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of honesty, truthfulness and integrity. The Quran and Hadith consider lying a moral sin and a sign of hypocrisy. In Islam, speaking the truth plays a vital role as it reflects a person's integrity and the strength of their faith. Lying or deceiving others not only harms one's spirituality but also spreads distrust and chaos in society. In today's digital age, a growing trend on social media involves people using fake names and providing false information to conceal their identities. This attempt to deceive others is not only morally wrong but also contradicts Islamic teachings. Creating fake social media accounts is equivalent to lying and deceiving, which Islam considers detestable and blameworthy.

The purpose of creating fake accounts on social media is often to mislead people, conceal one's true identity or spread false information. From an Islamic perspective, this action is a grave sin. Islam views lying and deception as harmful to individual integrity and societal harmony. Therefore, maintaining a truthful online presence and interacting with others honestly aligns with Islamic principles and fosters a safer and more trustworthy environment.

A Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) states:

4 عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ مِنْ شَرِّ النَّاسِ ذَا الْوَجْهِينَ الَّذِي يَأْتِي هُوَ لَاءِ بَوَّجِهِ وَهُوَ لَاءِ بَوَّجِهِ -

Narrated by Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (Peace Be Upon Him) said:

“Among the worst of people is the one with two faces, who comes to some people with one face and to others with another face.” Accepting Friend Requests:

In today's era, the standard for friendship is not only a reflection of changes in our social attitudes but also diminishing the importance of an individual's innate values and moral principles. Our ancestors and elders had a tradition of selecting friends based solely on the individual's virtues, integrity, piety and fear of God. Accordingly, through friendship, an individual could improve their moral and spiritual upbringing and bring positive changes to their life. In their view, the true standard for friendship was based on the individual's spiritual character and social reputation, which enabled them to establish relationships with others based on moral principles. However, in today's era, particularly in the age of social media, the standards for friendship have undergone a significant transformation. We now establish relationships with others, often disregarding their personal qualities or moral integrity and instead, prioritize their social media presence, number of followers and social status. Rather than emphasizing an individual's virtues, piety and moral character, we focus on their online popularity, number of friends or the likes and comments on their posts and pictures.

This shift is not only a consequence of social media's influence but also a broader societal reality, where we have begun to prioritize superficial and shallow standards in our lives. As a result, the concept of genuine friendships has been redefined. This new standard often inclines individuals to deceive, lie or establish shallow relationships with one another, diminishing the importance of true spirituality and moral connections. The impact of this transformation is not limited to an individual's moral character; it also affects the nature of relationships on a societal level. The outcome is often manifested in feelings of loneliness, mistrust, and social fissures. The Spread of Unverified Information:

Allah, the Almighty, commands:

5 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَّاهُ يَنْوٓأٓ أَن ۖ تَصۜبُوا قَوْلًا بِهِ لَتُنۜصِرُنَّ خَوۜفًا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمۜوٓاۙ - نَدِيمِينَ -

“O you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance and afterwards you become regretful over what you have done.” A blessed Hadith states:

6 - قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ كَذِبًا أَنْ يَخۜبِرَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ

“The Messenger of Allah (Peace Be Upon Him) said, "It is enough for a man to be considered a liar that he narrates everything he hears.”

Just as everything has two sides: good and bad, social media also has two sides. It now depends on the users whether they utilize this remarkable innovation positively or negatively.

The Negative Effects of Social Media on Youths:

Social media's adverse effects are also impacting the lives of young people. Here, we provide a brief overview: Wasting of Time:

Time is the most valuable asset of human life, as it forms the foundation of life itself. Wasting time is, in essence, squandering life's precious moments without purpose. What's even more detrimental is when someone wastes their time on social media, as they not only squander their life's valuable portion but also spend financial resources in the process. This is a classic example of double devastation. Individuals who use social media without moderation and wisdom become enslaved by it. They assume they control it, but in reality, they are trapped by social media. Their awareness, time and energies become so consumed that they become oblivious to their life's genuine

objectives. This behavior not only hinders individual progress but also collectively forms a perilous trend. The Virtual Space:

Social media is referred to as "faza-ye majazi" in Persian, which reflects the reality that it has no direct connection to the real world. It is an artificial realm where relationships, emotions and characters become mere pretenses. Individuals who haven't communicated with their real siblings for years greet hundreds of people on Facebook daily. Those lacking like-minded friends in real life create thousands of virtual friendships to console themselves. This platform has become a showcase for fabricated personalities rather than genuine character. Parents' rights and service are neglected in real life, yet posts about obeying parents are shared. A social activist's murder in Islamabad was debated emotionally for months, claiming it was a martyrdom, only to reveal later that it was a case of personal relationships gone sour. Similarly, a TikTokker with millions of followers had only a handful of attendees at their funeral, highlighting the discrepancy between social media fame and real-life connections. Another TikTokker gained fame by portraying themselves as oppressed, only to be exposed later as having staged the drama. This platform not only distorts personalities and promotes propaganda but also encourages personality cults and self-aggrandizement.

### **Social Media: A Killing Field**

Social media is not just a testing ground for ideas and ideologies; it has also proven to be a lethal killing field for youth, where they surrender themselves to mental and physical dangers while residing in comfortable bedrooms. One significant manifestation of this is the various violent and psychologically hazardous games that have challenged humanity's fundamental principles and consumed innocent lives. For instance, the "Blue Whale Game" was a notorious creation by Philip Budeikin, a 22-year-old Russian psychology student. This game exploited human vulnerabilities in an unusual manner, requiring players to document their self-inflicted physical pain at each stage. Ultimately, to win, players had to take their own lives, an unforgivable tragedy. The devastating consequences of this game have claimed numerous lives worldwide, with only a few players being fortunate enough to be rescued. Similarly, recent examples, such as the violent incidents triggered by the "PUB G" game, have highlighted the depth of societal hazards. In Lahore, a young man, Zain, murdered his mother, sister and brother under the mental distress caused by this game. This incident is not just an individual's story but clear evidence of the psychological devastation caused by such games.

These examples illustrate the reality that social media and internet-based games, which seemingly provide entertainment, have actually taken the form of a silent epidemic. They are not only distorting human values but also pushing our youth towards death. There is a need for us to thoroughly assess these dangers and take concrete steps to save our youth from these destructive trends.

### **Obscene content:**

In today's era, social media has become a platform that undermines moral values, where an abundance of immoral content has severely impacted societal attitudes and individual character. The mobile phone, once merely a means of communication, has transformed into a personal cinema and entertainment hub. This shift is not only a sign of technological advancement but also a complex manifestation of moral crisis and psychological decay.

The notion of strong walls and solitude has been blurred by mobile phones and the internet to the extent that an individual, even when alone in their room, remains connected to others on some level and often unknowingly loses control over their private world. This situation has led youth

and children into a state where they not only disconnect from reality but also get lost in the dark corners of the virtual world, resulting in moral and psychological decline. In such circumstances, the responsibility of parents and guardians doubles. It is essential to keep children away from mobile phones at night, prioritize their educational and moral upbringing, and make them aware of the importance of time. This is not only a need of the time but also a necessary requirement for societal protection. Parents should allocate time for their children, understand their emotions and problems and provide an environment where they can remain safe from the quagmire of social media. It is crucial to acknowledge that there is no immediate or short-term solution to this issue. However, under a long-term strategic approach, nurturing the young generation, promoting moral values and monitoring technological tools is the only way to combat these challenges.

### **Beneficial Consequences:**

Social media's scope extends far beyond being just a communication tool and its true benefits can only be reaped when an individual is equipped with awareness, knowledge and insight. It is not only an effective means of connecting people but has also become a powerful economic, social and political weapon in the modern world. Through social media, new income sources can be generated, including digital marketing, freelancing and content creation industries. It is an unforgettable platform for advertising and ideological influence, where everything from individual messaging to collective consciousness formation is possible. From a political and military perspective, social media has become a fundamental weapon in soft warfare, where it is commonly used to weaken or strengthen governments, change public opinion and influence international politics. In cultural and ideological battles, social media can serve not only as a means of preserving local values but also as an effective defensive weapon in the clash of global cultures. Social media represents a modern front for resistance against oppressors, support for the oppressed and the promotion of higher human values, where mere words, images and videos can spark major social revolutions. All this is possible, provided the user employs it with insight, wisdom and scholarly maturity. Furthermore, social media has numerous positive aspects, which are discussed below:

Engagement with Edifying Social Media Content:

Where social media has negative effects, no sane and insightful person can deny its benefits and positive impacts. Participating in useful, scientific or informative programs on social media is not only permissible but also commendable.

Organizing programs on various topics through social media platforms, which include discussions on contemporary issues, raising public awareness and providing people with better guidance on solving their problems, is entirely acceptable.

### **Global Village:**

Marshall McLuhan, a brilliant mind and Canada's prominent thinker, reflected the changing direction of human civilization in his time, presenting a mirror that still reveals the depths of reality today. Born on July 21, 1911, this prodigy predicted, through his profound intellectual insight that this vast world, once thought to be boundless, would soon shrink into a "Global Village." Witnessing the rapidity of contact and messaging, McLuhan envisioned this future at a time when neither the internet nor video calls were conceived. Today, as we witness his foresight becoming a reality, even great poets like Ghalib might ponder the meaning of "human encounters" in this digital age. McLuhan's intellectual legacy, which ended with his last breath on December 31, 1980, in Toronto, still explains the fundamental principles of the world's social and technological

structure. Thanks to social media, distances have transformed into proximities. The constraints of time and space have vanished, and every means of communication is possible in moments. The pen and paper have given way to the touch of fingers and messages travel from one corner of the globe to another in the blink of an eye. Not only can voices be heard, but human movements and expressions can also be seen with such clarity and immediacy that the slightest gesture or lip movement can be observed by someone miles away in an instant.

If Ghalib were alive today, he might describe video calls as a “complete meeting” or a unique experience. Anonymity has given way to recognition, and distances have been replaced by whispers that have become voices. News of any event in a remote corner of the world spreads globally within moments.

People can not only express their thoughts on the event but also share their emotions and feelings with thousands. Those who were once neglected in their surroundings can now make thousands of friends and companions, whether they have met them or not.

It has become incredibly easy to convey one's feelings to them and receive solace in return. Geographical boundaries have lost their significance, and ideological boundaries can be reinforced. You can find supporters of your ideas in any corner of the world and connect with them intellectually. Moments of joy and sorrow are not only shared but also lived together with people worldwide.

### **Social Media: A pedagogical Nexus:**

One of the paramount benefits of social media is its potential to serve as a pedagogical tool. As aptly noted by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, “Computers will educate future generations.” This truism is evident to every discerning individual, as exemplified by the edifying impact of films, cartoons dramas and games. It is now incumbent upon us to decide the type of content we wish to utilize in educating our children. In contrast to the often morally bereft productions of Hollywood and Bollywood, Turkish historical dramas such as “Diriliş Ertuğrul”, “Kurulus Osman”, “Sultan Saladin”, “Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror” and “Sultan Abdulhamid” offer a more salubrious alternative, being largely devoid of obscenity and frivolity. Similarly, Korean historical dramas like “Jumong” and “The Promise” are noteworthy.

Moreover, various Islamic games designed for children are also available. It is the fundamental responsibility of parents to scrutinize these resources and provide their children with a nurturing environment that fosters positive character development. While it may be impracticable to completely shield children from social media in today's era, it is certainly feasible to safeguard them from inappropriate content and facilitate their access to wholesome, morally enriching and educational materials. To achieve this objective, parents must undertake a concerted effort to exercise vigilance and discretion in monitoring their children's online activities, thereby ensuring a safe and edifying digital experience.

### **Social Media: A Catalyst for Financial Independence and Intellectual Growth**

Businesspeople, residents of large cities and homemakers who are occupied with domestic chores or childcare and thus unable to access quality Islamic education, are now utilizing online classes on reputable platforms to bridge this educational gap. Similarly, numerous individuals are leveraging various social media platforms to earn a commendable livelihood.

In brief, as the revered saying of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) states: “The best of people are those who benefit mankind.”<sup>7</sup>

In light of this hadith, a Muslim strives to make their existence, words, actions and demeanor beneficial to others, rather than detrimental, while adhering to Islamic teachings.



### Eventual Consequences:

Theoretical and principled individuals consciously use social media to promote and defend their beliefs and ideologies. For them, the importance lies not in who wrote the content, but in the truth, accuracy, moral standards and Islamic values it presents. These individuals think beyond affiliations and group biases. They evaluate whether the message is reasonable, moral and socially acceptable. If the content is based on truth and reflects moral excellence, these principled people will play their part in promoting truth and justice, regardless of personal connections. They prioritize Islamic values and justice over organizational or personal loyalties. Their approach reflects that for a principled mind, loyalty to an organization or person is secondary, while establishing truth and justice is the top priority in Islam. The actions of such individuals encourage the younger generation to use social media for promoting Islamic values and truth, rather than spreading immorality, evil and hatred. May Allah grant us the ability to do so. Ameen!

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