

USAGE AND AWARENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN JORDAN**Abdullah Abdel Razzaq Al-Tarawneh*, Dr. Faten AbdelRahim Barham****Basic Science Department, Al-Balqa Applied University****Abstract**

The study aimed to identify the most social media applications used by preschool children and seeks to determine the level of usage and awareness of social media among pre-school children, the sample of the study consisted of (163) from an independent Kindergarten during the second semester of the 2023 -2024 academic year in Jordan, distributed among the age groups (25 children from three-year- old, 62 children from four-year-old and 76 children from five -year- old). Research data collected to assess preschool children's awareness of social media by a picture card with (30 × 30 cm) presenting social media application Facebook, YouTube, Whatsapp, TikTok, and Messenger, logos are prepared. Five kids from each age group who could identify the logos on the cards were interviewed face-to-face. The kids were asked open-ended questions about the purpose of the application. The research data was analyzed using the descriptive analysis technique. According to research, the majority of kids are aware of social media apps. The most popular and widely used app is YouTube, which kids use to view movies and cartoons.

Keywords: Social Media. Preschool Children. Facebook. YouTube. WhatsApp**Abstract**

El estudio tuvo como objetivo identificar las aplicaciones de redes sociales más utilizadas por los niños en edad preescolar y busca determinar el nivel de uso y conocimiento de las redes sociales entre los niños en edad preescolar, la muestra del estudio estuvo compuesta por (163) de un jardín de infantes independiente durante el segundo semestre del año académico 2023 -2024 en Jordania, distribuidos entre los grupos de edad (25 niños de tres años, 62 niños de cuatro años y 76 niños de cinco años). Se prepararon datos de investigación recopilados para evaluar el conocimiento de los niños en edad preescolar sobre las redes sociales mediante una tarjeta con imágenes (30 × 30 cm) que presentan los logotipos de las aplicaciones de redes sociales Facebook, YouTube, Whatsapp, TikTok y Messenger. Se entrevistó cara a cara a cinco niños de cada grupo de edad que podían identificar los logotipos de las tarjetas. A los niños se les hicieron preguntas abiertas sobre el propósito de la aplicación. Los datos de la investigación fueron analizados mediante la técnica de análisis descriptivo. Según la investigación, la mayoría de los niños son.

Keywords: Redes Sociales, Niños en Edad Preescolar, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp

Manuscrito recibido: 03/06/2024

Manuscrito aceptado: 18/06/2024

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Introduction

Communication is a form of social interaction, which is seen as one of the social phenomena in children's lives, which directly affects the child's values, emotions, feelings, and sentiments, and his attitudes and tendencies, and therefore it is considered an essential factor in changing feelings and thinking patterns (Al Shamari & Al Balhan, 2019).

Early childhood is a period in which children reach crucial developmental milestones (Schwarzer et al., 2022). The effect of childhood on children's future lives is now a recognized reality in the world (Sapsaglam, 2018). As childhood, is the beginning of human life, the complexity of childhood stage represented by its becomes as a main foundation for human development at a later age, such as adolescence and adulthood. In addition it requires a lot of stimuli until the development can reach an optimal point (Fadilah, 2018). Children in childhood period begin to learn things around them through experiences experienced as a part of their learning process in life. All aspects and components that affect combination of genetic and environmental factors to be able to provide the best learning experience (Tesa and Irwansyah, 2018).

In accord with the National Association for the Education of young children, the first eight years of children's lives considered as fundamental to their development. The awareness of this development process by parents and teachers pressured into exposing children to digital media during these early years of children's life, which indicates that the exposure and use of digital media will over time (Canadian Pediatric Society, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Social media refers to applications and websites where individuals can share and create information in social context through networks, it also include Interacting with others on social Networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, YouTube and other applications, these Networking sites can give the person an opportunity to pursue on his / her own (Ahmad, Abdullah, & Damit, 2018).

Social media is an online platform for digital communication that lets people and businesses create, share, and engage with material as well as establish connections with others. It now forms a fundamental component of Contemporary society, influencing many facets of our personal and professional lives. (Ikems & Atakpa, 2023).

Because we live in a technological age, social media has become a vital

aspect of our life. Technology is used for a variety of purposes; we utilize it for news following, communication, education, and pleasure. Furthermore, it is affordable, accessible to the majority of the population, and in Every one's hands. These days, every home has a computer, internet, and smartphone. (Kwingwa et al., 2023).

Social media have a prevalent status in lives of children and youth today and are central to how they integrate digital technologies into their everyday life (O'neill, 2023). Media and social networks considered as great resources for children and adults by using the various form of social media services and applications that enable users to share content and interact with others. (Bozzola et al., 2022).

Salihoglu & Cetin (2024) stated that from 3-6 years age, cognitive, emotional, social development can influenced by using social media by children, so it is important to prepare programmes and learning strategies with a need to be careful and systematic to support development aspects of preschool children. From this, view a research conducted by Kwingwa et al. (2023) conclude that the increased use of social media and easier access of preschool children to digital devices need attention because of the relationship between theme and the development aspects of preschool children.

According to Dyer (2018) as internet introduced at a very early childhood period, around the world more than (80%) of our youth and children are spending a lot of time on activities related to internet and social media. Children from birth onwards grow up in an environment that influenced by tow kind of media first one is the traditional media which known as broadcasting media include inefficient use of devices, such as TV or radio, with a content formed externally by an established producer (Chassiakos et al., 2016). The second kind of media is digital media, which focus on social interactive and engagement by users (Kattein et al., 2023).

In our current time, there are indicators of an increase in children's use of digital media, which leads to a growing concern about its impact on their cognitive and social – emotional development (Lauricella, Wartella, & Rideout, 2015; Bavelier, Green, & Dye, 2010).

Speaking about the impact of social media on aspects of children's cognitive, social and emotional development, social media can have both effects: on the positive side, it provides them with socialization opportunities by helping children's to connect with others, such as friends and family, and allows for emotional expression. On the negative aspect, it also exposes them to

cyberbullying, and the fear of missing out can lead to negative emotions such as low self-esteem and anxiety (Ikems & Atakpa, 2023; Nahriyah S., 2017). When child is exposed to smart phones, computers, touch screens and television for too long, this will effect different aspects such as delay in motor skill development, behavioral, psychosocial, academic, and physical wellbeing (Kwingwa et al., 2023). Other problems related to social media awareness and usage by children include sleep deprivation and internet addiction (Undiyaundeye, 2014).

It is crucial to emphasize that delay in language, cognitive development, emotional regulation, social delays, aggressive and nervous conduct, and sleep Disturbances are harms linked to early childhood excessive screen time. These harms are the result of early and excessive media device use as well as inappropriate exposure to inappropriate information. (Arantes & Morais, 2021)

According to Swist et al. (2015: 5), “the review identified eight domains of social media’s impact on children: physical and mental health; identity and belonging; formal and informal learning; play and recreation; consumer practices; civic and political engagement; risk and safety; and family and intergenerational relationships”.

Social Media bring basic changes to the lives of 21st century children, as they are the most frequent users of emerging digital services (OECD, 2016). Fadilah (2018) point out that the complexity of child development at an early age require a lot of stimuli until the development can reach an optimal point, the journey of human start with infancy phase by learning what around them through interaction with others and experiences of their surrounding environment.

According to a UNICEF (2017) report, children in the United States about (47%) of children aged 0-8 possessed a tablet. This indicates that children started owning their own devices (e.g., first mobile phone) at a young age. In addition, kids can now use personal digital devices like laptops and mobile phones to access the internet (Byrne et al., 2016). Additionally, almost (49%) of kids use their phones, tablets, and other electronic gadgets in their bedrooms without any parental supervision at all. (Livingstone et al., 2017).

Due to all of the above, it appears that there is a need to use technology and social communication applications with children in the kindergarten stage. Studies have indicated that a lot of materials (visual, auditory, or concrete) are applicate and used in preschool period in order to empower learning and provide the opportunity to learn by doing and experiencing (Arikan et al., 2017; Ikems & Atakpa, 2023; Salihoglu & Cetin, 2024).

The Present Study

As preschool children get into social media application, who have not yet developed skills of reading and spelling can interact and use digital media guided by symbols (Kattein et al., 2019). The importance of the present study based on coping with the call trends that focus on the importance of kindergarten and preschool children, and the usage and awareness of social media by them. Moreover, the study aims to point out the most social media used by preschool children's and if they have the right awareness of social media applications.

Due to the lack of specialized studies on the subject of Usage and Awareness of Social Media in Preschool Children, the results of the study may draw the attention of officials, teachers, and parents. About the Positive and negative aspect of using social media by Preschool Children.

The study provides theoretical literature at the Arab world and locally with the subject of Usage and Awareness of Social Media in Preschool Children. Therefore, it may contribute to open the way for other studies in this field and linking it with other variables in the target group of the study.

The present study aimed to: (1) Identify the most social media applications used by preschool children and (2) The study seeks to determine the level of usage and awareness of social media among pre-school children. To be more specific, the current study will examine the Usage and Awareness of Social Media in Preschool Children in terms of the following study questions:

1: What is the level of Usage and Awareness of Social Media applications

according to Preschool Children?

2: What is the purpose of the social media application used from the perspective of children's?

Methods

Participants

The overall study sample consisted of all (163) from an independent Kindergarten during the second semester of the 2023 -2024 academic year in Jordan, distributed among the age groups (25 children from three-year- old, 62 children from four-year- old and 76 children from five -year- old).

Gender distribution of children in the study group is as follows:

- three years old group: girls (n=11 / 44%), boys (n=14 / 56%)
- four years old group: girls (n=32 / 52%), boys (n=30 / 48%)
- five years old group: girls (n=40 / 53%), boys (n=36 / 47%)

Instrument

To achieve the objectives of the study, research data collected to assess preschool children’s awareness of social media by a picture card with (30 × 30 cm) presenting social media application Facebook, YouTube, Whatsapp, TikTok, and Messenger, logos are prepared. Responses of children has recorded in the data Sheet.

Statistical Methods

Descriptive analysis used to suit the questions and objectives of the study. Descriptive analysis stand on its own as research, it identifies socially important phenomena (Loeb et al., 2017). Data entered and an appropriate analysis carried out using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS, 23). Frequencies and percentage used to measure the level of responses of children.

Results

The results of the study presented below by answering the first question of the study: What is the level of Usage and Awareness of Social Media applications according to Preschool Children? To answer this question Frequencies and percentage used, as shown in (Table 1).

As noted from Table (1) that the results related to Social Media Usage and Awareness, by the responses of age 3 years old group, the most known social media applications by this group is as flow: You Tube and Whatsapp (n=20/ %80), Facebook (n=17 / %66), TikTok (n= 8 / % 32) and the lowest Known application is Messenger (n= 6 / %24). As we noted from the results in the table about the ranking of usage of social media applications is as flow: You Tube (n= 19 / %76), WhatsApp (n= 15 / %60), Facebook (n= 9 / %36), TikTok (n= 5 / %20) and the lowest usage application is Messenger (n= 4 / %16). Finally, the level of awareness of social media applications in this group was higher than the usage level (Table 2).

It is clear from Table (2) the results of Social Media Usage and Awareness, by the responses of age 4 years old group, the most known social media applications by this group is as flow: You Tube (n= 48 / %77.4), WhatsApp (n= 41 / % 66.1), TikTok (n=39 / %62.9), Facebook (n=36 / %58.1), and the lowest Known application is Messenger (n= 25 / %40.3). As we noted from the results in the table about the ranking of usage of social media applications is as flow: You Tube and WhatsApp (n= 38 / %61.3), TikTok (n= 27 / %43.5), Messenger (n= 24 / %38.7) and the lowest usage application is Facebook (n= 16 / %25.8). Finally, the level of awareness of social media applications in this group was higher than the usage level (Table 3).

Table (3) shows that the results of Social Media Usage and Awareness, by the responses of age 5 years old group, the most the most usage of social media applications by this group is as flow: YouTube (n=59/ 77.6), WhatsApp (n=41/ 53.9), TikTok (n= 39 /51.3), Messenger (n=35/ 46.1), and the lowest usage application is Facebook (n=17 / 22.4). As noted from the results of the table the most known social media applications by this group is as flow: YouTube

Table 1. Social Media Usage and Awareness (Age 3years old group).

Social Media Application	Used		Didn't Use		Knows		Didn't Know	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Facebook	9	36.0	16	64.0	17	66.0	8	32.0
YouTube	19	76.0	6	24.0	20	80.0	5	20.0
Whatsapp	15	60.0	10	40.0	20	80.0	5	20.0
TikTok	5	20.0	20	80.0	8	32.0	17	68.0
Messenger	4	16.0	21	84.0	6	24.0	19	76.0

Table 2. Social Media Usage and Awareness (Age 4 years old group).

Social Media Application	Used		Didn't Use		Knows		Didn't Know	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Facebook	16	25.8	46	74.2	36	58.1	26	41.9
YouTube	38	61.3	24	38.7	48	77.4	14	22.6
Whatsapp	38	61.3	24	38.7	41	66.1	21	33.9
TikTok	27	43.5	35	56.5	39	62.9	23	37.1
Messenger	24	38.7	38	61.3	25	40.3	37	59.7

Table 3. Social Media Usage and Awareness (Age 5years old group).

Social Media Application	Used		Didn't Use		Knows		Didn't Know	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Facebook	17	22.4	59	77.6	35	46.1	41	53.9
YouTube	59	77.6	17	22.4	64	84.2	12	15.8
Whatsapp	41	53.9	35	46.1	56	73.7	20	26.3
TikTok	39	51.3	37	48.7	52	68.4	24	31.6
Messenger	35	46.1	41	53.9	50	65.7	26	34.3

Table 4. The Social Media Application Used from the Perspective of Children's.

Age 3 Years Old Social Media Awareness and Usage (Expressive Descriptors)	
Social Media Application	The Purpose of Social Media Applications
Facebook	Used for seeing pictures (3.1)
YouTube	Used for watching cartoons (3.3)
Whatsapp	Used for texting or talking to others (3.2)
TikTok	Used for watching video clips (3.1)
Messenger	---
Age 4 Years Old Social Media Awareness and Usage (Expressive Descriptors)	
Social Media Application	The Purpose of Social Media Applications
Facebook	Used for checking texts and pictures (4.2)
YouTube	Used for watching cartoons and video (4.4)
whatsapp	Used for texting and making calls (4.3)
TikTok	Used for watching funny videos (4.3)
Messenger	Used for texting and making calls (4.2)
Age 5 Years Old Social Media Awareness and Usage (Expressive Descriptors)	
Social Media Application	The Purpose of Social Media Applications
Facebook	Used for texting and seeing pictures of others (5.2)
YouTube	Used for watching videos and songs and cartoons (5.5)
whatsapp	Used for chatting and seeing pictures (5.4)
TikTok	Used for watching videos and songs (5.4)
Messenger	Used for texting and making calls (5.3)

(n=64 / 84.2), WhatsApp (n=56 /73.7), TikTok (n= 52 /68.4), Messenger (n=50 /65.7), and the lowest usage application is Facebook (n=35 /46.1). Finally, the level of awareness of social media applications in this group was higher than the usage level.

To respond to the study's second question: From a child's point of view, what is the purpose of the social media application used? Five kids from each age group who could recognize the logos on the cards were interviewed face-to-face and asked about their use of each application. Table (4) displays the answers to the second query (Table 4).

It is clear from Table (4) that preschool children are generally aware of how social media technologies and application are supposed to be used, although we can note that the children of 3 years old are less knowledgeable about the usage of social media application than the other children in 4 and 5 years old. In addition, it can be noted that YouTube; is used for watching cartoons and videos (3.3/4.4/ 5.5). WhatsApp; is used for texting and making call with others (3.2/4.3/5.4). TikTok; is used for watching videos, funny clips and listening to songs (3.1/4.3/5.4). Facebook; is used for texting and seeing pictures (3.1/4.2/5.2) finally, Messenger; is used for texting and making calls (3.0/4.2/5.3).

Discussion

This study examined how preschoolers use and are aware of social media, revealing how they use and are aware of various social media platforms and identifying the most popular ones among them.

According to the studied research findings, YouTube and WhatsApp are the

most popular social media platform among all group of age (3.3/ 4.4/ 5.5) and WhatsApp and TikTok are the most popular platform among children aged five. TikTok, WhatsApp, and YouTube are the three social media platforms that all youngsters (4, 5) use the most frequently.

As for YouTube, this result is similar to Sapsağlam (2018), Al Shamari & Al Balhan (2019), and Al Azee & Abd Alkareem (2022), who emphasizes that a high level of usage and awareness of YouTube platform as a result of their researches. Young children are increasingly using YouTube and YouTube Kids as video-watching platforms in recent years (Ofcom, 2017; Rideout, 2017; Marsh et al., 2015). According to Pedreira et al., (2022) Given the importance of YouTube as a resource for early childhood education, YouTube channels that share educational content share similar traits in that they aim to teach young children topics related to daily life in an engaging way. These traits can also be linked to knowledge that is learned in the early childhood education stage at school. Professionals do most of these projects. They are based on cartoons that depict real-world scenes or the lyrics to the songs. In a survey study conducted by Redesky et al., (2020) which revealed that most videos in YouTube were age appropriate for 0-8 years old.

It is believed that children's increased awareness of YouTube stems from their use of the application to view cartoons, videos and songs online. The result can be explained by the fact that children utilize the YouTube application the most because of its features, which are suitable with the cognitive capacities of preschool-aged children.

The study's findings about WhatsApp's popularity as a social media platform

for all age groups, particularly the 4 and 5 age group, are consistent with studies by Usman & Bukar (2022), Zhou (2021), and Bhuvaneshwair & Kalaivani (2020) that found kids use the app to text, chat, and make calls to people like their parents or friends. Many kids connect with familiar people through digital devices. This happened in multiple methods. Kids to stay in touch with friends, family, and the parents of their friends most frequently used WhatsApp (Krustum & Steensel, 2016).

While the results of the study indicated that the application of TikTok which is one of the most social Media application usage by preschool children. According to Yang et al. (2019), (a) TikTok can create brief videos with a backing song that can explain the current situation based on the content shown in the video; (b) users can create videos on this application for a duration of 15 seconds to three minutes; and (c) users have the option to select and modify a song to fit the image or video created. Using the dislike feature built into the app, users can filter out anything that does not align with their preferences. The TikTok program allows users to customize its content according to their age and physical condition. For early childhood applications in particular, adults must assist children when they open or use the app. (Karimah et al., 2022).

Finally, the results related with the usage and awareness of both Facebook and Messenger as social Media applications, According to Ulusoy and Bostanci's (2014) research, Facebook is the most social media platform that parents and kids use, under the condition of supervision of father or mother. Krustum & Steensel (2016) stated that it appears that young children are an exception rather than the rule when it comes to being active on Facebook. One target child acknowledged having a Facebook account, although she primarily used it for gaming instead of socializing.

This outcome can be explained by the fact that the child has to be more proficient in written language to use Facebook and Messenger than he is in symbolic language when using apps like TikTok and YouTube.

Conclusion

The study's findings have led to the observation that children's awareness and usage of social media apps have grown along with their age, and that children's knowledge of these apps has expanded. This is mostly because children's development levels vary with age, leading to an increase for interaction between children and the items and people in their environment. Kandir and Alpan (2008) claim that the preschool years are the most influential in a child's development because of how quickly development occurs there.

Recommendations

The present study's conclusions allow the following recommendations to be made:

1. Work to Invest the high level of usage and awareness of social media application to increase and develop academic and social harmony through methodological and extracurricular activities.
2. Working to increase the level of preschool teachers in the skills of social media using skills through qualifying and training courses.
3. Work on more studies related to kindergarten children's use of social media applications in terms of positive and negative effects in Jordan.

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