

## **The Pathology of Boy Academies Students' Use of Mobile-based Social Networks in Torbat-e Heydarieh County**

**Ali Akbar Bagheri far**

Teacher and MA student of Educational Research at University of Tehran, Iran  
Bagheryfar@ut.ac.ir

**Keyvan Salehi (Ph.D.)**

Assistant Professor, Faculty Member of Psychology and Education Department,  
University of Tehrann, Iran  
keyvan.salehi@ut.ac.ir

### **Abstract**

*Many evidence and studies show that, besides having numerous advantages, internet also has disadvantages. Lack of adequate familiarity with virtual space can bring about harms for families and their children. The present study aims to present strategies for intelligently guiding and effectively. To do so, there was an attempt to semantically reconstruct students' life experience, perception of the use and probable damages of using mobile-based social networks via an interpretive approach. Doing so, it was also possible to show how participants understand and evaluate this phenomenon. Besides understanding the phenomenon under study from the students' views, attempt was made to present reliable results and enhance their acceptability through holding semi-structured interview with 40 students of boy academies in Torbat-e Heydarieh County and using narrative data obtained. The analysis of results from students' life experience shows that all of these students use mobile-based social networks like Line, Viber, Tango, and WhatsApp. Yet, parents do not have complete and deep knowledge and control over how their children use these networks. As the students believed, believe that the study of virtual networks, respectively of the Students they have a negative effect on warm familial relationships, educational achievement, and religious beliefs.*

**Keywords:** Pathology, Virtual Social Network, Boy Academy, Mobile-based.

## Introduction

Over the past years, the popularity of the social networks have been on the rise, in a way that millions of people around the world join these networks to create their human relationships, type of cooperation, professional affiliations and lots of other social, cultural, political and economic issues in the context of these social networks. Therefore, in terms of functional expansion it can be said that there exists something more than a global information space in virtual social network spaces. Some believe that a "social context" is being built and it requires that we recognize the technology to functionalize the web-based services (Shahabi and Bayat, 1391). Nowadays, the social network websites have turned into a global phenomenon and have created a virtual community with hundreds of millions of users. This virtual space provides the foundation for a friendly environment and interactions (Naghibo Sadat & Ghesabi, 1392). Today, with the development of ICT applications in everyday life, we have witnessed the formation of a new generation of Web-based tools which have provided more facilities for interaction, negotiation, dialogue and generally a two-way communication (Bashir & Afrasyabi, 1391). Social networks consist of generally individualistic and organizational groups that are connected through one or several types of affiliations and in the context of a complicated information society, it represents the image of two converged networks and its growing success and popularity is due to its being social. Social networks are often are web-based networks that include: online services, platforms and sites in which individuals express their interests and opinions and share them with others (Kavoosi and Kazemi). Information revolution in the virtual world has greatly expanded the role of private organizations and companies, social movements and network trade of individuals and this is the non-governmental activists,- in the form of a new online class, with a new discourse and young audiences- have created a new challenge for traditional societies. The sign of this digital era or virtual space post-modern society is the internet. As a result, this network space has directed and shaped the individuals' interactions and discourse interactions. In other words, internet has formed a new identity in the virtual world.

Since communication is the main reason for using social networks and individuals can communicate with diverse people in a short time, this has led to individuals', especially adolescents and young people, excessive use of these networks and has caused people to enjoy virtual spaces more than actual spaces. And this can threaten their mental health. Disorders such as addiction to the internet, depression, social isolation, identity disorders, and lack of self-

confidence are among the widespread disorders of excessive use of the social networks (Barat Dasjerdi & Sayadi, 1391). Internet like other innovative technologies, besides having inevitable and significant impact on human progression, can also have negative consequences. Since the people are unknown in the internet, it has allowed different individuals with different ideologies and attitudes express their thoughts and provoke religious and ideological diversions. Immoral information, images and videos are also easily available to the users (quoted by Khokhoi et al., 1392). Because in our society virtual social networks and satellites are not often used appropriately and this media and communication and information facilities mainly promote materialism and hedonistic and individualistic culture of the west, they bring about harmful consequence of weakening the religious and moral commitments of the adolescents and teenagers (Memar et al., 1391). In today's world, one of main tools of the soft war is virtual social networks which will have significant importance in future wars, therefore the different features and dimensions of this subject should be recognized and maximum advantage should be taken of the its opportunities and control its threats as far as possible (Mahanian & Mojaradi, 1393). One of the negative points of mobile social networks is that individual's personal information are used easily by espionage and security agencies and hackers and most of the users know little about settings which increase the security of the network and their privacy, so they expose their personal information to the public easily. Actually the adolescents, due to their age-related specific characteristics, are one of the most important groups who are most susceptible to these new digital media (Ghasemi et al., 1391). Increased use of cellphones might affect the academic performance, mental wellbeing, comfort and happiness of the users negatively (Lepp, Barkley, karpinski, 2014). There is a significant relationship between joining social networks and the lifestyle of the adolescents; therefore, to the extent that joining social networks that are controlled by the western culture can have devastating effect on adolescents' spirit, joining domestic social networks with value-based orientations can ensure the development of the youth of this country (Bashir & Afrasiabi, 1391).

Due to lack of integrated information regarding the way students use the mobile-based social networks; in this article, it has been tried to reexamine the way male students of vocational schools use mobile-based social networks in Torbat Heydarye city by using a lived experience and qualitative approach. Meanwhile the researcher had close and stable relationship with the students.

## Literature Review

Regarding the literature review, it can be said that due to the novelty of this subject in Iran, not much research has been done on user pathology of mobile-based social networks so far and there exists no reference with the precise title of the present research that have deeply investigated every aspect of the effects and consequences of the user's use of mobile-based social networks and each of these investigations, -based on the target purposes of the writers- has examined only one aspect of this phenomenon. In fact, it might be said that due to the fact that using mobile-based social networks is a novel and emerging phenomenon, theorizing in this regard has been few. However, main research in this regard includes:

The result of Feyzi's study(1384) entitled "leisure style and the use of internet among 12-18 year old students of Tehran" indicated that individuals who use internet excessively, have asserted that their family relations have failed while they have formed more effective and extended friendly relationships (Quoted by Bashir and Afrasyabi).

Dr. Ameli in 1389 by using the qualitative method and deep interview with ten people (7 female and 3 males) did a study on "The reasons why Iranian youths have tendency to Facebook network". All the interviewees were active users at the time of the interview. In this research the main reasons for youth propensity toward Facebook social network is to maintain old relationships and to make new ones (quoted by Amiri and Noori MoradAdbadi, 1391).

Rafat jah & Shakouri (1387) in a research entitled "internet and social identity" investigated the impact of the internet on some aspects of social identity (including religious identity, ethnic identity, Family identity and personal identity) by using the survey method. This study was done in Sanandaj city between two groups of girls, that is, those who use the internet and those who do not use the internet. The results of the study indicated that there is a significant difference between the two aforesaid groups in terms of religious identity, ethnic identity, family identity and personal identity. The religious identity, ethnic identity, Family identity of the first group is weaker than that of the second group. Also the personal identity and the self-concept of the first group were weaker than the second group (quoted by Ghasemi et al., 1391).

Jafarpour (1390) believes that social networks can be divided into two groups of non-virtual social networks and virtual social networks. Non-virtual social networks are networks that work by a collection of connected individuals

and groups in a social context, but the virtual social networks are networks that are Web-Product and refer to those technologies that provide the foundation for participating and using the web content, and sharing information including: text, picture, video, link, file or any other type of data (Quoted by Anoooshe).

Information and communication technology (ICT) has formed the basis for the improvement and the promotion of data collection and analysis capacity. The geographical distribution of these technologies in vast parts of the planet and the reduction of purchasing costs and their use, have led to the "democratization of technology" (NoorMohammadi, Mohammadi, 1392). Generally, in the definition of the virtual social networks it can be said that, they are sites that provide sharing ability for the users by adding facilities such as chat, email, etc. to simple site like searching engines. Social networks are the places for the gathering of hundreds of internet users that interact and exchange information regardless of the border, language, gender and culture differences (quoted by Yazd Khasti et al., 1392).

A group of other researchers believe that having access to internet at home may negatively change the interaction patterns of parents-children (Watt and White, 1999; Lenhart Raine & Lewis, 2001; Mesch, 2003) and leads to intergeneration conflicts and the reduction of family association (quoted by Khosravi, Aizadaay Sahrai, 1390). Emerging harms, including social harms can be defined as encountering any types of massages, especially messages that, Due to lack of prohibition, brings about serious psychological, mental and social damages. The promotion of nudity culture and sex are other disadvantages of social networks and computer games. Parents are better to spend more time with their children. When more time is allocated to children and when there exists a correct relationship between the children and parents, the ground for children's' using social networks and computer games is less provided (Fazol allahi & Maleki Tavana, 1390). The evidence indicates that there is a significant relationship between using cellphones and demographic variables of gender, employment status, boyfriend/ girlfriend, smoking and alcohol consumption (Pour Razavi et al., 2014).

Over the past years, using and joining these social networks required a computer and high-speed internet at home, but nowadays, this is done more easily by using a cellphone. Some of the mobile-based social networks include Line, Viber, What's up, Telegram, etc. and some facilities of these networks are free sharing videos, files, pictures, and sending message. The main reason for the emergence of negative consequences is that people in virtual spaces are not able to know each other enough and correctly. Pathology can be defined as

recognizing the collection of factors and situations that lead to incompatibility of the individual's social and mental activities with social and psychological norms. These networks have led to much harm in different societies, especially ours, damages that mostly threatens our children, teenagers, and youths and even our family foundations. Newly emerging harms can provide the ground for a new type of mental and social damage. To this reason, a plan to recognize, prevent and reduce emerging damages is required and necessary. This research has investigated the way vocational and training school students use mobile-based social networks to examine the impact of these networks on this age group. Due to lack of integrated information on the way students use these networks, it has been tried in this article to investigate the way vocational school students use mobile-based social networks in Torbat Heydarye city. Due to the importance of the issue, this research aims to answer this question that " what are the damages of mobile-based virtual social networks?"

*Table 1: A summary of some of the conducted research on the damages of virtual networks*

<b>consequence</b>	<b>event</b>	<b>characteristics</b>	<b>field</b>	<b>source</b>
Negative impact on academic performance, psychological and mental well-being	Excessive use	Negative consequences age	The role of cellphone in life	Lepp et al., 2014
Personal information being Hacked	Lack of awareness of way of use	Effect on life	Social networks and life style	Bashir & Afrasyabi, 1391
Negative impact on religious, ethnic, family and personal identities	Significant difference between the users and others.	Negative impact on social identity	Internet and social identity	RafatJah & Shakouri, 1387
Has a significant relationship between gender, employment status, boy/ girlfriend, smoking and alcohol consumption	The relation between using the cellphone and demography	Mutual impact	The consequences of using cellphones	PourRazavi et al., 2014
Disregarding it brings about significant disorders I society and its different social, cultural, political and economic dimensions.	Media technology, as one of the most important factors of change	The significant and important effects of communication technology	The relationship between political attitude and trust in national media	Amiri and Noori Morad Abadi, 1392
Promoting nudity culture and sex are other damages of social networks and computer games.	Lack of possibility to encounter any type of message	Emerging damages in the virtual world.	Educational adverse effects of computer games	Fazollahi & Maleki Tavana, 1390

## Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework in the present research is based on the social interpretivism. According to Bazargan (1384), based on the interpretivism viewpoint, fact is conditional to human experience and his interpretations. Through experience, man can make knowledge related to the fact in his mind. The researcher can gain knowledge through his interaction with the research subject. In this viewpoint, recognition is not factual and has different interpretations and dimensions (p. 14). In social interpretivism approach, as the main approach of this study, it is believed that due to the creativity of the human nature, fluidity of social facts and gaining significance in the process of human interpretation and comprehension, a specific method and trend for understanding the facts or making changes in them cannot be suggested (Dnizin and Lincoln; 2011; Neuman, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Glaser, 2001). Given this subject and using the Bazargan's (1384) viewpoint, to do an educational research that can be a solution to deep recognition of educational system element, social interpretivism should be used (p. 64). In this research it has been tried to reconstruct the interpretation of students' understanding of how to use and possible damages of excessive using of mobile based social networks. In other words, this research aims to what understanding they have of this phenomenon and how they comprehend and evaluate it. Given the importance of the subject, this research tries to answer this main question that "what are the damages of the mobile based virtual social networks".

## Methodology Of The Research

A review on the empirical studies in Iran shows lack of comprehensive studies on damages of how to use and possible damages of using mobile-based social networks. This issue indicates the necessity to adopt an exploratory approach to have a deep recognition of the situation, because it's a very sensitive and complicated phenomenon. Based on a qualitative paradigm and by adopting an inductive approach, in the present study, we have tried to explore, understand, interpret and reconsider the possible damages of using and the possible damages of using mobile based social networks. Bazargan (1389) asserts that, qualitative research is used when we want to consider a phenomenon from different perspectives and to reconstruct a detailed picture of the target phenomenon while studying the individuals in their natural settings (p. 30). Therefore, given all aspects and especially the nature of the of the target subject, this study is a qualitative one and has been conducted with Emic approach. The technique of gathering data in this study is a semi-structured interview. The interview started with this question" which social networks of

cellphones do you use? And what are the advantages and disadvantages of these networks?" and then continued with more detailed questions. Acceptance criteria (objectivity) of the data like reliability and validity, which are in quantitative studies, were used to evaluate the data of the study. Acceptance means the acceptability of the data which depends on the collecting actual data (Parvizi et. al., 1383).

To increase the acceptability of data, the following method was used:

- Consistent observation and investigation,
- Allocating enough time to long communication and consistent observation (given the fact that the researcher has academic courses with them during the academic year),
- Integrating the data collection methods (interview, observation, writing),
- Temporal integration (examining at different times and the possibility of data feedback).

According to Salsali and colleagues (1382) consistent involvement and examining, good manners and appropriate connection, accuracy in all the stages of the research, and a certified research method objectifies the data (Quoted by Parvizi & Nikbakht, 1383). In this research these points are taken into account.

### **Research Field, Statistical Population, Sampling Method And Sample Size:**

The research field of this study was the students of vocational and training schools of Torbate Heydarie city that used mobile- based social networks. Moreover, since the research subject is related to the individuals' experience of mobile- based social networks; it was tried to interview with participants that had the experience of using these networks and faced the challenges of these networks.

Mohammadpour (1386) believes that unlike quantitative methods, in qualitative methods the sample size is not determined in advance and depends on the research procedure and developing issues. In qualitative investigations two types of sampling can be used simultaneously. These two types of sampling include Purposive Sampling and theoretical Sampling. Purposive Sampling is used to select the interviewees, and the theoretical Sampling is used to determine the number of the individuals in a research, determining the place of the required data and finding the direction of the research. On one hand, the

sample size in qualitative studies depends on the level of the data saturation, and refers to a stage of qualitative data collection in which answers given to the research questions or the conducted interviews seem enough, because the collected data through the interview are similar and repetitive (quoted Sadeghi Fasai, Isari, 1391). Accordingly, having done a 40 in-depth qualitative interview with the vocational school students, data saturation was achieved. In order to observe the ethical issues, before starting the interview with the participants, they were informed about the research purposes and participated in the research at their own will. They were also ensured that their information will be kept secret. The interview time was variable between 20-45 minutes.

### **Analyzing The Data Of The Research And Findings**

To analyze the data, the Colaizzi seven-step method was used. To this aim, first the researchers tried to read every one word of the materials presented by the interviewees, then with several times investigation and accuracy, important sentences that were directly related to the target phenomenon were extracted and the meaning of each expression was explained. Then the data obtained from the previous stages was classified. Different codes were integrated for the formation of more general categories. Then the obtained results were combined and were reconsidered to gain access to obvious concepts, so that the information might be totally clear and eventually, the final validity of the findings was examined. By using the semi structured interview and narrative data obtained from interviewing 40 students of vocational school of Torbate Heydarie, besides understanding the phenomenon from their perspective, useful data was produced and the acceptability of the data increased. The analysis of the obtained data of this research revealed five main issues from the perspective of the participants regarding the use of mobile-based social networks which can represent their understanding of this phenomenon. These topics include:

#### **4.1. The effect of social networks on the religious beliefs**

The assertions of most of the participants showed that after using the mobile based social networks, this phenomenon has had a negative impact on religious beliefs and practices, even sometimes they do not pray.

Sixteen-year old boy named Ghasem asserts that "it has a strong impact on religious beliefs. I myself am a good example of this, because since I have installed this program on my cellphone I have gone far from religious attitudes. When you enter such spaces, there are lots of girls that ready to make friend with you. There remains no opportunity for studying and praying and you just want to be in those spaces".

#### **4.2. The impact of virtual networks on family relations**

Most of the participants' statements showed that using the mobile based social networks has negative impact on family relations, so that it has led to divorce and separation of the families. It has also negatively affected the family relations and family conversation with each other and has caused the families to get away from each other.

Sixteen-year old student named Hamid says that "Connection to these networks weakens the family relations. One of my friends in Mashhad is so obsessed by these networks that he sometimes does not even see his family.

Farzad, a seventeen-year old boy, says "in our family, my brother, sister and I use these social networks, so that only while having dinner, we are together and sit around the table and talk, at other times, though we sit together, each of us is entertained by his/her own cellphone. Our parents object to us most of the time and ask us to talk to them and discuss our schedules. But unfortunately, we are all busy with our websites and just nod or answer by saying a word to our parents. To put it in a nutshell, though we are sitting close to each other, we are far apart from each other.

#### **4.3. The impact of virtual networks on social adaptability**

The statements of most of the participants indicated that after using the mobile based social networks, this phenomenon has a positive impact on their social adaptability and has made them more socialized. However, others believe that using social networks has negative impact on social relations and social adaptability and leads to their social withdrawal and their impatience.

Amir Hossein, 17 years old, says that "in comparison to the past times, I have got much better. Never was I in a place where older boys and girls than me be together, even if I were in such places, I felt stressed and embarrassed. But now I am really much better than before and talking is much easier".

Amin, 16 years old, says "it allows an individual to become isolated and indifferent towards others and one just likes to exchange information in these networks".

#### **4-4.The impact of virtual networks on academic achievement**

According to most of the participants, after using the mobile based social networks, this phenomenon has negatively affected their studies and their academic performance. Because of the inclination to use such networks, they are not willing enough to study and do their homework; as a result they fail in their studies.

17- year-old Sajad says" Viber and Line networks waste our time and lead to addiction to cellphones and educational failure. Deciding to quit using these networks is very difficult ".

Reza says" it allows us to always have cellphone in our hands and discourages us from studying. Even I bring the cellphone to the school and use it at every opportunity.

Farhad Says" Those who use these networks are addicted to them like my own cousins. They are totally preoccupied with these networks and it is almost impossible to take it away from them".

AmirHossein says" sometimes pornographic images and videos are uploaded on such networks that distract us totally from studying".

#### 4.5. The effect of social networks on moral issue

The statement of most of the participants indicates that using mobile based social networks has negative impact on moral issues; that is, it causes the youth not to observe moral issues and by stimulating the sexual desire of the users, they provide the ground for cultural and moral degeneracy especially in the youth and teenagers.

Seventeen - year-old Ail Reza says" I think the pictures of these networks have negative impact on the moral and spirit of any student".

Hamed says" since we do not have such programs, we are far from these problems, but our friends who have such programs on their cellphones are not successful in terms of family and friends relations and academic performance. They have no academic progress and have failed to pass two main courses in the first semester; his dignity is lowered in his family and among us. He is no longer respected by us because he has failed morally and utters swear words that has learned from the social networks. That's a shame".

**Table 2: The obtained characteristics from the concept of damages of virtual networks**

Category	Sub-category	Characteristics	Confirming sentences
Religious beliefs	Not doing religious rituals, getting far from ethical values.	Too preoccupation with social networks	When you enter such spaces there are lots of girls, some of whom like to be friend with you, you have no opportunity for studying and praying
Family relations	Loosening of family bonds	Family members get far away from each other	Social networks have caused people to get away from each other, promote prostitution and obscenity in the society, and in some cases lead to the separation of couples.
Social adjustment	Avoiding gatherings and being interested in loneliness.	Excessive interest in social networks	It allows people to get isolated and take no heed to others and just like to share files.
Educational achievement	Having no time for studying- great preoccupation	Joining unethical groups	Some pornographic images and videos are uploaded on such networks that distract us totally from studying.

Moral issues	Pornographic pictures and videos	Sexual stimulation of the youth and adolescents	I think that pictures in these networks negatively affect the moral and spirits of any student.
aggression	impatience	Mental confusion	When I used to use such sites , I was aggressive and did not mind about others
Addiction to the internet	excessive use of different networks	Addiction to internet and joining all groups	Networks cause addiction to cellphones and quitting it is really difficult

## Results, Discussion And Conclusion

A reflection on the results obtained from the lived experience of students indicated that the creation of many challenges of students that can threaten seriously their mental and physical wellbeing, religious beliefs, family relationships, academic achievement and their ethical relationships, can be the result of the devastating effect of mobile based social networks. Comparing the results of this study (table 2) with the results of the aforesaid studies done in this regard (table 1) indicates that these findings confirm the findings of the previous study. Given the devastating effect of these networks in threatening the national identity and security, cultural integration and religious beliefs, ethical values of the society, it can be said that a soft war and a cultural invasion are being organized and implemented. In-depth and broad harms from the consequences of social network, computer games, and satellite channels are of great importance. In-depth and accurate results of this study on one hand and the vast extent of devastating effects of these networks can be a serious warning to families and officials. It must be accepted that mobile based social networks, like many other phenomena of information technology era, have opened their way to our lives and the lives of our children. If we want to overlook it and deprive our children from having access to these networks, their greed to gain access to these networks increases. On the other hand, if we leave our children to their own devices, the aforesaid dangers threaten them. Therefore, families and officials of cultural affairs should have appropriate planning for youth and adolescents" in correct use of these social networks.

## Practical Suggestions

Although a qualitative interview with limited numbers of subjects cannot be statistically generalized to many cases, we can reveal the hidden and generally neglected layers of this field. The results of this study have revealed a series of problems and damages of mobile social networks that requires reassessment and smart and rapid restoration by influential associations. In this regard, considering the following solutions and suggestions can be effective in improving the status quo and may prevent the intensification of recognized damages.

1. Given the students' maximum use of mobile social networks, it is suggested to design and develop domestic social networks with the same quality, capacity and attractiveness of the mentioned social networks. And to form academic, educational, cultural and artistic groups in each province at different levels of education by the education department and the students should be encouraged to use and join domestic social network groups.
2. Families should be more vigilant about their children especially when they are online. They should also establish intimate and friendly relationship with their kids at home, encourage them to study their school subject and free reading, visit their relatives, recreational and holy places on vacations and fill their free time with fruitful and pleasant programs so that they may distance themselves from the internet and live in the real world. If we cannot devote our time and energy for our children now, we may pay a lot for their ignorance and deviation.
3. The authorities at Education Department, Young and Sport Ministry, Islamic promotion Institute, and other cultural organizations should have systematic plans for students' free time the whole year and particularly in summer so that all students can use the educative, effective and pleasant programs freely at their leisure time.
4. Since enough and necessary research have not been done about the recognition and comprehension of the effects of mobile social networks, gaining awareness in this regard requires vast research and especially qualitative field research to determine the different dimensions and the positive and negative effects of these technologies.
5. In order to confront the devastating damages of these social networks, and to effectively confront the tricks of soft war , and to prevent the negative consequences of cultural invasion, diverse educational programs should be held in cultural centers, schools, mosques, cultural art centers, and other public places consistently and freely (paying no money) and at a large scale for the parents.
6. Given the billions of dollars investment of great powers of the world in loosening the religious beliefs and national identity, a significant budget should be allocated to training packages including books, pamphlet, brochures, films to be given to families freely and in a large scale, so that the families can use these educational items to both promote the level and

depth of their understanding of devastating effects of such networks and disappoint the enemy in gaining their objectives.

7. Given the invaluable guidance of supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, and the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, regarding the duty and status of national media as a public university, it is suggested that producing diverse types of audio and visual products like short and long films, series, cartoons, animations, clips , clipart etc. and to broadcast them in a large scale in all the channels and in suitable time provide the ground for the formation and promotion the Islamic civilization. These invaluable directions are objectified in this way and show the great part of Ayatollah Khamenei and Ayatollah Khomeini in the promotion of Cultural Revolution and fighting the wickedness and turpitude of western media.

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