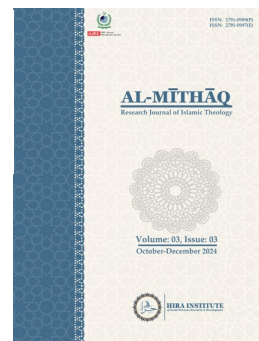




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The Negative Effects of Using Tik-Tok and Instagram on Muslim Youth and its Solution in Islamic Teachings

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How to Cite:

Dr. Abdul Rahman. 2024: "The Negative Effects of Using Tik-Tok and Instagram on Muslim Youth and its Solution in Islamic Teachings". *Al-Mithāq (Research Journal of Islamic Theology)* 3 (03):18-26.

Article History:

Received:
28-11-2024

Accepted:
18-12-2024

Published:
31-12-2024

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Conflict of Interest:

Author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

Abstract & Indexing



Publisher



HIRA INSTITUTE
of Social Sciences Research & Development

The Negative Effects of Using Tik-Tok and Instagram on Muslim Youth and its Solution in Islamic Teachings

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of social media platforms such as Tik-Tok and Instagram has profoundly influenced the behavioural, moral, and intellectual patterns of youth across the globe. Among Muslim youth, these effects are particularly significant as they intersect with religious, ethical, and cultural values rooted in Islamic teachings. This study examines the negative psychological, moral, and social consequences of excessive engagement with Tik-Tok and Instagram, focusing on issues such as time wastage, identity distortion, moral decline, the normalization of immodesty, and detachment from religious and communal responsibilities. Using a qualitative analytical approach, the paper draws upon empirical studies, sociological data, and classical Islamic sources to understand how digital consumerism and the pursuit of online validation erode spiritual consciousness and moral discipline. The research also highlights the subtle mechanisms through which these platforms promote materialism, narcissism, and ideological secularization among Muslim youth. In response, the study explores comprehensive solutions derived from Islamic teachings, emphasizing the Qur'ānic concept of ḥayā' (modesty), taqwā (God-consciousness), and the Prophetic model of social responsibility. The paper proposes an Islamic framework for ethical digital engagement that integrates self-accountability (muḥāsabah), purposeful media consumption, and community-based moral education. It concludes that effective guidance rooted in Qur'ānic principles and the Sunnah can help Muslim youth navigate modern digital environments without compromising their faith, moral integrity, or identity. Thus, the research contributes to contemporary Islamic discourse on media ethics by offering a balanced perspective that harmonizes technological participation with spiritual well-being.

Keywords: *Social Media, Muslim Youth, Tik-Tok, Instagram, Spiritual Impact.*

Introduction

Tik-Tok and Instagram are two famous social media platforms, particularly among young individuals. Their impact is positive and negative; however, in terms of Fitnah, it is necessary to navigate the influence on Muslim youth, as Fitnah can challenge their Faith and belief. Tik-Tok is a video-based app, and Instagram is a photo-based application. And the following are the impacts of Tik-Tok and Instagram Fitnah on Muslim youth.

Spiritual Impact

The spiritual is “relating to deep feelings and beliefs, especially religious beliefs.”¹ It is related to the impact of Tik-Tok and Instagram on Islamic beliefs and practices. The following are the spiritual impacts on Muslim youth:

1. Distraction from Religious Obligations

One of the impacts of today's social media platforms, like Tik-Tok and Instagram, is distracting Muslim youth from remembering Allah and performing their religious obligations. For instance, scrolling hours on Tik-Tok and Instagram reels, stimulating

content, and notifications, youth often delay, neglect, or pray without focusing on their Prayers (Ṣalah), which is the foundation of their faith and source of connection with Allah Almighty, and during Fasting (Roḍa), they spend all day consuming and making unethical and un-Islamic content of Tik-Tok and Instagram, as well as wasting their nights of Ramaḍan in doing Tik-Tok lives instead of utilizing those nights in doing righteous deeds, they spend them on worldly gain. The Qur'ān reflects on this.

وَالْعَصْرِ، إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ، إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ²

By the passage of time, surely humanity is in grave loss, except those who have faith, do good.

2. Immorality and Immodesty

Morality refers to “principles relating to right and wrong or good and bad behavior.”³ The opposite of morality is immorality; that is, wrong, indecent, and bad behaviors. Tik-Tok and Instagram promote immodesty and immorality through vulgar, obscene, immoral, and unethical content, sexual and seductive dances, weird, cringe trends, and provocative challenges, as well as nude and western dressings. Tik-Tok and Instagram also provide a shortcut to fame and wealth, which encourages Muslim youth to perform immoral and indecent acts to get viral while overlooking their religious moral values and ethics. It is like following the footsteps of Satan (Devil), which the holy Qur'ān warns us not to follow.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ⁴

O believers! Do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Whoever follows Satan's footsteps, then [let them know that] he surely bids [all to] immorality and wickedness.

3. Distortion of Information and Religious Knowledge

The hoaxes, misinformation, fake, unverified news, and rumors on Tik-Tok and Instagram distort the real information, which creates doubts and Bida's (“in Islam, any innovation that has no roots in the traditional practice (Sunnah) of the Muslim community”)⁵ among young Muslims. In the Holy Qur'ān, Allah instructs us.

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ⁶

Do not follow what you have no [sure] knowledge of.

4. Envy

One of the impacts Tik-Tok and Instagram have on Muslim youth is inciting a sense of envy and jealousy. The portrayal of perfectionism, flawless beauty appearance, showcasing wealth, and luxury on Tik-Tok and Instagram, furthermore, curated lifestyles trigger the feeling of envy (Hasad), as well as having more views, followers, or fame, than other influencers or Tik-Tokers, also boosts this negative feeling of envy among fellow content creators.

Prophet Muhammad said about envy.

لا حسد إلا في اثنتين: رجل آتاه الله مالا، فسلطه على هلكته في الحق، ورجل آتاه الله حكمة، فهو يقضي بها ويعلمها⁷

There is no envy except in two: a person whom Allah has given wealth, and he spends it in the right way, and a person whom Allah has given wisdom [i.e., religious knowledge] and he gives his decisions accordingly and teaches it to the others.

5. Public and Perpetuate Sins

It is a fact that singing is easier and convenient at this age of social media. Temptations and evils are everywhere, but with that, people become bold enough to perform these

kinds of actions that involve sinning publicly. That is one of the impacts of Tik-Tok and Instagram: people are dancing on streets, malls, and in hotels, recording vulgar, immodest Tik-Tok and Instagram reels with non-mahram. Women are exposing themselves while shooting Instagram pictures and collaborative videos. Moreover, they are not only doing it themselves but also posting it publicly, sharing, and involving others as well, which is like normalizing sinful behaviors. It has become normal in every society. Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) told us that:

كُلُّ أُمَّتِي مُعَاثِي إِلَّا الْمُجَاهِدِينَ.⁸

All the sins of my followers will be forgiven except those of the Mujahidin [those who commit a sin openly or disclose their sins to the people].

Tik-Tok and Instagram not only serve as a source of public sins but also as a source of ongoing or continuous sins. Whatever an individual posts or uploads on Tik-Tok and Instagram will remain there even after death unless they delete it and repent with sincerity.

6. Invasion of Solitude

In the Arabic language, the word khalwa (خلوة) is used to describe solitude. It is a concept in Islam, spending some time alone in contemplating Allah's creation, worshipping and remembering Him, as well as in spiritual reflection, and self-accountability. However, now the time of solitude is replaced with mobile phones, private sinning on social media, watching, and making algorithm-driven Tik-Tok and Instagram content, endless scrolling, and live streams, etc. The time that can be used to build a connection with Allah Almighty and seek inner peace is now wasted in entertainment, seeking validation from people, and worldly gain on Tik-Tok and Instagram. Imām ibn al Jawzī wrote in his book "Sayd al-Khatir":

He who wants to devote himself to the Hereafter should seek solitude, so he does not hear the voices of distraction and keep his heart empty from it. His self finds no desire to take as a friend, one who reminds it of what it desires.⁹

7. Fading of Contentment

Contentment is an Islamic concept, the state of happiness, acceptance, and submission to the decree of Allah Almighty. A person is content and has an attitude of gratitude for whatever Allah has given is contentment. But in this digital age, platforms like Tik-Tok and Instagram, where people show off their blessings, achievements, success, luxurious things, and the perfect side of life. Furthermore, everyone competing for increasingly is fading the concept of contentment and elicits the attitude of ungratefulness with what Allah has provided. Our guiding light, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), gave us a solution for this:

انظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا تَنْظُرُوا إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ فَوْقَكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ أَجْدَرُ أَنْ لَا تَزِدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ.¹⁰

Look at those who are beneath you and do not look at those who are above you, for it is more suitable that you should not consider as less the blessing of Allah.

Allah Almighty mentions in the Holy Qur'an:

وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ.¹¹

And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, If you are grateful, I will certainly give you more. But if you are ungrateful, surely My punishment is severe.

8. Chasing the Temporary, Forgetting the Eternal

The users and consumers of Tik-Tok and Instagram are in a race to chase worldly desires and possessions. Following Tik-Tok trends, Instagram challenges, earning through immoral means, and vulgar acts just to fulfill their desires and gain the blessing of this dunia (world) while overlooking Islamic principles and teachings. They are forgetting that all this is temporary, however, a life will come hereafter that will be eternal and permanent. Where the righteous will have an eternal life in Heaven, and the unrighteous will go to Hell. It is mentioned in this Qur'ān:

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَلَدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يُتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ.¹²

This worldly life is no more than play and amusement, but far better is the [eternal] Home of the Hereafter for those mindful [of Allah]. Will you not understand?

Psychological and Mental Impact

The psychological and mental impact of Tik-Tok and Instagram means the effects on a person's mind, emotions, and feelings. According to the report of the Royal Society for Public Health, "Instagram is the most detrimental app to young people's mental health and wellbeing."¹³ The following are the psychological and mental impacts of TikTok and Instagram on Muslim youth:

1. Depression and Anxiety

Depression and anxiety are mental illnesses that lead to unhappiness, nervousness, and loss of interest. Instagram and TikTok users are facing depression and anxiety due to comparison with unrealistic and perfect lifestyles that are shown on these platforms, as well as harassment, cyberbullying, and hateful comments also lead to depression and anxiety. Studies show that constant comparison on social media causes depression and anxiety among adolescents.¹⁴

2. Low Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is a "belief and confidence in your own ability and value."¹⁵ However, Tik-Tok and Instagram have built a feeling of low self-esteem among Muslim youth, causing them to question their value, lowering their confidence, and eliciting insecurities. Perfect body images, flawless appearance, and high beauty standards, on Instagram and Tik-Tok, create low self-esteem regarding physical appearance. Moreover, having an unhealthy comparison with other people's success and fame on Tik-Tok and Instagram leads to low self-esteem.

3. FOMO

FOMO means fear of missing out. Seeing other people on Tik-Tok and Instagram enjoying a luxurious lifestyle, traveling the world, vacationing, and hoteling, as well as partying with friends, produces FOMO in young people who do not have this kind of privilege.

4. Addiction

Mindless scrolling on Instagram and Tik-Tok sees addiction in its users. The users keep checking their accounts to see if there is any update. They keep looking at their phones for new notifications. In addition, Instagram reels and short videos on Tik-Tok keep users scrolling for a long period of time. This has led to the loss of intellectual thinking and critical thought, and young people fail to reflect upon the real world. This addiction in young people also results in the loss of cognitive skills.

5. Self-Adulation

Posting videos and content of oneself on Instagram and Tik-Tok exposes oneself to

different kinds of people. Some of these people, known as Fans, start to admire them and praise their posts. In today's world, Tik-Tok and Instagram influencers are excessively admired, which sometimes develops narcissistic behavior in them. Moreover, it also results in arrogance, ego, and self-obsession. They start to think of themselves as better than others. External validation that people receive on their posts and videos is the leading cause of these behaviors.

6. Short Attention Span

Instagram and Tik-Tok provide reels and short videos to their users, which results in scrolling for long hours. Some of these reels and videos are of a few seconds, but in those few seconds, a lot of information is provided. This leads to short attention spans in the users, and the brain is unable to focus on something for a longer period. According to a study, "a goldfish has an average attention span of nine seconds; however, in humans, due to a very digitalized lifestyle, the attention span has fallen below 9 seconds."¹⁶

7. Brain Rot

Brain rot is defined as "the supposed deterioration of a person's mental or intellectual state, especially viewed as the result of overconsumption of material (now particularly online content) considered to be trivial or unchallenging. Also: something characterized as likely to lead to such deterioration."¹⁷ It is a condition when the body and mind suffer and making it tired and stressed, because of excessive screen time and endless scrolling on Tik-Tok and Instagram.

Social Impact

The social impact of Tik-Tok and Instagram fitnah on Muslim youth refers to the effect on society, communities, and individuals. The following are the social impacts of Tik-Tok and Instagram fitnah on young Muslims:

1. Social Isolation

At this age of digital communication and social interaction, face-to-face communication is reducing. People, especially young individuals, prefer online interaction rather than communicating in real life. They spend most of their time chatting through Instagram DMs, commenting, and interacting through Tik-Tok live streams. This results in erosion of social communication, missing out on real-time events, and leaving them socially isolated.

2. Disturbed Relationships and Family Infrastructure

Social media has destroyed relationships and family bonding. Young people spend most of their time on social media. Despite being at home, they are not with their family, with their parents, siblings, or spouses. Users have destroyed their relationships for Tik-Tok money and fame. Superficial or *Ḥarām* (forbidden) relationships on Instagram have ruined conjugal relationships and led them towards divorces, breakups, and fights.

3. Suicides and Rapes

Many evils are emerging because of social media, including sexual exploitation and suicides. Cyberbullying, explicating images, perfectionism, and sexually luring dances or trends on Instagram and Tik-Tok encourage these kinds of immoral and dangerous acts. Studies show that interactions on social media facilitate sexual assaults, and excessive use raises suicide rates.

4. Loss of Empathy

The environment that has been created with the influence of Tik-Tok and Instagram

undermines the Islamic society and its norms. Society is declining morally and ethically. People are comparing, competing, and bullying each other on social media and have lost the sense of empathy, which is a crucial need of time.

5. Fallout of the Future

The future is collapsing because of social media platforms like Tik-Tok and Instagram. Youth, who is the future of any nation, are facing mental, psychological, emotional, spiritual, educational, behavioral, and social problems at a very young age. Instead of utilizing the potential of this age, they are wasting it on Tik-Tok and Instagram. Their ideals are the vulgar, immoral, and unethical Tik-Tokers and influencers, who are selling their faith for worldly profit.

Behavioral and Physical Impact

The behavioral and physical impact affects a person's manners, etiquette, actions, and body. The following are the impacts of Tik-Tok and Instagram fitnah on Muslim youth behavior and physical body.

1. Procrastination

One of the impacts that Tik-Tok and Instagram have created is procrastination (“the act of delaying something that you should do”) among young individuals.¹⁸ They are wasting their time watching Tik-Tok videos and Instagram reels, making video edits, and creating useless content.

2. Laziness and Tiredness

Young people are getting lazy and tired because they are spending hours scrolling through Tik-Tok videos and Instagram. Their physical activities are reducing, making them tired and lazy.

3. Ill-mannered Youth

Today's youth are developing behavior that is ill-mannered and disrespectful towards their parents, elders, and teachers. It is seen on Tik-Tok in various videos where they engage in rebellious behaviors in the name of freedom of speech, mocking elders, as well as disrespecting their teachers in the name of entertainment. They are forgetting the etiquette and respectful distance that they must maintain with their elders.

4. Money over Self Respect

Social media platforms such as Tik-Tok and Instagram are a great source of earning. People are earning a lot of money but disgracing their self-respect. For them, money, wealth, and worldly material are more important. This is evident during Tik-Tok lives where they are dancing obnoxiously, participating in trends and challenges, influencers doing sponsorships that don't align with their values, just for the sake of popularity and money.

5. Sleep Disturbance

Sleep is very important for the better functionality of a person's mind and body. But nowadays, social media has fully disturbed the sleeping habits of young people that have resulted in various negative effects. Scrolling Tik-Tok and Instagram before bedtime is very common, especially among young people. However, mobile phone screens contain blue light, and our body releases a hormone named ‘melatonin’ which helps in regulating sleep, and light decreases its production. So, when the blue light of a mobile phone interferes with the body's hormone melatonin, it disturbs sleep and reduces it.¹⁹

6. Health Issues

Many health problems are caused by social media. It includes Near-sightedness, because looking at a screen for long periods, back pain, and neck pain are caused by bad posture while using mobile phones. Eating disorders and dietary problems also occur among youth due to social media.

Summary

The growing influence of digital platforms such as Tik-Tok and Instagram has reshaped the lifestyle and mindset of Muslim youth in ways that often conflict with Islamic moral values. This study investigates the multidimensional negative effects of these platforms through social, spiritual, psychological, and physical lenses. On a social level, excessive use of Tik-Tok and Instagram promotes materialistic competition, erodes modesty, weakens family bonds, and normalizes indecent and immoral trends. On a spiritual level, constant exposure to content driven by desires and doubts leads to heedlessness, loss of taqwā, and detachment from worship and remembrance of Allah. On a psychological and emotional level, youth experience anxiety, inferiority, and identity crises caused by unrealistic beauty standards and the pursuit of online validation. Moreover, the physical effects include addiction, disrupted sleep patterns, and declining productivity due to prolonged screen time and digital dependence.

The paper argues that these collective impacts gradually pull Muslim youth away from a balanced Islamic lifestyle, immersing them in internal and external conflicts. Drawing guidance from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, the research proposes Islamic solutions emphasizing self-accountability, modesty, time management, and purposeful engagement with technology. It concludes that re-establishing an Islamic ethical framework for media consumption is essential to safeguard the faith, morality, and well-being of Muslim youth in the digital era.

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