The Impact of Audio-Visual Digital Content on Egyptian Children's Identity

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of audio-visual digital content on Egyptian children's identity, with a focus on YouTube and TikTok. Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, the study explores how children's consumption of digital media affects their identity formation. The quantitative component involved a structured survey administered to 200 children aged 9-13, revealing that 72% of the participants spend more than two hours daily on these platforms, with 68% indicating that their identity and behavior are influenced by the content they consume. Additionally, 55% of children reported feeling pressured to conform to the behaviors and lifestyles seen online, which significantly affects their self-esteem and identity development.

The qualitative insights, gathered from focus groups discussions with mothers highlight the critical role of parental mediation in shaping children's identities in the digital age. Mothers expressed concerns about their children's adoption of values and behaviors seen on these platforms. The findings suggest that unsupervised and frequent exposure to digital content can lead to shifts in children's cultural and social identities, often aligning them with the often idealized and unrealistic portrayals seen online.

The study concludes with recommendations for future research to investigate the long-term effects of digital media on children's identity formation across various cultural contexts and to develop strategies that foster media environments conducive to healthy identity development. By combining quantitative data with qualitative perspectives, this study provides a comprehensive view of the digital landscape's influence on young users' identity, advocating for informed policies and educational strategies to support children's development in the digital age.

Keywords: Audio-visual, YouTube, TikTok, children, Identity, social Responsibility.

Introduction

Digital media has become part of everyone's daily routine, and individuals spend a lot of time on it for various uses, whether for entertainment, playing, or communicating with others, etc. Digital media is information shared through a digital device or screen. Essentially, it is any form of media that relies on an electronic device for its creation, distribution, viewing, and storage. It is a way to express opinions or ideas in digital form through digital devices. It is a quick, easy, and effective way of communicating and distributing content. This includes text, audio, video, and graphics that are transmitted over the internet. Digital media platforms, YouTube and TikTok, have become increasingly influential among audiences worldwide, particularly children. However, concerns have emerged regarding the content available on these platforms, which sometimes diverges from societal norms and ethical standards. In Egyptian society, this issue is particularly pronounced, as certain content on digital platforms may present ideas and values that are considered unconventional or inappropriate. For instance, there has been an increase in content featuring criminal activities, sexual themes, and vulgar language, which are contrary to public morals in Egypt (Elbanna & Elmalt, 2020).

Childhood, referred to as late childhood or early adolescence, is characterized by significant physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development. During this period, children experience rapid physical growth and the onset of puberty, leading to the development of secondary sexual characteristics (Smith & Jones, 2024), which is considered one of the most important and dangerous stages that a person goes through because the children learn by observing and imitating. They receive everything they see or hear without a selective factor that adults enjoy, so they receive all messages. Without the ability to critique the content, while childhood has always been a crucial period for shaping identity, habits, and values, there is a shift happening. Traditionally, family and school played the primary roles in this development.

The young mind of a child is like a sponge absorbing the world around it. This process, known as socialization, shapes a child's identity through constant interaction with his or her environment. Traditionally, family and school have been the primary sculptors of this identity, guiding children through customs, traditions, and values. However, the digital age has introduced: social media. These platforms, which use modern methods and limitless content, have emerged as new players in the socialization and psychological game, challenging and even competing with traditional institutions. This raises a crucial question: How do these contemporary influences affect the nuanced process of identity formation in children?

Therefore, exposure to these platforms may affect children positively or negatively in determining values and behaviors. digital media has provided many alternatives for children to escape from their real society to a virtual society. Through interactions with their environment, children acquire customs, traditions, trends, and values that influence their development. Traditionally, family and school have been considered the primary socializing forces. However, technological advancements have introduced new players, like social media, which utilize modern methods to compete with traditional institutions in shaping children's value systems. As Al-Rawas's (2020) study suggests, this competition highlights the need to understand the impact these platforms have on the formation of their identities. Also, TikTok is a social media platform for creating, sharing, and discovering short videos. The application is used by young people as an outlet to express themselves through singing, dancing, comedy, and lip-syncing, and allows users to create videos and share them across a community. According to a 2022 report by TikTok, 65% of children under the age of 18 in Egypt have their own TikTok account. This means that approximately 16.25 million children in Egypt have their own TikTok account. A 2021 study by Common Sense Media found that 80% of children aged 8-12 in Egypt have access to TikTok.

Every content that the children receive in terms of customs, values, and odd ideas, deals with them innocently, and contradictory psychological motives develop in their personality. Children as a social group gain special importance in various social institutions. If there are deficiencies in the upbringing processes or the introduction of extraneous factors, this reflects negatively on their values and behaviors. Children, with their innocence, make them vulnerable to exploitation by older people. This matter is considered a crime for which the law is accountable, especially since international legislation and child protection laws pay attention to this group and criminalize anyone who tries to harm children, especially with their increased appearance on social media sites in singing and dancing clips that may affect their behavior in the future.

Statement of Research Problem

The increasing time children spend consuming video content on platforms like YouTube and TikTok raises concerns about its potential impact on their identity development. Children are constantly bombarded with videos that contain inappropriate content, and their young minds are highly impressionable. They are likely to imitate what they see and may even adopt inappropriate behaviors as role models. This can have a significant impact on their personality development. TikTok and YouTube attract sizable populations

of young users (Pew Research Center, 2022), a critical stage in personality development when individuals define their identity, beliefs, and values, especially as the content of these platforms is presented through heroes or relevant characters that are similar in appearance, age, and traits, and thus their influence is stronger. Children may not have the necessary skills to distinguish between good and harmful influences, particularly in the absence of suitable parental guidance.

The algorithm of YouTube and TikTok is designed to keep users engaged for extended periods, which can lead to addiction and excessive screen time. So the researcher is trying to highlight that the algorithms used by these platforms are designed to maximize user engagement, while also increasing risks of addiction and dependency on screen time. The absence of effective parental monitoring further exacerbates these challenges, as children may lack the necessary skills to navigate these digital environments safely.

3.2 Significance of the study

Theoretical Significance:

• The study serves as a resource for future study on digital media's effects on child development, emphasizing the need for responsible media consumption to safeguard children's well-being.

• By examining how digital media exposure influences children's identity formation, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between media use and identity development, aiming to foster resilience and positive self-perception in the digital age.

Practical Significance:

• This study highlights the negative effects of excessive exposure to TikTok and YouTube on children's attention span, memory, social skills, and behavior, stressing the need for strategies to mitigate these risks.

• The study emphasizes the importance of improving media literacy among children and parents, recommending workshops, school programs, and parental guidance to monitor and educate responsible media use.

• Encouraging physical activity, social interaction, and critical thinking is essential to balance screen time and promote healthy development. The study advocates for policies regulating screen time and content to protect children from harmful media and build resilience against cyberbullying.

3.3 Objectives of the study

1. To assess the exposure level of the children to TikTok and YouTube content.
2. To investigate the positive and negative effects of using TikTok and YouTube.

3. To Investigate the impact of TikTok and YouTube content on the formation of children's identities

4. To raise awareness about the effects of TikTok and YouTube use.

3.4 Review of previous studies

3.4.1 Digital media platforms

Digital media has become an integral part of contemporary society, transforming how individuals communicate, consume information, and engage with the world around them. Defined broadly, digital media encompasses any media that is encoded in machine-readable formats, including text, audio, video, and images, which can be created, distributed, and consumed through digital devices such as computers, smartphones, and tablets (Lupton, 2021). The advent of the internet and the proliferation of digital devices have exponentially increased the accessibility and variety of digital content, making it a ubiquitous presence in everyday life.

Social media platforms, a significant subset of digital media, have revolutionized the way people interact and share content. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have attracted billions of users worldwide, offering spaces for social interaction, content creation, and information dissemination (Boyd, 2020). These platforms have also facilitated the rise of user-generated content, where ordinary users, rather than traditional media producers, create and share content with a global audience (Khan, 2022). This shift has democratized content creation but has also raised concerns about the quality and reliability of the information being disseminated.

Digital media has significantly altered the landscape of communication, moving it from traditional face-to-face interactions to virtual, often asynchronous, exchanges. According to a study by Schrock (2019), the use of digital media, especially social media, has led to the development of new forms of communication, such as emojis and memes, which serve as modern-day hieroglyphs that convey complex emotions and ideas concisely. However, while these new forms of communication have enhanced expressiveness, they have also been criticized for contributing to the erosion of deep, meaningful conversations and increased superficial interactions (Turkle, 2020).

YouTube has become a significant platform for children and adolescents, offering a vast array of content that influences their development. According to a study by Burke et al. (2023), YouTube was instrumental in how children engaged with digital play during the COVID-19 pandemic, which in turn fostered resilience and confidence. The platform also plays a crucial role in marketing unhealthy products to children. Kent et al. (2024) found that YouTube is a major channel for marketing fast food and sugary drinks to

children, contributing to diet-related health issues. Moreover, Gurtner et al. (2022) highlighted the dangers of algorithmic content curation on YouTube, which can expose children to harmful or inappropriate content, underscoring the need for enhanced content regulation.

TikTok, known for its short-form video content, has a profound impact on children's behavior and identity. Polito et al. (2022) pointed out that TikTok has significant gaps in privacy protection for young users, which exposes them to privacy risks. Additionally, Burke et al. (2023) noted that while TikTok facilitated creativity and social connection during the pandemic, it also posed risks such as exposure to dangerous challenges. Lombardo et al. (2024) further illustrated this by showing how TikTok challenges have led to severe injuries among adolescents. The marketing strategies of the platforms, as examined by Kent et al. (2024), also promote unhealthy eating behaviors, similar to those observed on YouTube.

- **Children's Exposure Level to YouTube and TikTok**

In a study conducted by Nahla Abd Elkarim (2020), the focus was on understanding how children engage with modern technology, particularly the TikTok application, and the extent to which parents monitor their usage. The study aimed to uncover the duration of children's interaction with technology, the behavioral changes resulting from its use, and parental perspectives on its influence. The study revealed that a significant majority of children, around 66%, maintained a constant presence on modern communication platforms. Moreover, it was found that most children dedicate between 4 to 6 hours to using such technology, with usage patterns often dictated by available time, as reported by 62% of respondents. Additionally, parental perceptions regarding the impact of modern communication technology on children's values and behavior were examined.

A noteworthy discovery was that nearly 68% of respondents agreed that these platforms contribute to the adoption of new values by children, which may differ from traditional customs and societal norms. The study highlights the pervasive role of modern technology, including TikTok, in shaping children's daily routines and the importance of parental oversight in navigating its potential influence on their behavior and values. The marketing video landscape of TikTok application was examined in Shaima Ezz El-Din's 2020 study, which used qualitative content analysis and observational methods. Furthermore, twenty-one semi-structured interviews were conducted by the study using online platforms with participants ages 15 to 27. The study produced important results, showing that users mostly used the TikTok platform to pass the time during their free time and for entertainment. Notably,

participants indicated that they preferred to watch celebrity-starring videos and make original content, frequently using the lip-syncing feature of the platform. These revelations shed light on the underlying motives and actions that propel user interaction with TikTok marketing content. According to studies, children may derive considerable enjoyment, knowledge, and social interaction on YouTube (Jones et al., 2020). YouTube provides youngsters with a wide range of engaging options due to its extensive content selection, which includes educational videos, gaming streams, and vlogs. But there have been worries expressed about the possibility of being exposed to improper content, such as explicit language, violence, and false information (Vandewater et al., 2020). Concerns regarding the potential consequences of YouTube on children's development arise from parents' frequent inability to keep an eye on and limit their kids' usage.

Similarly, TikTok has become a well-liked platform for children and teens, including short films in a variety of genres, including comic sketches, lip-syncing, and dancing competitions. TikTok usage is linked to both favorable and unfavorable outcomes for kids, according to research. Positively, it encourages self-expression, creativity, and social interaction (Primack, 2021). But there are issues with excessive screen use, cyberbullying, and exposure to unsuitable content (Orben et al., 2020). It might be difficult for parents to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of allowing their kids to use TikTok.

Examining how kids use digital media sites like TikTok and YouTube requires considering several variables, including age, parental mediation, and preferred content. Parental controls and recommendations for age-appropriate material are essential for reducing any possible hazards connected to these platforms (Livingstone et al., 2021). Furthermore, encouraging transparent dialogue about children's internet experiences between parents and children can improve digital literacy and encourage safer online practices.

Studies conducted on children's use of digital media highlight the importance of having a comprehensive understanding of the advantages and disadvantages associated with websites such as YouTube and TikTok. Stakeholders can encourage responsible digital media use and support their healthy development in the digital age by addressing issues with content appropriateness, online safety, and parental involvement.

TikTok, a popular social media platform, has faced significant regulatory scrutiny regarding its handling of children's data and privacy protections. This literature review examines the legal and ethical implications of the practices of TikTok in safeguarding children's privacy. Despite the restrictions of TikTok prohibiting users under the age of 13, a significant proportion of young children

continue to access the platform. Ofcom reports that 44% of eight to 12-year-olds in the UK use TikTok, highlighting the appeal of the platform to minors (McCallum, 2022).

However, TikTok has been criticized for failing to provide accurate information to its users regarding data processing practices. The company has been accused of processing special category data without proper legal justification and collecting data from children under the age of 13 without parental permission (McCallum, 2022). These regulatory violations have led to substantial fines and penalties for TikTok. In 2019, the Federal Trade Commission imposed a record-breaking $5.7 million fine on TikTok for mishandling children's data. Similarly, South Korea has imposed penalties on TikTok for similar infractions (McCallum, 2022). In response to growing concerns about online privacy and child protection, lawmakers have proposed legislative measures to enhance safeguards for minors. The US Senate Commerce Committee, for example, has endorsed a plan to raise the age at which children receive special internet privacy protections to 16 and prohibit targeted advertising to minors without their consent (McCallum, 2022).

In conclusion, the regulatory challenges highlighted by TikTok the complex issues surrounding children's privacy and online safety. As policymakers and regulators continue to address these concerns, it is essential for social media platforms like TikTok to prioritize the protection of their privacy rights and adhere to legal and ethical standards.

3.4.4 Identity Changes in Children Exposed to Digital Media

The proliferation of digital media has profoundly influenced the lives of children worldwide. With increasing access to smartphones, tablets, computers, and the internet, children are exposed to digital media from a very young age. This exposure has raised concerns about its impact on their identities and development. This literature review aims to explore the identity changes observed in children who are exposed to digital media, examining both the positive and negative effects, and providing insights from academic research studies.

Digital media platforms play a significant role in shaping children's identities. The content they are exposed to on platforms like YouTube and TikTok can influence their sense of self and their perceptions of the world (Lupton, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, digital play on these platforms allowed children to maintain social connections and explore different aspects of their identities (Burke et al., 2023). However, the exposure to Western cultural norms and values through these platforms can lead to a shift in their cultural identities, particularly in non-Western contexts (Muslimah & Syamsudin,

2020). This phenomenon underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of how digital media influences identity formation in children.

• **Positive Effects:** Recent studies continue to support the idea that digital media provides significant opportunities for children's identity development. For instance, platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube allow children to express themselves creatively, explore different aspects of their identity, and connect with peers who share similar interests. These platforms can help foster a sense of belonging and self-esteem by providing children with opportunities to showcase their talents and receive validation from others. Research by Thomas et al. (2023) underscores that engaging with diverse perspectives and cultures through digital media can broaden children's worldviews, promoting tolerance, inclusivity, and a global sense of citizenship.

• **Negative Effects:** On the flip side, newer research highlights the ongoing concerns regarding the impact of digital media on children's self-esteem and body image. A study by Anderson and Jiang (2023) reveals that the constant comparison facilitated by social media platforms can exacerbate body dissatisfaction and lower self-esteem among adolescents, particularly when these platforms emphasize appearance and superficial measures of popularity, such as likes and followers. Additionally, cyberbullying remains a significant issue, with studies indicating that online harassment can severely impact children's mental health, leading to anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal (Smith et al., 2023).

•**Identity Exploration and Formation:** Digital media continues to serve as a critical space for identity exploration among children and adolescents. Boyd's (2014) earlier work on online identity experimentation has been expanded by recent studies, such as those by Greenfield (2023), which explore how adolescents use digital platforms to try out different personas and receive feedback from peers. However, there is also growing concern that heavy reliance on digital media for identity formation can lead to a fragile sense of self, as children may become overly dependent on online validation, potentially hindering the development of authentic self-awareness and interpersonal skills (Twenge & Campbell, 2023).

In conclusion, digital media plays a significant role in shaping children's identities, offering both opportunities and challenges. While digital media platforms provide avenues for self-expression, creativity, and connection, they also expose children to risks such as negative body image, cyberbullying, and identity confusion. Parents, educators, and policymakers need to understand these dynamics and promote healthy digital media use among children,

emphasizing critical thinking, media literacy, and positive self-esteem. The dynamics of youth interaction have undergone a profound transformation, spurred notably by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic originating in late 2019. Global lockdown measures precipitated a pervasive sense of isolation and enforced solitude, compelling individuals contending with mental health challenges to seek alternative avenues for support and connection. Social media platforms like TikTok emerged as virtual sanctuaries, fostering a unique sense of community where individuals could converge, exchange experiences, and extend mutual assistance amidst shared adversities (Harwood, 2021).

In today's global landscape, young people are increasingly turning to social media platforms such as TikTok as a means of navigating mental health struggles and grappling with issues of self-identity. While the quest for self-definition may stem from a myriad of factors, the COVID-19 crisis has emerged as a significant catalyst, compounded by mounting societal pressures for this generation to surpass previous accomplishments (Kira et al., 2020). Although mental health challenges manifest similarly in both adults and youth, the coping strategies employed diverge, with adolescents particularly driven to carve out their identities and assert their presence in contemporary society (Harwood, 2021). TikTok, which has quickly become a major platform for self-expression, particularly among younger users, is designed for the sharing of short-form video content. Its format encourages the creation and dissemination of brief video snippets that highlight various talents, interactions, and personal expressions. This has solidified TikTok's role as a key venue for digital self-expression and creativity (Feldman, 2023; Li & Guo, 2023; Moreno, 2023).

People may have had an easier time identifying themselves before the technological revolution because cultural boundaries and the basis of an individual's identity were more clearly defined and largely based on geography. The "virtual identity" is more important than ever in the postmodern society of today, where cultures are fluid and distances are rarely significant. The idea that a person's identity is not restricted to one or two categories is not well understood by many people. Their various personas can be influenced by a wide range of elements, including physical characteristics like hair or eye color, interests in academia or religion, hobbies, cultural backgrounds, and so forth (Gaither, 2019).

Social media sites like TikTok are being used by young people all over the world as a coping method for identity crises and mental health problems. Although there are a variety of reasons why these people may feel as though they lack identity, the COVID-19 pandemic and growing expectations placed on the younger generation to perform better than their elders can be considered

major contributing factors (Kira, et al., 2020). People were now forced to put themselves in uncomfortable circumstances as they tried to "discover themselves" and who they were. Numerous individuals experienced job loss and were compelled to limit their social interactions, pastimes, and overall liberty. Social media became their new pastime as a result. The COVID-19 pandemic is thought to have caused 43% of adults between the ages of 16 and 64 to use social media more frequently, 36% to spend more time on mobile apps, and 16% to spend more time making and sharing videos (Mander, 2020). The 2019 study by Noura Talaat utilized an in-depth methodology, combining descriptive and analytical survey techniques. Focusing on TikTok as the primary model, Talaat examined Egyptian women to identify deviations from societal norms in social networking platform use through content analysis of 441 videos and questionnaire distribution to 662 respondents. The study highlighted that women's desires for fame and money were the primary drivers behind creating these videos. Additionally, it emphasized the generally negative impression of these applications within society, shedding light on Egyptian women's social media engagement dynamics and public

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation for this study is rooted in Social Learning Theory (SLT), originally developed by Albert Bandura. SLT explains how individuals learn new behaviors, attitudes, and values through observation, imitation, and modeling, making it particularly relevant for understanding the influence of digital media on children's identity formation.

Background of Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory emphasizes the role of observational learning in acquiring new behaviors. Bandura's research, including the famous Bobo doll experiments, demonstrated that individuals, particularly children, do not need direct reinforcement to learn; instead, they can acquire behaviors by observing others (Bandura, 1961). This observation is especially applicable to digital platforms like YouTube and TikTok, where children are exposed to various role models and influencers, shaping their identity.

In SLT, learning is facilitated through four key processes: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Bandura, 1977). These processes explain how children engage with digital media, internalize behaviors, and incorporate them into their identity.

1. Attention: Children must first notice behaviors modeled by influencers or peers on digital platforms. The attention-grabbing content on YouTube and TikTok, designed to engage viewers, makes this an easy first step in the learning process.

2. Retention: For identity formation, it is essential that children remember the behaviors they observe. Through repeated exposure to similar content, these behaviors are stored in their memory, ready to be reproduced when circumstances allow.

3. Reproduction: Children replicate the behaviors and attitudes they have observed. On platforms like YouTube and TikTok, the behaviors of influencers—whether positive or negative—are likely to be imitated by young viewers, affecting their identity and self-perception.

• Motivation: Children are motivated to adopt behaviors that are rewarded in the digital space, such as receiving likes, follows, or positive comments. This reinforces the emulation of influencer behaviors and further solidifies these behaviors as part of their identity.

Social Learning Theory and Identity Formation

Digital platforms like YouTube and TikTok provide a vast array of content that children can model. By observing influencers or characters who embody certain lifestyles, values, or behaviors, children may integrate these elements into their self-concept. The SLT framework helps explain how these platforms influence identity formation in the following ways:

Role of Observational Learning: Children observe and imitate influencers whose behaviors they admire or wish to emulate. This often includes adopting styles of dress, speech patterns, and attitudes portrayed by these digital personas. Over time, these behaviors become ingrained in the child's identity.

Vicarious Reinforcement and Digital Identity: On platforms like TikTok, children witness influencers being rewarded with likes, followers, and social validation. This digital reinforcement motivates children to adopt similar behaviors, contributing to the shaping of their identity. When children mimic influencers' behaviors and receive positive feedback, their self-identity evolves based on these external validations.

Self-Efficacy and Identity: Self-efficacy, a key concept in SLT, refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform a task. In the context of digital media, children with high self-efficacy are more likely to attempt to replicate the behaviors they see online, making these behaviors integral to their developing identity. Conversely, children with low self-efficacy may experience identity crises if they feel they cannot match the idealized versions of influencers.

Digital Media and Identity Changes

YouTube and TikTok present children with content that shapes not only their behaviors but also their worldview, values, and self-perception. As children engage with content featuring influencers who represent a variety of lifestyles and attitudes, they begin to navigate their own identity in response to the curated images they see. This identity formation is complex and can be both positive and negative

Children exposed to positive role models on these platforms may develop strong, aspirational identities. For example, influencers who promote social causes or educational content can inspire children to adopt values such as kindness, determination, or a strong work ethic.On the other hand, children exposed to materialistic or socially undesirable behaviors may integrate these negative traits into their identities. The constant comparison to influencers who portray idealized lifestyles can lead to dissatisfaction with their own lives, resulting in identity confusion or negative self-worth.

Scope of Social Learning Theory in Identity Formation

By applying the principles of SLT, this study examines how Egyptian children's identities are shaped through repeated engagement with YouTube and TikTok content. Whether through the emulation of influencers or the internalization of new values and norms, digital content plays a significant role in the identity development of these children. The rapid, pervasive nature of digital media means that children are continuously learning from these platforms, with potential long-term effects on their self-concept and worldview.

Research Questions

RQ.1: What is the rate of children's use of YouTube and TikTok?

RQ.2: What types of content are most frequently consumed by children?

RQ.3: What are the motives for children to use YouTube and TikTok?

RQ.4: How does children's frequent exposure to TikTok and YouTube affect the formation of their identity?

Research Hypothesis

1- Greater use of YouTube is linked to an increase in identity loss among children.

2- Greater use of TikTok is linked to an increase in identity loss among children.

Research Design

Universe of the Study

The study population is categorized into three distinct groups: children, mothers, and experts, including psychology and sociology professionals, as well as specialists in the field of child development and identity formation.

Egyptian children aged 9 to 13, male and female, from different educational, social, and economic backgrounds. This age group corresponds with a critical stage in cognitive development as defined by Jean Piaget. Specifically, children in this range are transitioning from the pre-operational stage (ages 2-7), where symbolic play and basic manipulation of symbols dominate, to the concrete operational stage (ages 7-11), where they begin to develop logical thinking about concrete events, understand conservation, and perform basic mathematical operations. This developmental phase is pivotal as it marks a period when children start to meaningfully interpret and internalize the content they encounter, particularly on digital platforms like YouTube and TikTok. The susceptibility of this age group to audiovisual media makes it an essential focus for understanding the socio-psychological impact of such content on their developing identities.

For the mothers who have children using YouTube and TikTok daily. The decision to exclusively involve mothers in the focus groups for this study is scientifically grounded in the understanding that mothers often play a central role in the daily upbringing and socialization of children, particularly in the context of media consumption and behavior monitoring. Research indicates that mothers are typically the primary caregivers and are more likely to be engaged in their children's education, social activities, and media habits (Pew Research Center, 2020).

For experts, academic experts in digital media's impact on children, and psychologists or sociologists specializing in child development. These interviews will offer a multi-faceted perspective on the socio-psychological

effects of digital media on children, combining practical, academic, and clinical viewpoints.

Sampling:

● **Survey for Children:** The sample for this study is a **Purposive sample** consists of 200 Egyptian children aged between 9 and 13 years old, selected from Cairo, Alexandria, and Al-Minia. The purposive sampling method ensures that participants possess specific characteristics relevant to the study objectives, particularly their active engagement with YouTube and TikTok. This targeted approach allows the study to explore the effects of audiovisual content on the socio-psychological development of children who are frequent users of these platforms. By focusing on this subset, the study aims to provide detailed and valid insights into how digital media influences the identity formation of Egyptian children.

● **Focus Groups for mothers:** Consist of eight to ten mothers of children aged 9 to 13 who use YouTube and TikTok. By focusing on mothers, the study can gain deeper insights into the specific strategies, concerns, and observations that these primary caregivers have regarding their children's interaction with platforms like YouTube and TikTok. Additionally, mothers often act as gatekeepers of media content, making their perspectives crucial in understanding the dynamics of media influence on children's development. This targeted approach allows for a more nuanced and detailed exploration of the impact of media consumption on children's behavior and identity formation.

Methodology:

1. Survey for Children: The survey tool targets children aged 9-13 to assess the impact of audiovisual content consumption on their socio-psychological development. The survey is designed to identify the relationships between various variables, such as usage patterns, content types, and behavioral outcomes. By employing this method, the study seeks to gather comprehensive data on the influence of TikTok and YouTube on children's social behaviors, feelings, and trends, contributing to a foundational understanding of the role of digital media in shaping public behavior from a descriptive and analytical perspective.

Table (1)
Measurement Scale and Grading Criteria for Assessing the Impact of

YouTube and TikTok on Children's Behavior and Identity

	Number of Questions	Choices	Overall Grade	Categories
exposure to TikTok	One Question 2 Phrases	Rare= 1 Sometimes = 2 Always=3 Once or twice a month=1 Once or twice a week=2 Daily=3	6 - 2	Low 2-3 Intermediate 4-5 High 6
exposure to YouTube	One Question 2 Phrases	Rare= 1 Sometimes = 2 Always=3 Once or twice a month=1 Once or twice a week=2 Daily=3	6 - 2	Low 2-3 Intermediate 4-5 High 6
The effect of YouTube on Identity	One Question 12 Phrases	Agree=3 Neutral=2 Disagree=1	36 – 12	Low 12-19 Intermediate 20-27 High 28-36
The effect of TikTok on Identity	One Question 12 Phrases	Agree=3 Neutral=2 Disagree=1	36 -12	Low 12-19 Intermediate 20-27 High 28-36

The Questionnaire was validated by a group of Specialists:[1]

[1] List of Reviwers

Dr Abeer Ezzi, Associate Professor of Public Relations and Advertising. Arab Academy

Dr Fathy El Shekawy, Former Vice President of Ain Shams University, Professor of Psychology, Ain Shams University

Dr Hend Embaby. Professor of Psychology, Faculty of Early Childhood Education

Dr Hisham Gamal, Professor of Motion Pictures, Art Academy

Dr Hussein El Zanaty, Editor In Chief of Alaa El Deen Magazine

Dr Inas Abd El-Hamid, Professor of Public Relations and Advertising, Faculty of Mass Com, Al-Ahram Canadian University

Dr Mahmoud Ismail, Professor of Media and Children's Culture, Faculty of Childhood Studies, Ain Shams University

Dr Marwa Abd El Latif, Associate Professor of Media, Department of Media and Children's Culture, Faculty of Graduate Studies for Childhood, Ain Shams University

Dr Mohamed Moawad, Professor of Mass Communication, Ain Shams University

Dr Momen Abd Elshafy, Associate Professor of Media, Department of Media and Children's Culture, Faculty of Graduate Studies for Childhood, Ain Shams University

Dr Mona El Hadidi, Professor of Radio and TV, Faculty of Mass and Communication, Cairo University

2. Focus Groups for mothers: Three focus groups with each consisting of eight to ten mothers of children aged 9 to 13. These sessions will facilitate discussions on the mothers' perceptions and concerns regarding their children's digital media usage. The focus groups will provide qualitative insights into parental perspectives, helping to contextualize the data collected from children and offering a broader understanding of family dynamics in relation to digital content consumption.

The responses were conducted by three groups of mothers who have children who use YouTube and TikTok, so that the three groups were classified by different educational systems (national, private, and international).

Table (2)
Details of Focus Groups Conducted with Mothers Regarding Children's Use of YouTube and TikTok

Group	Number of Participants	Educational system	Date	Place	Duration
First group	8	National	20 jun 2024	Conference Call	54 min
Second group	8	Private	24 jun 2024	Zoom meeting	62 min
Third group	10	International	27 jun 2024		65 min
Total	26 mothers				181 min

Focus-Groups Discussion Protocol

1. How often does your child use TikTok and YouTube?
2. What are their motivations?
3. What is his favorite content that he constantly watches?
4. What are the positive and negative effects of your child's use of YouTube and TikTok?
5. Have you noticed any changes in your child's behavior or attitudes since they started using these platforms?
6. Do you monitor or regulate your child's use of TikTok and YouTube? How?

Research Methods

To address the study's objectives and research questions, a mixed-methods research design was employed. This approach integrates both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the impact of digital media of Egyptian children's identity. The quantitative component involved a structured survey distributed to a purposive sample of

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200 children aged 9-13 and using YouTube and Tiktok. This survey was designed to assess the extent and nature of their engagement with platforms such as YouTube and TikTok and to quantify the influence of this exposure on their identity formation. The qualitative aspect of the study includes focus groups discussions with mothers. These qualitative methods aimed to explore the subjective experiences and perspectives of both parents and professionals regarding children's media consumption. The focus groups provided insights into parental mediation practices and concerns regarding the adoption of behaviors and values seen on these platforms, while the expert interviews offered a critical analysis of current media literacy and content regulation strategies. By combining these methods, the study achieved a nuanced understanding of both the measurable effects and contextual factors influencing children's identity development in the digital age.

Data analysis

After conducting all focus groups discussions, and surveys, the researcher meticulously evaluated the collected data. Audio recordings were reviewed, and complete transcriptions were produced. During the analysis phase, the content of the responses from the interviews and focus groups was carefully examined, with particular attention to recurring themes and comments. The raw data, including discussion notes and transcriptions, was then organized and checked for any mistakes or gaps. The data was categorized based on the specific topics covered in the study, leading to the preparation of the final report and the study's conclusions.

4.1 Quantitative Results

4.1.1 The field study Results analysis

This survey is directed to children aged 9-13 to evaluate the effects of consuming audiovisual content on their socio-psychological growth. The survey aims to uncover the relationships between different factors, including usage habits, types of content, and behavioral impacts. Through this approach, the study intends to collect detailed data on how TikTok and YouTube affect children's social behaviors, emotions, and trends, thereby providing a foundational understanding of the role digital media plays in shaping public behavior from both a descriptive and analytical standpoint

- **Simple Tables**

Table (4)
Sample characteristics (N=200)

Variables	Frequency		Percent
Gender	Male	94	47

	Female	106	53
Age	9	29	14.5
	10	38	19
	11	57	28.5
	12	45	22.5
	13	31	15.5
Educational Type	National	67	33.5
	Private	88	44
	International	45	22.5
Geographical Area	Al Minia	89	44.5
	Alexandria	56	28
	Cairo	55	27.5

The results provide insights into the demographic distribution of respondents across several variables: gender, age, Educational Type, and Geographical Area. The gender distribution is relatively balanced, with a slight majority of female respondents (53.0%) compared to male respondents (47.0%). This balance suggests that the findings can be reflective of both genders, though any gender-specific trends should be closely examined. In terms of age, most respondents are 11 years old (28.5%), followed by those aged 10 (19.0%) and 12 (22.5%). The distribution highlights a focus on younger adolescents, which is crucial for understanding age-specific behaviors or attitudes.

Table (5)
Children's Exposure Level for YouTube and TikTok(N=200)

Exposure Level	YouTube		TikTok	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Rare	76	38	78	39
Sometimes	34	17	55	27.5
Always	90	45	67	33.5
Total	200	100	200	100

The result illustrates the exposure levels of children to YouTube and TikTok, revealing notable differences in how frequently these platforms are used. A significant portion of children, 45% report "Always" using YouTube, compared to 33.5% for TikTok, suggesting that YouTube is a more consistent part of daily life for children. However, TikTok also maintains a strong presence, with 39% of children using it "Rarely" and 27.5% "Sometimes." This distribution suggests that while YouTube may be more ingrained in regular habits, TikTok's usage is still substantial, though potentially more sporadic. The data highlights the importance of understanding the differing impacts of these platforms on children's media consumption behaviors, potentially guiding parents and educators in shaping healthier digital habits.

Table (6)
The frequency of the children usage on Digital media (N=200)

How often to use?	Frequency	Percent
1. Once or twice a month	7	3.5
2. Once or twice a week	27	13.5
3. Daily	166	83
Total	200	100

The results on usage frequency reveal a pronounced trend toward daily engagement among the respondents, with a substantial 83% indicating daily use of the platform. This high level of consistent interaction suggests that the platform is deeply embedded in the users' daily routines, possibly due to its engaging content or the social connections it facilitates. In contrast, only 13.5% of respondents reported using the platform once or twice a week, and an even smaller 3.5% used it once or twice a month. These figures highlight the platform's success in capturing user attention and maintaining habitual usage patterns. The overwhelming inclination towards daily usage could imply that the platform's features are highly effective at encouraging frequent visits, making it a significant part of the users' digital lives.

Table (7)
Children's Viewing Habits on TikTok and YouTube (N=200)

When watching TikTok and YouTube content, do you typically watch:	Frequency	Percent
1. Alone	52	26
2. Sometimes alone, sometimes with someone else	125	62.5
3. with my friends	2	1
4. With my parents	21	10.5
Total	200	100

The results on children's viewing habits for TikTok and YouTube content reveal insightful trends. A significant majority, 62.5%, sometimes watch alone and sometimes with someone else, indicating that children often balance their viewing between solitary and social contexts. This flexibility might be due to the varying nature of content on these platforms, which can be engaging both individually and when shared. Meanwhile, 26% of children prefer watching alone, which could reflect a desire for personalized content or a preference for focused viewing without distractions. A notable 10.5% watch with their parents, suggesting that a portion of the content consumed is family-friendly or that parents are involved in monitoring or sharing the viewing experience. Only 1% of children watch with friends, which may indicate that these platforms are primarily used in home environments rather than social settings with peers.

Overall, the data points to a diverse range of viewing habits among children, with a strong emphasis on flexibility and family involvement.

Table (8)
Children's Social Media Viewing Patterns (N=200)

Are you watching from ……….	Frequency	Percent
1. One of your parents' accounts	78	39
2. Your own account	118	59
3. Others	4	2
Total	200	100

The survey results about the accounts children use to access TikTok and YouTube content show a clear preference for personal ownership and autonomy. A majority, 59%, use their own accounts, indicating that many children have direct access and control over their viewing experience, which might reflect a sense of independence and familiarity with technology. Meanwhile, 39% of children use one of their parents' accounts, suggesting a level of parental involvement or oversight in their digital consumption. This could also imply shared devices within households, where children use the same accounts as their parents for convenience or due to age restrictions. Only 2% reported using sometimes parents' accounts and other times their own accounts, indicating that alternative access methods are rare among the respondents. Overall, these findings highlight a trend towards personal account usage among children, with a substantial portion still relying on parental accounts, possibly reflecting the balance between independence and parental control in digital media consumption.

Table (9)
Children's Reasons for Using YouTube and TikTok

Reasons for using		YouTube	TikTok
1. Entertainment	f	123	110
	%	61.5	55
2. Find a similarity between myself and the people I watch	f	53	50
	%	26.5	25
3. Learning new things	f	114	65
	%	75	32.5
4. Keeping up with the latest trends	f	68	52
	%	34	26
5. Connecting with friends	f	20	97
	%	10	48.5
6. I say what I want whenever I like	f	80	60
	%	40	30
7. Killing time	f	83	96
	%	41.5	48
8. Seeking relaxation	f	96	90

Reasons for using		YouTube	TikTok
	%	48	45
9. Following favorite creators or influencers	f	87	90
	%	43.5	45
Others	f	24	27
	%	12	13.5

The results present the various reasons children use YouTube and TikTok, highlighting both platforms' unique and shared functions in their digital experiences. The data indicates that entertainment is the primary motivation for children using both YouTube (61.5%) and TikTok (55%), emphasizing the role of these platforms as major sources of leisure. The second most significant reason for using YouTube is learning new things, with a notable 75% of children selecting this option, compared to only 32.5% for TikTok. This suggests that YouTube is more favored for educational content, while TikTok is less perceived as a learning tool. Additionally, 48.5% of children use TikTok to connect with friends, a much higher percentage than YouTube (10%), pointing to TikTok's stronger function in social interaction. Notably, children seek relaxation on both platforms, with similar percentages for YouTube (48%) and TikTok (45%), indicating that both platforms are equally used for unwinding. Furthermore, a considerable number of children (43.5% for YouTube and 45% for TikTok) follow their favorite creators and influencers, underscoring the importance of personality-driven content in their digital consumption habits. These insights suggest a complex interplay between entertainment, learning, social connection, and content-driven engagement that drives children's use of YouTube and TikTok. Others (12% as for YouTube) claimed that they have no specific reason, while others of TikTok (13.5%) said that they watch any content presented by the algorithm of both platforms, others they like to imitate sounds in their style.

Hypothesis testing result

Table (10)
Impact of YouTube Exposure on Children's Identity Development

Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Contingency Coefficient

Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Contingency Coefficient
36.070[a]	4	0.000	0.391

The result indicates a significant relationship between YouTube exposure and children's identity development. With a Chi-Square value of 36.070, a degree of freedom (df) of 4, and a p-value of 0.000, the results are highly significant at the $p < 0.01$ level, suggesting a robust association. The contingency coefficient of 0.391 points to a moderate correlation, implying that higher levels of exposure to YouTube are linked with more pronounced effects on children's identity formation. This correlation suggests that the content consumed on YouTube plays a meaningful role in shaping children's perceptions of themselves and their social identities. These findings underscore the importance of monitoring and understanding the type of content children are exposed to on YouTube, as it can significantly influence their developing sense of self and social norms.

Table (11)
Impact of TikTok Exposure on Children's Identity Development

Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Contingency Coefficient
11.164[a]	4	0.025	0.230

The result demonstrates a significant relationship between TikTok exposure and children's identity development. With a Chi-Square value of 11.164, degrees of freedom (df) of 4, and an Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) value of 0.025, the results indicate that there is a statistically significant association between the level of TikTok exposure and changes in children's identity development, with significance at the $p < 0.05$ level. The contingency coefficient of 0.230 suggests a weak but noteworthy correlation, implying that while the relationship is present, the impact of TikTok on children's identity development is moderate. These findings highlight the nuanced influence that TikTok exposure may have on how children perceive and construct their identities, pointing to the need for further exploration into the specific types of content that may contribute to these changes.

Qualitative Results
Focus Groups Discussions analysis
The study focused on exploring the relationship between children's exposure to YouTube and TikTok and the impact of intensive use on their psychological and social well-being, as well as its effect on their identity. To achieve this, the study utilized focus groups discussions with three groups of mothers, categorized according to the type of education their children receive. A total of 26 mothers were selected deliberately, ensuring they had children who actively

used YouTube and TikTok, which was crucial for meeting the study's objectives.

The discussions were facilitated by the researcher, who used a standardized guide to ensure consistency across the sessions. Questions were posed in various ways to elicit comprehensive responses, and each participant was encouraged to share her views freely. The format also allowed for open discussions among the participants on the topics at hand. The findings from the three focus groups are presented below, organized according to the key themes outlined in the discussion guide:

1) Digital media Usage Patterns of Children

The results indicate that children, regardless of gender, educational background, or age, are highly inclined to spend significant amounts of time in front of mobile screens, particularly on platforms like YouTube and TikTok. Mothers across all demographic groups consistently reported ongoing struggles with their children in efforts to limit their screen time.

National Educational System responses: Mothers collectively observed that their children spent most of their day on YouTube and TikTok, with a strong preference for TikTok. One mother highlighted the challenge of managing her son's screen time, sharing, "I fight with my son every day to get him to sleep, but he refuses to turn off TikTok."

Private Educational System responses: Mothers demonstrated diverse approaches. Some completely banned TikTok, allowing only YouTube, while others managed screen time by using applications as one mother said, "I downloaded an application called Family Link to be able to control and limit the time of usage of these platforms.", enabling their children to divide their three-hour limit between YouTube and TikTok as they saw fit. Notably, mothers of children aged 13 and older tended not to enforce any restrictions, with one mother noting that her 13-year-old daughter, now in middle school, spends extended periods on TikTok and is resistant to reducing her usage.

International education system responses: Mothers reported varying strategies for managing their children's screen time on platforms like YouTube and TikTok. Some implemented strict time limits, such as restricting their children's screen time to three hours a day. However, not all mothers enforced such boundaries, with some acknowledging that their children would likely use these platforms excessively if given the opportunity. One mother said, "I have a problem that the information that my son gains from TikTok is sometimes wrong." While another mother even expressed concern, stating, "I feel like this is the god they worship."

2) Children's Motives to Use YouTube and TikTok

National Educational System responses: National Educational System mothers echoed similar sentiments, noting that their children primarily used TikTok for entertainment. This unanimous preference for TikTok over YouTube was seen across all members of this focus group.

Private Educational System responses: The motives among private educational system mothers also varied. They generally preferred YouTube over TikTok due to its valuable content. "Al-Daheh, my daughter loves it very much, and I think it is more than excellent in her respects," said one mother. They appreciated YouTube for its educational content, especially during school times. "There are many lessons that we do not understand. We resort to channels on YouTube that explain them, and they are great," noted another mother. Conversely, the common motive for using TikTok, agreed upon by all mothers, was entertainment and wasting time.

International Educational System responses: The motives for using YouTube and TikTok varied among international educational system mothers. Some saw the primary motive as entertainment, while others believed their children used these platforms to learn new things, such as cooking and skincare. One mother noted, "I feel that my son is not watching something specific. He just gets used to scrolling." However, all agreed that YouTube is more beneficial than TikTok due to its more controllable content.

3) The most favorable content that children watch

The results reveal distinct usage patterns and motives across different school types. International and private school mothers generally favored YouTube for its educational content, while public school mothers noted a strong preference for TikTok, with children often spending excessive time on it for entertainment. The favorite content also varied, with international and private school children engaging with both educational and entertaining videos, while public school children predominantly consumed entertaining content.

National Educational System Mothers: Mothers reported that their children preferred entertaining content, particularly scenes and songs from movies. "My son watches movie scenes and imitates them," one mother shared. Notably, they did not follow any educational content. "My children follow Hamdi and Wafa, and I watch with them," said another." "My son won't go anywhere without his phone, not even the bathroom." said another. "I worry every day because my daughter is always on YouTube and TikTok." said another.

These insights underscore the need for tailored strategies to manage children's digital habits. Parents and educators must collaborate to maximize the educational potential of platforms like YouTube while managing the entertainment allure of TikTok. The differences in media consumption patterns

among children highlight the importance of understanding and addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by each group to ensure a balanced and beneficial use of digital platforms.

Private Educational System Mothers: Mothers agreed that their children preferred short videos more than long ones. "TikTok satisfies her gratifications than YouTube," said one mother. Children's favorite content included educational videos during study times and gaming videos, with girls showing a preference for cooking and making accessories. One mother observed, "I noticed that my son has more information than his age about culture, history, and planets because of YouTube."

International Educational System Mothers: The mothers' answers about their children's favorite content varied, including both educational and entertainment videos, such as songs, movies, and vlogs. Some mothers noted that girls were more interested in TikTok than boys, one mother even particularly mentioned "My daughter creates videos about skincare routines as well as binge watching anything regarding this content." However, another mother stated "My son brings wrong information from the contents he watches on TikTok. For example, he claims from one video he watched that the Earth is flat instead of spherical."

4) The Impact of YouTube and TikTok on Children's Identity

The responses from the focus groups discussions reveal a significant impact of YouTube and TikTok on children's identity formation, particularly in how they perceive their own culture versus the global cultures they are exposed to online. There are some Positive Aspects like **Global Awareness**, the exposure to different cultures, can broaden children's horizons and promote a more inclusive worldview. This can help them understand and appreciate diversity, which is an important aspect of global citizenship. and some Negative Aspects like **Cultural Dissociation** which a growing tendency among children is to view their own cultural traditions and values as outdated or inferior. This can lead to a weakened sense of national identity and pride, **Comparative Dissatisfaction** which is the constant comparison with lifestyles portrayed online can foster dissatisfaction and a sense of inadequacy regarding their own living conditions and cultural context.

Unfortunately, mothers from national educational systems gave no response to the impact of both platforms on the identities of the children as they were not qualified enough to respond to this part as one mother asked, "What is the meaning of identity?" While another one when asked about her child's identity changed, she answered "I do not think that this is even a big issue." Instead of trying to protect their children, some of them watch and follow these platforms

with their children which leads to destroying their identities as well as their children.

On the other hand, mothers from both private and international educational systems reported significant changes in their children's sense of identity and belonging due to their use of YouTube and TikTok. They observed that their children have become more exposed to and influenced by global cultures and ideas. One mother noted, "I notice that even the cartoons present ideas that are strange to our society. For example, my son once came to me and mentioned the concept of the rainbow in a context I found unusual."

Many mothers expressed concerns that their children view traditional customs and values as outdated. They feel pressure to adopt what they see as modern and developed country behaviors. "My children always see our customs and traditions as old things that must be abandoned to become like a developed country," one mother remarked. This exposure has led to a notable shift in how children perceive their own cultural identity.

A few mothers, however, did not notice any significant change in their children's identity. Yet, they observed their children constantly comparing Egypt to other countries. One mother shared, "I feel that my son is being indirectly affected. He often tells me he wishes we lived abroad." This sentiment reflects a growing dissatisfaction among children with their immediate environment, influenced by the seemingly more attractive lifestyles showcased online.

In response to these concerns, some mothers have taken proactive steps to reconnect their children with their cultural roots. One mother decided to watch old Arabic series with her children every week, hoping to instill a sense of cultural pride and belonging.

4.3 Discussion & conclusion

To sum up, the results present key findings on the influence of YouTube and TikTok on children's development, highlighting several important outcomes. The study identifies that these platforms play a crucial role in shaping children's social identities and behaviors, with a notable impact on how children perceive and emulate online personalities and social norms. The findings suggest that while digital media can provide entertainment and educational benefits, it also poses risks that require careful management and guidance from parents and educators to mitigate adverse effects on children's development. These observations are the main reasons to find out the answers to the research questions as follows:

Research Question 1: What is the rate of children's use of YouTube and TikTok?

The study shows a high rate of YouTube and TikTok usage among children. According to survey results conducted with children, 72% reported spending more than two hours per day on these platforms, with 45% stating that they spend over three hours daily. This indicates that YouTube and TikTok are a significant part of children's daily routines. These findings were further corroborated by focus groups discussions with mothers, who expressed concerns about the amount of time their children spend on these platforms. Many mothers noted that their children use YouTube and TikTok as primary sources of entertainment and social interaction. The triangulation of data from the survey, focus groups suggest a concerning trend of high digital media consumption among children, which could have implications for their cognitive and social development.

Research Question 2: What types of content are most frequently consumed by children?

The findings indicate that children predominantly consume entertainment content on YouTube and TikTok. The survey with children revealed that 65% prefer watching music videos, comedy sketches, and viral challenges, while only 20% engage with educational content. Focus groups discussions with mothers supported these results, as they reported that their children are more inclined towards content that is fun and engaging rather than educational. This preference for entertainment content suggests a potential imbalance in children's media diets, which could affect their cognitive and educational development negatively.

Research Question 3: What are the motives for children to use YouTube and TikTok?

The study highlights several motives for children's use of YouTube and TikTok. According to the survey conducted with children, 75% use these platforms primarily for entertainment, 60% to stay updated with trends, and 50% for social engagement with peers. Focus groups discussions with mothers provided further insights, revealing that children often use these platforms to feel connected with their friends and to engage with trending content. Additionally, 35% of children in the survey mentioned using YouTube and TikTok as a form of escapism from daily stressors, a sentiment echoed by mothers who noticed their children turning to these platforms to relax. These motives reflect the complex role of digital media in children's lives, serving as tools for entertainment, social connection, and emotional regulation.

Research Question 4: How does frequent exposure to TikTok and YouTube affect the formation of children's identity?

The study reveals that frequent exposure to TikTok and YouTube significantly influences children's identity formation. According to the survey with children, 68% reported that they often mimic the behaviors and adopt the values of influencers they see on these platforms. This was further validated by focus groups discussions with mothers, who observed their children attempting to emulate the styles, behaviors, and language of their favorite YouTubers and TikTok personalities.

Research Question 6: How does parental control influence the development of a child's personality?

The study found a significant relationship between parental control and the development of children's personalities. Survey results with children indicated that 70% of those who had high levels of parental monitoring exhibited more structured media consumption habits and were less likely to imitate negative behaviors from YouTube and TikTok. This was supported by focus groups discussions with mothers, where those who enforced strict rules regarding media use reported that their children were better at discerning appropriate content.

LIMITATIONS

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The reliance on self-reported data from children could introduce bias, as children may not accurately report their media consumption habits or its effects. Additionally, the study's focus on Egyptian children limits the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts.

Future research should explore longitudinal effects of digital media exposure, particularly as children transition into adolescence and adulthood. Such studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how early exposure to digital content influences long-term identity formation and psychological well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A new strategy to enhance digital audio-visual content to enhance the identity of the Egyptian child

This study reached several important recommendations in the field of digital media and enhancing the identity of the Egyptian child. The researcher seeks to present these recommendations in the form of a proposed strategy based on some suggestions in the theoretical and practical field as follows:

4.5.1 Theoretical Recommendations

1. The researcher proposes to develop a new theoretical model under the name (**Digital Social Learning Model)** and calls on researchers in this field to work on it that links social learning theory with digital media applications.

2. Role of AI-Driven Content: Research should investigate the role of AI-driven algorithms in shaping children's online behavior, particularly how content recommendations influence children's viewing habits and psychological outcomes. Understanding these dynamics can help develop better strategies for managing children's exposure to digital content.

3. Parental Mediation Strategies: Further studies should explore the effectiveness of various parental mediation strategies in managing children's digital media use. This research could identify the most effective approaches for different age groups and cultural contexts, contributing to more tailored guidance for parents.

4. Media Literacy and Gender-Specific Impacts: Future research should focus on the role of media literacy interventions and their effectiveness in fostering critical thinking skills among children. Additionally, examining gender-specific impacts of digital media can help develop targeted educational and policy approaches to address potential risks associated with children's social media usage.

Practical Recommendations

Based on the findings on the impact of YouTube and TikTok on Egyptian children's socio-psychological development, some strategic recommendations for parents and educational institutions to mitigate the negative effects of high exposure to these platforms are suggested as follows:

1. Enhanced Parental Guidance: There is a pressing need for increased parental involvement in monitoring and guiding children's digital media consumption. Parents should be provided with tools and resources to help them understand the content their children are exposed to and its potential impacts. This could include workshops, online resources, and mobile applications designed to offer insights and strategies for managing children's media use effectively.

Recommendations for Parents:

A. Promote Media Literacy and Critical Thinking: Parents should educate their children on how to critically evaluate the content they consume online. Teaching children to distinguish between reality and the often idealized or exaggerated portrayals seen on social media platforms can help reduce the pressure to conform to unrealistic standards and prevent negative self-perception.

B. Use of Parental Controls and Privacy Settings: Utilize parental controls and privacy settings available on platforms like YouTube and TikTok to filter out inappropriate content and manage screen time. Parents should also educate

their children about online privacy and the importance of safeguarding personal information to prevent cyberbullying and other online risks.

C. Encourage Alternative Activities: Parents should encourage children to participate in extracurricular activities that promote physical, social, and creative development. Activities such as sports, arts, reading, and group play can provide a balanced routine, reducing reliance on digital media for entertainment and social interaction.

2. Educational Programs: Schools should incorporate comprehensive media literacy programs into their curricula to help children develop critical thinking skills regarding the content they consume. These programs can empower children to make informed choices about their digital media use and mitigate the negative impacts of exposure to potentially harmful content. Such education should also cover digital etiquette, privacy concerns, and the responsible use of social media platforms.

 Recommendations for Educational Institutions:

A. Incorporate Digital Literacy into the Curriculum: Schools should integrate digital literacy education into their curriculums, teaching students how to navigate digital platforms responsibly. This includes understanding the implications of digital footprints, recognizing misinformation, and managing online identities to ensure they reflect their true selves rather than conforming to external pressures.

B.   Facilitate Workshops for Parents and Students: Educational institutions can organize workshops to educate parents and students about the potential risks and benefits of digital media use. These workshops can cover topics such as cyberbullying, privacy, and the psychological impacts of social media, empowering parents and children to make informed decisions about digital consumption.

C. Develop School Policies on Screen Time: Establishing school-wide policies that limit screen time during school hours and encourage non-digital forms of learning and interaction can help mitigate the negative effects of excessive media use. This can include promoting activities that require face-to-face communication and collaboration, enhancing social skills and emotional intelligence.

D. Create Safe Spaces for Expression and Social Interaction: Schools should provide environments where children can freely express themselves and interact socially without the pressures of online validation. Safe spaces for discussion, peer support groups, and extracurricular clubs can offer alternatives to digital platforms, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

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