

The Impact of Social Media Sites on Deviant Behavior in University Youth

"Descriptive Study on X-Platform Users"

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the impact of using the X platform on deviant behavior among university youth at Dhofar University in the Sultanate of Oman. The study based on the descriptive and analytical approaches, drawing on imitation theory as a theoretical framework, and was applied to a purposive sample of (115) male and female students. The results showed that the level of impact of using the X platform on deviant behavior was high. The most influential dimensions were celebrity imitation (high), followed by the spread of fake news (high), while the impact of cyberbullying was moderate.

The study also found statistically significant differences in the level of impact in favor of males and in favor of students from the Faculty of Arts and Applied Sciences. The study found the necessity of adopting high-level preventive mechanisms, including imposing censorship on offensive and misleading content, establishing clear laws and regulations to control digital behavior and determine responsibilities to ensure deterrence.

Keywords: social media, deviant behavior, university youth, X platform, online behavior.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a radical shift in the pattern of social communication among individuals with the spread of social media sites, which have become a principal window for interaction and self-expression, especially among university youth who constitute a large percentage of users of these platforms. Among these platforms, the "X" platform stands out as one of the most prominent social media tools that have directly impacted youth behaviors, as its influence is no longer limited to information exchange and entertainment but has extended to include psychological, social, and legal dimensions with profound effects on the individual and society.

Despite all the benefits and opportunities these platforms offer, excessive or undisciplined use may lead to the emergence of deviant behavioral patterns that threaten societal values and cause the disintegration of social bonds, particularly among the university youth category. Among these behaviors that have become widespread and escalating in the X platform environment: cyberbullying, which causes psychological and social harmful to victims; the spread of fake news, which undermines trust and stirs discord; and imitation of celebrities and their negative lifestyles, which promotes the adoption of harmful practices that may lead to psychological and social crises.

A sufficient understanding and analysis of these phenomena can only be achieved through the integration of scientific efforts across different disciplines. The field of social work plays a pivotal role in studying the psychological and social factors that lead to these behaviors and proposing preventive and awareness programs based on scientific and field methodologies. Meanwhile, the field of law is responsible for establishing the legal and regulatory framework that ensures

the control of digital behavior and protects individuals and society from transgressions by determining appropriate responsibilities and penalties.

This study aims to uncover the real motives behind the use of the X platform and analyze its impact on deviant behavior among university youth, while seeking to provide integrated preventive strategies that combine both the social and legal dimensions, making this study an effective reference for decision-makers and institutions concerned with youth upbringing and care in the Sultanate of Oman and beyond.

Firstly: Research Problem

In light of the widespread use of the X platform among university youth, and its characteristics of rapid content dissemination and ease of interaction, patterns of digital behaviors have emerged that involve deviant manifestations affecting social values and university conduct, such as cyberbullying, spreading unverified news, and imitating celebrities in inappropriate behaviors. Previous literature and studies indicate a possible correlation between the intensity of social media platform use and the emergence of these behaviors. However, the nature and scope of this correlation vary depending on the digital platform, age group, and cultural and social context.

Despite that, studies that have specifically addressed the X platform and its relationship to deviant behavior among university youth remain limited, particularly those that treat this relationship from a social and legal analytical perspective based on scientifically testable hypotheses. Hence, the research problem stems from the attempt to uncover the nature of the relationship between X platform usage and the level of deviant behavior among university youth, thereby contributing to verifying the validity of the hypotheses from which the study proceeds.

Second: Research Significance

The research significance is divided into theoretical and practical significance:

1. Theoretical Significance:

The theoretical significance of this research stems from addressing a modern and vital topic concerning the impact of social media sites, particularly the X platform, on deviant behavior among university youth—a group that represents the cornerstone of building societies.

The research contributes to enriching the scientific and epistemological literature in the fields of social service and law through linking both social and legislative dimensions in analyzing the phenomenon. It also highlights new forms of deviant behaviors brought as the result of digital development, such as cyberbullying, rumor spreading, and celebrity imitation, thereby enhancing the theoretical understanding of these phenomena and placing them in a scientific methodological context amenable to generalization and comparative study.

2. Practical Significance:

From a practical standpoint, the research provides an accurate depiction of the reality experienced by university youth in the digital communication environment and monitors the challenges they face regarding deviant behaviors associated with X platform usage.

The practical significance of the research lies in its contribution to:

- a. Introducing awareness to academic and educational bodies and decision-makers about the risks of negative social media use.
- b. Providing proposals and preventive strategies that can be applied within universities and youth guidance institutions to limit the spread of deviant behaviors.
- c. Supporting practitioners in the fields of social work and criminal justice in designing targeted intervention programs to address the phenomenon using scientific and realistic methods.
- d. Guiding media and legislative policies toward controlling digital content and enhancing safe and positive use of communication platforms.

Third: Study Objectives

1. To identify the motives for university youth's use of the X platform.
2. Determine the impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth.
3. Identify proposed preventive strategies to reduce the impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth.
4. To attempt to reach proposed mechanisms to reduce the impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth.

Fourth: Study Hypotheses

First study Hypothesis:

"It is expected that the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth will be high."

This hypothesis can be tested through the following dimensions:

1. Cyberbullying behavior.
2. Fake news spreading behavior.
3. Celebrity imitation behavior.

(2) Second Study Hypothesis: "There are statistically significant substantive differences between university youth responses according to some demographic variables (gender/university colleges) regarding their determination of the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth."

(3) Third Hypothesis: "There is a statistically significant variation between university youth responses according to some demographic variables (academic year categories/hours of use categories) regarding their determination of the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth."

Fifth: Research Concepts

1. Social Media Sites

Social media sites are electronic platforms that enable users to create and share content and build social networks through instant interaction. They are "a group of Internet applications built on Web 2.0 technological foundations that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Rami, 2026)

Social media sites are also defined as digital networks consisting of websites on the Internet that provide their users with opportunities for dialogue and exchange of information, opinions, ideas, and problems through personal profiles, photos, chat rooms, and other media. These networks vary to include many platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, and other sites (Nassef & other 2022, p.133; Al-Badri, 2023).

These platforms are characterized by interactive features such as user-generated content, network building, and social interaction, making them influential in user behavior and attitudes.

Moayyad's study (2015) provided an analytical description of social media sites within the Internet framework, indicating that they represent a qualitative development of this network, which is no longer reduced to being merely a "global network, a massive repository, or an exceptional tool for rapid information exchange," but today performs "exceptional tasks with political, economic, and social repercussions." It is understood from the general context that social media sites are part of the modern Internet, which has become one of the most prominent sources of information and influence among youth

Shabha and Nawal's study (2021) illustrated that the social media sites have become an essential part of youth's daily lives, playing an active role in shaping thinking and behavior patterns, especially in university environments. The study indicates that excessive use of these platforms may lead to the emergence of undesirable behaviors such as verbal aggression, social isolation, and being influenced by negative content. The study also demonstrated a direct correlation between the intensity of use of these sites and some manifestations of deviant behavior, such as blind imitation of negative behaviors or engagement in digital groups with intellectually or behaviorally deviant tendencies.

Social media sites enable users with multiple opportunities for self-expression, information exchange, and the formation of social and cultural identities, making them key drivers of social change and mass communication **(Boyd & Ellison, 2007).**

In this research, the definition of social media sites is limited to the X platform as a study model, due to its prevalence among university youth and its influential characteristics on behaviors and deviance.

2. X Platform

The X platform, formerly known as "Twitter," is a microblogging service that allows users to post short tweets, retweet them, and interact through comments (Java et al., 2007).

This platform is characterized by the rapid spread of information and ease of access, making it an influential environment for shaping public opinion and behavioral attitudes, especially among youth (Bruns & Burgess, 2011).

Al-Anzi and Al-Sakhawi's study (2024) conclude that excessive use of Twitter among university youth contributes to the crystallization of new intellectual and behavioral patterns influenced by the platform's content, especially when this content is directed by entities or accounts with wide influence. The study also documented cases of intellectual deviance due to the intensive repetition of content and ease of access without cognitive censorship. The study emphasizes the importance of user awareness, especially among youth, of the content they interact with, to reduce opportunities for negative influence or behavioral deviance associated with misleading or violent digital messages.

Since changing its brand to "X" in 2023, the platform continues to play a pivotal role as an interactive digital platform influencing social behaviors, making it a suitable model for study in the current research.

It refers to the digital platform formerly known as "Twitter," which relies on instant posting of tweets, retweeting, and interaction through comments. It is characterized by rapid content transmission, wide accessibility, and the ability to directly influence user opinions and behavior. This platform serves as the study tool through which the correlation between usage and deviant behaviors among university youth will be measured.

3. Concept of Deviant Behavior

Deviant behavior refers to any act that violates social rules, cultural values, or prevailing legal norms in society. **Ibrahim and Shehata (D.T.)** emphasize that deviance is not an absolute concept but is relative and varies according to time, place, and cultural context. Forms of deviant behavior range from simple behaviors that violate public decency to explicit crimes and legal violations, making it a dynamic and broad concept in social studies.

In this research, Deviant behavior takes on a procedural character, manifested through three recurring main patterns on the X platform. (formerly Twitter):

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is considered as one of the most prominent forms of digital deviant behavior. It is defined as "deliberate and repeated aggressive behavior carried out through digital media with the aim of causing psychological or social harm to victims," as indicated by **Abdul Rahim's study (2022)**. Its danger lies in not being restricted by time or place, which enhances its continuity and weakens social control over it.

The **Patchin & Hinduja's (2024)** study indicate that cyberbullying leaves profound psychological effects on victims, including anxiety, isolation, and suicidal thoughts. Also, the Awan et al. (2023) study confirmed that the motives for this type of behavior include the desire for control, reaction to previous bullying, and seeking social acceptance, especially in the university environment.

The study of **Masrom and others (2021)** placed this behavior among the most common digital deviant behaviors among university students, emphasizing the necessity of analyzing it in its social and psychological context.

- Fake News deployment

Fake news is considered as one of the most dangerous forms of deviant behavior in the digital space. It involves spreading misleading, fabricated, or incorrect information with the aim of influencing public opinion or creating a state of societal confusion.

Ghanem and other's study (2019) proved that emotional content, such as feelings of anger or fear, is the most widespread and influential in promoting fake news. **Stanford University's study (2016)** confirmed that 82% of students are unable to distinguish between correct and fake news, reflecting a weakness in digital literacy.

From his side Lahmar's study (2020) provided a cognitive analysis of the phenomenon of fake news and explained how social networks create an ideal environment for the flourishing of this type of misinformation, in the absence of editorial oversight and rapid circulation. Al-Yazidi's study (2023) supported this finding, confirming that cognitive biases and filtering algorithms contribute to deepening the problem.

- Imitation of Celebrities and Their Negative Lifestyles

University's youth are influenced by the behaviors of some celebrities on social media platforms, sometimes pushing them to imitate unhealthy lifestyles such as excessive consumption, superficial display, or even more dangerous behaviors like drug use.

Nouri's study (2018) addressed this type of influence within the framework of parasocial relationships, explaining how influencers create a sense of familiarity and trust, increasing the likelihood of imitation. Budzinski and **Janssen's study (2018)** indicated that the economics of digital stardom rely on repetitive content, even if negative, in achieving rapid success and mass influence.

Kaur and Garg's study (2016) proved that university youth are significantly influenced by advertisements featuring movie celebrities, which directs their purchasing behavior and affects their consumer lifestyle.

In a similar context, Al-Sayed's study (2019) indicates that parasocial interaction with celebrities constitutes a psychological and emotional dimension with a tangible impact on adolescents, making them more susceptible to imitating celebrities in behavior, appearance, and thought.

3. Summary

From the analysis of previous studies, it is clear that manifestations of deviant behavior such as cyberbullying, deployment of fake news, and negative celebrity imitation do not occur in isolation from the digital environment but are nourished by it and reproduced through it. It can be said that the X platform, as a model of modern social networks, provides a fertile environment for the exacerbation of these phenomena, necessitating educational, awareness, and legal interventions to mitigate their psychological, social, and behavioral effects on university youth.

2. Concept of the University Youth

University youth are considered one of the most active groups in society; they are those who pursue their academic education after obtaining a high school diploma, typically ranging in age between **18 and 35 years** (Kanaan, 2008). Hashim's study (2018, p 379) ensure that this group represents the nation's workforce and the cornerstone of development processes in its various dimensions, as they possess capabilities, energies, and creativity that contribute to achieving the desired societal progress, as university youth are viewed as the backbone of society, future leaders, and the pillar of sustainable development.

Nazihah, Shbayki, and Sarah, Tarshan's study (2021, p. 20) also indicated that university youth are an essential element in the educational process, falling within the age group of 19 to 24 years, and are characterized by traits such as quick wit and the ability to bear social responsibility.

In light of that, this study operationally defines university youth as male and female students affiliated with the Faculty of Arts and Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Law at Dhofar University, ranging approximately between 18 and 25 years of age, who regularly use the X platform as part of their daily social media activities. These youth represent the primary unit of analysis in the study, as analyzing their usage patterns of the platform aims to understand their motives for this use and measure its impact on certain digital deviant behaviors such as cyberbullying, spreading fake news, and imitating negative lifestyles promoted by some platform celebrities.

Sixth: Previous Studies:

1. Shabha and Nawal (2021) - titled "The Impact of Social Media Sites on Deviant Behavior"

This study titled *"The Impact of Social Media Sites on Deviant Behavior,"* aimed to explore the relationship between the use of social media specifically the Facebook platform by media and communication students and their adoption of patterns deviant behaviors. The researchers used the descriptive analytical approach and applied the study to a sample of master's students at Mouloud Mammeri University. The results showed that the length of time spent using platforms and the type of content followed directly contribute to enhancing the likelihood of adopting abnormal behaviors, especially in the absence of guidance. The study recommended the necessity of educating university youth about responsible use of communication platforms.

Relevance to the current study: This study confirms the relationship between social media use and deviant behavior, supporting the analytical framework of the current study

2. Abdul Rahim's study (2022) - "Cyberbullying: Its Manifestations, ways of its Confrontation, and Related Jurisprudential Rulings"

This study aimed to explain the various manifestations of cyberbullying and interpret them in light of Islamic Sharia. It addressed the concept of cyberbullying and its causes, such as psychological pressures and social factors, and demonstrated its forms including defamation, blackmail, and account hacking. It also reviewed the Sharia rulings related to these acts, confirming that they fall under the category of "discretionary punishment".

Relevance to the current study: This study illuminates an important aspect of digital deviant behavior and provides an ethical and value-based dimension to the study topic.

3. Al-Hadrami & others. (2022) - "The Impact of Social Media on University Youth Behaviors and Values in the Sultanate of Oman: A Field Study on Female Students at Al-Sharqiyah University"

The study aimed to analyze the positive and negative impact of social media use on female students' behavior and values. It adopted a descriptive approach and was applied to 400 female students from various academic levels. The results concluded that increased platform use leads to problems such as poor concentration and increased isolation, with some positive aspects such as enhancing social relationships.

Relevance to the current study: This study enhances the link between intensive use of social media and behavioral changes, which is closely related to the deviant behavior axis in the current study.

Foreign Studies

4. Awan & others (2023) - "Motives Behind Cyber Deviant Behavior Among University Students"

This study aimed to explore the psychological and social reasons that drive university students to adopt deviant behaviors through the internet. It used in-depth qualitative interviews and found that among the most prominent motives are: the desire for social recognition, seeking control, and reaction to previous bullying.

Relevance to the current study: This study provides a deep understanding of the motives for deviant behavior in the university context, which supports the analysis in the current study, especially regarding the X platform.

5. Patchin & Hinduja's study (2024) -titled "Cyberbullying Among American Asian Youth"

This study sought to analyze the effects of this behavior on mental health. The results showed that digital bullying leads to severe psychological symptoms such as depression and chronic anxiety. The study recommended to put a preventive strategy.

Relevance to the current study: It highlights the psychological dimension of deviant behavior, which can be utilized in interpreting some of the current study's results in the Omani environment.

6. Masrom & others (2021) - titled "Understanding Students' Behavior in Electronic Social Networks"

This study aimed to provide a comprehensive review of student behavior patterns on digital platforms, including deviations such as digital aggression, addiction, and bullying. The study confirmed that platforms form a conducive environment for maladaptive behaviors due to continuous interaction and weak oversight.

Relevance to the current study: This study supports the analytical methodological framework of the current study and highlights the importance of analyzing the behavior of X platform users within the local university context.

Previous Studies and Research Gap

Recent years have witnessed a noticeable increase in the number of studies addressing the impact of social media on individual behaviors, especially among university youth, as a result of the new behavioral patterns that the digital environment has produced, which merit analysis and study. In this context, a set of studies that serve as important references for the current study can be reviewed, in terms of topic, methodology, and field, whether on the Arab or international levels.

Comparative Table of Prominent Previous Studies Related to the Research Topic:

S.n	Study title	Objective	Methodology & Sample	Main Findings	Relevance to current Study
1	Shabha & Nawal (2021)	Explore relationship between social use and deviant behavior among media's student	Descriptive analytical – Master's students	Content and time affect behavior. repetition leads to imitation and deviance	Directly relates to the core of the current study in analyzing the relationship between content and deviant behavior.
2	Abdul Rahim (2022)	Jurisprudential treatment of cyberbullying, its manifestations and rulings	Foundational jurisprudential analysis	Sharia analysis of cyberbullying forms; call for deterrence and moral education	Enhances the value and religious dimension in interpreting digital behavioral deviance
3	Al-Hadrami & others (2002)	Demonstrate impact of social media on behaviors and values of female students at Al-	Descriptive -400 female students	Moderate impact; negative results like isolation and poor concentration, positive	Important local reference confirming the importance of the current study in the Omani context

		Sharqiyah University - Oman		like enhanced relationships	
4	Awan & others (2023)	Explore motives of digital deviant behavior among university students	Qualitative -in depth interviews	Desire for control, revenge, and social recognition as motives for deviant behavior	Explains psychological and motivational factors in X platform use
5	Patchin & Hinduja (2024)	Analyze effects of cyberbullying on youth mental health	Quantitative questionnaires	Profound and long-term psychological impact (anxiety, trauma)	Enhances understanding of physiological effects of digital deviant behaviors
6	Masrom & others (2021)	Review student behavior in social networks	Methodological review	Aggression, bullying, addiction as recurring patterns; networks shape digital behavior	Confirms the importance of the methodology used and supports the applied context of the study.

Research Gap

Through analyzing previous studies, **several main research gaps** can be identified that distinguish the current study from what preceded it:

1. Non focus on the X Platform Specifically:

All previous studies addressed social media sites in general or focused on Facebook, and did not address the behavioral impact of the X platform (formerly Twitter) despite its particularity in spreading rapid, provocative content that is open to aggressive or emotional interactions, making its study of special importance in the academic context.

B. Absence of Integration Between the Social and Legal Dimensions:

Most studies focused on the social or psychological dimension only, or the religious dimension as in Abdul Rahim's study, without integrating this analysis with a clear legal perspective stemming from criminology and concepts of responsibility and deviant behavior—something the current study seeks to achieve.

C. Rarity of Local Applied Studies on Digital Deviant Behavior in the Sultanate of Oman:

Except for one study (Al-Hadrami & others.), there are no Omani field studies—to the researchers' knowledge—that have addressed the relationship between digital platforms and deviant behavior. This study comes to fill this gap by examining the Omani university environment and analyzing the impact of X platform content specifically.

D. Absence of a Study Providing an Integrated Analysis Combining (Motives of Use, Patterns of Deviant Behavior, Prevention Strategies) in an integrated Applied Descriptive Model, this is what this study seeks to achieve through reliance on specific theoretical frameworks (such as Tard's imitation theory) and precise field data.

- Theoretical Framework of the Study

Crime is a social phenomenon par excellence, as no society exists, regardless of its social, political, economic, or legal organization, without crime, as confirmed by sociologist Émile Durkheim, who considered crime a phenomenon that threatens the social fabric due to the disruption it causes among members of society.

With the development of human societies, research into the causes of crime and the analysis of criminal behavior became central to the humanities and social sciences, especially with the emergence of criminology as a specialized science aiming to analyze criminal behavior from all its angles, including social, biological, psychological, and economic causes and factors. Criminology refers to a set of theories that explain criminal behavior and the factors leading to it, which are not limited to a single factor but include the overlap of biological, social, economic, psychological, and cultural factors.

Understanding these factors is necessary for developing effective preventive strategies (Abu al-Ghanem & others 2025).

In this context, the theory of French scholar Gabriel Tard (1843-1904) emerges as an important theoretical framework for our study. Tard focuses on the role of imitation and social simulation in the emergence of criminal behavior. Tard argues that criminal behavior does not arise from innate or natural factors within the individual, but is the product of social factors related to the socialization process and cultural beliefs that the individual acquires through imitation and simulation of others in their social environment. Thus, Tard distances himself from theories that focus on biological or psychological characteristics inherited and emphasizes that individual deviation and behavior that violates social rules

The Impact of Social Media Sites on Deviant Behavior in University Youth depends primarily on the social environment in which they live and the extent of its influence on them (**Benhadou, 1999, p 114**).

From the above, it is clear that Tard focused on the idea that criminal behavior, like any other social behavior, is learned through processes of simulation and imitation.

Tard establishes several basic rules in the law of imitation that explain how criminal behavior is transmitted between individuals:

1. **Imitation proceeds from the inside out:** Imitation of ideas and beliefs precedes imitation of expressive means of behavior. Also, imitation of socially close individuals is faster and stronger than imitation of distant individuals.
2. **Imitation spreads from the stronger to the weaker:** Individuals with higher social status or leaders influence the formation of others' behaviors, which explains the existence of criminals imitating gangs and their leaders.
3. **There is a fashion in imitation:** Just as fashions in clothing change, patterns of criminal behavior also change, with new methods of crime appearing that replace old ones and spread rapidly among criminals.

Tard defined the criminal as a person who habitually commits criminal acts through upbringing and raising in a criminal environment, where crime becomes a habit difficult to abandon, with an absence of desire for change or cessation.

This theory applies particularly to studying the impact of social media platforms such as the X platform on university youth, as these platforms allow for the rapid and widespread access of ideas and behaviors, making youth more susceptible to imitating behavioral patterns that may be deviant or culturally and socially inappropriate. Tard explains how uncritical imitation of these behaviors can lead to the spread of phenomena such as cyberbullying, spreading fake news, and imitating negative lifestyles of celebrities.

Although Tard's theory clearly focuses on the imitation process as a cause of criminal behavior, it does not cover all the complex aspects of deviant behavior, given that it is behavior emanating from humans, and human behavior is known to be complex due to the intertwining of factors and causes influencing it, including apparent and hidden relationships and factors.

Therefore, this study aims to integrate the aforementioned theory with other concepts in the fields of social service and law to understand the phenomenon comprehensively and put multidimensional preventive strategies suitable for the modern digital communication environment.

- The linkage between the theory and the behaviors of young people on social media platforms

In the framework of our research on the impact of the X platform on deviant behavior among university youth, Tard's theory helps us understand the mechanisms of transmitting deviant behaviors through the simulation and imitation of celebrities or influential groups on this platform, which play the role of higher social power that youth emulate. The behaviors displayed on these platforms, whether positive or negative, are imitated and simulated, which explains the spread of phenomena such as cyberbullying, imitation of celebrities' negative lifestyles, and the spread of fake news.

Thus, the research views the **X platform** as a new social environment that exercises its influence on the individual through the mechanisms of social imitation described by Tard, where the simulation of behavior presented on this platform constitutes one of the most important factors in the cultivation of deviant behavior in the digital university environment.

Critique and Integration

Despite the importance of Tard's theory in clarifying the role of imitation in criminal behavior, the theory faces criticism for not encompassing all influencing factors, such as the complex economic, social, and psychological factors that affect individual behavior. Therefore, this study relies on integrating the theory with other concepts in social service and law to deepen our understanding of deviant behavior in the social media platform environment.

Research Fields

(a) Spatial Field:

The spatial field of the study is represented by the Faculty of Arts and Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Law at Dhofar University.

(b) Human Field:

The human field of the study is represented by a purposive sample of students from the Faculty of Arts and Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Law in the four academic years at Dhofar University in the Sultanate of Oman for the academic year 2025/2026, totaling (115) individuals.

(c) Time Field:

The time field of the study is represented by the data collection period from the field, which began on November 1, 2025, and ended on November 30, 2025.

Methodological Procedures of the Study

(1) Study Methodology:

This study is considered as one of the descriptive study, and it relied on the social survey method using a purposive sample of students of the Faculty of Arts and Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Law at Dhofar University in the Sultanate

of Oman across the four academic years for the academic year 2025/2026 who are users of the X platform, totaling (115) individuals. Their distribution: (80) individuals from the Faculty of Arts and Applied Sciences, and (35) individuals from the Faculty of Law

(2) Dimensions & sources of the Study:

Main Dimensions	Sub-Dimensions	Dimensions Source
Dimensions of the impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth	Cyberbullying behavior Fake news spreading behavior Celebrity imitation behavior	The most important sources of these dimensions were identified by referring to the theoretical literature guiding the study, and previous studies related to the research problem of the study.
	The proposed preventive strategies to reduce the impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth	

(3) Study Tools:

Data collection tools represented in:

A questionnaire for university youth on the impact of social media sites on deviant behavior among university youth:

- The researchers designed a questionnaire for university youth using Google Drive Models on the impact of social media sites on deviant behavior among university youth, based on the theoretical heritage guiding the study, as well as previous studies related to the research issue of the study.
- The university youth questionnaire included the following axes: preliminary data, dimensions of the impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth, and proposed preventive strategies to reduce the impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth.
- The university youth questionnaire relied on the three-point Likert scale, with responses for each statement being (Yes, To some extent, No), and each response was assigned a weight (score) as follows: Yes (3 points), To some extent (2 points), No (1 point).
- The researchers verified the content validity (logical validity) of the university youth questionnaire by reviewing theoretical literature, scientific books, and previous studies and research that addressed the study dimensions, then analyzing them to identify the study dimensions. The tool was then presented to (3) referees from faculty members at the Faculty of Arts and Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Law at Dhofar University to give their opinion on the tool's validity in terms of linguistic correctness of the statements and their relevance to the study dimensions. The tool was modified and formulated in its final form, and its results can be relied upon to achieve the study objectives and test the validity of its hypotheses.
- The researchers relied on Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for estimating reliability values of the tool, applying it to a pilot sample of (10) individuals from the university youth (study population). It was found that the reliability coefficients for the dimensions possess a high degree of reliability, as follows:

Table No. (1): Results of University Youth Questionnaire Reliability

University Youth (n=10)	Dimensions of X Platform Use Impact on Deviant Behavior				Proposed Preventive Strategies	Tool Dimensions as a Whole
Dimensions	Cyberbullying	Fake News	Celebrity Imitation	Impact Dimensions as a Whole		
Number of Statements	5	5	5	15	6	21
Coefficient Value	0.946	0.838	0.968	0.878	0.939	0.910
Reliability Degree	High degree	High degree	High degree	High degree	High degree	High degree

- The reliability coefficients indicate that the tool possesses a high degree of reliability, accuracy, and validity, and the tool has reached its final form. Its results are reliable, and its findings can be generalized to the study community.

(4) Determine Levels of Arithmetic Mean for Study Dimensions:

The level of study dimensions can be determined using the arithmetic mean. Data were coded and entered into the computer. To determine the length of the three-point scale cells (lower and upper limits), the range was calculated = highest value - lowest value ($3-1 = 2$). The range was divided by the number of scale cells to obtain the corrected cell length ($2/3 = 0.67$). This value was then added to the lowest value on the scale or the scale starting point which is the complete One to determine the upper limit of this cell, as follows:

Table No. (2): Levels of Arithmetic Mean for Study Dimensions

Values	Level
If the mean value for the statement or dimension ranges from 1 to 1.67	Low level
If the mean value for the statement or dimension ranges from 1.68 to 2.34	Moderate level
If the mean value for the statement or dimension ranges from 2.35 to 3	High level

(5) Statistical Analysis Methods:

Data were collected from 1/11/2025 to 30/11/2025, then processed using a computer using the Statistical Package program for the Social Sciences (SPSS V. 24.0), and the following statistical methods were applied: frequencies and percentages, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, range, and reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) for Estimated reliably values for the instrument and Pearson correlation coefficient, independent samples and t-test for two independent samples, and one-way analysis of variance to determine variance between groups.

- Field Study Results and its Discussion

First Axis: Description of University Youth the Study's population

Table (3): Description of University Youth as the Study Population

Gender	k	%	University Colleges	k	%
Male	68	59.1	College of Arts and Applied Sciences	80	69.6
Female	47	40.9	Faculty of Law	35	30.4
Total	115	100	Total	115	100
Academic Year	k	%	Daily Hours of Use	k	%
First year	52	45.2	Less than 1 hour	25	21.7
Second year	30	26.2	From hour to 3 hours	42	36.5
Third year	20	17.4	From 4 hours to 6 hours	48	41.7
Forth year	13	11.3	Total	115	100
			Arithmetic mean	3	
Total	115	100	Standard deviation	2	
Motives for Using X Platform	k	%	Type of Content on X Platform	k	%
Following News	34	29.6	Entertainment Content	59	51.3
Following Celebrities and Influencers	47	40.9	Sports Content	14	12.2
Interaction with Societal Issues	13	11.3	Educational/Academic Content	32	27.8
Entertainment and amusement	21	18.3	Social Issues	10	8.7
Total	115	100	Total	115	100

The table above shows that:

- The largest percentage of university youth were males (59.1%), while females accounted for (40.9%).
- The largest percentage of university youth were enrolled in the college of Arts and Applied Sciences at Dhofar University (69.6%), followed by the college of Law at Dhofar University (30.4%).

- The largest percentage of university youth were enrolled in their first year (45.2%), followed by second year (26.1%), then third year (17.4%), and finally fourth year (11.3%).
- The largest percentage of university youth reported daily X platform usage in the category (4 to 6 hours) at (41.7%), followed by the category (1 to 3 hours) at (36.5%), and finally the category (less than 1 hour) at (21.7%). The mean daily usage was (3) hours, with a standard deviation of approximately 2 hours.
- Motives for X platform use among university youth were: following celebrities and influencers (40.9%), followed by following news (29.6%), then entertainment and leisure (18.3%), and finally interaction with societal issues (11.3%).
- The most followed content type on the X platform among university youth was: entertainment content (51.3%), followed by educational/academic content (27.8%), then sports content (12.2%), and finally social issues (8.7%).

Second Axis: Dimensions of the Impact of Using the X Platform on Deviant Behavior Among University Youth

Table (4) Illustrate Dimensions of the Impact of using the X Platform on Deviant Behavior Among University Youth

(n=115)

	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Rank
Cyberbullying Behavior	I am sometimes exposed to offensive comments or sarcasm on Twitter	2.47	0.55	High	1
	Cyberbullying spreads among some Twitter users from university students	2.23	0.55	Medium	2
	Identity anonymity encourages increased hostile behaviors on Twitter	2.35	0.62	High	3
	Harsh discussions sometimes turn into verbal abuse between users	2.32	0.59	Medium	4
	Bullying on Twitter affects some students' sense of security and self-confidence	2.34	0.59	Medium	3
	Impact of X platform use on cyberbullying behavior	2.34	0.47	Medium	
Fake News Spreading Behavior	I encounter inaccurate information or news frequently on Twitter	2.51	0.54	High	1
	I have previously shared content without verifying its accuracy when influenced by it	2.32	0.52	Medium	5
	Rapid spread of tweets helps circulate misleading news	2.42	0.62	High	3
	Spread of unverified news has a negative impact on some students	2.43	0.56	High	2
	Some youths are influenced by decisions based on unconfirmed information published on Twitter	2.41	0.59	High	4
Celebrity Imitation Behavior	Impact of X platform use on fake news spreading behavior	2.42	0.47	High level	
	I regularly follow celebrity and influencer content on Twitter	2.65	0.51	High	1
	Some youth try to imitate celebrities' lifestyles as shown on Twitter	2.46	0.53	High	5
	Celebrity content may push some students to adopt inappropriate behaviors	2.55	0.61	High	2
	Some youths are influenced by values or ideas spread by celebrities without evaluation	2.51	0.55	High	4
	The desire of Some students increases to follow trends spread among celebrities on Twitter increases	2.52	0.57	High	3
	Impact of X platform use on celebrity imitation behavior	2.54	0.48	High Level	

The table above shows that:

- **Impact level of X platform use on cyberbullying behavior** among university youth is **medium**, with a arithmetic mean of (2.34). Indicators according to mean ranking: Rank 1: "I am sometimes exposed to offensive comments

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or sarcasm on Twitter" with a mean of (2.47), followed by Rank 2: "Anonymity encourages increased hostile behaviors on Twitter" with a mean of (2.35), then Rank 3: "Bullying on Twitter affects some students' sense of security and self-confidence" with a mean of (2.34), and finally Rank 5: "Cyberbullying spreads among some Twitter users from university students" with a mean of (2.23).

- These results can be interpreted in light of Gabriel Tarde's imitation theory, which holds that deviant behavior is socially acquired through simulation and imitation within the surrounding environment. The nature of interaction on the X platform, especially in the context of anonymity and weak social control, contributes to the transmission of patterns of hostile behavior among users, making cyberbullying a behavior that can spread and be repeated through unconscious imitation.
- These results are consistent with Abdul Rahim's study (2022), which demonstrated the multiple manifestations of cyberbullying and its association with psychological and social factors, and also align with Masrom et al.'s study (2021), which confirmed that digital platforms serve as a fertile environment for hostile behaviors in the context of weak oversight and anonymity.
- The level of **X platform use impact on fake news spreading behavior** among university youth was high, with a mean of (2.42). Indicators according to mean ranking: Rank 1: "I encounter inaccurate information or news frequently on Twitter" with a mean of (2.51), followed by Rank 2: "Spread of unverified news has a negative impact on some students" with a mean of (2.43), then Rank 3: "Rapid spread of tweets helps circulate misleading news" with a mean of (2.42), and finally Rank 5: "I have previously shared content without verifying its accuracy when influenced by it" with a mean of (2.32).
- These results can be interpreted in light of Gabriel Tarde's imitation theory, which emphasizes that the transmission of ideas and beliefs precedes the transmission of behavior. Repeated interaction with unverified content on the X platform contributes to establishing patterns of uncritical thinking, leading some youth to imitate the behavior of sharing and posting without verification, viewing it as a common and acceptable practice within the digital space.
- These results are consistent with Shabha and Nawal's study (2021), which showed that duration of use and content type contribute to the adoption of abnormal behaviors.
- The level of **X platform use impact on celebrity imitation behavior** among university youth was **high**, with a mean of (2.54). Indicators according to mean ranking: Rank 1: "I regularly follow celebrity and influencer content on Twitter" with a mean of (2.65), followed by Rank 2: "Celebrity content may push some students to adopt inappropriate behaviors" with a mean of (2.55), then Rank 3: "Some students' desire to follow trends spread among celebrities on Twitter increases" with a mean of (2.52), and finally Rank 5: "Some youth try to imitate celebrities' lifestyles as shown on Twitter" with a mean of (2.46).
- These results can be interpreted in light of Gabriel Tarde's imitation theory, which holds that criminal or deviant behavior is acquired through imitation and simulation in an influential social environment. Continuous interaction with celebrity content on the X platform demonstrates how digital social models impact youth values and behaviors. Celebrities represent models with high social status, and thus imitation of their lifestyles and ideas spreads rapidly among youth, especially in the absence of critical thinking or self-censorship.
- These results are consistent with Al-Hadrami et al.'s study (2022), which confirmed that intensive use of social media leads to changes in university youth behaviors and values, and also align with Awan et al.'s study (2023), which highlighted that the desire for social recognition is among the most prominent motives for digital deviant behavior among university student

Third Axis: Proposed Preventive Strategies to Reduce the Impact of X Platform Use on Deviant Behavior Among University Youth

Table (5) Indicate Proposed Preventive Strategies to Reduce the Impact of X Platform Use on Deviant Behavior Among University Youth

	Statements	Arithmetic mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Rank
University Youth	Imposing censorship on offensive and misleading content	2.75	0.46	High	1
	Educating students about the risks of negative behaviors on social media platforms	2.54	0.53	High	6
	Encouraging constructive dialogue and balanced opinions through the X platform	2.64	0.61	High	2
	Enhancing critical thinking and distinguishing between correct and misleading information	2.60	0.57	High	5

	Supporting training programs on responsible use of social media sites	2.62	0.57	High	4
	Training on safe and responsible use of communication tools within the university	2.63	0.61	High	3
	Proposed preventive strategies as a whole	2.63	0.45	High Level	

The table above shows that:

The level of **proposed preventive strategies to reduce the impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth** was **high**, with a mean of (2.63). Indicators according to mean ranking: Rank 1: "Imposing censorship on offensive and misleading content" with a mean of (2.75), followed by Rank 2: "Encouraging constructive dialogue and balanced opinions through the X platform" with a mean of (2.64), then Rank 3: "Training on safe and responsible use of communication tools within the university" with a mean of (2.63), and finally Rank 6: "Educating students about the risks of negative behaviors on social media platforms" with a mean of (2.54).

These results align with the recommendations of Shabha and Nawal's study (2021), which emphasized the importance of awareness about responsible use, and are also supported by Patchin & Hinduja's study (2024), which recommended adopting preventive and regulatory strategies to reduce digital deviant behavior. The importance of these strategies can also be explained from the perspective of Gabriel Tarde's theory, as Tarde emphasizes that behaviors are acquired through imitation and simulation within an influential social environment. Therefore, imposing censorship, educating youth, and encouraging critical dialogue contribute to limiting the transmission of negative behaviors and create a safer digital environment that reduces the imitation of deviant patterns, thereby limiting the emergence of deviant behavior and promoting proper social upbringing within the university environment.

Fourth Axis: Testing Study Hypotheses

(1) Testing First Hypothesis:

"It is expected that the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth will be high.

Table (6) indicates Level of X Platform Use Impact on Deviant Behavior Among University Youth as a Whole

	Dimensions	Arithmetic mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Rank
University Youth	Impact of X platform use on cyberbullying behavior among university youth	2.34	0.47	Medium	3
	Impact of X platform use on fake news spreading behavior among university youth	2.42	0.47	High	2
	Impact of X platform use on celebrity imitation behavior among university youth	2.54	0.48	High	1
	X platform uses impact dimensions as a whole	2.43	0.37	High Level	

The table above shows that:

The level of **X platform use impact on deviant behavior among university youth as a whole** was **high**, with a mean of (2.43). Indicators according to mean ranking:

- Rank 1: Impact of X platform use on celebrity imitation behavior among university youth with a mean of (2.54) – **High level**.
- Rank 2: Impact of X platform use on fake news spreading behavior among university youth with a mean of (2.42) – **High level**.
- Rank 3: Impact of X platform use on cyberbullying behavior among university youth with a mean of (2.34) – **Medium level**.
- This leads us to accept the first hypothesis of the study, which states: "It is expected that the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth will be high

(2) Testing Second Hypothesis of the Study:

There are statistically significant substantive differences between university youth responses according to some demographic variables (gender/university colleges) regarding their determination of the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth."

Table (7) indicates Significance of Differences between University Youth Responses According to Some Demographic Variables (Gender/University Colleges) Regarding Their Determination of the Level of Impact of X Platform Use on Deviant Behavior Among University Youth

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University Youth (n=115)			Number (n)	Arithmetic mean	Standard Deviation	F Value	Significance	Direction of Differences
Dimension	Research Population							
Dimensions of X platform use impact as a whole	Gender	Male	68	2.49	0.36	1.979	0	1 > 2
		Female	47	2.35	0.39			
	University Colleges	Art College	80	2.48	0.35	2.125	0	1 > 2
		Law College	35	2.32	0.42			2

** Significant at (0.01) * Significant at (0.05)

The table above shows that:

- There are statistically significant substantive differences at the significance level of (0.05) between university youth responses according to gender (Male/Female) regarding their determination of the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth as a whole, in favor of male university youth responses.
- There are statistically significant substantive differences at the significance level of (0.05) between university youth responses according to university colleges (Faculty of Arts and Applied Sciences / Faculty of Law) regarding their determination of the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth as a whole, in favor of university youth responses from the Faculty of Arts and Applied Sciences.
- This leads us to accept the second hypothesis of the study, which states: "There are statistically significant substantive differences between university youth responses according to some demographic variables (gender/university colleges) regarding their determination of the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth."

(3) Testing Third Hypothesis of the Study:

"There is a statistically significant variation between university youth responses according to some demographic variables (academic year categories/hours of use categories) regarding their determination of the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth."

Table (8): Analysis of Variance for the Level of Impact of X Platform Use on Deviant Behavior Among University Youth According to Some Demographic Variables (Academic Year Categories/Hours of Use Categories)

University Youth (n=115)			Number (n)	Arithmetic mean	St. Deviation	Value V	Significance	Direction of Differences
Dimensions impact of using the x platform	Research Population							
	Academic Years	First Year	52	2.42	0.37	0.089	Not Significant	-
		Second year	30	2.45	0.35			
		Third year	20	2.45	0.45			
		Fourth year	13	2.39	0.36			
	Number of hours	Less than hour	25	2.57	0.38	2.132	Not Significant	-
		From hour to 3	42	2.4	0.34			
		From 4 hours to 6	48	2.39	0.39			

** Significant at (0.01) * Significant at (0.05)

The table above shows that:

- There is no statistically significant variation between university youth responses according to academic year categories (First Year/Second Year/Third Year/Fourth Year) regarding their determination of the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth as a whole.

- There is no statistically significant variation between university youth responses according to daily hours of use categories (Less than 1 hour/1 to 3 hours/4 to 6 hours) regarding their determination of the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth as a whole.
- This leads us to reject the third hypothesis of the study, which states: "There is a statistically significant variation between university youth responses according to some demographic variables (academic year categories/hours of use categories) regarding their determination of the level of impact of X platform use on deviant behavior among university youth."

Fifth Axis: Proposed Mechanisms to Reduce the Impact of X Platform Use on Deviant Behavior Among University Youth

1. Developing awareness programs for students concentrating on studying the psychological and social factors that may lead to deviant digital behavior when using the X platform.
2. Empower social workers working with university youth groups to design effective and direct intervention programs to reduce deviant digital behavior associated with the platform, using scientific and practical methods.
3. Educate academic and educational bodies and decision-makers about the risks resulting from negative use of the X platform, including imitating celebrities in inappropriate behaviors.
4. Establish clear laws and regulations to control digital behavior on the X platform and protect individuals and society from transgressions.
5. Identify responsibilities and appropriate penalties for harmful actions on the platform to ensure deterrence and reduce deviant behavior.
6. Guide media and legislative policies to promote safe and positive use of the X platform and encourage responsible digital behaviors among university youth.

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