



THE PROS AND CONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA THESE DAYS

Supervisor: Senior teacher of Foreign

Languages Department, UzJMCU

Sagatova Muborak Payzidinovna

Pilology and language teaching: English

First course student: Dolixonova Muxlisa Ulug'bekovna

Abstract: This article explores the role of social media in contemporary life by examining its advantages, disadvantages, and the motivations behind its use. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter (X) have become essential tools for communication, information sharing, entertainment, and professional development. The study is grounded in the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which explains how users actively choose media platforms to satisfy specific needs such as information, social interaction, and self-expression. The findings highlight that social media provides significant benefits, including improved global connectivity, access to real-time information, opportunities for business and personal branding, and creative expression. However, it also presents notable challenges such as mental health issues, misinformation, privacy concerns, and reduced productivity. The article concludes that social media is a double-edged tool whose impact depends on the way individuals use it. Responsible and purposeful engagement is essential to maximize benefits and minimize risks.

Keywords: Social media; Uses and Gratifications Theory; communication; mental health; misinformation; privacy; digital media; online networking; internet usage; benefits and disadvantages.



Social media has become an integral part of modern life, encompassing platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter (X). These internet-based platforms allow users to communicate with friends and family, share content, access information, and stay updated in real time. The number of social media users continues to grow annually, with people of different ages and backgrounds actively participating in these platforms (Aksoy & Allahverdi, 2025).

In today's world, social media plays a critical role in daily life. It facilitates faster communication, provides access to global news and ideas, supports education, and offers opportunities for business promotion. However, while social media provides numerous benefits, it also brings challenges such as misinformation, privacy risks, and mental health issues. Therefore, it is important to analyze both the advantages and disadvantages of social media use. To understand why individuals use social media and what they gain from it, one of the most widely applied frameworks is the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) (Hajdarmataj & Paksoy, 2023).

The Uses and Gratifications Theory is a communication theory that explains how media users actively select media to satisfy specific needs. Developed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch in the 1970s, UGT contrasts with older models that viewed audiences as passive recipients of media. According to UGT, people use media to fulfill social and psychological needs such as acquiring information, entertainment, social interaction, or self-expression (EBSCO, 2026).

In the context of social media, UGT helps explain the different motivations behind user behavior: some users engage with social media to access news and global events.

Others use it to communicate with friends, share opinions, or promote personal activities.



Many use platforms for leisure, entertainment, or following trends (Aksoy & Allahverdi, 2025). Studies indicate that these motivations influence platform selection and the type of engagement users have. In other words, users actively choose the platform that fits their needs and consume content that serves their purposes. UGT provides a theoretical framework to analyze these behaviors, linking user motivations with media choices and outcomes (Hajdarmataj & Paksoy, 2023; Aksoy & Allahverdi, 2025).

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok enable people to connect instantly across cities and countries. These tools allow users to share messages, photos, and videos, making communication easier and more immediate than traditional methods. Research shows that social media facilitates social interaction and helps users stay socially connected, which can reduce feelings of isolation and help maintain relationships. (Shojib, 2024). Example: A young person can keep in touch with relatives living abroad through Instagram stories or Messenger chats, keeping relationships strong despite physical distance.

Information and Awareness

Social media is a major source of real-time information. People use social platforms to stay updated on news, learn about current events, global issues, and public health announcements. Social media also supports awareness campaigns and educational content by institutions and experts, allowing important information to reach millions quickly. Studies highlight that access to information and education is a key benefit of social media use. (Shojib, 2024). Example: During elections or health crises, government agencies and news outlets post updates on social networks so that users get timely and accurate information.

Social media provides opportunities for professional networking, job searches, and business development. Users can build an online presence, promote products, and engage with customers or collaborators worldwide. Research shows



that social platforms are used to create connections that can lead to career development and business growth. (Shojib, 2024). Example: A freelance photographer can use Instagram to showcase their portfolio, reach potential clients, and grow their brand without needing traditional advertising.

Social media enables users to create and share diverse forms of creative content, including videos, music, memes, blogs, and art. This enhances entertainment, inspires creativity, and provides interactive experiences. Studies note that creative engagement is one of the positive uses of these platforms, allowing users to express themselves and engage with communities of interest. (Shojib, 2024). Example: TikTok creators produce short educational videos on language learning or science experiments that attract millions of views and build learning communities.

Academic research has documented links between excessive social media use and negative mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, social comparison, and reduced well-being. Heavy use is associated with increased psychological distress, especially among young people — possibly because users compare their lives with filtered online images or because online interactions replace offline social contact. (Naslund et al., 2020). Example: Adolescents who spend many hours scrolling through idealized feeds may feel more anxious or unhappy compared to peers who limit screen time.

Misinformation and Fake News

While social media spreads information quickly, it also allows misinformation, rumors, and unverified claims to circulate rapidly before they are corrected. This can mislead the public on important issues such as health, politics, or emergencies. Although research mostly focuses on mental health, scholars also highlight misinformation as a risk inherent in social platforms that requires careful media literacy. (Shojib, 2024). Example: Unverified health advice about treatments may spread widely and lead some people to ignore official medical guidance.



Privacy and Security Concerns

Social media platforms collect and process large amounts of personal data, which can raise serious privacy issues. Research shows that users may worry about threats to employment, fear of being judged, personal relationships, and hostile experiences online when their information is shared publicly. These privacy risks can have real effects on users' lives and sense of safety. (Naslund & Aschbrenner, 2019). Example: A post about personal opinions might be seen by future employers, potentially affecting hiring decisions.

Time Consumption and Productivity Loss

Using social media can lead to significant time investment, often distracting users from work, school, or other responsibilities. While not all academic reviews quantify this effect directly, literature on the disadvantages of social media consistently lists distraction and overuse as major concerns alongside mental health and privacy issues. (Shojib, 2024). Example: A student who repeatedly checks social feeds during homework time may finish assignments later and with lower quality due to distraction.

Social media offers a range of benefits and drawbacks, which makes its overall impact complex. On one hand, it enhances communication and connectivity, provides access to information and learning resources, supports networking and personal branding, and encourages creativity and entertainment (Shojib, 2024). On the other hand, excessive use can contribute to mental health challenges, privacy risks, time loss, and the spread of misinformation (Naslund et al., 2020; Naslund & Aschbrenner, 2019).

It is important to note that social media is neither completely good nor completely bad. Its effects depend heavily on how, when, and why it is used. For example, using social media intentionally for learning, professional networking, or



creative projects can maximize benefits while minimizing risks. Conversely, excessive scrolling or passive consumption of content may increase negative outcomes such as anxiety, distraction, or exposure to fake news.

Linking this to the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), people engage with social media to satisfy specific needs, including information, entertainment, social interaction, and personal identity formation (Aksoy & Allahverdi, 2025). UGT emphasizes that users are active participants, choosing platforms and content based on their goals. However, this theory also implies that the pursuit of gratification must be balanced with self-awareness and responsible usage, because unmoderated engagement can lead to the disadvantages discussed above.

In summary, social media is a double-edged tool. Its advantages include enhanced connectivity, access to information, professional and creative opportunities, and entertainment. Its disadvantages include potential mental health issues, misinformation, privacy concerns, and productivity loss.

To use social media effectively, individuals should adopt responsible usage strategies, such as:

Setting time limits to avoid overuse.

Verifying information before sharing to prevent misinformation.

Protecting personal data and adjusting privacy settings.

Engaging intentionally with content that supports learning, creativity, or professional growth.

Balancing the benefits and risks is crucial. When used thoughtfully, social media can be a powerful tool for personal, educational, and professional development, aligning with the motivations described in the Uses and Gratifications



Theory. Users who are aware of both the potential gains and hazards can maximize positive outcomes while minimizing harm.

References:

1. Aksoy E., Allahverdi F. Z. Social Media Use Motives Explained by Uses and Gratifications Theory //Kültür ve İletişim. – 2025. – Т. 28. – №. 55. – С. 231-253.

2. Hajdarmataj F., Paksoy A. Uses and gratifications theory in social media applications: Today's active users, characteristics and obtained gratifications //Current Studies in Communication Sciences. Literatürk Academia. – 2023. – Т. 1. – С. 24-35.

3. EBSCO Research Starters (2026). Uses and Gratifications Theory.

4. Aksoy E., Allahverdi F. Z. Social Media Use Motives Explained by Uses and Gratifications Theory //Kültür ve İletişim. – 2025. – Т. 28. – №. 55. – С. 231-253.