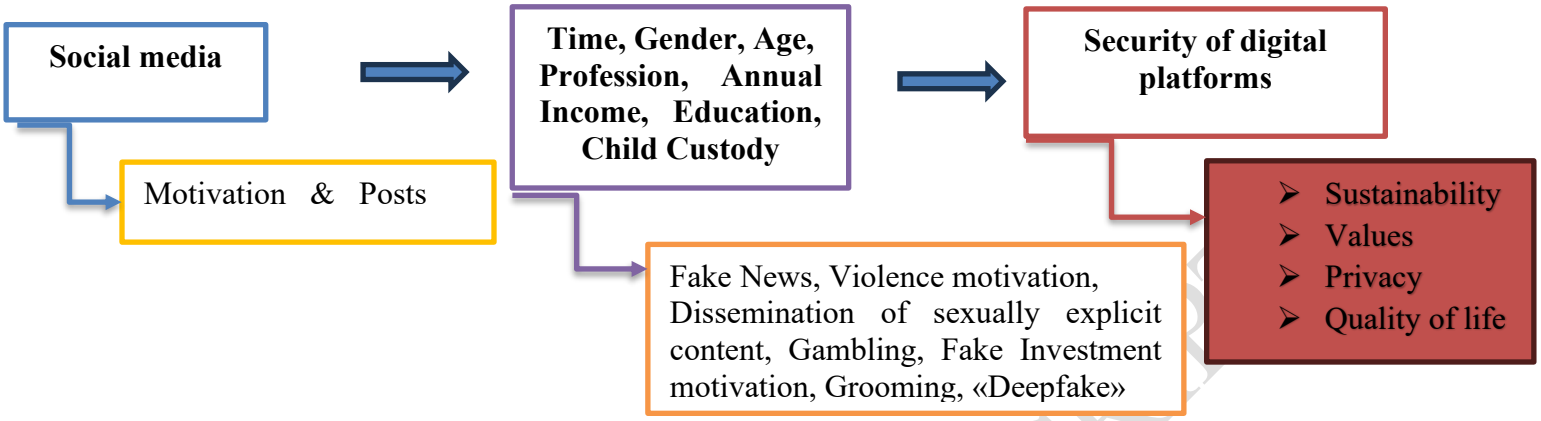
Graphical abstract



“THE SECURITY OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS AS A SUSTAINABILITY FACTOR IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT OF CHIOS”

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Abstract

Social media allows people to communicate, share content, interact and create communities on the internet. The social media ecosystem has significantly influenced the quality of life of modern people, which is reflected in their daily lives, setting a new basis for the way of communication, interpersonal relationships, information, work and business. It is an environment characterized by the speed and ease of information transmission, the collection of personal data and exposure in the public sphere, in any way. For this purpose, a relevant questionnaire was prepared and distributed, both in electronic and printed form, to adult residents of the Regional Unit of Chios.

The study included a total of 382 individuals (18 years and older), residents of the Regional Unit of Chios, for at least 6 months, with the aim of investigating behavioral factors in relation to demographic characteristics, regarding the security (any user) and the reliability (of any information) of the Social Networking Media ecosystem. Using SPSS, Correlations in Monte Carlo/Chi Square Modeling were conducted to examine forms of motivation and content displayed on social media in relation to the demographic characteristics of the sample. The evaluation and analysis of the data can help in understanding the profile of Social Networking Media users so that good practices can be adopted for the security, reliability of Social Networking Media and quality of life, within the social and professional environment, with which businesses are inextricably linked.

Keywords: Social media, posts, motivation, attitudes, safety, reliability, Chios Prefecture, quality of life.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, technology seems to have played a critical role in the evolution of human history. During the industrial revolution, the invention of machines attracted the population, creating large urban centers and shaping human destiny. The same seems to be happening during digital revolution. The mobile phone ceased to be a tool and became an essential element of everyday life. The way we speak and communicate, our entertainment, shopping, and eating habits have all changed. Our way of thinking has also evolved. Below are selectively described some of the pathologies of digital revolution and radically affect social relationships and related problems in cities.

Social media is a recent invention and absorbs a significant part of the time people spend in everyday life. It is a massive database that includes not only human activities but also desires, expectations, opinions, reasoning, criticism, etc. Naturally, it has also attracted extreme behaviours, as well as individuals involved in criminal activity, since the capital invested and circulated on the Internet is enormous. This research attempts to present some of the unknown human behaviours that are affecting not only the quality of life of individuals but also, more generally, social relationships and the way people live, particularly in large cities. The social phenomena presented in the bibliography are unprecedented in human history.

To clarify this research, it is necessary to define "motivation" and "attitudes," which serve as the primary psychological processes by which social media shapes user behaviour.

Motivation appears as a complex psychological process with many facets, depending on what mobilises and directs the individual, as well as what maintains it, so that the individual behaves in ways that lead toward goal achievement (Ryan & Deci, 2017). It includes

internal factors (values, needs, etc.) (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and external factors (incentives, rewards, the general social environment) which constitute classic theories of motivation (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Motivation is a critical factor that influences performance and commitment—whether material or intangible—(to a business, a goal, an idea, a behaviour, another person, or a product). It also influences creativity through the mechanisms of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017) and the Hierarchy of Needs theory (Maslow, 1943).

Attitudes are relatively stable measures of positive or negative evaluation (Ajzen, 1991). They influence how individuals behave toward people, things, or situations. Attitudes reveal how people perceive and respond to environmental stimuli (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). They indicate intentions and affect behaviour in social and organisational contexts (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudes form from personal experiences, life events, social factors, laws, and rules. This makes attitudes a dynamic mechanism that interprets and reflects individual behaviour (Bandura, 1986).

The following sections outline the literature review, methodology, data, and the results of this research. The objective is to offer a comprehensive assessment and understanding of social media and its function in the modern digital world. These findings contribute to understanding the evolving relationship between digital and physical spheres in contemporary human life.

2. Literature Review

A major disadvantage frequently mentioned because of internet use, concerns social influence and propaganda (Chen et al, 2022). An analysis of scientific sources reveals that the key agents and moral instigators behind this phenomenon are governments, political parties, independent agents, etc., and it is not difficult to imagine why and how social networks function as complementary tools of war and defense. In 2019, researchers at the University of Oxford published a report (Bradshaw and Howard, 2019) showing that more than 56 countries are conducting cyber-military activities on Facebook, while at the same time, research is being conducted into human cognitive and perceptual mechanisms to identify ways in which the influence and manipulation of populations can be made as effective as possible.

Recent scholarship demonstrates that social media has emerged as a primary instrument in contemporary warfare. It is recognised as a new generation of weapon systems encompassing fake news, diplomatic maneuvers, legal interventions, and interference in the electoral processes of other states (Chen et al., 2022). Social media shape's public opinion increases social sensitivity, and may reinforce or trigger collective reactions (Aksut, 2020). In 2020, researchers at Carnegie Mellon University analysed more than 100 million tweets related to the coronavirus epidemic and reported that nearly half of the tweets originated from bots (Young, 2020).

The consequences are also serious in the economic sphere as well. Social media news platforms influence financial markets, consumer transactions, and market price volatility. Article content and reported facts on these platforms are frequently unverified or unchecked (Kogan et al., 2023). Security commissions' research has identified corporate-

funded promotional material labelled as “author’s opinion.” Documented fraud has at times resulted in reduced transaction volumes in response to all news, not just verified reports. These effects are particularly detrimental to smaller, less recognised companies.

A variation of the previous case differs primarily in the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, featuring a more direct interaction than cases involving the dissemination of fake news (Anderson et al., 2024). For example, investment fraud in Australia has emerged as the most prevalent form, resulting in losses exceeding 1.5 billion AUD between 2022 and 2023 (ACCC, 2023). In the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has reported losses surpassing 2.7 billion USD. The rapid expansion of the Internet and the emergence of novel opportunities have facilitated increased criminal activity aimed at defrauding investors (Reurink, 2018).

Recent advances in Artificial Intelligence, particularly in Deep Learning (DL) algorithms, have facilitated the manipulation of audio, images, and video, commonly referred to as "deepfakes," a term derived from "deep learning" and "fake." Deepfakes represent a particularly dangerous form of online manipulation because they can create highly convincing yet false events or phenomena. Complex neural networks are used to generate or alter videos and audio, raising significant concerns regarding potential misuse, including misinformation, defamation, impersonation, and unauthorized content creation (Bendiab et al., 2025). The amplification effect of social media enables deepfakes to reach vast audiences and exert substantial social influence, particularly as most users lack the skills to recognize or resist such content. The ability of this technology to fabricate explicit or digital materials without consent intensifies privacy and ethical concerns and may result in emotional and psychological harm (Bendiab et al., 2025). Cybercriminals exploit

deepfakes to deceive, extract sensitive information, and manipulate individuals or groups by faking identities. Consequently, impersonation and fraud, often involving the replacement of a victim's face or voice, constitute the most significant risks associated with this technology.

Another contemporary pathology is gambling (Ghelfi et al., 2024), with the global prevalence of problematic adult gamblers ranging from 0.12% to 5.8% (Calado & Griffiths, 2016). Gambling participation has risen rapidly. Accessibility, frequency of play, and expenditure have increased to unprecedented levels. As a result, gambling is recognized as a major social issue that threatens public health, population welfare, social relationships, and social cohesion. In recent years, online gambling has expanded rapidly; it presents more challenges than conventional gambling due to its broad reach and increased risks, which complicate efforts in control, prevention, and intervention. The 2020 pandemic decreased overall gambling participation but shifted many players toward online platforms (Hodgins & Stevens, 2021).

Meilani et al. (2018) found that 57% of adolescents worldwide use the internet for pornography. Most traffic comes from WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube. Of these users, 57.5% viewed images, videos, or reels. Research shows that male adolescents access pornography more than females, while using more than four social media platforms further raises the chance of seeing sexual content. Supporting these findings, Waliyanti and Aristawidya (2025) found that 6% of 4,500 Indonesian students aged 10–17 had seen such content, with an average of 64 hours online each month. Davidson et al. (2025) used data from European youth to examine: (i) how common three high-risk sexual online behaviours are: sexting, making and sharing sexual images, and watching pornography; (ii)

demographic variances pertaining to age and gender; (iii) how these behaviours relate to depression, anxiety, and stress. They found that males did these behaviours more often than females.

But the worst case of those mentioned concerns the sexual exploitation of children. Child sexual grooming refers to the process by which potential offenders manipulate and approach children for the purpose of sexual gratification (Gillespie, 2002). The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) has reported millions of "cybertips" concerning child exploitation globally; however, the phenomenon may be more pronounced in developing nations. Rigorous research is required to elucidate the role that the proliferation of technology has played in grooming practices—a contribution that would be significant not only for academic researchers but also for law enforcement agencies. According to Ringenberg et al. (2022), the emergence of the Internet and mobile telecommunications has influenced the design and implementation of grooming strategies, extending their reach from the online environment into the physical world. The term "child sexual grooming" has been defined as a "process of manipulation whereby the offender gains the child's trust with the intent of sexually abusing them" (Gillespie, 2002). It is essential to examine grooming techniques in detail to improve the awareness of authorities and families. These persuasive methods include, but are not limited to, the provision of gifts, specialized attention, expressions of affection, bribery, the granting of various privileges, the sharing of pornographic material, and the fulfillment of the child's requests in exchange for sexual acts. Through these mechanisms, offenders secure sexual control and often solicit the child's silence without the necessity of overt aggression, leading to victim compliance in the absence of physical harm. Alternative methods of entrapment

involve indirect coercive pressure, such as inducing guilt or a sense of obligation toward the offender (Conte & Berliner), for instance, by offering financial assistance. Other strategies include the invocation of authority, moral manipulation, or the exploitation of adult power dynamics (Groth & Burgess).

Finally, a further social phenomenon, connected to digital platforms, pertains to the recruitment and structuring of individuals within gangs or, more precisely, organised crime groups. Such groups frequently precipitate violent conflicts (Roks et al., 2021; Bekkers et al., 2024b; de Boer et al., 2022). Social media enable the establishment of private online networks and encrypted communication, as exemplified by Snapchat and Telegram. Empirical research indicates that secondary education students are approached via Snapchat (42.9%), Instagram (32.8%), and WhatsApp (10.7%). Documented activities encompass drug trafficking, the deployment of explosive devices, and money laundering (Van Berkel et al., 2025).

In the remainder of this paper, it will be shown that the research conducted on the small island of Chios confirms the previously mentioned bibliographic references. This confirmation suggests that, because the internet serves as a virtual world, geographical isolation in a small Aegean town does not prevent the spread of these phenomena.

The widespread use of mobile phones and digital platforms, and their limitless exploitation by adolescents and young people, create similar risks in small towns as in large cities. These risks are proportional to those in larger urban areas. This fact will be documented in the research results presented in the following sections.

3. Materials and methods

The research was based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire, a widely used tool in the social sciences for capturing attitudes and behaviours (Bryman, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The questionnaire included demographic questions, five-point Likert-type questions (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), as well as dichotomous and categorical questions, in accordance with questionnaire design specifications (DeVellis, 2017). The clear phrasing of the questions contributed to the reliability of the responses, while the standardised structure allowed for systematic data collection.

The research sample comprised 382 participants selected via purposive sampling. As articulated by Palinkas et al. (2015), purposive sampling is particularly appropriate for research that requires comprehensive, detailed data, such as implementation studies and mixed-methods designs. This method facilitates the identification of "information-rich cases," which significantly contribute to theoretical development and elucidation of multifaceted social phenomena. In contrast to other sampling techniques, purposive sampling is more rigorously documented both strategically and theoretically, as participant selection is grounded in research relevance rather than convenience. This methodological approach enhances internal validity, provides greater depth, and enriches the qualitative data—elements essential for robust qualitative analysis (Benoot et al., 2016).

Overall, purposive sampling is a fundamental strategy in qualitative research, enabling the researcher to select participants who can provide meaningful, in-depth information, thereby contributing to the production of theoretically and empirically robust conclusions. Data collection took place over a 12-week period (April–June 2025) to avoid seasonal effects.

Participants completed the questionnaire once, ensuring the independence of observations. To assess content validity and comprehension, a pilot study was conducted with a sample of 30 individuals, a practice recommended as a core practice in research design (Presser et al., 2004). These individuals were not included in the final sample.

All participants were informed about the research objectives, provided free and informed consent, assured of anonymity, and informed of their right to withdraw, in accordance with the ethical principles of social research (American Psychological Association, 2020).

The geographical focus exclusively on the Chios Regional Unit limits the external validity of the results (Shadish et al., 2002). Furthermore, in electronic distribution, there is a possibility of self-selection bias and over-representation of individuals with higher digital skills (Bethlehem, 2010). Regarding the tool, the use of self-reported data may be influenced by social desirability bias (Fisher, 1993). The cross-sectional nature of the research does not allow for causal interpretations (Cohen et al., 2018).

Statistical analysis of the data was performed using IBM SPSS29, initially using descriptive methods and subsequently inferential methods via hypothesis testing. The (chi-square) test of independence was used to investigate correlations between categorical variables. The significance level was set at $\alpha=.05$, in accordance with statistical conventions (Field, 2018).

The test hypotheses were:

- H0: There is no statistically significant relationship between the variables.
- H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between the variables.

The assumptions for the application were examined, and in cases where these assumptions were violated, Fisher's exact test and Monte Carlo tests were applied, practices which are recommended in the literature (Agresti, 2018).

The internal consistency of the tool was examined using Cronbach's alpha, a standard reliability measure for Likert scales (Cronbach, 1951; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Values >.70 are considered acceptable, while >.80 are considered high. In the present study, the value of alpha= .741 indicated satisfactory reliability. A check was also performed to assess a potential improvement in the index by removing questions, but this did not yield any improvement in results.

The research was conducted in accordance with research ethics principles, ensuring anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

4. Results and Discussion

The results in the following table (Monte Carlo/Chi-Square modelling) examine the forms of motivation and content displayed on social media in relation to the sample's demographic characteristics. Almost unanimously (94.52%), participants responded positively to the question of whether social media contains posts that promote fake news. This finding reflects the increased wave of misinformation/disinformation in the digital environment. Despite this, posts that display Fake news do not reveal a significant correlation with the variables. Nevertheless, according to the literature, individuals with access to higher education (high school etc.) are more capable of identifying fake news

(Guess et al., 2019), while the strengthening of digital literacy is a critical factor for an individual to perceive posts that misinform and present fake news (Jones-Jang et al., 2021).

Table 1: Correlations in Monte Carlo/Chi Square Modeling

Factor	Time in social media	Gender	Age	Profession	Annual Income	Education	Child Custody
Fake News Posts	.373	.177	.244	.168	.109	.819	.824
Violence motivation	.009	1.000	.005	.001	.041	.047	.203
Dissemination of sexually explicit content	.037	.927	.008	.017	.003	.001	.036
Gambling motivation	.872	.540	.643	.399	.010	.189	.563
Fake Investment motivation	.414	.736	.233	.064	.220	.606	.473
Grooming	.472	.881	.009	.006	.224	.140	.011
«Deepfake» photos or other posts	.080	.860	.033	.016	.062	.301	.073

Source: Author's calculations

A large majority (76.76%) believe that social media functions as a platform for motivation toward violent behaviour of any form. This category shows significant correlations with time spent on social media (p = .009), age (p = .005), occupation (p = .001), income (p = .041), and education level (p = .047) among survey participants. Age often influences familiarity with digital technologies and how they are used, with younger age groups tending to spend more time on social media. At the same time, education level and income may be associated with different patterns of technology use, whether for information and professional networking or mainly for entertainment. Finally, occupation affects both the amount of free time available and the need to use social media for professional or social

purposes. The findings align with studies showing that younger users and individuals in low- or middle-income occupations have been exposed to these types of motivations (Oksanen et al., 2021).

From the responses collected, 68.67% of the respondent population recognize that pornographic material of any form is posted on social media. Consequently, significant correlations are observed with age (p = .008), income (p = .003), and education level (p = .001). This may be explained by the fact that age creates different perceptions regarding sexual content on social media. Income influences the degree of access to internet services, while education level is related to attitudes towards this phenomenon. In general, access to inappropriate content is often associated with younger age groups and lower digital literacy (among older age groups) (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004).

The case of "grooming" is of particular interest, showing significant correlations with age (p = .009), occupation (p = .006), and the parameter indicating whether participants have custody of other individuals (parents, guardians, etc.) (p = .011). The data reinforces the view that in vulnerable ages and social positions, forms of online harassment are intense (Whittle et al., 2013).

Finally, a new risk emerges. The phenomenon of Deepfake material shows significant correlations with participants' age (p = .033), and occupational category (p =.016). This is explained by the fact that age affects the quality of perception for understanding and rejecting such news. Younger people are more vulnerable to fake news. Some professions, as mentioned earlier related to financial news, will inevitably be exposed to such events, while income determines access to technological means where this news is disseminated.

Therefore, understanding why different social groups are more frequently exposed to this form of risk is critical (Chesney & Citron, 2019).

Overall, the table's results show that demographic factors such as age, education, and socioeconomic status play a decisive role in social media use.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, observing Table 1, we see that the increased time spent using social media is a variable that increases the user's exposure to incitement to violent behavior. As mentioned above, the factor of motivation for violent behavior combined with time of use gave us a statistically significant relationship ($p = .009$). Engaging in social media for two hours or more gives us that the percentage of participants who have been exposed to this form of motivation is 82–84%. This reinforces the view that the time spent (use) is directly related to the likelihood of the individual being exposed to this type of content (Livingstone & Smith, 2014). Also, the professional categories that use social media in their daily lives for professional reasons media may be more exposed to such content (Anderson and al., 2017). This also results from the statistical model which showed that the relationship between the factor of motivation for violent behavior and the variable of "occupation" is statistically significant ($p = [.001]$). Indicatively, participants who declared themselves to be students show the highest percentage of positive responses (86%). Private employees and the self-employed also show high percentages of positive responses (79.4% and 77.4% respectively), as well as public employees with 66.9%. In contrast to retirees, the percentage of positive responses is 50%, which shows that they do not constantly engage

with their accounts and content on social media. (Livingstone & Smith, 2014). In addition, it is concluded that younger people are more exposed through the continuous and increased use of social media (O'Reilly and al., 2018). This is confirmed by the statistically significant relationship that emerged between the age variable and the factor of motivation for violent behavior ($p = .005$). Age also shows a statistically significant relationship with the factors related to Dissemination of sexually explicit content ($p = .008$), Grooming ($p = .009$) and "Deepfake" ($p =. 033$).

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