

# Impact of Social Media Ads on Unhealthy Food Concepts and Adolescent Health in Jazan Region

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**Abstract:** In this paper, we examine the impact of social media advertisements on the eating habits of teenagers and children in the Jazan region, focusing on the promotion of unhealthy food. The researchers used the historical method and a survey method with a sample of 209 adolescents and youths. The study recommends incentivizing traditional food stores, developing a national strategy to minimize fast-food industry, issuing laws for planning, and organizing fast-food stores, and monitoring social media advertisements. Additionally, promoting traditional food stores, creating a national app to educate teenagers and children, and establishing a database for fast-food stores and their products are also recommended.

**Keywords:** Food concepts; Jazan region; Teenagers; Social media.

## 1 Introduction

A healthy diet is essential to improving health, and it is worth noting that no single meal contains all the essential nutrients that the body requires to maintain its health and work properly. For this reason, all diets must contain a variety of different foods to help get the wide range of nutrients that the human body needs. A healthy diet should provide a sufficient amount of energy and calories for daily tasks. Many researchers point out that the reasons for the spread of the fast-food industry are the ever-changing lifestyles as well as the changes in working hours and breaks, which lead to an increase in working hours. In addition, little time is spent at home, and the lack of family members gathering for a meal as it was in the past has caused weak family relations. Also the parents' busy schedules and the modern women joining the workforce. Lastly, having greater purchasing power in an unprecedented way than ever before in addition to advertisements and promotions in various media. All these have led to the spread of the habit of eating out in restaurants, especially those that serve fast food. The dietary habits of a community reflect its social organisation and the type of relationship that binds it to its natural milieu [1]. While advertising is defined as the art of seducing or introducing people as individuals and directing their behaviour in some way [2], The "iron advertisement" is also defined as the various aspects of the activity that lead to the publication or broadcasting of advertising messages, both visual and audible, to the public to urge them to buy from and accept the institutions that are being advertised about [3].

Al-Abdali defined consumer advertising as the law of advertisement that is directed at the final consumer of a certain good or service [4]. Communication can be defined as building a relationship between two individuals, two states, or two societies, thus achieving mutual benefit for the two parties [5]. As for the term "social," Dr. Muhammad Al-Masry defined it as a society that is a weave of social

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connections; those links are determined by the mutual perception between two sides [6]. It is defined as a system of electronic networks on the Internet that allows the subscriber to create his website and then link it through an electronic social system with other members who have the same interests and hobbies [7, 8]. whereas the use of social media is to understand customer requirements and promote businesses around the world. Social media also allows the adoption of deals and the protection of the customer through direct contact, and it also allows us to obtain information about competitors by following social media. Poor use of social media has many downsides, such as visual impairment, diabetes, and obesity due to a lack of body movements. It also causes an intellectual weakness where the mind weakens because of being pretty preoccupied with it; not to mention, it also causes fatigue and insomnia, which leads to mental tension and intellectual disruption.

The main challenge facing social media is being a reliable source of communication to minimise harm. Social media can be used to be realistic and transparent and to address whatever issues arise on time. therefore reducing rumors and negative talk and motivating people to speak on behalf of the company [9]. Social media have become an energetic part of the internet and affect behaviours and habits among people around the world. The social media idea that was started in 1979 was called Usenet. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media has been classified into broad categories, such as Facebook in 2004, YouTube in 2005, and Twitter in 2006. Social media is the use of the internet to share contact information with other humans. Social media has connected one person with hundreds of people around the world. Users of social media are now extremely avid web consumers; therefore, social media affects marketing performance [10]. Also, social media is useful for learning and students so that they can provide better knowledge and information through their studies. Students are also using social media like Facebook to post pictures and videos. Knight and others reported that students spend 100 minutes per day only on Facebook accounts. This is more precisely what international education looks for in the marketing plan for academic purposes. Additionally, student engagement is increasing through social media. Students find new ways to make academic activities easier. Even though some authors support using social media, especially for students, according to their study, Social media becomes a good locale for discussions and marketing. Social media is a cost-effective method for marketing activities [11, 12].

Fast food is relatively more popular among the population of major cities, where the western and eastern regions have the highest rate of turnout, followed by the central and southern regions, and the northern ones are the least popular [13]. This may mean that the consumption of fast food in Saudi society has become part of daily life. There is also an inverse association between the increased consumption of fast food and the variable of age, especially in the younger group. As the age variable decreases, the percentage of people who eat fast food increases. This reflects the degree of openness that increases among young people and the degree of conservatism that increases among adults. Therefore, fast food has become one of the most frequent Saudi family meal options, but the spread of these meals has led to the development of local models for fast food, some of which have achieved clear success [14, 15]. This present study aims to discover the impact of social media advertisements on imparting unhealthy food concepts and their health harms to adolescents and youth in the Jazan region of KSA and to make suitable recommendations to minimise this phenomenon in the local society. Social media have become an energetic part of the internet and affect behaviours and habits among people around the world. The social media idea that was started in 1979 was called Usenet. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media has been classified into broad categories, such as Facebook in 2004, YouTube in 2005, and Twitter in 2006. Social media is the use of the internet to share contact information with other humans. Social media has connected one person with hundreds of people around the world. Users of social media are now extremely avid web consumers; therefore, social media affects marketing performance [10].

Also, social media is useful for learning and students so that they can provide better knowledge and information through their studies. Students are also using social media like Facebook to post pictures and videos. Knight and others reported that students spend 100 minutes per day only on Facebook accounts. This is more precisely what international education looks for in the marketing plan for academic purposes. Additionally, student engagement is increasing through social media. Students find new ways to make academic activities easier. Even though some authors support using social media, especially for students, according to their study, Social media becomes a good locale for discussions and marketing. Social media is a cost-effective method for marketing activities [11, 12]. Fast food is relatively more popular among the population of major cities, where the western and eastern regions have the highest rate of turnout, followed by the central and southern regions, and the northern ones are the least popular [13].

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## **2 Research Methods and Materials Used**

### **Research Methodology**

The researchers used the historical method, and then after that, they used the survey method, which is represented in the analytical descriptive survey method through field surveys, to be able to understand the relationship of the phenomenon under investigation with other variables [11].

### **Tools for Data Collection**

A questionnaire was prepared for this purpose. It contained questions related to the demographic, socio-economic characteristics, consumption patterns, and nutritional awareness of the sample members. The study applied to the sample that contains 209 adolescents and youths in the Jazan region. After the researcher identified the research population, he randomly selected the research sample. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher prepared a questionnaire to collect data related to the research topic, and the questionnaire in its final form consists of two parts: The first part deals with demographic information, and the second part contains questions with multiple options to choose from. After the researcher designed the questionnaire, he distributed it to the study sample. Accordingly, the researcher designed the questionnaire to include two parts: The first section includes personal data such as gender, age, educational level, region name, and monthly income. The second section includes general questions for the questionnaire that measure the validity of the hypotheses. The researcher distributed the questionnaire electronically to the aforementioned sample to obtain the respondents' answers and to determine the previous indicators.

### **Data collection**

The questionnaires were collected electronically, then emptied, and then analyzed to formulate results and conclude appropriate recommendations. The responses received were 209 questionnaires, which were processed by the (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program.

### 3 Results and Discussions

The results showed that the female category in the study sample was the predominant category, with a percentage of 77.5 percent and a frequency of 162. And that the predominant age group is between 21 and 25 years, and their percentage reached 50.7%, and holders of a university degree were the predominant group, their percentage reaching 66%. Also, those who live in Samta are the dominant group, with their percentage reaching 50.7. Finally, those whose monthly income of the family was 6,000 thousand riyals or more were the predominant percentage, reaching 54.5 percent, which is the highest monthly income of the family. The results also showed that those who had health problems other than blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, and digestive diseases were the predominant group, with a percentage of 68%. And those who are exposed to viewing fast food advertisements once a day were the highest category (76%), and their frequency was 159. and that those who believe in the influence of advertisements on choosing diets are the highest (43%), and their frequency is 90. Likewise, those who believed that social media advertisements for fast foods played a role in instilling wrong eating habits were the highest (55%). The results also showed that the members of the study sample who were the most interested in fast food after viewing the ads had the highest percentage (43%).

Likewise, those who responded from one to two times about the meals advertised in social media programmes are the dominant group, with a percentage of 77% and a frequency of 162. Also, the study examined members whose dependence on eating fast food that is advertised on social media caused them to become obese. They are the predominant group, and their percentage reached 63.2 percent, and their frequency is 132. That the members of the study sample who do not count calories before eating the advertised meals are the dominant group; their percentage is 85.6% and their frequency is 179; and that the category that uses the Instagram app frequently and watches a lot of food ads is the dominant group; their percentage is 45% and their frequency is 94. The results also showed that the members of the study sample who think that the performance of social media influencers in terms of their sincerity in publishing advertisements is unacceptable are the dominant group; their percentage amounted to 42.6 percent and their frequency was 89 percent. Likewise, the study sample members who use the discount codes provided by food sites and social media influencers are the predominant group; their percentage reached is 59 percent, and their frequency is 124 percent. Also, the study examined members who watch ads on social media programs, whose answers are less than an hour. They are the dominant group, and their percentage is 60.3 percent and their frequency is 126. Likewise, the study sample members who did not participate with their parents in following up on food advertisements on social media were the dominant group; their percentage rate was 70% and their frequency was 146. Likewise, the study sample members who think food advertisements on social media are sometimes honest in their content are the majority; their percentage reached 57.9%, and their frequency is 121. Finally, the results showed that the study sample members who watch the social media ads that you see a representative view of are a predominant group, their percentage reached (44.5%), and their frequency is 93, Likewise, the study sample members who are encouraged by the advertising temptation to buy food through social media ads are the predominant category; their percentage ratio is 41% and their frequency is 87. Likewise, the study sample members who believe that the reason food advertisement on social media looks attractive to them is the feeling of hunger have a percentage of 51% and a frequency of 107. What is the effect of fast-food advertisements on social media on the wrong eating habits of the youths and adolescents in the Jazan region?

**Table 1:** Results of Simple Regression Analysis to test the effect of fast-food advertisements on social media on the wrong eating habits of the youths and adolescents in Jazan region.

Denotation of F	Denotation of T	Computed F value	Computed T value	Coefficient of determination R <sub>2</sub>	B <sub>1</sub>	B <sub>0</sub>	The dependent variable, fast food, on the wrong eating habits of the youth and adolescents in the Jazan region
0	0	125.35**	14.53*	0.884	0.89	0.74	The independent variable social media ads
*Statistically significant at $0.05 \leq \alpha$ level of significance							

As shown in Table 1, there is an impact of social media advertisements about fast food on the wrong dietary habits of young people and adolescents in the Jazan region, where there was an increase in the beta values due to the computed T value, which amounted to 14.53. It is greater than its tabular value of 12.54 at the level of significance (0.05) and 1.93 degrees of freedom due to the computed F value of 125.35. It is greater than its tabular value, which amounted to 111.14, and the focus of social media ads in this model contributes to explaining 88.4% of the changes in fast food to wrong eating habits. That is, 11.6% of the variables were not covered by the model adopted in this research, which requires refuting the first null hypothesis, which stipulates that there is no statistically significant effect between the effect of social media ads about fast food on the wrong dietary habits of youths and adolescents, and replacing it with the hypothesis that there is a statistically significant effect between the impact of social media ads about fast food on the wrong dietary habits of youths and adolescents in the Jazan region, as the strength of this effect is large and has flexibility and a degree of detail. The agreement of the youths and adolescents is that there is an effect of social media advertisements about fast food on the wrong eating habits of the youth and adolescents, which means that the ads in social media say that there is a strong degree of impact of social media advertisements for fast food on the wrong eating habits of youths and adolescents. They agree that there are also social media ads and that whenever there is a high degree of advertising practice, there is a large increase in the degree of the impact of fast food on bad eating habits. The researcher attributes this to the provision of social media advertisements, with the availability of this factor leading to a feeling of a lack of awareness of the impact of fast food on the wrong eating habits. There are ads on social media that damage our food and our children.

To answer this question, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to explain the damage caused by ads in social media.

**Table 2:** Pearson correlation coefficient to explain the damage & harm caused by ads in social media.

Do you think that social media ads for fast foods have a role in instilling wrong eating habits in you?	Do you think ads influence and manipulate your dietary choices?		
1	.301**	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Do you think ads influence and manipulate your dietary choices?
	0	The level of statistical significance	
209	209	Number	Do you think that social media ads for fast foods have a role in instilling wrong eating habits in you?
.301**	1	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	
0		The level of statistical significance	
209	209	Number	
*Statistically significant at $0.05 \leq \alpha$ level of significance			

It is evident from Table 2 that there is a strong positive relationship (.3010\*\*) with statistical significance between social media ads that harm our food and that of our children at the level of

statistical significance 0.05. That is the more food requirements from ads, the greater the damage. The less demand for the advertisements published on social media, the less harm.

The community and youth can be persuaded by spreading awareness of the danger of fast-food advertisements. Is it true?

To answer this question, a Pearson correlation coefficient was used to clarify the awareness of the danger of fast-food ads on social media.

**Table 3:** The statistically significant relationship between the performances of influencers on social media in terms of their honesty in publishing advertisements.

Do you think that social media ads for fast foods have a role in instilling wrong eating habits in you?	What do you think of the performance of social media influencers in terms of their honesty in posting ads?		
1	.156*	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Do you think that social media ads for fast foods have a role in instilling wrong eating habits in you?
	0.024	The level of statistical significance	
209	209	Number	
.156*	1	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	What do you think of the performance of social media influencers in terms of their honesty in posting ads?
0.024		The level of statistical significance	
209	209	Number	

It is clear from Table 3 that there is a strong direct relationship (.1560 \*) with statistical significance between the performance of influencers on social media in terms of their honesty in publishing advertisements, and the belief that social media advertisements for fast foods have a role in instilling wrong food habits in you, at a statistical significance level of 0.05. That is, the higher the performance of social media influencers, in terms of their sincerity in publishing ads, the more it is believed that social media advertisements for fast food have a role in instilling wrong eating habits in you. The lower the performance of social media influencers in terms of their honesty in publishing ads, the less social media advertisements for fast food, have a role in instilling wrong eating habits in you. Changing the dietary habits of young people changes their relationships with their family members. To answer this question, a Pearson correlation coefficient was used to illustrate the dietary habit of young people that make changes in their relationships with their family members.

**Table 4:** The inverse relationship with statistical significance between having your parents' participation in following up on food advertisements on social media programs

Do you think that social media ads for fast foods have a role in instilling wrong eating habits in you?	Do your parents join you in following food ads on social media?		
1	-0.057	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Do you think that social media ads for fast foods have a role in instilling wrong eating habits in you?
	0.412	The level of statistical significance	
209	209	Number	
-0.057	1	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Do your parents join you in following food ads on social media?
0.412		The level of statistical significance	
209	209	Number	

It is clearly evident from Table 4 that there is an inverse relationship (-.057) with statistical significance between having your parents' participation in following up on food advertisements on

social media programs, and the belief that social media advertisements for fast food have a role in instilling wrong food habits in you, at a statistical significance level of 0.05. That is, the more parents participate in following up on food advertisements on social media programs; the less they use rapid social media ads for fast foods, which have a role in instilling wrong food habits. The less parental involvement: the more rapidly social media advertisements are used for fast food, which has a role in instilling wrong food habits.

#### **4 Conclusions**

The study recommended a set of recommendations, the most important of which are: Raising taxes on fast food, as it became obvious that the main reason for consuming fast food is its affordable prices compared to meat, chicken, and traditional or authentic meals. Another recommendation is the intensification of nutritional education programmes on the importance of traditional food habits and the dangers of the fast-food industry on public health, in addition to conducting more studies on the influence of social media advertisements concerning fast food. also setting up a scheme for creating counter-ads for social media advertisements that promote the fast-food lifestyle, with the Saudi Food and Drug Authority coordinating the regulations and requirements for practising the profession and the performance control mechanisms so that it aims to adapt itself to more traditional or authentic meal methods.

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#### **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict regarding the publication of this paper.

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