

The Risks to which Adolescent Girls are Exposed Via the Internet in Jordan and the Protection Mechanisms used from the Perspective of Adolescent Girls and their Caregivers

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Abstract

The current study investigated the risks to which adolescent girls are exposed on the Internet, and identified the protection mechanisms used from the point of view of the adolescent girls themselves and from the point of view of their caregivers. The study used the qualitative approach (topic analysis) by conducting four focus group discussions with adolescent girls aged (10-17). And four focus group discussions with caregivers, and the results showed some of the risks to which adolescent girls are exposed, represented by electronic violence (bullying, harassment), security risks (hacking accounts, sending inappropriate photos and videos, accessing the dark web, and some social risks such as isolation, imitating negative behavior, and weak Academic performance, in addition to some psychological risks such as spending long hours in front of devices, the results showed several options used by young women, such as activating some protection options in search engines and applications, reporting to service providers and informing their mother or older sister, avoiding opening links from unreliable sources, The options used by caregivers were to sit in a place visible to parents, avoid opening links from unreliable sources, prevent adolescent girls from accessing the Internet or owning devices, family awareness, and defining some rules of use. Future work should investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of such interventions to support adolescents' emotional health and prevent the escalation of unsafe Internet use.

Keywords: Risks, Adolescent Girls, The Internet, Protection Mechanisms, Caregivers

INTRODUCTION

In the era of modern technology and digital communication, the Internet has become a part of teenagers' lives, as it has become one of the most important means of communication, information, and entertainment in the world. The teenager often exposes himself to danger, especially in light of his lack of knowledge and skills that make him aware and aware of how to deal with this virtual world. While browsing and merging with websites that he finds interesting and popular for him; For example, he may be asked to disclose his personal data, which exposes him to problems, violations, and risks (Al-Atoum M, 2017).

With the increase in the number of Internet users in Jordan, which by the beginning of 2023 reached approximately 9.95 million Internet users, with a penetration rate of (88%) (Al-Bayoumi. S, 2021), new risks and challenges may also come that could negatively affect adolescents. The digital gender gap in the Arab Levant is considered one of the widest in the world, and if it is not bridged, digital transformation may become a missed opportunity and an additional obstacle. The World Bank estimates indicate that the gap in Jordan between the sexes in Internet use is (10%), but the telephone gap has reached (21%), as a result of cultural values and trends that encourage preference and greater support for electronic use for males, while other values can impose Restrictions on the use of the Internet for females and concerns regarding their safety (Al-Fayez, H, 2023).

Some studies warn of excessive use of the Internet and its negative effects on adolescents psychologically, socially, and physically (Al-Gizawi, D, 2021) (Al-Jizawi, D,2021). In light of the lack of societal awareness in Jordan of the effects of the Internet and its repercussions on the psychology and personality of adolescents, and the decline in the influence of the family in general and the decline of its role in increasing adolescents' digital awareness (Al-Khawaja et al, 2020).

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The risks related to digital protection for adolescents, according to some studies (*Al-Salou, 2022*) and (*Al-Samaha, 2022*), include dangers that threaten physical safety, such as sexual assault for producing visual and audio recordings. Young people may deal with deviant and psychologically abnormal people, and contacting them sometimes leads to revealing personal information that may expose them to danger, such as meeting them outside the virtual space for the purpose of Sexual exploitation. Young people are exposed to dangers via the Internet as recipients of information, such as dangers related to content such as false information, pornographic sites, and messages with provocative content, in addition to information that encourages the preparation and use of drugs (*Al-Sanea et al, 2020*), Young people are exposed to cyberbullying. Common forms of bullying include spreading rumors or lies about young people, sending pictures or videos intended to humiliate or embarrass them, receiving intentionally harmful text messages or emails on social media sites, and creating fake online profiles and using them to embarrass or embarrass them. Intimidating young people, in addition to publishing personal information and content that is aggressive, violent, hateful, biased or racist, exposing them to exploitation. There are some risks that involve young people as actors, in bullying others or playing games that negatively affect their psychological development (*Braun, V. and Clarke, V, 2006*). *Braun et al, (2019)* also show that young people are exposed to some commercial dangers, such as exploitative advertisements and deceptive financial transactions, such as promising the deceived party a large amount of money on the condition that the user makes some arrangements to receive this money, such as sending an amount of money or entering the bank account number.

Supervision by caregivers of adolescents is considered one of the most important tasks required of them, because it plays a role in protecting them from the risks and problems they may encounter as a result of using the Internet, and enabling them to understand ways of optimal and safe use of its applications, given the amount of time they spend on the Internet (*Green et al,2007*). Statistics show, according to a survey conducted by the Digital Safety Program in Jordan for the year 2021, that children spend between one and six hours on the Internet, with a percentage of (69.6%) of children, and (74.1%) of children follow YouTube, followed by the “Tik Tok” application. (28.1%), while the percentages for some electronic games reach (29.7%) (*Hanafi, 2019*).

The vast majority of studies on the risks to which male and female adolescents are exposed in Jordan are quantitative in nature, which leads to the lack of an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the various risks and problems facing adolescents online, and the extent of their impact on their well-being and mental and physical health. The current study provides new insights into exploring the risks that adolescent girls face online and promoting safe navigation in digital spaces, by listening to the perspectives of adolescent girls, whose ages range between (10-17) years, and from the perspective of caregivers who belong to the local and refugee communities in Jordan, in addition to identifying the opinions of caregivers and adolescent girls regarding risk mitigation measures.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

This study investigated the risks and problems that adolescent girls face in the digital space, with a focus on the extent to which they affect their well-being and mental and physical health. The adolescent girls participating in the focus group discussions were asked to identify the risks they are exposed to online in the cities of Amman and Irbid, in addition to knowing the protection options used. From the perspective of caregivers and adolescent girls themselves, based on their opinions and personal experiences on this topic.4 focus group discussions were conducted with adolescent girls aged (10-17), (46 participants in total) and a total of (4) focus group discussions were held with caregivers of adolescent girls: mothers, fathers, legal guardians or alternative caregivers responsible for caring for adolescents who Ranging in age from (10-17) years (44 participants in total), the interviews included open-ended questions based on a semi-structured interview guide that focused on their views, experiences, and problems arising when they interact with the Internet, use social media, games, and other screen activities in the daily context, and methods. Alleviate it. Questions specific to the topic were used: “What are the risks to which they are exposed online,” “What are the risk mitigation measures?” and the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Participants and Study Population Participants and Setting

For this study, participants were selected from adolescent girls aged (10-17) years in cooperation with 8 schools, 4 government schools (national system) and 4 schools with an international program in both the capital Amman and Irbid governorate. Caregivers were also selected based on the inclusion criterion. The only thing is that participants must be caregivers for adolescent girls between the ages of (10-17) years. These parents volunteered to participate based on invitations from the schools. The parents were self-selected through an invitation to participate in the study by the concerned schools that agreed to participate in the study. Studying with her students and carers in schools. Given that the nature of this study was qualitative, There was less need to find representative samples across socio-economic classes and focus on the nature of problems and recommendations (see Procedures section). This study targeted adolescent girls because of: (i) the need to identify the problems and risks they face when using the Internet. (ii) Lack of studies that reflect a gender perspective regarding problems resulting from online use. (iii) adolescent girls being a critical group due to their stage of development and exposure to cultural pressures in the study population (Ibrahim, R. and Alsaeed, H, 2020) (Khairallah, 2022) and (iv) a growing need to explore the possibility of using online risk mitigation measures to promote positive adolescent girls' activity and ensure their safety in the digital space and a growing need for family-based prevention strategies. While four FGD sessions for adolescent girls and four FGD sessions for caregivers were considered sufficient to address questions to explore and provide appropriate insights, saturation was reached in the third FGD session for both.

Study Tool

The study tool consisted of a focus group discussion guide for collecting qualitative data, which included twenty-five questions, taking into account scientific foundations when formulating the questionnaire questions. To verify the validity of the tool and its comprehensiveness of all elements that must be present during analysis on the one hand, and the clarity of its vocabulary and paragraphs on the other hand, the form was presented, accompanied by the concepts, objectives and questions of the study, to a group of specialized arbitrators from the faculty members at the College of Counseling and Mental Health at the International Islamic Sciences University and the University. In order to obtain their opinions regarding the validity and suitability of the form to measure the purpose of the study, the necessary amendments, deletions, and additions were made in light of the proposals presented. A participatory committee of 10 children outside the study sample was also formed, and their opinions were taken about the study tool due to its reliance on the participatory approach, and some questions were modified accordingly.

Procedures

Ethical considerations were adhered to, as participants provided informed consent to participate in this study either to caregivers or to adolescent girls and their parents. The field researcher who dealt with the adolescent girls took the "Child Safeguarding Policy" course from Save the Children to ensure the safety of the participating adolescent girls. This study also adhered to the ethical rules of the British Psychological Society, and the IFRC, Focus interview guide was used when conducting the focused discussion sessions. group discussion (FGDs) guide (Mahmoud, 2023).

The study was explained by the first author in personal interviews with school principals. Upon agreement, schools sent information sheets about the nature of the study electronically to caregivers of adolescent girls from the relevant caregiver community, identified interested parties, and coordinated registration for participation, and the time and location of the interview within the school premises. Caregivers were asked to discuss views on online risks with adolescent girls and the protection mechanisms used. Each session lasted 60–100 minutes, and questions were based on a semi-structured interview schedule. The interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Questions were also discussed with the adolescent girls, and each session included a group of activities for the adolescent girls to break the deadlock first, then use activities related to the topics of the current study, such as the kite method, using Rocky Road, or an album of drawings related to the Internet, and some of their drawings were collected. Each session lasted from 100 to 120 minutes, and was

based on the questions were based on a semi-structured interview schedule, and the interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

The focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis (TA) (Nash, H.; Al-Abzouzi, R, 2023) and were guided by a social constructivist cognitive approach to generate themes based on participants’ opinions and perceptions of their experiences and perceptions in their social and cultural context rather than objective reality (Quayyum et al, 2021). This study also uses a human rights-based approach in its analysis, as well as a participatory approach. It responds to gender, as every human being has the right to be protected from dangers. This approach is based on the recognition that every society has barriers related to specific groups at the macro level, such as women and refugees. In addition to the participatory approach, through the participatory committee with children outside the study sample and taking their opinions about the study tool.

The analysis consisted of five stages: (i) becoming familiar with the data by iteratively reviewing the transcripts (ii) extracting and isolating verbatim quotations (iii) searching for any potential connections between themes, (iv) developing and refining themes in subsequent iterations. (V) Consolidate further identified topics under a few key themes. While analyzing the data. One of the researchers from the research team (who had experience in dealing with children) conducted the focus discussion sessions. The theme was developed independently by researchers with research experience in order to evaluate commonalities and differences in generating themes (Quayyum et al, 2021), and to increase the accuracy and credibility of the results by reducing researcher bias in this type of research. Agreement was reached in (85%) of the topics, any differences were resolved in the analysis process, the topics were discussed further, and points of disagreement were agreed upon by the research team.

RESULTS

Key themes emerged from adolescent girls and caregivers regarding the risks to which adolescents are exposed online: (i) cyber violence, consisting of two levels: sexual harassment and cyberbullying, (ii) safety and content risks, and (iii) social and psychological risks. Several themes also emerged regarding the protection options used from the girls’ point of view: (i) activating some protection options in search engines and applications, (ii) appropriate reporting, and (iii) caution when using public networks and Wi-Fi. Themes emerged for the protection options used from the perspective of caregivers (i) sitting in a place visible to parents, (ii) preventing adolescents from accessing the Internet or owning devices, and (iii) family awareness. While adolescent girls and caregivers jointly avoided opening links from unreliable sources to enhance protection options for adolescent girls.

The average of the answers was calculated: Regarding risks, the answers of the respondents (adolescent women and caregivers) were not separated because there were no differences in the answer, while the answers of the respondents (adolescent women and caregivers) were separated in the second axis related to mechanisms for protection from risks due to the emergence of differences between them, with an example included. Verbatim for each subtheme in Table 1.

Table 1. Digital protection for adolescent girls via the Internet

| Themes and subthemes | Verbatim examples |
|---|--|
| Theme 1: The risks and challenges faced by adolescent girls online from | the perspective of adolescents and caregivers |
| • Cyberbullying: (84.4%) | I am being bullied because I am a refugee, and they are sending us funny pictures that show the stupidity of Syrian refugees in Jordan.” (A teenage girl, 14 years old). “My child is bullied because of the color of her skin when she plays online games... especially Roblox.” (One caregiver, 38 years old) |
| • Sexual harassment (53.3%) | “There was a young man who contacted me through the Instagram application and told me how to get married in detail and asked me to open the camera so he could see my body.” (A teenage girl, 10 years old) “A young man was harassing my 15-year-old daughter under the guise of marriage.” (Caregiver, 42 years old) |
| • Security risks (account hacking (90%), sending inappropriate photos and videos (33.3%), accessing the dark web (5.5%) | “My account was hacked and my personal photos were stolen from my Instagram account, and the young man started taking advantage of that and |

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and psychological risks: - The dangers of imitating the negative behavior of some celebrities (24.4%) - Social isolation (75.5%) Poor academic performance (42.2%) - Spending long hours in front of devices (87.7%) | <p>asking me for more photos, which put me in a big problem.” (A teenage girl, 16 years old)</p> <p>“There is someone who sends me inappropriate pictures and videos on Facebook.” (A teenage girl, 13 years old)</p> <p>“I accessed the dark web through an encrypted program and saw frightening videos of people asking for money in exchange for watching videos of children and elderly people being killed.” (A teenage girl, 17 years old)</p> <p>“The thing girls are most at risk of is having their personal photos stolen and blackmailed.” (Male caregiver, 51 years old)</p> <p>“Years ago, I put an olive in my nose as a result of imitating a celebrity on the TikTok application.” (A teenage girl, 12 years old)</p> <p>“My daughter jumped from a high place without any means of protection to imitate a celebrity who is trying to imitate Abbas bin Firnas in flying.” (Male caregiver, 49 years old)</p> <p>“I no longer want to sit with my family or go to my grandmother’s house on the weekends because I want to play Fortnite with my friends” (one of the teens, 14 years old).</p> <p>“We do not see our children, even though we live under the same roof, as if we are in two separate worlds.” (Female caregiver, 41 years old) My grades have dropped since I started playing PUBG, and my father punishes me every class by taking away my iPad because of that.” (A teenage girl, 41 years old).</p> <p>“Our children spending a lot of time playing on phones and electronic devices is a major reason for their poor grades in school” (male caregiver, 46 years old).</p> <p>“I spend more than 12 hours in front of devices on vacation and six hours during school.” (A teenager, 11 years old)</p> <p>“It is an era of slavery to the Internet. My daughter spends all her time on her devices and if I take it away from her, she throws tantrums.” (Caregiver, 35).</p> |
| <p>Theme 2: Protection strategies</p> <p>Protection strategies employed by adolescents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate some protection options in search engines and applications (84.7%) • Reporting to the companies providing the service (80.4%), and informing the mother or older sister (39.1%) • Avoid opening links from unreliable sources (89.1%) • Caution when using public networks and Wi-Fi (50%) <p>Protection strategies employed by caregivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting in a place visible to parents (47.7%) • Avoid opening links from unreliable sources (95.4%) • Preventing young people from accessing the Internet or owning devices (31.8%) • Family awareness and determining some rules of use (90.9%) | <p>I protect my device using a security program called F-Secure” (one of the teens, 13 years old)</p> <p>“I make a report in the Instagram application if I am harassed” (one of the teens, 15 years old)</p> <p>“We should not open links that we do not know, as they may be hacked.” (A teenage girl, 11 years old)</p> <p>“Public networks are not protected, so you must be careful when using them.” (A teenage girl, 14 years old)</p> <p>“I allow my daughter to play with her friends, but on the condition that she sits in the living room so I can watch her.” (One caregiver, 42 years old)</p> <p>“One of the most important ways to protect young people online is to make them aware not to open applications that may come to them on applications whose source they do not know.” (Male caregiver, 46 years old)</p> <p>“Girls have many problems. It is better for them not to have the Internet and devices at all, because of the social stigma. They are the ones who bring shame, not the boys.” (Male caregiver, 48 years old)</p> <p>“The best option to provide protection for adolescent girls is to provide them with the necessary awareness and skills through school or the family.” (One caregiver, 36 years old)</p> |

The First Topic: The Risks and Challenges Facing Adolescent Girls Via the Internet.

The results showed that adolescent girls are exposed to many problems and risks related to cyberbullying, at a rate of (84.4%) according to the majority of adolescent girls and caregivers, and it included threatening and sarcastic messages, especially against Syrian refugee women, through social media, primarily Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp. The results showed that the majority of bullying to which adolescent girls are exposed comes primarily from acquaintances (primarily friends and schoolmates, then relatives, followed by friends in the digital space, especially live online games).

“We send each other at school what are known as memes (sending pictures of people in the form of stickers and in funny poses to make fun of them), where we take funny pictures of each other, for example, of my friend yawning, and I turn them into stickers and put a duck in her mouth, then we send them on our own group to laugh at them.” (One of the teenage girls, 17 years)

Another risk that girls are exposed to online is sexual harassment, with a percentage of (53.3%) of participants, through sexual talk with young girls, some of which is under the guise of marriage and the young man promising the girl that he will marry her and using it as a justification for harassment, while some girls were exposed to sexual harassment from By manipulating her photos using cut and paste photo applications and then blackmailing her into sending more photos in sexual positions.

Some of the risks are related to security, such as account hacking, with a rate of (90%). Younger girls (10-13) years old indicated that the accounts of the games they pay to buy are hacked, and thus they lose money, which is what their caregivers agreed with, while older girls (14 years old) indicated 17-year-old women were subjected to their Instagram and Facebook accounts being hacked and fake accounts created with their personal photos.

I bought my ten-year-old daughter a Roblox account worth 100 dinars, including clothes and game items that I don't know at all, and she came to me one day crying that someone had hacked into her account and taken everything she had collected.” (One caregiver, 37 years old)

Another safety risk is sending inappropriate photos and videos, with a percentage of (33.3%), as adolescent girls and their caregivers indicated sending inappropriate photos, videos, and advertisements that are appropriate for the age of adolescent girls. While the results showed that some adolescent girls have accessed the dark Internet, with a percentage of (5.5%) of adolescent girls.

“Given that I study in schools with an international program in Jordan, we take advanced programs on the Internet. There are encrypted words that I write. A strange website appears. There is also an application called Safety Gate or Freenet to access the dark or deep Internet. I once saw frightening videos of people asking for money in exchange for When I saw a video of adults killing children or the elderly, I was frightened and quickly left.” (One of the teens, 17 years old)

Among the social risks that young girls are exposed to via the Internet is the risk of imitating the negative behavior carried out by some celebrities (24.4%) of the participants, as it was found that some of these behaviors affect the physical safety of young women, such as trying to jump from a high place, or putting foreign objects in the nose. Or eat very spicy food and try to hurt themselves, like some content creators.

Some of the risks are related to social isolation (75.5%) of the participants, as adolescent girls spending long hours playing, studying, or even watching content on YouTube makes them want to stay in their rooms and on their devices, away from social interaction with family or direct communication with friends. This is what the majority of caregivers complained about.

Some caregivers and adolescent girls indicated that academic performance was affected by (42.2%) of the participants, as spending a long time on digital games in the first place and social networking sites in the second place led to a decline in the academic performance of adolescent girls who spend an average of (5) hours or more on the Internet. , especially for younger groups (10-13) years.

“It is natural for young girls' performance to decline in school. Instead of the girl spending her hours studying, she spends the majority of her time playing or communicating with her friends on the Snapchat application, as she must Streak every once in a while, so she remains attached to the devices at the expense of her lessons and duties.” (One of the caregivers, 52)

While the psychological risks were associated with spending long hours in front of devices, including (87.7%) of the participants, and according to the caregivers, young ages (10-13) years were more affected by prolonged sitting on the Internet, and displaying behaviors of discomfort, anxiety, nervousness, and psychological pain resulting from this. Stay away from the mobile phone or even lose the electrical charger for the devices.

Topic Two: Options and Protection Mechanisms Used

Some of the protection options used differed from the perspectives of adolescent girls and caregivers as follows:

The protection options and mechanisms used from the point of view of young women were the activation of some protection options in search engines and applications that protect devices, and the use of content filtering programs, by (84.7%) of young women, to protect them from accessing inappropriate websites, especially the age group (14-17)., in general, and among these applications, as indicated by young women: F- Secure, Secure Folder, Brave Browser, Save App, Best Secret Folder

Other protection mechanisms include reporting to companies providing the service, with a percentage of (80.4%) of female adolescents, and reporting to the mother or older sister, with a percentage of (39.1%). There was no tendency among female adolescents to inform the males in the family (father, brother), as the percentage indicated (6.5%) % that they may inform the male in the family and they are among the younger age groups (10-13) years. Young females also tend to inform the school counselor at a rate of (8.6%). While the tendency for adolescent girls to report to official support mechanisms in Jordan was very weak, with regard to reporting to the cybercrime unit at a rate of (6.5%), legal clinics (0.0%), or legal aid centers at a rate of (2.1%).

"It is not possible for me to report to the cybercrime unit or to my father about what I am exposed to online, especially with regard to sexual harassment or any online situation involving males. They cannot tolerate that." (One of the adolescent girls, 17 years old)

Some of the protection mechanisms relate to adolescent girls' caution when using public networks and Wi-Fi, at a rate of (50%), as almost half of the adolescent girls expressed their fear of having their accounts hacked when using public networks and Wi-Fi, such as using (VPN).

The mechanism to avoid opening links from unreliable sources was a common mechanism between adolescent girls and their caregivers, including (89.1%) of adolescent girls, as adolescent girls feared malware and viruses.

"Opening unknown links is very dangerous, as some of these links may be used in fraud attempts, for the purpose of stealing identity or money, or what is known as ((phishing))" (one of the young women, 15 years old)

The protection options and mechanisms used from the point of view of caregivers were sitting in a place visible to parents and (47.7%) of caregivers. Caregivers indicated that devices were placed or used in the family's seating area and not in adolescent girls' bedrooms, so that they could monitor them closely. effective. Family awareness and specifying some rules of use were among the main mechanisms used by caregivers (90.9%), in terms of determining the time in which they could use digital devices, or limiting use to school holidays or weekends, and educating adolescent girls about the dangers of using the Internet. Especially sending personal photos to males.

"Parents must educate their daughters about the dangers of using the Internet. What we hear these days about incidents between males and females is very frightening.... The time for using devices must also be limited to three hours a day on school days, and it is preferable not to use it except at the end of the week." (One caregiver, 41 years)

Some caregivers tended to deprive adolescent girls of access to the Internet or ownership of devices (31.8%), unlike their male children.

"Girls in our society are not like boys. They bring shame to their families. That is why I have five daughters, none of whom were given a phone or device, while my six-year-old male son was given a phone and an iPad." (Male caregiver, 48 years old)

Caregivers participate with adolescent girls in a mechanism to avoid opening links from unreliable sources, including (95.4%) of caregivers. Caregivers indicated that adolescent girls may be tricked into revealing their personal data through forged web pages, and these links may lead to downloading content. unwanted or unethical content on their devices even without their consent.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The risks and challenges facing adolescent girls via the Internet

The study provides information about the risks to which adolescent girls in Jordan are exposed via the Internet, in addition to shedding light on the protection mechanisms used from the point of view of the adolescent girls themselves and from the point of view of their caregivers. The results indicated that young girls are exposed to

many risks via the Internet, represented by electronic violence on two levels, the first related to electronic bullying, at a rate of (84.4%). It is worth noting that the majority of the bullying that girls are exposed to comes primarily from acquaintances and friends. The second risk to which young girls are exposed is related to sexual harassment, with a rate of (53.3%). In a previous study, it indicated that children are exposed to electronic bullying via the Internet without there being an effective way to track the image or video clip published on the social network or the Internet (Rabhi, 2023), However, our study reported Much higher prevalence of cyberbullying.

It is worth noting that the rate of electronic harassment may be much higher among adolescent girls, given the tendency of the majority of females in general in Jordan not to report violence, especially sexual harassment, to which they may be exposed, as indicated by some studies (Rodriguez, C.; Patterson, E. J,2021) ,This is attributed to several overlapping factors related to social, cultural, and cultural aspects. And legal issues, as indicated by the adolescent girls in this study, such as the fear of the social stigma that may accompany them after reporting sexual violence, as the culture of Jordanian society, from their point of view, attaches great importance to family honor, and the adolescent girls fear that they will be seen as having brought shame to their families, This fear is higher among Syrian refugee women in Jordan. A quarter of the adolescent girls in this study indicated that they were not aware of their legal rights or the procedures that must be followed to report cases of sexual violence. While half of adolescent girls, especially Syrian refugee women residing in Jordan, indicated the lack of counseling services and support centers, which makes it difficult for victims to obtain the necessary assistance.

(90%) of adolescent girls reported risks related to security, such as account hacking, and the younger groups (10-13) years indicated that the accounts of the games they paid to purchase were hacked, while older adolescent girls (14-17) years indicated that they had been exposed to their accounts on Instagram and Facebook being hacked. Facebook and creating fake accounts with their personal photos. Some of the safety risks were related to sending inappropriate pictures, videos, and advertisements. The result is consistent with previous studies (Smith,2022) (The World Bank, 2020), that confirmed that young people may be exposed to harmful media content related to smoking and alcohol advertisements, and messages with sexual content, which children often associate with positive and acceptable behaviors, which threaten the future of the current generation. Through new forms of media-supported crime such as identity theft and child pornography.

The results showed that some adolescent girls have accessed the dark Internet, with a percentage of 5.5% of adolescent girls, in light of the scarcity of Jordanian and Arab studies related to these risks, which are considered a fertile environment for exploitation and sexual harassment, or expose children to finding markets to sell drugs and dangerous materials or recruitment. By terrorist or criminal groups and other risks, as indicated by some studies (Zakharova, 2020) and (Al-Atoum, 2017).

Participants reported some social risks, as (24.4%) of participants reported the risks of imitating the negative behavior carried out by some celebrities. It was found that some of these behaviors affect the physical safety of adolescent girls, such as trying to jump from a high place, or putting foreign objects in the nose, or Eating very spicy food and trying to injure themselves, like some content creators, was indicated by Al-Bayoumi,(2021) that reviewed the dangers of electronic imitation in children. This includes exploring how exposure to different types of digital media, such as social media platforms, video games, and other electronic content, can affect It affects children's behavior and development negatively, as indicated by social learning theories.

Some of the risks are related to social isolation, as (75.5%) of the participants and the desire of adolescent girls to remain in their rooms and on their devices, away from social interaction with family or direct communication with friends, which is consistent with (Data Reportal, 2023) study that indicates a negative deterioration in personal relationships, as children addicted to the Internet are more They are prone to neglecting their school obligations and their relationships with family and friends, which is also consistent with the results of the current study, which indicate that academic performance was affected by (42.2%) of the participants, as spending a long time on digital games in the first place and social networking sites in the second place led to The academic performance of adolescent girls who spend an average of (5) hours or more on the Internet declines.

Psychological risks were associated with spending long hours in front of devices, with a percentage of (87.7%) of the participants, especially the young ages (10-13) years. The results are consistent on (Flinsi, 2018) and (IFRC, 2024) studies that indicated frequent and continuous use of computer and video games excessively and an inability to control. On the growing trends and behaviors towards using the Internet.

There were also some behaviors of discomfort, anxiety, nervousness, and psychological pain resulting from being away from the mobile phone or even losing the electrical charger for the devices, especially for young girls (10-13) years who showed behaviors of screaming bouts and excessive nervousness, and this is consistent with a (Khalayfia, 2022) study that indicates the existence of a direct relationship between... Addiction to electronic games, anxiety, social isolation, and aggressive behavior.

Options and Protection Mechanisms Used

The protection mechanisms used differed depending on the risks that adolescent girls face online, according to the individual and family context. Risk mitigation measures differed between adolescent girls and their caregivers based on the type of risk, but they shared in common their tendency toward informal protection mechanisms for fear of social stigmatization of adolescent girls and fear of The recent amendments to the Jordanian Crimes Law, which are incomprehensible to adolescents and caregivers, and the consequences for them in the event of a complaint or report.

The protection mechanisms used by adolescents were to avoid opening links from unreliable sources (89.1%), and adolescent girls also showed greater awareness than their caregivers of means of protection online by activating some protection options in search engines and applications by (84.7%) of adolescent girls, as None of the caregivers mentioned those programs used to protect adolescent girls when using the Internet. The most important applications were F-Secure, Secure Folder, Brave Browser, Save App, and Best Secret Folder, which indicates a lack of keeping up with caregivers in ways to safely use the Internet.

Young girls tended to report to service provider companies (80.4%), and to be careful when using public networks and Wi-Fi (50%), while some young girls tended to inform their mother or older sister (39.1%) without tending to inform the male. family for cultural reasons, such as fear of social stigma. It was found that some adolescent girls were unable to deal with some risks because of this, such as electronic sexual harassment. Thus, the results show the need to increase gender awareness courses in Jordan, as some studies (Mismar, 2020) as well as the results of this study, indicate the persistence of some stereotypes. Which prevents females from reporting the violence they are exposed to due to social stigma resulting from traditional gender roles and cultural preferences that prevent them from seeking help or obtaining support. School guidance was also not among the preferences of adolescent girls, which indicates the need to activate the role of the school counselor, as some studies (Mohtar,2021) indicate the lack of awareness of teachers and counselors about the risks to which students are exposed in their schools, and thus the absence of their role in educating students.

While caregivers indicated that measures should include avoiding opening links from unreliable sources (95.4%), family awareness and specifying some rules of use, such as warning adolescent girls against giving personal data or talking to strangers online without consulting them (90.9%), The previous result is consistent with the results of studies (Mohtar,2021) and (Oweijan,2021), indicating the necessity of educating adolescents about appropriate ways to protect themselves and their privacy and how to interact safely online by teaching them the skill of critical thinking and developing responsible behavior in them. Among the protection options from the point of view of caregivers was for adolescent girls to sit in a place visible to their parents, meaning that Young girls use electronic devices in an open environment and not in a closed room alone, at a rate of (47.7%). While some caregivers, especially males, tended to prevent adolescent girls from accessing the Internet or owning devices (31.8%), as parents do not have a way to mitigate these risks in the absence of appropriate alternatives.

The results of the current study highlight the interaction and relationship between the following social systems: adolescent girls, devices/applications and online content, caregivers/adolescent girls, and larger systems (public policy/cybercrime law). The risks indicate the potential vulnerability that may affect adolescent girls if they

remain untreated. Likewise, the same systems may act as protective factors against potential risks within the context of social media and gaming, as some studies (Sha'atit,2018) and (UNICEF, 2021), have suggested.

The study revealed the weakness of basic protection mechanisms represented by psychological and educational counseling in schools, or reporting to the cybercrime unit, legal clinics, legal aid centers, or even resorting to parents, which may lead to an exacerbation of the psychological damage resulting from electronic violence, blackmail, or any form of risk they may be exposed to online. Also, adolescent girls may feel isolated and lonely, and lack the psychological support necessary for recovery, especially in light of the weak role of school and psychological counseling, which the majority of adolescent girls in the current study did not resort to.

Although this study provides valuable insights into the types of risks that adolescent girls face online and the protection mechanisms used, it is not without limitations. It is important to note that the study was conducted only on adolescent girls. Therefore, the generalizability of findings to adolescent males may be limited. Some difficulties emerged in the focused discussion sessions with caregivers in Irbid Governorate, as some women, at the request of their husbands, refused to sit with men in one place due to social norms that impose restrictions on mixing in those sessions. Therefore, the study recommends, in similar studies, separating the sessions in Governorates.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of social media constitutes a large part of the psychological and social development of adolescent girls, apart from traditional socialization factors, and the current study explored some of the risks that adolescent girls are exposed to via the Internet, from electronic violence to excessive use and some risky behaviors. Some protection options used by adolescent girls and by caregivers have been found to provide varying degrees of protection against electronic risks, and their ability to protect depends on several factors such as the type of risk, the level of awareness of adolescent girls and caregivers about electronic security, and how they apply these. Means. The results also showed that there is awareness of some protection methods among adolescent girls that are not known to caregivers, such as electronic protection programs. The study suggests several ways to raise awareness and build digital capabilities online and offline, by activating the role of civil society organizations to carry out programs and activities targeting digital protection for adolescents and raising awareness of the risks they face, such as creating educational resources, such as booklets and websites, and creating an information base on using new technologies in an easy and effective way for parents. Teachers, mentors and young people. The current study also proposes providing legal support to young people who are exposed to risks online, in addition to integrating digital awareness into school curricula and spreading a culture of safe use of the Internet by activating privacy procedures and online protection applications that prevent them from entering prohibited sites such as parental control programs, filtering programs, and search engines. Secure and updated antiviruses to protect data. Activating the role of psychological guidance and counseling centers in providing treatment programs for Internet addiction, in addition to psychological and social support services for young people who suffer from other negative effects resulting from their experiences online.

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