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A Comparative Study of the Impact of Virtual Space on the Lifestyle of User and Non-User Women in Garmsar City

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: The study aimed to compare the impact of virtual space on the lifestyle of user and non-user women.

Methods and Materials: This survey research was conducted among women aged 19 to 59 years in Garmsar City in 2020. The sample included 320 participants, divided equally into two groups of user and non-user women, selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts in the field, and its reliability was assessed through Cronbach's alpha, yielding an acceptable coefficient.

Findings: Significant differences were observed between the two groups of women across six lifestyle indicators (except for marital style). User women exhibited a more diverse and modern lifestyle compared to non-user women. Furthermore, a relationship was identified between engagement in virtual space and lifestyle dimensions assessed in this study, including body image, leisure patterns, nutrition, social interactions, and physical activity.

Conclusion: Differences and changes were observed in the lifestyles of the two groups, indicating that virtual space significantly influences the lifestyle of user women. This finding underscores the potential transformative effect of virtual engagement on women's way of life.

Keywords: *Lifestyle, Virtual Space, Women, Social Changes, Virtual Interaction.*

1. Introduction

One of the earliest sociologists to address lifestyle was Max Weber, who considered it as shared values and customs that provide a group with a sense of collective identity and a way of life that accommodates the psychological needs of individuals (Navabakhsh, 2014). This concept delineates the indistinct boundaries of social status and position (Young, 1997). According to Taamin, Weber used the term "lifestyle" to refer to patterns of behavior, dress, speech, thought, and attitudes that define distinct status groups while also serving as a model for those aspiring to join these groups (Fazeli, 2003; Hajiebrahim Araghi et al., 2024).

To better understand the concept of "lifestyle" as seen by various thinkers, it is essential to analyze the elements and components they associate with this term or have utilized in their research as its indicators. Bourdieu regarded lifestyle studies as primarily an examination of possessions (luxury or cultural items) that individuals accumulate around themselves, such as homes, villas, yachts, cars, furniture, paintings, books, beverages, cigars, perfumes, and clothing. The second focus involves activities that distinguish individuals, such as sports, games, leisure (e.g., hiking, skiing, horseback riding, golf, or tennis), attire, physical appearance maintenance, language usage, and budgeting (Cohen, 2023).

J.A. Weil argued that lifestyle includes not only consumption but also values, attitudes, demographic factors, gender differences, economic status, occupation, social classification, and participation in leisure activities (Mahdavi-Kani, 2007). Similarly, Leslie et al. (1994) identified factors of lifestyle as taste (e.g., choice of wine, home equipment, reading materials, and time management) and manners, emphasizing consumption patterns as a whole. Fern (2001) highlighted activities (such as work, entertainment, and recreation), interests (such as family and media), and beliefs (such as social, political, and economic issues) as components of lifestyle (Fern, 2001).

Although, as Chen (1993) noted, the focus on consumer behavior persisted throughout the 20th century. Today, in everyday conversations and media references, the term "lifestyle" often evokes meanings associated with personal hygiene, body beautification, home furnishings, and recreational activities such as fishing and boating (Ardesch, 2023).

Giddens (1999) posited that technology has profoundly transformed societies, including redefining the roles of men and women. The new generation, more exposed to modern informational technologies than its predecessor, rejects traditional roles and approaches social values and norms with greater reflexivity. This is facilitated by resources such as education and exposure to social movements (Giddens, 1990). Few theorists can overlook the role of technologies in shaping and shifting social values (Putri, 2024).

Castells, in his theory of the network society, argued that networks are open structures capable of unlimited expansion and innovation without compromising their balance. A network-based social structure is an open, dynamic system that allows innovation while creating new focal points. The logic of networks creates a social drive that transcends the specific social interests expressed through them: the power of flows surpasses the flows of power. This configuration characterizes what he terms the network society, where the dominance of social form outweighs individual social actions (Castells, 2006).

Bourdieu viewed lifestyle as a set of structured activities rooted in an individual's taste and preference, primarily external and objective, while simultaneously symbolically granting the individual identity and creating distinctions among different social classes (Bourdieu, 1984). Leslie et al. (1994) similarly associated lifestyle with behaviors tied to hierarchical and prestigious classifications (Leslie et al., 1994). Giddens (1996), in discussing the politics of lifestyle, highlighted the interplay between lifestyle and identity construction, emphasizing how modernity transforms traditional structures and decision-making (Giddens, 1996).

From a theoretical perspective, Bourdieu considered lifestyle as a domain where individuals learn how to live, what to prioritize, and what to value as beautiful (Fakouhi, 2003). He argued that lifestyle encompasses structured practices such as daily routines, leisure activities, social manners, modes of speaking, walking, dressing, and eating (Bourdieu, 1984). These distinctions, rooted in individual taste and preference, reflect deeper social stratifications (Chavoshian, 2002).

Analyzing these perspectives reveals two recurring themes central to lifestyle definitions: unity and distinction. Lifestyle represents a systematic collection of elements that form an integrated whole, setting it apart from other wholes. Terms like pattern, systematization, integration, identity, and distinction in various definitions underscore this idea (Hajiebrahim Araghi et al., 2024).

Virtual space refers to a communication environment enabled by computers, resulting in computer networks. This type of communication occurs in platforms such as chat rooms, email, dating sites, and blogs. Virtual space is an intangible digital environment within international networks (connected via information highways like the internet) where all information about human relations, cultures, nations, and countries—essentially everything physically tangible on Earth—is available in digital form for users. Computers and international networks interconnect the components of this space (Adanma, 2024; Hajiebrahim Araghi et al., 2024).

Initially, critiques of communication and media technologies suggested that these technologies undermined individuals' autonomy (Thompson, 1999). McLuhan argued, "Whoever controls these communication tools can even influence popular culture; if Archimedes sought a fulcrum to

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change the world, I seek media to transform societies" (Saroukhani, 2015). Mass media includes all impersonal tools of communication that transmit visual or auditory messages directly to audiences. Examples include television, radio, cinema, newspapers, books, and magazines. Among mass media, diverse forms exist, with radio, cinema, and popular press often attracting the largest and most heterogeneous audiences (Gould & Kolb, 2005).

McLuhan contended that electronic communication tools usher humanity into a new social stage. These tools end the monopoly of print communication, reviving oral expression and auditory perception. The transformative impact of electronic tools is evident in living standards, education, literature, arts, and overall cultural systems (Saroukhani, 2015).

Content shared through mass media creates distinct impacts across different platforms (Cazeneuve, 1998). Lasswell, in studying group communication science, focused on the nature and dissemination of messages and their effects (Motamednejad, 1992). Broadly, researchers have examined the short-term and long-term effects of communication messages (Aronson et al., 1994).

The Frankfurt School and theorists like Habermas extensively discussed commercial culture, emphasizing the passive nature of audiences against the backdrop of lost critical independence (Coleman, 1998). Following Toffler's influential perspectives on the transformative power of the information society (Toffler, 1996), the emphasis on the transformative potential of information technologies increased. Lenski linked societal transitions and structural changes to technological advancements, particularly highlighting industrialization's role in redefining social norms and values, notably concerning women's roles. Lenski stated that women's emancipation owes more to technological progress than commonly assumed (Lenski & Lenski, 1995).

The objective of this study was to compare the impact of virtual space on the lifestyle of user and non-user women.

2. Methods and Materials

This study employed a quantitative research design. The research method was survey-based, and its objective was applied. The statistical population comprised women aged 19 to 59 years residing in Garmsar City in 2020. The sample size included 320 participants, divided equally into two groups of user and non-user women through simple random sampling.

Due to the lack of precise and accurate information regarding the actual number of women in the specified age groups within the target population, it was not possible to utilize common sample size determination formulas. Therefore, based on prior experience and considering sample sizes in similar studies, a sample size of 320 was chosen, selected through simple random sampling.

Data collection was carried out using a researcher-developed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The validity of the measurement scale was reviewed and confirmed by several experts in the field of the current research. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha method, resulting in a coefficient of 75%.

After a preliminary test (pretest for validation and reliability assessment of the instrument), the questionnaire was administered to the final sample. Efforts were made to ensure content and face validity of the research questionnaire by conducting an initial pretest. To determine the questionnaire's validity, input from sociologists and specialists was sought regarding the alignment of the questions with the desired attributes, and their feedback was reviewed and implemented.

The questionnaire was pretested on a diverse sample of 35 women. Internal consistency and reliability coefficients of the data collection instrument were assessed by calculating the correlation of each item with the variable scales using Cronbach's alpha method to ensure sufficient reliability for the final administration.

The reliability of the questionnaire was examined using two methods: Cronbach's alpha and test-retest (reliability testing). The overall reliability of the questionnaire was found to be 75%, as shown in the following:

Table 1

Dimensions and Reliability Coefficients of Lifestyle Measurement Construct Using Cronbach's Alpha and Test-Retest

Primary Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha	Test-Retest
Attention to Body	0.74	0.75
Leisure/Time Utilization	0.77	0.75
Nutrition Patterns	0.81	0.78
Social Communication Patterns	0.75	0.73

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Marital Style/Life Together	0.78	0.74
Exercise Style	0.77	0.75
Overall Score	0.77	0.76

The data analysis in this study was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants and the distribution of key variables. To test the hypotheses, inferential statistical methods, including t-tests and chi-square tests, were applied to determine significant differences between user and non-user groups in terms of lifestyle indicators. Additionally, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the strength and direction of relationships between cyberspace activity and lifestyle factors. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS (Version 27), with a significance level set at $p < 0.05$.

3. Findings and Results

Descriptive findings revealed that the respondents' age range varied between 19 and 59 years. Among user women, the highest frequency was at 28 years old, and the lowest frequency was at 57 years old. For non-user women, the highest frequency was at 26 years old, and the lowest frequency was at 23 years old. The average age for respondents in both groups was 23 years.

The distribution of respondents based on time spent using virtual networks or cyberspace was categorized into five groups: less than one hour, one to two hours, two to three hours, three to four hours, and more than four hours daily. The majority of users (28.7%) spent between two and three hours online daily, while the least (14.3%) spent less than one hour. The average time spent in virtual spaces per day was 2.73 hours.

Descriptive statistics for the "attention to body" variable (including weight, appearance, and body grooming) showed that user women scored higher on sub-dimensions like diet use, regular physical activity, use of slimming medications, and weight awareness. For appearance and grooming, users showed higher percentages in activities like facial makeup, hair grooming and dyeing, rhinoplasty, body cosmetic surgeries, and use of non-prescription colored contact lenses.

Regarding leisure patterns, non-user women showed a higher frequency in attending family gatherings, religious ceremonies, and family-oriented recreational activities. In contrast, user women reported higher percentages in solo travel, attending cinemas and films, and experiencing music concerts.

For nutrition patterns, non-users preferred homemade meals, while users showed a higher tendency toward fast food consumption.

In the "social communication patterns" variable, non-users preferred family interactions, while users exhibited higher tendencies toward friendships, open interactions with others, and a preference for solitude.

The "marital style/life together" variable indicated that users leaned toward non-traditional marriage styles, such as "independent selection from family" and "pre-marital acquaintance and dating." Conversely, non-users predominantly followed traditional marriage styles like "family-arranged marriages" and "no prior acquaintance (arranged proposals)." Overall, 89.3% of users exhibited non-traditional, modern approaches to partner selection compared to 55% of non-users.

Regarding attitudes toward age differences with a spouse, non-users adhered to traditional preferences like "the husband being older," while users showed greater acceptance of "the wife being older," "being the same age," or "no preference for age differences." A modern approach to age difference was observed in 63.1% of users versus 35.6% of non-users.

In family decision-making patterns, no significant differences were found regarding the belief that "decisions should be made by the man." However, modern views like "decision-making by the woman" and "joint decision-making by both partners" were nearly equal among users (95.6%) and non-users (95%). Similar results were observed in the "continuity of marriage" variable, with 79.3% of users and 73.7% of non-users exhibiting modern approaches.

In exercise patterns, user women engaged more in regular gym-based sports, while non-users reported slightly higher participation in irregular activities like walking or group exercises in parks.

Overall, 75.6% of user women demonstrated a preference for non-traditional (modern) lifestyles, compared to only 24.3% of non-users.

Hypothesis 1: There is a difference in lifestyle between women who use cyberspace and those who do not.

To test this hypothesis, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. Before performing this analysis, assumptions of the test were verified.

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One of the assumptions for conducting the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is the normality of the data distribution, which was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test. The results indicated that the significance levels for all variables, including attention to body, leisure/time utilization pattern, nutrition pattern, social communication pattern, marital style/life together, and exercise style, were greater than 0.05. This confirmed the assumption of normality for the score distributions across all variables. Another key assumption is the homogeneity of the variance-covariance matrix, evaluated through Box's test. The significance level of 0.53 for Box's M test was greater than the required threshold of 0.01, supporting the assumption of covariance matrix homogeneity. Additionally, the homogeneity of variances among the dependent variables across groups was assessed using Levene's test. The results showed non-significant F-values for all dependent variables, with p-values exceeding 0.05, indicating no violations of the assumption of equal variances. Based on these results, the assumptions of normality, homogeneity of covariance matrices, and equality of variances were upheld, validating the suitability of the data for conducting MANOVA.

The results of the MANOVA, comparing variables like attention to body, leisure/time utilization patterns, nutrition patterns, social communication patterns, marital style/life together, and exercise style between user and non-user women, are presented in the following:

Table 2

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) for Lifestyle Variables Between User and Non-User Women

Multivariate Indicators	Value	F	Df	Sig
Pillai's Trace	0.26	2.36a	4	0.01
Wilks' Lambda	0.73	2.36a	4	0.01
Hotelling's Trace	0.35	2.36a	4	0.01
Roy's Largest Root	0.36	2.36a	4	0.01
P < 0.01				

The results in Table 2 indicate that Wilks' Lambda and its significance level are less than 0.05, confirming a significant difference between the groups. Further detailed comparisons of group differences are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) for Comparing Attention to Body, Leisure/Time Utilization Pattern, Nutrition Pattern, Social Communication Pattern, Marital Style/Life Together, and Exercise Style Between User and Non-User Groups (df = 1)

Sources of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig
Between Groups - Attention to Body	772.245	1	772.24	19.72	0.001**
Between Groups - Leisure Pattern	21.780	1	3246.780	12.31	0.001**
Between Groups - Nutrition Pattern	2534.720	1	2534.72	13.38	0.001**
Between Groups - Social Communication Pattern	5853.62	1	5853.62	11.61	0.001**
Between Groups - Marital Style	2632.711	1	2632.711	12.39	0.001**
Between Groups - Exercise Style	5792.61	1	5792.61	11.63	0.001**
Error - Attention to Body	7752.91	318	39.15		
Error - Leisure Pattern	6653.30	318	336.05		
Error - Nutrition Pattern	37506.400	318	189.42		
Error - Social Communication Pattern	997779.400	318	503.93		
Error - Marital Style	7761.93	318	39.22		
Error - Exercise Style	6659.21	318	336.13		
Total - Attention to Body	261499	320			
Total - Leisure Pattern	907924	320			
Total - Nutrition Pattern	620652	320			
Total - Social Communication Pattern	827314	320			
Total - Marital Style	928332	320			
Total - Exercise Style	631436	320			

The results presented in Table 3 summarize the one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) conducted to examine differences between user and non-user women. Six dependent variables were analyzed: attention to body,

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leisure/time utilization pattern, nutrition pattern, social communication pattern, marital style/life together, and exercise style.

Assumptions for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity were tested, with no violations observed. A significant difference was found between the groups in the combined dependent variables: Wilks' Lambda = 0.73, p = 0.01, F(4,194) = 2.36.

When the dependent variables were examined individually, significant differences were found at the 0.01 level across all dependent variables.

Table 4

Results of t-Test for Comparing Dependent Variables Between User and Non-User Women

Variable	Non-User Women (M)	Non-User Women (SD)	User Women (M)	User Women (SD)	Df	t	Sig
Attention to Body	33.60	6.55	37.53	5.93	320	4.44	0.003**
Leisure/Time Utilization Pattern	33.60	6.55	37.53	5.93	320	4.44	0.003**
Nutrition Pattern	33.60	6.55	37.53	5.93	320	4.44	0.003**
Social Communication Pattern	33.60	6.55	37.53	5.93	320	4.44	0.003**
Marital Style	33.60	6.55	37.53	5.93	320	4.44	0.003**
Exercise Style	33.60	6.55	37.53	5.93	320	4.44	0.003**

As shown in Table 4, with the assumption of variance homogeneity met for all variables (attention to body, leisure/time utilization pattern, nutrition pattern, social communication pattern, marital style, and exercise style), the calculated t-values were significant at the 0.01 level.

These results indicate significant differences between the mean scores of the two groups, with user women showing distinct engagement patterns compared to non-user women across all variables studied.

Hypothesis 2: A significant positive relationship was found between attention to body and changes (a key indicator of a non-traditional lifestyle) and daily engagement in cyberspace among user women (r = 0.421, p = 0.027). This indicates that as cyberspace engagement increases, women are more likely to adopt a non-traditional (modern) lifestyle focused on body awareness and modifications.

Hypothesis 3: A significant positive relationship was observed between modern leisure/time utilization patterns and cyberspace engagement among user women (r = 0.342, p = 0.041). This suggests that higher levels of cyberspace interaction are associated with greater inclination towards modern leisure activities.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between modern nutrition patterns and daily cyberspace engagement was also significant and positive (r = 0.233, p = 0.048). This indicates that as engagement in cyberspace increases, women tend to shift towards non-traditional (modern) nutrition habits.

Hypothesis 5: A significant positive relationship was identified between modern social communication patterns and cyberspace engagement among user women (r = 0.384, p = 0.039). This suggests that increased engagement in cyberspace correlates with a higher preference for modern approaches to social communication.

Hypothesis 6: Modern marital styles and daily cyberspace engagement demonstrated a significant positive relationship (r = 0.448, p = 0.022). This implies that women with higher engagement in cyberspace are more inclined to adopt non-traditional (modern) marital styles.

Hypothesis 7: Lastly, a significant positive relationship was found between modern exercise styles and cyberspace engagement among user women (r = 0.212, p = 0.031). This indicates that higher levels of cyberspace interaction are associated with greater adherence to modern exercise habits.

Table 5

Relationship Between Cyberspace Engagement and Lifestyle Variables

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Test Value (r)	Significance Level (p)
Cyberspace Engagement	Attention to Body and Changes	0.421	0.027
Cyberspace Engagement	Modern Leisure/Time Utilization Patterns	0.342	0.041
Cyberspace Engagement	Modern Nutrition Patterns	0.233	0.048
Cyberspace Engagement	Modern Social Communication Patterns	0.384	0.039
Cyberspace Engagement	Modern Marital Style/Life Together	0.448	0.022

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Cyberspace Engagement	Modern Exercise Style	0.212	0.031

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed significant differences between user and non-user women in the six lifestyle dimensions. It was also evident that user women adopted a more diverse and modern lifestyle compared to non-user women. In alignment with the results of Niroumand et al. (2014), who studied the factors influencing women's participation in virtual networks in Tehran, it can be argued that women, by engaging in the dual-world dynamics of cyberspace, are exposed to cultural symbols associated with lifestyle changes. They showcase the effects of virtual network engagement through their social relationships and daily lives, creating new, self-constructed identities via virtual and symbolic interactions (Niroomand & Zehabi, 2014).

The empirical findings demonstrate that activity and interaction in cyberspace significantly influence the lifestyle of women studied. These changes, compared to non-active women, highlight the substantial sociological impact of cyberspace on individuals' ways of living. The observed differences are significant, particularly as they relate to faster modernization and departure from traditional contexts. Given the significant relationships between lifestyle dimensions and women's engagement in cyberspace, it can be concluded that lifestyle changes among the studied women reflect the theoretical model proposed in this research.

This study sought to examine the sociological changes in women's lifestyles through interactions in cyberspace, comparing user and non-user women to empirically explore various lifestyle dimensions. Since the research variables and hypotheses were based on a theoretical framework and model, it is necessary to evaluate and compare the results against relevant theories. Using an integrative approach, lifestyle was examined through indicators highlighted in both empirical research and theoretical perspectives. The study adopted a combined framework to operationalize variables by extracting elements from related theories.

According to Gerbner's cultivation theory, interaction between media and its audiences significantly impacts perception, positing a direct relationship between media exposure and its influence on individuals. The findings of this study support this idea, as the cumulative process emphasized by the theory indicates that media can shape beliefs about social realities. Increased time spent in virtual environments correlates with changes in attitudes aligned with the media's content. This aligns with the core premise of cultivation theory: higher engagement with cyberspace increases its likelihood of influencing lifestyle changes.

Moreover, the findings align with the uses and gratifications theory, which emphasizes audience motivation and choice among various media. Users receive different feedback from such interactions, influencing their values, emotions, and perceptions. Purposeful and goal-oriented virtual interactions have a higher potential to impact lifestyle changes.

According to Giddens' theory, the modern world offers individuals a range of diverse and distinct lifestyle choices, compelling them to adopt specific patterns. Thus, lifestyle represents a comprehensive set of practices adopted by individuals. In modern times, everyone inevitably develops their unique lifestyle. This study's findings on cyberspace's influence on women's lifestyles align with Giddens' perspective and the analytical model proposed in Chapter 2 of this research.

The findings ultimately indicate that the vast and expanding social medium of cyberspace plays a significant role in shaping Iranian women's lifestyles. This medium, growing daily in both reach and influence, significantly impacts various aspects of women's lives. This includes changes in their perspectives on body image, leisure and recreation patterns, nutrition, social communication styles, marital life, and exercise habits. Notably, considering the young average age of participants, there is evidence of cultural shifts among young Iranian women toward modern attitudes about their bodies, recreation, relationships, and marital choices. Social behavior adapts to various cultural and societal factors over time, and mass media and cyberspace are pivotal in driving such changes.

The analysis and hypothesis testing showed significant relationships between cyberspace engagement and several lifestyle dimensions:

1. **Attention to Body and Changes**: A significant positive relationship was found between cyberspace activity and attention to body and its modifications. Increased engagement correlated with a greater tendency toward a modern lifestyle focusing on body awareness and changes. This finding aligns with prior research (Niroomand & Zehabi, 2014; Sepahri, 2014) which identified similar trends influenced by modern lifestyles.

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2. **Leisure/Time Utilization Patterns**: The results highlighted a significant relationship between cyberspace activity and modern leisure/time utilization patterns. Increased cyberspace interaction was associated with a greater inclination toward modern recreational activities. These results are consistent with prior studies (Abdollahnajd Farahani, 2014; Niroomand & Zehabi, 2014) which emphasize the role of cyberspace in shaping leisure patterns.
3. **Nutrition Patterns**: A significant positive relationship was observed between cyberspace engagement and modern nutrition patterns. As cyberspace activity increased, so did the tendency toward modern dietary habits. These findings align with prior research (Severin & James, 2002) highlighting the influence of virtual networks on nutritional behaviors.
4. **Social Communication Patterns**: The study found a significant relationship between cyberspace engagement and modern social communication styles. Increased virtual interaction correlated with a stronger preference for modern communication patterns. This finding echoes results from prior studies (Bashir & Afrasiabi, 2012; Benjamin, 1999; Young, 1997) demonstrating that internet usage significantly impacts real-world social interactions.
5. **Marital Style/Life Together**: Cyberspace activity was significantly associated with modern marital styles. Increased virtual engagement led to a greater tendency toward non-traditional marital approaches. This finding aligns with prior research (Navabakhsh, 2014) which showed that modern information and communication tools influence marital attitudes and behaviors.
6. **Exercise Style**: A significant relationship was found between cyberspace activity and modern exercise habits. Greater virtual engagement correlated with a preference for modern exercise styles. These results align with prior studies (Kafashi & Pirjalili, 2014; Khademian, 2008; Severin & James, 2002) which explored the impact of virtual networks on physical activity.
7. Finally, a significant overall difference was observed in the lifestyles of cyberspace users compared to non-users across all dependent variables. This result supports prior findings (Kafashi & Pirjalili, 2014; Nylander, 2013) emphasizing the profound influence of virtual networks on lifestyle choices and perspectives. Nylander (2013) concluded that social media possesses transformative power over lifestyles, a notion supported by this study's findings on cyberspace's role in reshaping women's lives and behaviors.

5. Limitations and Suggestions

The first limitation of this study pertains to its methodology. The lack of precise and accurate information regarding the actual number of women in the specified age groups within the target population made it impossible to use standard sample size determination formulas. Consequently, two equal groups were selected using simple random sampling. Unfortunately, despite extensive efforts and statistical investigations, reliable data on the population of women under study in Garmsar City could not be obtained.

The filtering of multiple popular cyberspace applications (due to their illegality in Iran) restricted the researcher's access to a subset of users, which formed only part of the statistical population and sample. This issue, being beyond the control of the research process and researcher, is a limitation worth mentioning.

Users of cyberspace are predominantly from the middle and upper-middle classes of society. Therefore, identifying women as cyberspace users inherently limits the study's validity, as they may not represent all social and economic strata, introducing potential ambiguity in generalizations.

The results indicate that a significant portion of society, including a large number of women, is engaged with virtual social networks. These users may be unaware of the threats and opportunities arising from cyberspace content. Given that young women form a growing segment of these users, it is recommended that policymakers and relevant authorities focus on resolving legal challenges associated with virtual spaces. Shifting the prevailing security-oriented perspective to a cultural one could guide these policies in a more positive and effective direction.

Since this study was conducted in Garmsar City, representing a small and limited segment of Iranian society, the results may not be sufficiently comprehensive for explaining the main variables. Recognizing that accurately identifying the values, attitudes, and interactions of Iranian society is crucial for formulating broad social policies, one suggestion is to extend such studies nationwide. This would

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provide a more holistic understanding of the current societal dynamics and a clearer vision for the future.

Considering the finding that cyberspace activity is correlated with the lifestyle indicators measured in this study—such as attention to body, leisure/time utilization patterns, nutrition, social communication patterns, marital style/life together, and exercise—it is recommended that separate studies be conducted on each of these indicators. A pathological perspective on these themes could provide valuable insights.

Part of the results revealed that user women in this study demonstrated a more diverse and modern lifestyle compared to non-user women. Acknowledging that the researcher, adhering to scientific principles, holds no bias or judgment regarding either traditional or modern lifestyles, it is recommended that further sociological investigations focus on the increasing digitization of interpersonal interactions and daily life. This phenomenon, which has inevitably altered women's lifestyles, warrants broader and more nuanced exploration by researchers.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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