

Chapter 13

Study of Social Media Indulgence Among College Students in UAE and Kuwait: Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on uses and gratifications of social media use among college students in the United Arab Emirates and in Kuwait for three social media platforms: Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. Mixed methodologies are duly applied (quantitative and qualitative) to explore various use and gratifications factors, as well as other social factors among a youth that contributes to the adoption of these social network sites (SNSs). Moreover, several statistical tests were performed to analyze collected data. A few research articles are published about new and social media platform use in the region; however, comparative studies were rarely noticed regarding this subject. The survey includes (N=190) samples between Kuwaiti and Emirati students. Conclusively, the study reveals that the main use and gratification reason for using the abovementioned social media platforms amongst college youth is entertainment, while the main social reason is identification.

INTRODUCTION

Technological developments and innovations have had a massive impact on the information and communication system (Kosyakova et al. 2020; Widjaja et al. 2020). Such technological advancement is important in the use of the internet to foster information dissemination and reception (Blok et al. 2020;

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-9640-1.ch013

Rzheuskyi et al. 2020; Sarti et al. 2020). The social medium which has established several networks have gained admiration and receptiveness over the years (Killian et al. 2019; McClure and Seock, 2020). “The concept of Social Media (SM) has been on top of the agenda for many business executives” Pourkhani et al. 2019; p. 2)

In a general term, Social media are websites and internet-based applications that permit users to produce and share information. (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Chiu et al., 2013) Individuals utilize social media websites such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc. to build and maintain relationships or reconnect with lost companions (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Alwagait et al. 2015; Michikyan et al. 2015; Nasrullah and Khan, 2019). These social media collect personal data from users in the form of profile data as a requirement for establishing connection link (Pempek et al. 2009). However, social media communication is not only formed via individuals representing themselves by creating their profiles, but also those individuals are allowed to generate their own contents, display, and interact with the contents other, friends or other online users (Ding and Jiang 2014; Spasojevic et al. 2014; Zarrinkalam et al. 2015; Raghuram et al. 2016; Seghouani et al. 2019).

Social media has become an addiction to the users (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Elantheraiyan and Shankarkumar, 2019; Nasrullah and Khan, 2019). It has been researched that use of Facebook comes on the second number after the use of several addictive substances such as alcohol, cigarettes, and others where the individual finds it difficult to break the usage (Juergensen and Leckfor, 2018). Social media does not only seem to have effect on our society but it actually has changed our lives (Ariel and Avidar, 2014), even our way of thinking is changed due to the social websites. Social media has changed the way people behave (King, 2015). Social media has had impact on individuals (Chen et al. 2019; Talwar et al. 2019; Alalwan, 2018) and communities (Simon et al. 2013; Kamboj et al. 2018; Wang et al. 2019), organization (Namisango and Kang, 2019; Ihm, 2019; Steffens et al. 2019; Sideri et al. 2019), and politics (Hong and Nadler, 2012; Anim et al. 2019; Miller, 2019; Crilley and Gillespie, 2019). These are some of the several examples where social media has strong influence.

Social media use is common among the youth, including university students (Ahmad et al. 2019; Alnjadat et al. 2019; Feng, 2019; Köse and Doğan, 2019; Saide et al. 2019; Izuagbe et al. 2019; Pew Research Center, 2015) In the United States, Smith and Caruso (2010) stated that around 97% of university students are actively using SNSs on a daily basis. Another recent study in UK noted that college students spend up to six hours on SNS, Facebook in particular, a day. While it is possible that higher rates of SNS use might exist in other regions in the world among college students which have not been recorded yet (Daily Mail, 2014). As of January 2018, the social networking site usage penetration in UAE and Kuwait is 99% and 98%, respectively. Qatar also has a high 99% penetration rate, whereas Bahrain has 92% penetration rate, and Saudi Arabia has only 75% penetration rate (statista.com, 2019). This indicates that in the UAE and in Kuwait nearly everyone uses SNSs. As stated earlier, the main SNSs are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Authors such as Hawi and Samaha (2017) indicate that as of March 2016, there were 1.09 billion daily active users. The statistics for Instagram stood at 400 million monthly active users. At the same time, Twitter had 310 million active monthly users and LinkedIn had 433 million active users (Hawi and Samaha, 2017). These statistics indicate the high usage of Facebook, and the rate of social media addiction in Facebook users.

This high level of SNS use, and the addictive influence of these websites by university students raises concern among social sciences scholars worldwide (Koc & Gulyagci, 2013; Hawi and Samaha, 2017; Jasso-Medrano and López-Rosales, 2018; Köse and Doğan, 2019). For this reason, this research explores the theory of uses and gratifications regarding SNS use to investigate the reasons behind their adoption

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