

Students' Use of Social Networking Sites for Educational Purposes

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Abstract

This study responds to the modern global concerns in the field of media, and it seeks benefiting from social media in teaching subjects of media as being considered as media and communicational methods in the first place, and as being considered as an educational method in which the main elements and constituents of modern educational approaches are available. This study seeks getting acquainted with media students' opinions on the social media as an educational method, its merits and demerits as well as the most apparent elements, which can be used within an educational curriculum on social media. Moreover, results of the study clarified that the most students' attitudes towards social medias an educational method were negative; especially in terms of saying that teaching curricula on social media needs capabilities, which are unavailable in our universities, and there insufficient qualified professors in our universities to teach curricula on social media. Results of the study indicated that there is no statistically significant relation in terms of students' opinions towards the merits of social media as an educational method and there is no statistically significant relation between male and female students in terms of their opinions towards the demerits of social media as an educational method.

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Introduction

This study responds to the modern global concerns in the field of media, which seeks to benefit from the social media in teaching the subjects of media as being considered a media and communicational method in the first place as well as being an educational method in which the main constituents and elements of the modern educational methods are available.

Despite of the attention given to those studies, there are no any Arabic studies that deal with this topic on the one hand, and there are no any opinions expressed about employing the social media in the field of media studies and the media academic education on the other hand. Moreover, the perspectives of the concerned people and the users of social media towards their advantages, disadvantages and constituents as an educational method are not observed.

This study seeks to know the media students' perspectives towards the social media as an educational method; their advantages, disadvantages and the most significant elements that can be employed within a curriculum on the social media.

Importance of Study

1. Considered from the first Arabic studies, which attempt to know the possibility of employing the social media as an educational method.
2. Considered from the first Arabic studies, which attempt to deal with the social media as an educational and media method at the same time.
3. Seeking to clarify the educational and media constituents of the social media.
4. Seeking to know the perspectives of one of the important parties relevant to the employment of social media, which are the young people and the university students on the one hand and the media learners on the other hand.
5. Attempting to employ some new educational approaches in studying the social media as a media and educational method.
6. Attempting to make the curricula flexible to understand the modern teaching methods; especially the interactive ones.
7. Attracting the attention of the educational institution including the students and academic people, as well as the significant role played by the social networking sites in education.

Previous Studies

Essam Obeid's study entitled "The role of social networks in supporting university courses from the perspective of male and female students" on a research sample of (100) male and female students in the Faculty of Computer and Information Sciences at Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University. The students' lack of confidence in the importance of social networks in supporting university courses, and their lack of acceptance of the actual participation in social networks in support of university courses, as well as the lack of access to the teachers to link their personal sites or sites on the web Social data.

A study by the British Council on the impact of the Web in the patterns of young learners who want to learn English as a second language showed a great effectiveness and interaction of teachers in the use of technology in education and they were able to integrate their students with a larger world outside the class. These students were able to get more marks and acquired skills Faster and more, and the most important results of this research also is that

about 69% of learners around the world learned more effectively when they used interactive social sites.

Studies have also revealed the educational role of social networking sites as in the study of Calpido, Costin & Morris (2011), which showed the positive and important role of social media and showing that Facebook is a social network that strengthens the social relations and helps students to be socially and psychologically compatible. (Lee, Lee & Jang, 2011) study revealed using social media has predictive signs of psychological and social compatibility for students.

One of the studies revealed the negative role of social networking sites such as Sangari, Limayem and Rouis (2011). The results indicated that Facebook has no important role to play in academic performance, Lei & Wu, (2007), which revealed the positive correlation between psychological isolation and the high number of internet usage hours, and the results of the 2008 study that showed some of the negative effects of Internet addiction. Topmost of which are: The tendency to isolation, distance from communicating with others, and lying in conversations and chats.

The study of Cristina Maria. Balteretu, 2010, which sought to identify the motives of the use of university students in Romania for social networking sites. The researcher relied on the tool of concentrated groups as a tool for data collection, and the study reached many results, the most important: The most popular social networking sites among young people is Hi5. Facebook, Netlog. Tagged, Myspace, and motivated to use these networks are concentrated in: Easily connect with my friends, discover a lot of information about others, stay in touch with my friends who keep away from me, chat with others and share photos and video clips.

Comments on Previous Studies

1. The lack of studies that linked the means of social media and how to benefit from them in the educational process.
2. The lack of studies that tried to explore the possibilities of social media as a media medium and a course that can be taught to students of media, as a distinct media.
3. Contradiction of the results of the studies on the perceptions of users about social networks and the positive and negative aspects of these methods.

Theoretical Framework of Study

Several researchers attempted to develop the theories used in studying the phenomena of social media and employing them in studying the social media, including:

Public Domain Theory, which is one of the theories that tried to study the behavior of the individual recipient and its relationship with society, especially after the relationship between civil society and public life, has become a main topic of discussion in many disciplines.

Media Dependency is one of the approaches that make up public relations with the media. The degree to which individuals rely on media information is the basis for understanding the impact of media messages on beliefs, feelings and behavior.

It is assumed that the input of the uses and saturation of the audience is motivated by psychological and social effects of the use of the media in order to obtain special results

called "saturation". Such as creating a profile on social networking sites, reducing stress, rest and relaxation, getting rid of boredom and isolation, content surmises such as getting information, discovering reality, and linking the information a person gets from its Social relations network, such as the ability to talk to others.

Adapting the model of dissemination of ideas developed in the study of the uses of media for social media, by knowing the prevalence of the use of these means in the media institutions, and study at two levels: the level of adoption across institutions, and then the level of individual adoption, with a focus on study the impact of complexity of the use of these means And their relevance to the possibility of adoption, taking into account the factors that affect the adoption of these new institutions.

The study seeks to benefit from all the previous models and theories in reading the phenomenon of using the social media as an educational medium in the field of studying media and the users' perspectives about this method.

Problem of Study

The problem of the study is determined by answering the following question: Media students or social networks as an educational tool, and what are their attitudes about the benefits and disadvantages as an educational tool?

Questions of Study

1. To what extent are media students exposed to social media in exchange for exposure to traditional media?
2. What are the most social media outlets used by media students in Arab universities?
3. What are the students' perceptions of the most important features of social media as an educational medium?
4. What are the main advantages and disadvantages of social media as educational tools from the point of view of media students in Arab universities?
5. What are the general attitudes of media students in Arab universities regarding the use of social media as an educational tool?

Sample of Study

In this study, the researcher uses the purposive sample. The researcher chose in this type of study cases that are thought to represent the society in the aspect dealt with in the research. Thus, the study was applied to a sample of 148 students from media students at different Arab universities as the number of participants from Arab universities reached 60 male and female students at a rate of (40.5%) and from UAE universities 78 at a rate of (59.5%). The following table shows the characteristics of the sample of study.

Results of Field Studies

The researcher reviews in this part the results of the field study Relevant to the Media Students' Exposure to the Social Media as follows:

Media Students' Exposure to the Social Media

Methods	Rarely		Sometimes		Always	
	Q	%	Q	%	Q	%
Newspapers	65	44.5%	65	44.5%	16	11.0%
Television	16	11.0%	75	51.7%	54	37.2%
Computer in general	14	9.6%	38	26.0%	94	64.4%
Internet in general	1	.7%	10	6.8%	136	92.5%
Social Media	1	.7%	14	9.5%	133	89.9%
Mobile Devices	3	2.0%	8	5.4%	136	92.5%

Table 1: Media Students' Exposure to the Social Media

The above table shows the rise of students' exposure to social media and the Internet compared to the traditional media. 92.5% of the respondents said that they are exposed to the Internet permanently, 92.5% to mobile phones, 89.9% are exposed to social media and 64.4% are computer users, 37.2% are exposed to television 11% of the newspapers permanently, which reveals the increasing exposure to social media and the Internet by media students in return for the decline of exposure to the traditional media.

Rate of Exposure to Social Media Compared to Other Media Methods

Rate of Exposure	Mobil Devices		Social Media		Internet		Computer		Television		Newspapers	
	Q	%	Q	%	Q	%	Q	%	Q	%	Q	%
Less than an hour.	10	7.1%	10	7.0%	4	2.8%	26	18.6%	35	24.6%	123	89.1%
From one to less then two hours.	12	8.6%	21	14.8%	15	10.4%	37	26.4%	57	40.1%	11	8.0%
From two to less than three hours.	21	15.0%	33	23.3%	45	31.3%	35	25.0%	30	21.1%	2	1.4%
More than three hours.	97	69.3%	78	54.9%	80	55.6%	42	30.0%	20	14.1%	2	1.4%

Table 2: Rate of Exposure to Social Media Compared to Other Media Methods

The above table shows that students use mobile devices to a great extent. The percentage of respondents who use it for more than three hours per day is 69.3%, followed by using the Internet at a rate of 55.6% and social media 54.9%. 30% said that they use computers for more than three hours a day while 14.1% said they watch TV for more than three hours a day and only 1.4% read newspapers for more than three hours a day. The above reveals the diversity of ways in which students are exposed to and are increasingly interested in social media.

The Most Commonly Used Social Media

Social Media	Q	%
Facebook	51	34.9%
Twitter	82	56.2%
My Space	1	.7%
YouTube	114	78.1%
Hi5	2	1.4%
Linked In	5	3.4%
WhatsApp	128	87.7%
Flickr	3	2.1%
Blogs	10	6.8%
Live Journal	3	2.1%
Wikis	5	3.4%
Google Plus	30	20.5%

Table 3: The Most Commonly Used Social Media by the Students

The above table shows that the most commonly used means of social communication by media students are: WhatsApp at a rate of 87.7%, followed by YouTube at a rate of 78.1%, Twitter at a rate of 56.2%, followed by Facebook at a rate of 34.9%, Google Plus at a rate of 20.5%, blogs at a rate of 6.8%, Wiki at a rate of (3.4%), LiveJournal and Flickr (2.1%) for both, Hi5 at a rate of (1.4%) and Myspace (7%). The above reveals the diversity of social media used by students, which calls for using more than one means in the teaching of media materials and exploring ways to use them in educational courses.

Students' Perspectives Towards the Advantages of Social Media

The Most Prominent Advantages of Social Media	Order	Mathematical Average	Standard Deviation
They outperform traditional means of communication in the field of creating social ties and relationships.	2	3.41	2.311
The closest means of interaction, discussion and dialogue among users.	3	3.35	2.158
Updating news, information and opinions promptly.	1	2.97	2.370
Creating homogeneous communities of users with common interests.	7	4.27	2.144
Employing them for tools such as text, images, videos, graphics, etc.	6	4.18	2.203
Monitoring and following the interests of others.	4	4.88	2.350
Representing a platform for those, who cannot find a place to express themselves in traditional media.	5	4.53	2.437

Table 4: The Students' Perspectives Towards the Advantages of Social Media

The above table shows the students' attitudes towards the most prominent advantages of the social media. The first place was the renewal of news, information and opinions with a mathematical average of 2.97, followed by the traditional means of communication in the field of creating social relations and relationships with an average of 3.41, followed by the closest means of interaction, discussion and dialogue between users and a mathematical average of 3.35, and in fourth place it helps to monitor and follow the interests of others with a mathematical average of 4.88, and in fifth place they represent a platform for those who cannot find a place to express in the traditional media and a mathematical average of 4.53 , and in sixth place they are used for several tools of texts, pictures, videos, drawings, etc. with a mathematical average of 4.18, and in seventh rank they help to create homogeneous groups of users with common interests and a mathematical average of 4.27. In general, positive attitudes were found among students about the advantages of using social media.

The Social Media Preferred to Be Used Within the Educational Curricula

In case of using social media within any educational curriculum, what are the most used methods?						
	Highly Used		Moderately Used		Not Used	
The most commonly used forms within the classroom.	Q	%	Q	%	Q	%
Web sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.	60	42.9%	49	35.0%	31	22.1%
Sending and reading emails.	85	61.2%	40	28.8%	14	10.1%
Using mobile phones to send and read instant messages for educational purposes; such as student groups on the WhatsApp.	78	56.5%	38	27.5%	22	15.9%
Using the search engines like Google within the classroom.	81	58.3%	38	27.3%	20	14.4%
Using computers in their different forms within the classroom.	74	53.2%	45	32.4%	20	14.4%
Using collaborative websites and networks such as blogs, Wikipedia, Google documents, etc. within the classroom.	68	48.6%	51	36.4%	21	15.0%

Table 5: The Preferred Social Networking Sites that are Used Within the Educational Curricula

The following table shows students' perceptions on the best electronic communication methods that can be used in educational courses. They found that the most widely used forms are sending and reading emails at a rate of 61.2%, followed by the use of in-class search engines; such as Google at a rate of 58.3%, followed by using mobile phones to send and read instant messages for educational purposes; such as students' groups on the WhatsApp at a rate of 56.5%, followed by the use of computers in various forms in the classroom at a rate of 53.2%, followed by the use of collaborative web sites and networks; such as blogs, Wikipedia and Google documents within the classroom at a rate of 48.6%, followed by the use of the electronic networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter and YouTube at a rate of 42.9%.

The Most Suitable Forms That Can Be Used Within a Curriculum on Social Media

The Most Forms that can be used (within a curriculum on social media)						
	At a High Degree		Moderately		At a Low Degree	
The Most Forms that can be used	Q	%	Q	%	Q	%
Facebook Groups	44	31.7%	29	20.9%	66	47.5%
Google Plus Groups	35	25.9%	49	36.3%	51	37.8%
Group work tools, such as Wikis and Google Doc	37	27.6%	41	30.6%	56	41.8%
Audio share, such as Podcast	41	31.8%	43	33.3%	45	34.9%
Microblogging, such as Twitter	53	39.3%	39	28.9%	43	31.9%
Photo Sharing, such as Flickr	28	21.2%	47	35.6%	57	43.2%
Video Shares (YouTube for instance).	79	58.5%	35	25.9%	21	15.6%
Blogs	37	29.8%	51	41.1%	36	29.0%
Other Media Tools	35	38.5%	32	35.2%	24	26.4%

Table 6: The Forms that can be used within a Curriculum on Social Media

The above table reveals that media students believe that the most prominent forms that can be used in a course on social media are video shares via YouTube at a rate of 58.5%, followed by microblogging; such as Twitter at a rate of 39.3%, followed by other media tools at a rate of 38.5%, followed by audio posts (31.8%), followed by Facebook groups (31.7%), blogs (29.8%), group work tools (27.6%), Google Plus (25.9%) and Flickr (21.2%). The above refers to the variety of social media that can be used in educational courses, as well as the preference of students to use video and Twitter.

The Most Apparent Disadvantages of Social Media as an Educational Method

The most Apparent Disadvantages of Social Media as an Educational Method									
	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Average		
Disadvantages	Q	%	Q	%	Q	%		^{Chi} Square	Significant Value
Waste of Time	48	35.6%	62	45.9%	25	18.5%	2.17	0.430	0.806
They help in spreading rumors and circulating them rapidly.	103	76.3%	27	20.0%	5	3.7%	2.73	9.950	0.007
Considering them an entertaining method rather than an educational one.	80	59.7%	48	35.8%	6	4.5%	2.55	3.971	0.137
Lack of privacy.	74	54.8%	46	34.1%	15	11.1%	2.44	10.769	0.005
Lack of confidence in the information shared via those methods.	79	58.5%	46	34.1%	10	7.4%	2.51	1.707	0.426
Difficulty of documenting the shared information.	75	55.6%	48	35.6%	12	8.9%	2.47	6.063	0.048
Losing information easily among the huge number of messages and posts.	72	53.3%	44	32.6%	19	14.1%	2.39	4.052	0.132
Distracting the student's attention in case of using them within the classroom.	88	66.2%	33	24.8%	12	9.0%	2.57	4.417	0.110
They can be used in disseminating negative behaviors; such as harassment, bullying and insulting others.	78	59.1%	40	30.3%	14	10.6%	2.48	0.831	0.660
Can be used outside the classroom and not inside it or vice versa.	69	53.9%	42	32.8%	17	13.3%	2.41	6.201	0.045
There are no integrated programs or courses so far on social media and their relation to media.	33	47.1%	25	35.7%	12	17.1%	2.30	2.071	0.355
Lack of textbooks relevant to the application of social media.	37	54.4%	23	33.8%	8	11.8%	2.43	3.696	0.158

Table 7: The Most Prominent Disadvantages of Social Media as an Educational Method

It is clear from the above table that media students found that among the most prominent disadvantages of using social media are:

- They help to spread the rumors and circulating them rapidly at a rate of 76.3%, and distracting students if used in the classroom at a rate of 66.2%, and can be used to disseminate negative behaviors such as harassment and bullying and insulting others by 59.1%, and considered as 59.7%, and the lack of confidence in the information that is traded through these means by 58.5%, and the difficulty of documenting the information that is traded by 55.6%, lack of privacy at a rate of 54.8%, and Lack of textbooks related to social media applications 54.4%, and losing information easily within the large number of messages and posters at a rate of 53.3%, and can be used outside the classroom and not in the classroom or vice versa by 53.9%, and there are no programs or integrated courses so far on social media and its relationship to the media at a rate of 47.1%, and the transfer of social media for courses will eliminate students from performing their original lessons by 44.9%, and unsafe use in terms of Internet access at any time and quickly at a rate of 43.5%.

Media Students' Attitudes towards the Social Media as an Educational Method

Phrases	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Average	T Test	Degree of Freedom	Significance
	Q	%	Q	%	Q	%				
The curricula of the media colleges in the Arab World lack courses on social media.	83	62.4%	37	27.8%	13	9.8%	2.53	.449	131	.654
Teaching courses on social media need capabilities that are not available at our university.	49	36.8%	56	42.1%	28	21.1%	2.16	.097	131	.923
There are not enough qualified professors in our university to teach courses on social media.	50	37.9%	43	32.6%	39	29.5%	2.08	-.547	130	.585
Media students consider courses on social media to be less useful and closer to entertainment than to education.	33	25.0%	54	40.9%	45	34.1%	1.91	-1.116	130	.266
Social media do not need their own courses to be taught.	49	37.4%	59	45.0%	23	17.6%	2.20	-1.996	129	.048
Teaching most media courses should be done through social media	76	58.0%	46	35.1%	9	6.9%	2.51	-3.742	129	.000

Table 8: The Media Students' Attitudes Towards the Social Media as an Educational Method

It is evident through the previous table relevant to the students' attitudes toward social media as an educational tool that while 62.4% agree that the curricula of Arab media colleges lack courses on social media, 9.8% disagree, while 27.9% Neutral. While 36.8% said that they agree to teach courses on social media that need the possibilities that are not available in our university, 21.1% said they do not agree, while 42.1% took a neutral position. While 37.9% agree that there are not enough qualified professors in our university to teach courses on social communication, 29.5% said they do not agree, while 32.6% have a neutral attitude. While 25% said they agree with media students that they consider courses on social communication to be less useful and closer to entertainment, 34.1% said they do not agree, while 40.9% have a neutral attitude.

While 37.4% agreed that social media did not need their own courses to teach, 17.6% said they did not agree, while 45% took a neutral stance. While 58% agreed that most media courses should be taught through social media, 6.9% said they did not agree, while 35.1% took a neutral stance. While 51.4% said they agree that media colleges in the Arab world should change their curricula and incorporate social media, 11.4% said they do not agree, while 37.1% have a neutral attitude. While 62.4% agreed that media colleges in the Arab world should encourage more use of technology within the classroom, 4.3% said they did not agree, while 32.9% had a neutral attitude.

1.91, and that do not need the means of social communication of special decisions for the purpose of teaching, where the average of those who say that 2.20, and that the colleges of information in the Arab world should change their curricula and include the means of social communication, with an average of 2.40, and that the predominance of traditional teaching in most of the media professors at our university.

Only positive attitudes were expressed in terms of the fact that Arab media organizations were in dire need of students who were aware of how to use the means of communication. The average number of respondents was 2.57, and the media colleges in the Arab world should encourage the use of technology more in classrooms. The average number of respondents was 2.59, and most of the information courses should be taught through social media. The average number of respondents was 2.51. The educational curricula of the Arab media colleges lack courses on social media, with an average of 2.53.

On the other hand, there is no statistically significant difference between male and female students' attitudes towards social media as educational means, except that they do not need the means of social communication for their own courses in order to be taught. T-1.996, reached a degree of freedom of 129 and a significant value of 0.48, as well as the phrase that teaching most of the media courses should be through social media, where the value of T-3.742, at a degree of freedom.

Conclusion and Discussing Questions and Results

Results of the study revealed the following:

- Increasing exposure to the social media and the Internet by media students in return for the decline of exposure to traditional media.
- There are various ways in which students are exposed to the social media, and their increasing interest.
- The use of WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook came on top of the social media by the media students, which means the diversity of social media used by

students, which calls for the use of more than one means in the teaching of media materials and exploring ways to use them within the curricula.

- The number of students, who benefit from the use of social media. The first place was occupied by the renewal of news, information and opinions promptly, followed by the fact that it surpasses the traditional means of communication in the field of creating social ties and relationships, followed by the closest means of interaction, discussion and dialogue among users.
- The results of the study showed that media students see that among the most prominent advantages of social media as an educational tool are: The means of social communication can be employed in many media campaigns. In the same percentage, it is said to suit the interests of media students, followed by immediate and simultaneous communication between students and teachers, (pictures, video, etc.).
- The results of the study showed that media students see that among the most prominent disadvantages of social communication means as an educational tool are: They help spread rumors and their circulation speed, and focus the student if used in the classroom, and can be used in the dissemination of negative behaviors such as harassment and bullying And the insult to others and consider it as a recreational and entertainment rather than educational and lack of confidence in the information that is traded through these means and the difficulty of documentation of shared information.
- The results of the study showed that there are no statistically significant differences between the attitudes of media students (males and females) about the means of social communication as educational means except in terms of saying that they do not need the means of social communication for their courses in order to teach them. It must be done through it.

The study recommends the importance of employing social media in the teaching of media courses, working on the formulation of special courses to study the means of social communication, providing the possibilities that will help to employ them in Arab universities, and the rehabilitation of students and media professors to deal with these new means. And to avoid the negative effects, not only to use a certain means, but also to employ the interactive possibilities provided by these means in order to create a distinct learning environment in the teaching of media courses and others.

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