

University of Windsor

## Scholarship at UWindsor

---

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Theses, Dissertations, and Major Papers

---

7-11-2015

# How Undergraduate Female Students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Perceive Social Media as a Learning Tool: An Exploratory Study

Alaa Ibraheem Kutbi  
*University of Windsor*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd>

---

### Recommended Citation

Kutbi, Alaa Ibraheem, "How Undergraduate Female Students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Perceive Social Media as a Learning Tool: An Exploratory Study" (2015). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 5290. <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/5290>

This online database contains the full-text of PhD dissertations and Masters' theses of University of Windsor students from 1954 forward. These documents are made available for personal study and research purposes only, in accordance with the Canadian Copyright Act and the Creative Commons license—CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution, Non-Commercial, No Derivative Works). Under this license, works must always be attributed to the copyright holder (original author), cannot be used for any commercial purposes, and may not be altered. Any other use would require the permission of the copyright holder. Students may inquire about withdrawing their dissertation and/or thesis from this database. For additional inquiries, please contact the repository administrator via email ([scholarship@uwindsor.ca](mailto:scholarship@uwindsor.ca)) or by telephone at 519-253-3000ext. 3208.

How Undergraduate Female Students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Perceive Social

Media as a Learning Tool: An Exploratory Study

by

Alaa Kutbi

University of Windsor

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

through the Faculty of Education and Academic Development

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Master of Education at the

University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2014

© 2014 Alaa Kutbi

How Undergraduate Female Students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Perceive Social  
Media as a Learning Tool: An Exploratory Study

by

Alaa Kutbi

APPROVED BY:

---

W. Park  
School of Social Work

---

K. Smith  
Faculty of Education and Academic Development

---

Z. Zhang, Advisor  
Faculty of Education and Academic Development

18 February 2015

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, my thesis does not infringe upon anyone's copyright nor violate any proprietary rights and that any ideas, techniques, quotations, or any other material from the work of other people included in my thesis, published or otherwise, are fully acknowledged in accordance with the standard referencing practices. Furthermore, to the extent that I have included copyrighted material that surpasses the bounds of fair dealing within the meaning of the Canada Copyright Act, I certify that I have obtained a written permission from the copyright owner(s) to include such material(s) in my thesis and have included copies of such copyright clearances to my appendix.

I declare that this is a true copy of my thesis, including any final revisions, as approved by my thesis committee and the Graduate Studies office, and that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

## ABSTRACT

Social media in the classroom is no longer a hot topic for many countries because most schools are taking advantage of the technologies. However, most of the Saudi students do not experience the use of social media in education.

This study is intended to determine how Saudi female undergraduate students perceive the social media in education. The sample was 25 students at a Saudi University. The study was qualitative; a questionnaire and an interview were used.

Three research questions were explored: How do they perceive social media in education? Do they prefer social media in education, and Why? What could be done to make social media a better tool for education?

The study revealed that most participants had positive perception of the use of social media in education. Reasons were ranged between personal, educational, social, and technical. Students' suggestions regarding improving the use of social media in education were varying.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Madani, and my kids, Lana, Toleen and Faris. I give my deepest expression of love and appreciation for the encouragement that they gave and the sacrifices they made during this graduate program. I thank them for the support and company during late nights of typing. I thank them for encouragement during the challenges of graduate school and life. I am truly thankful for having them in my life.

This work is also dedicated to my parents, Ibrahim and Zainab, who have always loved me unconditionally and whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Zuo Chen Zhang, for the continuous support of my Master study and research, for his patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge. His guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my Master study.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee: Dr. Kara Smith, and Dr. Wansoo Park, for their encouragement, insightful comments, and hard questions.

My sincere gratitude also goes to Dr. Norah Almalki, for sharing her class and experience with me. I would like to thank her for all the time and the effort she has put to send me all of the necessary information required to complete my thesis.

Last, but not the least, I would like to thank my parents, my husband, and my kids for supporting me spiritually throughout my life.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY.....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
LIST OF APPENDICES .....	xi
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Purpose Statement.....	2
1.2 Research Questions.....	3
Chapter 2: The Review of Related Literature.....	5
2.1 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at a Glance.....	5
2.2 Social Media .....	13
2.3 The Advantages of Social Media.....	14
2.3.1 Communication.....	14
2.3.2 Safe environment.....	15
2.3.3 Self-directing intentional learning.....	16
2.3.4 Entertaining factor.....	17
2.3.5 Multiple media.....	17
2.3.6 Knowledge Building.....	18
2.4 Challenges of Using Social Media.....	20
2.4.1 Language Barrier.....	20



	viii
2.4.2 Internet technical problems.....	25
2.4.3 Social Media.....	32
Chapter 3: Methodology and Procedures .....	38
3.1 Recruitment and General Procedures.....	38
3.2 Participants.....	38
3.3 Data Collection .....	39
3.3.1 Instrumentation.....	39
3.3.2 Questionnaire.....	40
3.3.3 Interview.....	41
3.4 Research Design.....	42
3.4.1 Twitter.....	43
3.4.2 Facebook.....	44
3.4.3 YouTube.....	44
3.5 The Role of the Researcher.....	48
3.6 Data Analysis .....	48
3.6.1 Questionnaires.....	48
3.6.2 Interviews.....	49
Chapter4: Results and Findings .....	50
4.1 Introduction.....	50
4.2 Findings.....	50
4.2.1 Students' overall experience.....	50
4.2.2 Students' opinions regarding the use of social media as learning tool.....	53

4.2.3 Students' reasons behind preferring or not preferring social media as a learning tool. ....	55
4.2.4 Students' recommendation to improve the use of social media as a learning tool. ....	63
Chapter 5: Discussion and Limitations.....	64
5.1 Review of the Major Findings and Research Questions.....	64
5.2 Research Question 1 .....	67
5.3 Research Question 2 .....	68
5.3.1 Students who preferred social media in education.....	69
5.3.2 Students who don't preferred social media in education. ....	74
5.4 Research Question 3 .....	75
5.5 Limitations of the Study.....	76
5.6 Recommendation for Future Studies .....	78
REFERENCES .....	79
APENDECES.....	92
VITA AUCTORIS.....	105

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Facebook Growth Rate in Saudi Arabia ..... 21

Figure 2: Twitter Use by Age Group ..... 34

Figure 3: Twitter Use by Gender ..... 33

Figure 4: Saudi Arabia Ranks First on Twitter ..... 34

Figure 5: 56% of Facebook Users Around the World is Female ..... 35

Figure 6: More than 90 Million Videos are Watched Daily in Saudi Arabia. .... 37

Figure 7: The Class Twitter Page..... 43

Figure 8: The Class Facebook page..... 44

Figure 9: The Instructor YouTube Page. .... 45

Figure 10: The instructor Website ..... 46

Figure 11: The Instructor Grading and Assessments rules ..... 47

Figure 12: The Students' responses regarding their uses of social media..... 53

Figure 13: Students' opinion regarding social media in education ..... 54

Figure 14: 89% of the users of social media are between 18-29 old . .... 64

## LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire consent form & Letter of information .....	92
APPENDIX B: Questionnaire .....	95
APPENDIX C: Recruitment letter.....	98
APPENDIX D: Interview consent form & Letter of information .....	99
APPENDIX E: Audio consent form.....	111
APPENDIX F: Interview questions.....	103

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

It is relatively recently that institutions of higher education acknowledged the significance of the social side of online learning: interaction and collaboration were foreign words when learning systems were first introduced (Berge & Collins, 1995). Learners were only exposed to content but never shared in shaping it. Web 2.0 tools (synchronous and asynchronous) revert the formula by allowing users to modify and share content. Most of these tools are based on the concepts of interaction and collaboration; hence, turning the online world into a social environment operated and run by numerous social media applications (like blogs, forums, vlogs, social networks, content sharing tools, virtual social worlds, and many others) (Rosen & Nilson, 2008).

The significance of social media for university students is related to how these tools assist in the creation of learning communities. These learning communities work together to provide the new members with support and guidance, and moreover, to provide students with information and opportunities that they can use for their personal growth and development (Martínez Alemán & Wartman, 2009; Nagele, 2005). On a course delivery level, social media is used to enhance teaching and learning by providing students with academic support services, including mentoring, tutoring, and feedback (Rosen & Nilson, 2008).

To leverage the benefits of these social media applications, universities had to look into implementing them in light of the best practices and well-developed strategies. Besides scattered recommendations, these practices and strategies are lacking in Middle

Eastern universities. Current research highlights some suggested frameworks for implementing these media tools in education, and most empirical studies measure certain indicators of successful use of these applications. What is needed in King Abdulaziz university is more empirical studies, focusing on coming up with a strategy for using social media as an instructional and learning tool which encourages and supports students' collaboration (Shabrg, 2012). For this purpose, students' usage rates and satisfaction should be investigated on course and program levels and even on university level, as a large-scale learning community.

With the rapid rise of social media awareness amongst the youth and their engagement in public affairs and with the fact that Saudi Arabia ranks the number one on Twitter worldwide, having the most active users in the world (the socialclinic, 2013), it is important to exploit this interest and awareness to improve our educational system. As a matter of fact, the Senior Affairs and Educational Issues Ministry in Saudi Arabia has stated in a report that the poor use of the appropriate educational technology for each grade level will cause a lack of excitement in the educational process and the infiltration of boredom to teachers and students (Sultanah, 2012). That boredom and lack of excitement will have a negative impact on the Saudi education system and on the outcomes of this system.

### **1.1 Purpose Statement**

According to the Saudi Gazette website, a study has been released recently on social media in the Arab world. "According to the report, Saudis are the most active social media users in the Arab region, with an estimated 393,000 using Twitter and nearly

four million using Facebook” (Fatany, 2012, para. 1). Saudis are among the most prolific users of Facebook and Twitter. They are taking advantage of the independence and freedoms offered through social media. There are simply too many Saudis around the world who are voraciously utilizing social media. They are not only using Facebook and Twitter, but also they equally enjoy YouTube.

In 2012, The Communication and Information Technology Commission in Saudi Arabia conducted a field survey to identify the main reasons for using the internet in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The survey showed that navigation and communication with others were the main reasons for using the internet in the Kingdom, while the educational reasons came in the fifth place (CITC, 2012).

The purpose of this study is to determine how Saudi female undergraduate students perceive the social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, as a learning tool. Moreover, the research investigates reasons behind their responses and the difficulties they may experience.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. How do Saudi female undergraduate students perceive social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube as a learning tool?
2. Why (or why not) do they prefer social media as a learning tool?
3. What can be done to make social media a better tool for learning purposes?

To answer these three questions, a questionnaire was sent to the participants to determine if social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, is a preferable learning tool

and the reasons behind their responses. In addition to the questionnaire, some of the participants were interviewed to gain more understanding and details about their responses.



## **Chapter 2**

### **The Review of Related Literature**

In order to gain a deep understanding of this study and the rationale behind the study, we need to have better understanding of the people, traditions, and the religious and political boundaries in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Such information will give us a deeper understanding of the nature of this country and the reason behind this study, especially if we look at the fact that there were many studies conducted in this field but not in a country like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The review will look at political, social, religious, and educational systems in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In addition, this review will look at previous studies and articles in order to examine the current view of social media as a learning tool. The literature review will also focus on possible educational uses of the following three educational tools: Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.

#### **2.1 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at a Glance**

Saudi Arabia is considered to be one of the most controversial countries in the world; this may be due to the internal and external orientations of Saudi Arabia. Ostensibly and formally, Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world that is still governed by Sharia law ostensibly in the time that every other country in the world is governed by laws that have been put in place by humans. The Sharia law is “the Islamic law [that] influences the legal code in most Muslim countries. [It] governs personal status law, a set of regulations that pertain to marriage, divorce, inheritance” (Johnson &

Vriens, 2013, para. 1). As a matter of fact, and according to the United Nations addendum, the tribal customs have a great influence in the Saudi society and in Saudi lifestyles (Ertürk, 2009).

According to the United Nations report, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is considered to be the strictest country in the world, mainly because of the issues related to women's freedoms and rights. Moreover, issues related to the freedom of speech and expressions lead many people to consider Saudi Arabia one of the most controversial countries in the world as mentioned in a report published by the Human Right Watch in 2012. The report indicated that Saudi Arabia introduced new laws in 2011 which "criminalize the exercise of basic human rights such as freedom of expression" (2012, p. 1). These restrictions are due to the political law in Saudi Arabia, and the tribal traditions in the country. As a mater of fact, these restrictions serve the political party, and the tribal customs and traditions. Because everyone knows that media has a great influence on the public and it can shape the public sphere, the government of Saudi Arabia has great control and censors most of the media. According to the Human Right Watch report in 2012, "The Ministry of Culture and Information heavily censored print and broadcast media. Internet critics crossing vague "red lines" faced arrest" (p. 4).

So, in short, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia holds high restrictions of both a political and a religious nature on different media forms, including the internet. Such restrictions contribute to the unique status of Saudi Arabia as the country with the most restrictions in the world. Samin argues:

Since the Saudi government first made the Internet publicly available in 1999, its use has skyrocketed. The number of Saudi Internet users in the year 2000 totaled 200,000. By 2006, the number of users had increased to 2,540,000, constituting a 1,170% change (2008, p. 3).

The high turnout of the Saudi citizens drew government attention, thence; the Saudi government developed one of the most extensive internet monitoring and censorship systems in existence. King Abdul Aziz Center for Science and Technology (KACST), the Riyadh-based state institution, which, as its president claimed, is a tool to protect the society, Muslim values, tradition, and culture (Black, 2009). Therefore, a number of sites have been blocked according to the Saudi Internet Services Unit (ISU). These blocked sites either contain pornographic and immoral contents or they contain issues that jeopardize the Islamic religion or the Saudi laws (2006).

At this time, and with the relative calmness after the revolutionary wave of the Arab spring -a series of anti-government protests, uprisings and armed rebellions that spread across the Middle East in early 2011 (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2015), Saudi media has changed some of its techniques in order to maintain the stability of the country. Saudi Arabia had to sacrifice something to look more democratic in its citizens' eyes. As Hussein Shobokshi, the columnist for the website of the Saudi-owned news channel, Al Arabiya, said, "I don't think that what has been going on in the last 10 years will be pulled back...Saudis, especially the youth, are becoming extremely creative and entertaining in delivering their message online" (McDowall, 2011, para. 9). To enjoy this new democracy, groups of youth have started their own broadcasting shows in what they

call, “The New Saudi Media.” According to CNN, “The New Saudi Media” is an alternative media which is led by the new generation of Saudi comedian youth that are using YouTube to discuss and reflect on the political and social issues that are happening in the country in a comical way, without crossing any religious or Monarchical boundaries. The youth have alleged that they hope to change the Saudi community. In addition, they want Saudis to reflect upon and question what they have been told before deciding what to believe (CNN, 2011). These shows have become very popular among the young Saudis because they give the youth an opportunity to watch a media that reflects their reality (CNN). In other words, the youth in Saudi Arabia liked their new ability to discover, investigate, and question the world and reality. However, these things are relatively absent from the Saudis’ schooling and educational system.

Despite this freedom, Saudi Arabia official announced that social networking sites are now considered regulatory tools, which means that the government can now use offensive comments as evidences and they will be formally investigated (Yasmina, 2013). This can be seen in the Amnesty International public statement which states that, in 2012, Saudi authorities have expanded their repressive measures to arresting activists on social networking and sentencing them to prison (2013). Moreover, the statement indicated the following:

The Saudi Arabian Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) asked internet service providers to “take all needed steps to achieve security control over communications... [and] all service providers inform the

authorities of the progress they have made in monitoring social media applications.” (Amnesty International, 2013)

In short, social networks are restricted and censored by the Saudi government, and that will, indeed, have an impact on the way Saudis use, and to what degree they can benefit from, these mediums.

Since this study is targeting the undergraduate Saudi female students, the literature review will focus on the education system in the female universities, but first, you need to know that the education system for females in Saudi Arabia is different than most systems in the world. Saudi Arabia is a sex-segregated society. Usually, meetings and discussing between males and females are conducted by phone or through video-conferences and, occasionally, face-to-face. As a matter of fact, according to Ertürk, “the new Saudi Labour Code, amended in 2005, no longer includes a provision explicitly requiring sex segregation in the workplace” (2009, p. 7). In other words, the females in Saudi Arabia study in separate universities where no men are allowed unless through video link. This separation is due to the Islamic law and traditions in the country.

One can say that, the separation, or the sex segregation, did not affect the Saudi education system because, according to the Ministry of Higher Education official website, “the Kingdom has been at the forefront of many countries in providing equal education at all levels to both males and females” (Ministry of the Higher Education). As a result of these efforts, the Kingdom provides a distinguished level of education for females, which guarantees the continuation of their education. According to statistics published in 2004 by the Ministry of the Higher Education in Saudi Arabia, 48.8 percent

of students in Saudi Arabia were female. Moreover, the Al-Arabia News indicates that, “by 2011 the number of female students has increased to 58 percent of the total student population of 130,000 at seven universities in Saudi Arabia” (2011). In addition, the Al-Arabia News mentioned the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report. According to that report, “The Saudi government devotes nearly 30 percent of its annual budget, or \$40 billion to education” (Al-Arabia News, 2011). Following on from this, it is notable that the King of Saudi Arabia opened the largest female university campus in the world in a major move to boost women’s higher education in the Kingdom. Princess Nora Bint Abdulrahman University aims to provide high quality academic education and skills for its female students:

On the other hand, the United Nation addendum reported that;

Sex-segregated education adversely impacts on the quality of education as the allocation of resources and access are said to be unequally distributed. Female faculty members have complained that women’s branches of universities are less equipped than those for boys and that the highest decision-making positions are occupied by men. (2009, p. 8)

Adding to that, Amani Hamdan mentioned in her article “Women and Education in Saudi Arabia: Challenges and Achievements” that the share of budget appropriations for women’s education were only 18 percent (2005, p. 53). She believes that the quality of female education is poorer than the male education because teachers in the male universities are better trained. She continued, “[more than 34 percent of men teaching at men’s universities hold doctorates compared to only three percent of those who teach at

women's universities and colleges" (as cited in Hamdan, 2005, p. 53). According to Hamdan's article, this discrimination has a great impact on the quality of females' education. She gave an example of the impact of this discrimination; she said that Saudi females don't have a full access to the public libraries in schools, universities, and religious institutions. Women only have restricted and limited visiting hours. Moreover, the libraries for the females' universities are often poorly equipped or extremely small (as cited in Hamdan, 2005, p. 53). However, the quality of females' education could be changed in upcoming years, since King Abdullah –God rest his soul- started the King Abdullah Scholarship Program.

King Abdullah –God rest his soul- understood the importance of education in developing the country, so he ordered to raise the education expenses. In 2005, the program started to send both male and female students abroad. Their mission was to qualify Saudi human resources and actively develop them to be world-competitive in the academic research and work markets. In addition, the returning students can serve as a high caliber base in Saudi universities, private, and public sectors (Mohe). As a matter of fact, as a result of this action, and according to the Ministry of Higher Education, Saudi Arabia is among the leading countries in annual expenditures in education. Moreover, in the last eight years, Saudi Arabia has built twenty-five universities and sixty-eight technical institutions and trained 435,343 academic staff (Mohe). So, as we can see, the Saudi education system has been improving, but, according to the previous studies, the gap between male and female education in Saudi Arabia still exists. This gap could be due to the ideology of Saudi society. In some parts of the country, people still believe the

purpose of females' education is to prepare them for 'acceptable' jobs, such as teaching and nursing, which were the jobs that suit female nature. As a matter of fact, those people believe that the true and most important outcome of female education is to make good wives and mothers (Hamdan, 2005, p. 44). Some people believe that, in order to protect women, they need to control and guard them. Ertürk discussed that in her report. She said that "the legal guardianship of women by a male is practiced in varying degrees and encompasses major aspects of women's lives" in Saudi Arabia (2009, p. 10). The United Nations addendum mentioned that this guardianship system could prevent greater participation of women in society because this system grants a great power to men over women (Ertürk, 2009, p. 12). As a result of abusing this power by the husbands or family members, many complaints were reported to the Human Rights Commission, NSHR. As a matter of fact, the denial of health care, education, or even inheritance to wives and children are examples of this abuse (Ertürk, 2009, p. 13). Adding to that, some people prevent their female family members from using the social network, because they believe that such websites contain inappropriate practices. In September 2013, a teacher in Al-Taif University asked her female students to send their assignment through Facebook. The students' parents complained to the university that they refuse to let their daughters use the Facebook, even for educational purposes. They said that communication in such a website is immoral and it encourages abnormal behavior (Al-Rabeay, 2013). Moreover, a reporter in Alyoum newspaper talked about the social media in Saudi society. He believed that the reality of social networking has, unfortunately, become a hotbed of



moral and social corruptions. He stressed the importance of parents in monitoring their sons and daughters (Hamoud, 2013).

As we can see from the previous studies and reports, the Saudi Arabian educational system still needs more improvement to keep up with the modern times and that using all the available resources including the social media.

## **2.2 Social Media**

After an understanding of the tradition and culture in the Saudi community, the term social media needs to be defined. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2014), social media consists of “forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)”. Another definition states that social media is a collection of “Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking” (Oxford Dictionary, 2014). In other words, social media enables its participants to communicate with each other through messages, videos, and other ways; their common interests combine them and bring them together, and that, according to the previous definitions, will create the online community where they can interact with each other and share their ideas and knowledge. However, some can argue that social media has its own challenges too. In the next few pages the advantages and the challenges of social media will be discussed.

## **2.3 The Advantages of Social Media**

**2.3.1 Communication.** Many scholars believe that the emersion of Web 2.0 facilitates the communication between individuals in the structure of a virtual community (Smith, 2012). According to Sharon Smith, “Web 2.0: The current format of the World Wide Web functions as a place for consumption, information sharing, and participation by users” (2012, p. 4). Dr. Mohammed Khalf-Allah, assistant professor in educational technology, defined social media as technological applications based on Web 2.0. The goal of these applications is to achieve communication and interaction between different individuals who live around the world. As a result of this interaction and cooperation, the members of these groups can reach the maximum benefit from this visual community (2013). Taking this further, Web 2.0 is a method that provides second-generation internet services. This technology supports the communication between internet users, and moreover, it maximizes the user's role in the enrichment of digital content on the internet, and the cooperation between the various users of the internet to build visual communities. Paul Grabowicz believed that “Web 2.0 means moving away from using the internet to draw a passive audience to a static publishing platform, and instead embracing the broader network, where communication, collaboration, interaction and user-created content are paramount” (2014, para. 65). Again, the rise of Web 2.0, or social media, has facilitated the interaction and the communication between the internet users. This transformed them from passive receivers to active learners.

**2.3.2 Safe environment.** Some could argue that the use of social media as a form of e-learning can help in improving the quality of the female education system. As a matter of fact, a study that was conducted by Norah Alkahtani indicates that “social media has a positive effect on the collaborations of students, as they are able to keep their cultural and religious values without physically intermingling with the opposite sex, which is a requirement of religion and culture” (Alkahtani, 2012, p. 3). In other words, social media provides the female students with a safe environment where they can interact with each other without worrying about penetrating their privacy. This convenient environment can foster the learning process and, thus, the outcomes of it. As a matter of fact, it is important to take into account the social situation of the students in the e-learning environment in order to succeed. Wegerif found in his study that, “individual success or failure on the course depended upon the extent to which students were able to cross a threshold from feeling like outsiders to feeling like insiders.” (Wegerif, 1998. P. 34). He gave an example of a student who found e-learning more difficult than the face-to-face meetings because she could not cross this threshold and found the e-learning experience cold and unfriendly. However, most of the students in Wegerif’s study liked using the media in education and responded to the end of course questionnaire question: “What did you like most about the course?” Their responses included statements that e-learning was, “particularly good at supporting collaborative learning” (Wegerif, 1998, p. 37). As a matter of fact, Våljataga & Fiedler agree with Wegerif’s study. They believe that e-learning is an “essential aspect of today’s postmodern, technologically rich society

which is to develop the ability to take control and responsibility for our own education, learning, and change” (Väljataga & Fiedler, 2009, p. 58).

**2.3.3 Self-directing intentional learning.** Hayes has claimed that in order to control our lives we need to take control of our education (1998). In other words, the self-directing intentional learning that can be achieved through social media is necessary for acquiring knowledge and remembering it. In their study, Väljataga and Fiedler stated that all their participating students claimed that “they had a positive experience regarding the acquisition of useful theoretical knowledge and practical skills in respect to the use of social media tools and services and self-directing their own learning projects within formal educational settings and beyond” (Väljataga & Fiedler, 2009, p. 68). They said that the students’ report indicated that they gained considerable knowledge and skills regarding the use of social media for supporting a range of activities. Väljataga and Fiedler concluded that students acquired some expertise regarding the selection and meaningful combination of a diverse set of social media for their own purposes (2009). Therefore, we can say that students enjoy the use of social media in their learning. Moreover, by using the social media as a learning technique, students will have the feeling that they have earned this knowledge and that will make them never forget the knowledge they have acquired. Adding to that, in their article (Computer Support for Knowledge-Building Communities) Scardamalia and Bereiter noted in their evaluations of the computer-supported intentional learning environments that “students greatly surpass students in ordinary classrooms on measures of depth of learning and reflection, awareness of what they have learned or need to learn, and understanding of learning

itself” (1993, p. 281). In their article, Scardamalia and Bereiter discussed the benefits of using the computer- supported technology. They concluded that when students work collectively, “they seem to be functioning beyond their years, tackling problems and constructing knowledge at levels that one simply does not find in ordinary schools, regardless of the caliber of students they enroll” (1993, p. 281). In other words, using technology as a learning tool can boost the educational process as well as educational outcomes.

**2.3.4 Entertaining factor.** In addition to all the excitement and self- acquisition features that can be found in social media as a learning tool, researchers argue that e-learning is considered a student friendly environment. Following this further, social media, or e-learning in general, is very convenient. It allows students to think and take their time before posting and participating. In addition, social media as an educational tool provides the students with the opportunity to participate whenever it is convenient for them. As a matter of fact, some students believe that e-learning is better than the traditional face-to-face classes. They say that in a face-to-face class there is the pressure to think fast and share your answer or comment with your peers. With e-learning, on the other hand, they can take as much time as they like before responding and sharing, without worrying about waiting for their turn or being interrupted by the others, because this technology supports an egalitarian style of communication in which everyone can participate more easily (Wegerif, 1998).

**2.3.5 Multiple media.** It is important to remember that social media, or e-learning, is considered a multiple media. Howard Gardner believes that there are at least

eight ways that people have to understand the world. Gardner's eight identified intelligences include linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence (as cited in Davis, Christodoulou, Seider, & Gardner, 2012, p. 2). Gardner called his theory the multiple intelligence theory. In his theory, Gardner suggested each person understands and perceives the world differently according to his/her ability or intelligence (Gilman, 2001). He also believed that the technology should provide many opportunities for the varieties of minds (Veenema & Gardner, 1996). Social media in its various types takes into account students' individual differences, as the different platforms offer multiple ways to participate which may suit most of the students. Moreover, the fact that teachers ask their students to use multiple mediums (like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube) in their learning could affect the students learning process in a positive way. According to SEG research, "multimedia learning seeks to give instructors the ability to stimulate both the visual and auditory channels of the learner, resulting in better progress" (2009, 2008). Taking this further, according to a theory called Dual Encoding, Clark believes that content communicated with text and graphics can affect our long-term memory and thus the learning process in general (Clark, 2002).

**2.3.6 Knowledge building.** This is the most important feature of social media, or e-learning, as a learning tool. Hewitt and Scardamalia believe that "a Knowledge-Building Community is any group of individuals dedicated to sharing and advancing the knowledge of the collective" (1998. P. 82). They argue that Computer Supported

Intentional Learning Environments—which can be considered a form of e-learning—provide a permanent record of community interaction. On this topic, they said the following:

This allows all students to work simultaneously and permits a type of highly intensive and opportunistic peer collaboration that would be impractical, and chaotic, without computers. It also allows for asynchronous communication, and this provides time for reflection and quiet moments needed for demanding intellectual activity. (1998, p. 84)

As Hewitt and Scardamalia have mentioned before, the nature of the social media allows students to build on each other's knowledge, and that will result positively on the learning process and its outcomes. When students comment and build on their peers' work, they are giving feedback to each other, and that, according to a group of students who have used the social media in an educational context, "enables [them] for example to provide continuous feedback, to carry out reflective tasks, to draw schemes either individually or in groups synchronously, to mediate group communication, and to work together on common artifact" (Väljataga & Fiedler, 2009, p. 67). In other words, those students who are organizing around a particular area of activity can get a sense of joint enterprise and identity. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger called this organizing and grouping "communities of practice". According to their theory, learning is social and most of the things we learn come from experiences in our daily lives. Lave and Wenger argue that "communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor." (Wenger, 2012, p. 1). In

other words, those people, or participants, share the same interest and information. They also, according to Lave and Wenger's theory, help each other and engage in joint activities and discussions. As a result of this interaction, the members of this group will build relationships that enable them to learn from each other (2007). As a matter of fact, Wenger believes that this interaction can be achieved easily, especially with current technology. He said that "new technologies such as the Internet have extended the reach of our interactions beyond the geographical limitations of traditional communities [...] as a matter of fact, it expands the possibilities for community and calls for new kinds of communities based on shared practice" (2007, p.6).

With new technologies, students can collaborate and undertake more complex activities and projects; they can also work together as a team regardless of the temporal and spatial limitations. The goal of using technology in education, or what is called e-learning, "is to create communication systems in which the relations between what is said and what is written, between immediate and broader audiences, and between what is created in the here and now and archived are intimately related and natural extensions of school-based activities" (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1994, p. 266). In such an environment, students can reach to their maximum potentials collectively.

## **2.4 Challenges of Using Social Media**

**2.4.1 Language barrier.** Although social media developers tried to present their mediums in many different languages, the English language is still number one. The reason behind that could be due to the fact that English is the most widely used language



in the word, or maybe because it is the network mother language. If we take Facebook as an example, we will find that Facebook is currently available in more than 70 languages, but still, according to the statistics on the “Facebook top ten languages” in 2010, the English language came in the first place, while the Arabic language came in the tenth place (Sue, 2010). However, other statistics indicate that “Arabic is one of the fastest growing languages on sites like Twitter [...] it is becoming increasingly easy for Arabic speakers to interact in their mother tongue online” (Messieh, 2012, para. 9) (Figure 1). On the other side, and according to the same statistics, many Facebook users in the Middle East showed their preference for using the English language (Messieh, 2012). Despite this rapid growth in the use of the Arabic language in social media, non-native English speakers are having difficulties in learning through these websites.

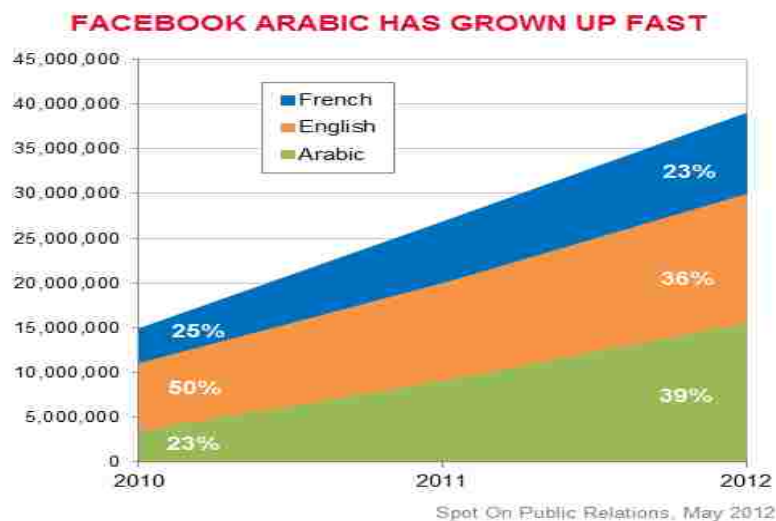


Figure 1 - Facebook Growth Rate in Saudi Arabia (Redcliffe, 2013)

Zhang and Kenny discussed the challenges that face non-native English speakers or the international students when they take an online course in their article

“Learning in an Online Distance Education Course: Experiences of Three International Students.” In their study, the two authors focused on the online experience of three international students who were enrolled in a Canadian university that offers an online master’s program. Along with their native English-speaking peers, the three international students were supposed to engage with their peers in the online course discussion; moreover, the students were expected to participate regularly and share their opinions, reflections, and thoughts with their peers in the online environment. The study concluded that, “non-native speakers of English were not very confident about their English proficiency and spent considerably more time than their English speaking peers reading and composing messages in the course CMC spaces” (Zhang & Kenny, 2010, p. 6). In the Zhang and Kenny case study, the two authors found that the reason behind their findings was the fact that non-native speakers of English face lots of challenges when they are trying to communicate with their native English-speaking peers. According to the article, the language barrier was the biggest challenge they faced. Although those three international students had met the minimum level of English proficiency, they were having difficulties in communicating in the online environment with their native English speaking peers. Thus, the authors found that the three students from the case study “were apt to think the language barrier prevented them from posting as many messages as they would have liked” (Zhang & Kenny, 2010, p. 4). In other words, the three international students did not participate as much as their peers because of the language barrier. As a matter of fact, and according to the case study findings, “there was a sense of anxiety associated with using a CMC space for non-English language speakers” (Zhang &

Kenny, 2010, p. 6). The three international students were not sure of their English proficiency and their ability to have a successful and meaningful communication with their native English-speaking peers. For example, one of the international students stated that he was afraid that “his peers might refuse to work with him in group activities if they judged his English proficiency as poor” (Zhang & Kenny, 2010, p. 5). Another student from the case study said that she was experiencing language difficulties as an international student. Her biggest concern was understanding the informal language that her native English-speaking peers used in their postings. (Zhang & Kenny, 2010, p. 5). Another concern that was revealed in this case study was that international students may feel lost in the online environment because of the absence or lack of the actual presence of the instructor (Zhang & Kenny, 2010, p. 2). As a result, international students might feel insecure and isolated. As a matter of fact, research also shows that learners may feel uncertain in their communication and isolated in this environment because of a lack of non-verbal cues and social presence (Muilenburg & Berge, 2005). This may significantly impact students who were raised in a culture where social context and/or social presence (Ku & Lohr, 2003; Tu, 2001) are emphasized (Zhang & Kenny, 2010, p. 2). So, in other words, and according to previous research, international students who come from different cultures and social contexts may face many challenges in adapting to another culture and social context. These challenges can affect those students’ learning. Adding to that, studies have found the following:

International students, especially those who are from Asia and the Middle East, may face more challenges or frustrations in this regard than their domestic peers

because of such factors as language barriers (Goodfellow, Lea, Gonzalez, & Mason, 2001; Lee & Greene, 2007), feelings of isolation or alienation (Shattuck, 2005; Walker-Fernandez, 1999; as cited in Uzuner, 2009). (Zhang & Kenny, 2010, p. 2).

However, online learning has many benefits for non-native English speakers. For example, participants in an online learning environment can post their reflection after taking their time thinking about what has been said and what they want to post (Zhang & Kenny, 2010). Moreover, students from the case study said that the online environment allowed them to proofread their reflections before posting, in order to check for spelling and grammar errors (Zhang & Kenny, 2010, p. 5). In addition, one of the international students in the case study found the online environment convenient for the international students because it is less stressful than the face-to-face courses. She said “in an online class, you don't have to worry too much about your English so you are less nervous. ... I feel more relaxed, I can spend more time on it but I don't have to worry about being embarrassed” (Ping, telephone interview, as cited in Zhang & Kenny, 2010, p. 5). As a result, researchers found that “virtual environment may promote critical thinking that leads to higher achievement and more satisfaction in collaborative learning” (Alavi, 1994, as cited in Zhang & Kenny, 2010, p. 1). In other words, despite the language difficulties non- native English speakers might face, learning via an online environment still has a positive impact on the international students' learning.

#### **2.4.2 Internet technical problems.**

*Internet and technology quality.* No one can argue that the quality of the internet services or the technology in our hands can have a huge impact on the success of the e-learning environment. High quality internet can lead to a satisfied student, and a student's satisfaction is an important factor in the success of any learning method. As a matter of fact, "Several researchers indicate that technology quality and internet quality significantly affect satisfaction in e-Learning (Piccoli et al., 2001; Webster & Hackley, 1997 as cited in Sun, Tsai, Finger, Chen, Yeh, 2008, p. 1188). As a matter of fact, low internet speed or connection can be frustrating for the students and the instructors, and that, indeed, could hinder the education process. In other words, "the higher the quality and reliability in IT, the higher the learning effects will be (Hiltz, 1993; Piccoli et al., 2001; Webster & Hackley, 1997 as cited in Sun, Tsai, et al., 2008, p. 1188). Moreover, researchers have found that slow speed internet and/or poor technology can frustrate the students and the instructors in the e-learning environment. Researchers said, "In e-Learning environments, poor technology with slow response time or frequent technical difficulties will definitely discourage learners and discourage students from taking online courses" (Sun, Tsai, et al., 2008, p. 1195). Having said that, it is important to mention a study that was conducted in King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia. The study explored students' views regarding the advantages and limitations of blended learning—which is a mix of traditional learning and e-learning (Al Zumor, Al Refaai, Bader-Eddin & Al-Rahman, 2013, p. 1). The study sample was 160 male students who were taking an English language course. In the study questionnaire, the students had to answer a

question regarding limitations and problems they faced in the e-learning environment. The researchers found that “48% of the students mentioned technical and Internet problems as the major challenge to their successful learning via Blackboard” (Al Zumor, et al., 2013, p. 10). So, in other words, internet and technical problems can be considered one of the biggest factors that have a negative impact on the educational process in the e-learning environment. Another study regarding the impact of the internet and technology quality was conducted at the University of Technology in South Africa (Isabirye & Dlodlo, 2014). The study explored the perceived inhibitors of e-learning teaching practices through the experiences of ten academics at a university. The researchers found that internet and technical problems were one of the themes that appeared in the study. The researchers said the following about this issue:

In cases where e-learning was utilized, users complained that the network was extremely slow and that the university experienced constant Internet service disruptions. This not only disrupted the teaching and learning process, but also made it extremely difficult to download web content. Other technical hindrances to the use of e-learning included installation problems, slow connection, maintenance challenges. (Childs et al., 2005 as cited in Isabirye & Dlodlo, 2014, p 394)

Obviously, internet and technology quality problems are not a one-country issue. As a matter of fact, it is a problem in many countries around the world. However, researchers noted that internet and technical problems are concentrated in developing countries in general and Arab countries in particular (Ali, 2012). According to Dr. Ali, Computer and

Information Technology Program Coordinator at the Open University of Sudan, this could be due to the high cost of the internet network. Despite the decline in the prices of computer hardware and software, the cost of networking is still high and this is because most computer networks are still relying mainly on city infrastructure and communications providers, which are still weak in many Arab countries and developing countries (2012). Adding to that, Umm Alquraa University published on the university website that weak city infrastructure and the high cost of internet service providers in developing countries are two of the major challenges faced by e-learning (2014). Another university in Saudi Arabia talked also about the e-learning challenges. King Abdul-Aziz University discussed in The Eighth Meeting for the Future of the E-Learning and Distant Learning In Saudi Arabia the challenges that face e-learning and distant learning in the Saudi university. One of the meeting's speakers mentioned the weak infrastructure as one of the challenges (FEA-KAU, 2012). According to the Education Newspaper—that covered the meeting—during the meeting, the speakers discussed the results of academic and technological studies, which were prepared by academics from the universities of Saudi Arabia and experts in the telecom companies. In these results there was an agreement that the future of distance education and e-learning in Saudi Arabia is threatened by internet problems. As a matter of fact, slow internet connections were the largest obstacle overshadowing this new method of education. Moreover, the speakers pointed to the fact that slow internet connections will lead to a lack of an appropriate communication between the students and faculty members (2012).

However, it is important to point out that these technical challenges did not limit the spread of the e-learning in the developing countries in general and Saudi Arabia in particular. With this in mind, it is worth mentioning that at the same meeting mentioned above, the Dean of Deanship of Distance Learning at the King Abdul-Aziz University, Dr. Hisham Brdesa explained in his speech that e-learning and distance education has witnessed great and remarkable developments in the last decade, when the university began to significantly develop the distance education through the Committee for e-learning. He also pointed out that the university is seeking to increase the absorptive capacity for the distance-learning students (Education newspaper, 2012). So, as shown above, the Saudi universities are aware of these internet and technical problems, and they are trying to resolve them and improve the e-learning environment to keep up with the changing technology.

***Technology skills and computer literacy.*** One of the major challenges that e-learning faces is the lack of knowledge or skills to use the new technology among its users (Umm Alqura university, 2014). As a matter of fact, many researchers in the Arab world, and in developing countries, believe that lack of technological knowledge and computer illiteracy are two of the obstacles that face e-learning. In Sudan, for example, Dr. Edrees Ali believes that computer illiteracy and a lack in technical experience among the instructors and students are still high in the Arab region, in spite of the spread of institutes and colleges that have emerged in recent years (2012). Not only do researchers in Sudan believe this, but also researchers in Jordan indicate that the lack of efficiency in the use of e-learning and the lack of the technological skills are two of the major issues



that prevent or hinder the development of e-learning in the Arab world (Yaseen & Melhem, 2012). In other words, if the students or the instructors do not have technical skills and they have difficulties in dealing with the computer and the e-learning software, then that, indeed, will affect their learning process. Another study conducted by a Kuwaiti researcher indicates the major difficulties and challenges in the Arab world are to introduce the new technology in the educational life, in order to create a rich educational environment (Alsharhan, 2012). Moreover, Alsharhan believes that, as administrators and educators, need to be sure of the readiness of students, faculty members, and teachers in this regard. In addition, educators need to know the positive and negative impacts of technology to the educational process (Alsharhan, 2012). Alsharhan believes that, in order to achieve that, the educators need a new pedagogical thinking and an ongoing work to prepare faculty members and teachers for this new era. (2012, p. 13). As a matter of fact, many researchers and scholars believe that educators need a good and proper preparation to be able to teach an online course because the educator's perception of online learning can impact the whole educational process. According to Sun, et al, "Attitude toward using computer and network technology in delivering education and training will impact students' attitudes and affect their performance" (2008, p. 1194).

As a matter of fact, not only the Arab countries are lacking the technology knowledge, and resources, but also developing countries, like China and Tanzania, are also facing these problems. According to Nyandara, China has many challenges

regarding the use of the technology-based learning. As a matter of fact, she listed these challenges in

her paper “Challenges and Opportunities of Technology Based Instruction in Open and Distance Learning: A Comparative Study of Tanzania and China.” She said the following in that paper:

Sife, et al (2007) found challenges like awareness and attitudes towards ICT, inadequate funds for staff development and infrastructure development, insufficient of qualified staffs, and lack of systematic approach to ICT implementation in case of using the existing infrastructures already in place. (2012, p. 135)

She added that this could be due to the high cost of the internet access and the poor technology infrastructures and resources that are needed to meet the new curriculums (as cited in Nyandara, 2012). Moreover, some governmental and national security limitations may also affect the internet use in developing countries, such as China. These limitations might have an impact on blocking some of the foreign websites, thus limiting the uses of the internet in these countries (Nyandara, 2012).

Another developing country, Tanzania, is in the same situation. Researchers indicate the same challenges in Tanzania. These challenges include the following:

Lack or insufficient technical and academic staffs with appropriate skills of technology use, unsupportive mindset, electricity connectivity and reliability as well as telecommunication network, expensive cost of internet access and low internet speed, lack of content that meet user’s expectation especially to some

government and local institution websites which demoralize users to search online content, shortage of technological resources and infrastructures and traditional culture of education and learning styles. (Nyandara, 2012, p. 135)

In other words, these challenges can be categorized into four categories, untrained staff, infrastructure problems, internet problems, coast and cultural boundaries. As a matter of fact, the challenges that face a developing country, like Tanzania, are the same challenges that face most of the Arabic and developing world, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In order to overcome these challenges, researchers found out that some of these challenges are easy to solve. As a matter of fact, Yaseen and Melhem suggest that, in order to overcome the challenges that face e-learning, educators have to provide appropriate and intensified training for the faculty members and the teachers on how to deal with the computer hardware and software; moreover, they need to be trained in how to construct an e-learning curriculum and how to deliver it successfully and effectively (2012,). Yaseen and Melhem believe that this is the duty of the Ministry of Education to make sure that there are supervised training centers that train the teachers and educators to use the electronic network for the purpose of education, and to provide them with all the necessary programs to achieve their educational goals (2012).

As a matter of fact, the Chinese universities, for example, knew that and started to teach a course called Educational Technology to students from undergraduate to PhD levels (as cited in Nyandara, 2012, p. 135). Moreover, according to Nyandara, the “Chinese National Teacher Training Program is also implemented based on the national

educational technology standards for teachers so as to improve teachers' awareness and skills on how to use and apply ICT in teaching and learning" (as cited in Nyandara, 2012, p. 135). In addition to that, the program also offers courses to develop students' awareness of, and interest about, on-line learning, to realize the impacts of it on daily life and to make them understand and master the basic e-learning skills (as cited in Nyandara, 2012, p. 135). Having said that, Yaseen and Melhem emphasize the importance of the work on the deployment of e-culture among members of the community, in order to achieve greater interaction with this type of education (2012, p. 134). That indeed could improve the cultural acceptance of e-learning and eventually its impact.

Finally the three mediums or platforms that I considered in my study were Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.

#### **2.4.3 Social Media.**

**Twitter.** Twitter may have started as a fun social media site for keeping up with friends and sharing updates about daily life, but years later it became much more than that for many users. These days, Twitter is a powerhouse for marketing, communication, business, and even education, letting people from around the world work together, share ideas, and gain exposure. The popularity of this medium among the youth made teachers wonder about just how to use it as a learning tool in the classroom and in their professional lives. Twitter can be used by teachers in many ways; the simplest way is to connect with students and ask them open-ended questions. This will start conversations and get students thinking, sharing, and connecting.

In her research paper “Twitter as a Teaching Practice to Enhance Active and Informal Learning in Higher Education: The Case of Sustainable Tweets,” Eva Kassens-Noor indicates the following:

As educators, are being encouraged to use Twitter to enable interactivity, excite learners, and foster greater student participation. Responding to this challenge, educators in higher education have started to experiment with Twitter in the hope students seize the opportunity to interact more frequently, engage more thoughtfully, and foster learning inside and beyond the classroom. (Kassens - Noor, 2012, p. 11)

In other words, in order to keep up with youth and their growing interest in technology, teachers should take advantage of Twitter and boost their learning. As a matter of fact, statistics indicate that Saudi Arabia’s Twitter users “grew more than 3,000% from 2011 to 2012, and currently accounts to 50,000,000 tweets per month” (the Socialclinic, 2013); moreover, another study indicates that 53 percent of Twitter users around the world are females (Figure 2) and 77 percent of them are between the age of fifteen and twenty-five (Internet World Stats, 2013) (Figure 3).

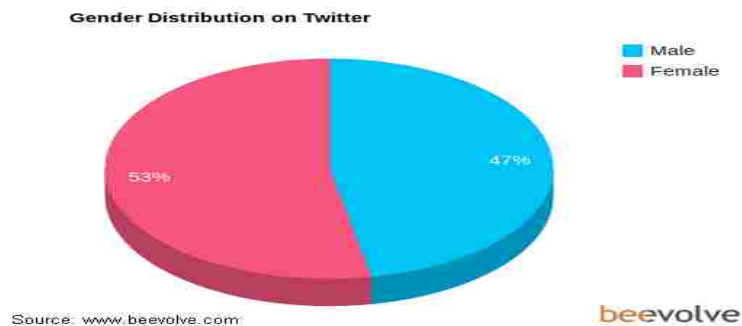
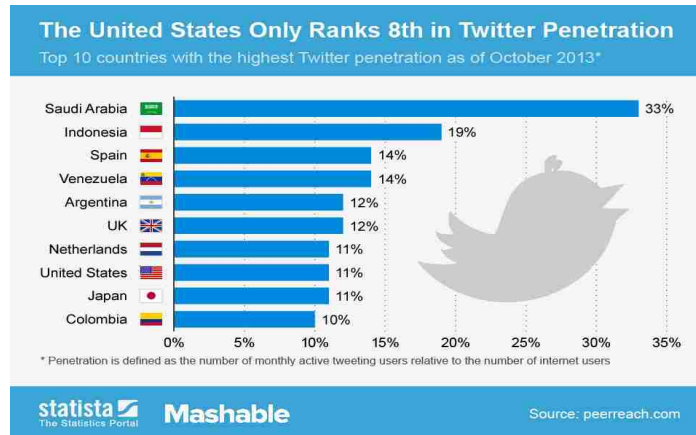
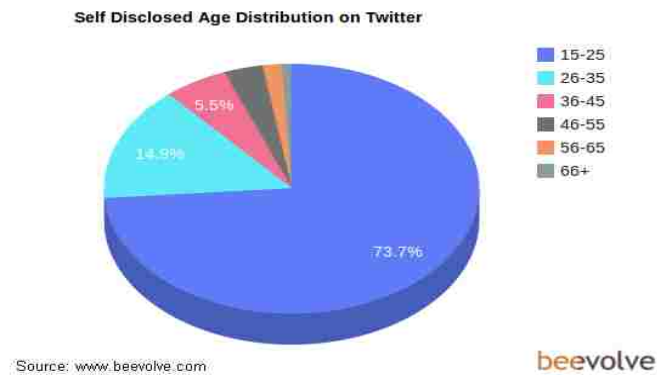


Figure 2- Twitter Use by Gender (Beevolve, 2012)



*Figure 3-* Saudi Arabia Ranks First on Twitter (The socialclinic, 2013).

Despite the fact that one third of Saudi Arabia's online population are active Twitter users, and the fact that Saudi Arabia ranks the first among ten different countries around the world (including the USA), there is still no clear evidence for Twitter's educational uses in Saudi Arabia (The socialclinic, 2013) (Figure 4).



*Figure 4-* Twitter Use by Age Group (Beevole, 2012)

**Facebook.** Facebook is emphatically a social network site, but trends of using it for teaching purposes are increasing. Given increasing numbers of students who use Facebook, the temptations for universities to enter that space is strong. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for example, has the highest Facebook user rate in the gulf countries (The

Socialclinic, 2013). According to Discover Digital Arabia statistics, by the end of 2010, the number of Saudi Facebook users reached 3.2 million (2010). Another study indicates that 58 percent of Facebook users are female (Times of India, 2012), while, according to Alyssa Skelton, 56 percent of Facebook users around the world are female (2012) (Figure 5). Another study, conducted by Carolyn Woodley and Catherine Meredith, concluded that “Facebook could well engage and support some students who would otherwise be isolated or disengaged.” (2012, p. 93). In other words, the mechanism, or the way



Figure 5- 56% of Facebook Users Around the World is Female. (Skelton, 2012)

Facebook works, allows students to engage and participate whenever they like without the pressure of the traditional classes. This engagement is necessary to a successful learning experience.

As a matter of fact, Imam Muhammad bin Saud University had successful experiences using social media in general, and Facebook in particular, in teaching one of

the courses. The course instructor created a Facebook account for the course and started to add the students to the account. It was used for the exchange of ideas and discussion, in addition to downloading and uploading educational and scientific videos. This experiment received lots of compliments from both the students and the officials (Al-Naji, 2013).

**YouTube.** According to YouTube's official website, YouTube allows billions of people to discover, watch, and share originally-created videos. YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers large and small (YouTube). In other words, YouTube can be used by teachers and students to upload or watch different videos. It could be a rich environment for both teachers and students. This environment could promote students' education. It is really amazing that YouTube itself has created YouTube for Schools, where schools can access free educational YouTube videos, while limiting access to other YouTube content (YouTube). All these videos, according to the YouTube website, are educational; however, many educational institutions and schools do not benefit from YouTube for Schools, even though there is an increase in the number of YouTube up-loaders and viewers. For instance, more than 90,000,000 videos are watched daily on YouTube in Saudi Arabia alone (Figure 6).





*Figure 6- More than 90 Million Videos are Watched Daily in Saudi Arabia. (The socialclinic, 2013)*

The Socialclinic website indicates that this rate is higher than any daily YouTube video viewership worldwide (2013). Unfortunately, there is not yet any exploitation of these interests from the educators (Shabrg, 2012).

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology and Procedures**

#### **3.1 Recruitment and General Procedures**

In November 2013, an approval to conduct the study was granted by the Research Ethics Board of University of Windsor, after that, I contacted the professor of the Introduction to Literature course at King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia. This course is an introductory course in the European languages department. The reason behind selecting this course was because this was the only course that was taught by using social media. So, as I have mentioned, I contacted the course instructor and sent her a brief summary of my research plan to make sure that her course and her teaching methods were suitable to my research requirements. Moreover, I had to make sure that my research instruments would suit the students' situations and check if there were any adjustments I had to make or take in consideration in my study plan. After many conversations and emails between the course instructor and me, we concluded that the course was appropriate for my needs.

#### **3.2 Participants**

Because this study focused on social media as a learning tool, the participants I targeted were students who were taking an undergraduate course that is taught using the three social mediums, which I focused on (Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube). Thirty female Saudi students from the undergraduate program at the King Abdul-Aziz

University were chosen to participate in this study; however, only twenty-five students chose to participate. The participants were non- native English students who were taking an English course that is taught using social media.. The aim of the course is to acquaint students with selected literary specimens in English and world literatures. The sessions take place twice a week, face-to-face, and students are supposed to read literary pieces chosen by the instructor, or ones which they choose out of a suggested list, and use social media platforms to comment on them. Twenty-five participants chose to participate in my study. These participants were aware that their data and conversations were collected and recorded for the purposes of documentation in this research.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

To collect data for this study, I depended on online questionnaires and interviews as research instruments. Basically, a qualitative approach is used to draw the data for the study.

**3.3.1 Instrumentation.** In order to gain a deeper understanding of human behaviors and the changes in their behaviors, we need a research method that goes beyond virtual words and accesses the hidden meanings behind those words and actions—a method that reveals the reasons of the human behavior. According to C. R. Kothari, qualitative research techniques “aim to discover the underlying motivates and desires [...] to find out how people feel or what they think about particular subject or institution” (2006, p. 3). Kauthari also added “qualitative research is specially in the

behavioral sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motivates of human behavior” (2006, p. 3).

For the above reasons, and in an attempt to reveal a deeper understanding of the responses I got from my samples, I decided to use the qualitative techniques as research methods. In this research I used two qualitative methods, the first one was an electronic questionnaire and the second was an interview.

**3.3.2 Questionnaire.** The first instrument that I used in this study was a questionnaire that has been completed by students after a month of using social media as a learning tool. The questionnaire was an electronic survey that was made on SurveyMonkey.com. The questionnaire link was posted on the course Twitter and Facebook pages. Students were free to fill in the voluntary e-questionnaire, which included twenty open-ended and closed-ended questions. The open-ended items of the questionnaire required students to reflect on their use of social media throughout the duration of the course. The closed-ended ones were Likert-type items designed to assess students’ overall perception of the course as delivered through the social media chosen for this study. The first two pages of the questionnaire were the Information Letter and the Consent Form. Students were required to agree to the consent form in order to access the questionnaire’s questions. Moreover, students were able to print the Information Letter if they wished.

After completing the questionnaire and pressing the “Done” button, the completed questionnaire was submitted to my survey monkey account and a thank you message appeared for the participant.

The questionnaire link was open for six months, and after a month of the end of the semester I closed the link to collect and analyze the data. The questionnaire was designed to answer the three research questions.

**3.3.3 Interview.** According to Kothari, interview is one of the best qualitative methods to discover underlying human desires and motivations (2006, p. 3), thus, the second instrument I decided to use was an interview. Students were asked in the last page of the questionnaire to voluntarily participate in individual, semi-structured interviews to talk about their experiences using social media through coursework. There were about ten questions on the interview sheet. I chose a semi-structured interview because this type of interview does not limit the participant's responses, and, at the same time, it gave me the opportunity to explore their responses further.

Interviews were carried out via Skype voice call. So I created two accounts, one for my use and the other one for the participants' use in case they did not have a Skype account, or they did not want to use their personal account. Students were asked in the questionnaire to contact me by email or messages if they were willing to participate so I could send them the Skype account information and arrange a meeting time. The interview was designed to take about twenty to thirty minutes.

Three students agreed to participate in the interview. After setting up suitable meeting times, and signing the Interview Consent Form and the Audio Taping Consent Forms—which have been posted on the Survey Monkey Website and have been sent to the three participants after agreeing to participate—a Skype phone interview was conducted with each of the participants. Adding to that, each participant was reminded at

the beginning of the interview of her right to refuse to answer any questions and to withdraw at any time; moreover, the participant was informed that the interview would be recorded. Each interview took about twenty to thirty minutes. After that, I thanked the participants and made sure that they had my contact information, in case they want to contact me in the future for the study results.

### **3.4 Research Design**

Upon agreement with the course instructor and obtaining suitable consents, I reviewed the instructor's pedagogical focus, the instructional design of online content being presented, and the types of collaborative (or otherwise) activities designed to meet the needs of the students enrolled in the course. Twitter lists, Facebook pages (and groups), and YouTube playlists that have been used to run the course.

The course LANE 341, Introduction to Literature, is an introductory course in literature offered to students in the Department of European Languages at King Abdulaziz University. The aim of the course is to acquaint students with selected literary specimens in English and world literatures. The sessions take place twice a week, and students are supposed to read literary pieces chosen by the instructor, or works, which they choose out of a suggested list. This Course consists of 6 units. The presentation of each unit adopts an identical structure:

- A face-to-face session (once a week), which explores theoretical concepts.
- A face-to-face session (once a week), which applies the critical concepts to, selected literary readings.

- An online reflection session (once a week during the weekends), where the students post content related to that week's unit, or post content which they think relevant to the class discussions, or ask the instructor or their peers questions about the unit.

The instructor allowed students to choose from an array of social media tools (Twitter, and Facebook) in case students preferred a certain media to another.

**3.4.1 Twitter.** An online Twitter journal asynchronies session was set up (once a week during the weekends). The instructor created a list of all students' accounts on Twitter and then started monitoring their posts. The instructor used the hashtag because it was much easier with a hashtag to group all course material and posts in one place.

Students were supposed to choose between:

- 1) Submitting entries to Twitter Class Journal --via course Hashtag #lane341lit
- 2) Posting content related to that week's unit (Figure 7)
- 3) Posting content which they think relevant to our class discussions,
- 4) Asking the instructor or their friends questions about the unit.



Figure 7- The Class Twitter Page.

**3.4.2 Facebook.** The instructor also created a Facebook page for the course and students were supposed to tag the page in their posts (Figure 8). The Facebook page had a website interface and it was easy to follow the posts and, at the same time, to post content of various lengths and types.



Figure 8- The Class Facebook page.

**3.4.3 YouTube.** The course instructor posts YouTube videos, which illustrate certain concepts or ones of movie representation of the literature they had (Figure 9). Students were encouraged to respond to these posts. On the Facebook page, the instructor had to tag all students to alert them to it. On the Twitter account, the instructor used shout-outs to alert students to the videos.

Moreover, the rules for students' engagement with the social media were set right from the beginning of the semester and it was documented both on the instructors' website and in the Induction Presentation (Figure 10). Students were asked to:



Contribute posts, which reflected on their course knowledge or ones, which demonstrate their engagement with concepts related to what have been discussed in class.

- Post weekly references to topics that have been covered in class.
- Sum up the ideas discussed in class, or contribute their ideas about the literary works they read.
- Interact with their peers in the course. One can teach the others something new about the literary works that have been read in the class.
- Posts should be free of grammar and spelling mistakes.
- The instructor will respond to students' questions or observations and retweet them if they were valuable to the rest of the class.
- The instructor will evaluate students' posts and send notes as DMs (direct messages).

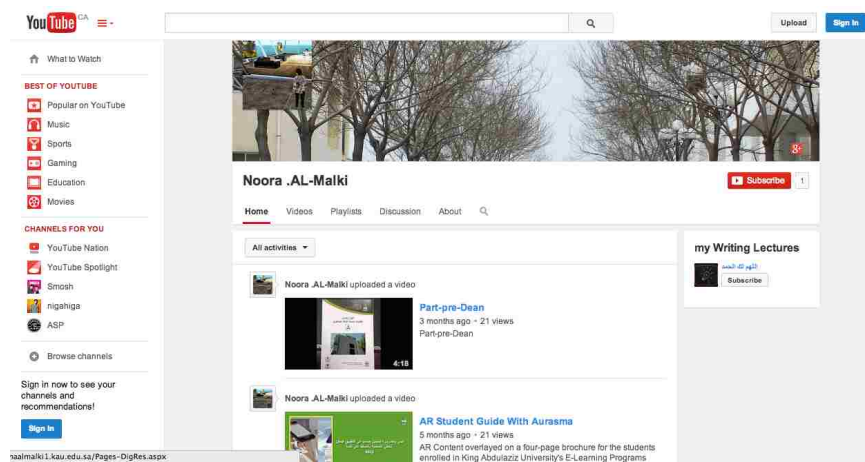


Figure 9- The Instructor YouTube Page.

Students not catching up with class or online discussions have the right to call for a live classroom session—on a certain day and time that has been set by the course instructor—via blackboard collaborate which is an online collaborative learning platform.



Figure 10- The instructor Website

Dear student, you should respect all participants in this learning community by:

- Honoring their right to their opinions.
- Respecting the right of each person to disagree with others.
- Responding honestly but thoughtfully and respectfully using language which others will not consider foul or abusive.
- Avoiding the use of capital letters in any post (rude and is considered shouting)
- Respecting your own privacy and the privacy of others by not revealing information which you deem private and which you feel might embarrass you or others.
- Being constructive in your responses to others in the class.
- Being prepared to clarify statements, which might be misunderstood or misinterpreted by others.

In addition to the rules of social media engagement, the course instructor has set some netiquette for communication via the social media:

The instructor also evaluated the students' responses and reflections on the social media as an evaluation process (Figure 11):

- The instructor reviews posts by students on the Twitter journal every Sunday morning.( Sunday is a working day in Saudi Arabia)
- The instructor comments on posts, which are acceptable but have minor mistakes (grammar or spelling).
- The instructor retweets posts, which are informative, creative, or significant in the context of the course.
- The instructor sends a DM (direct message) to the student who posts irrelevant, rude or false information (It was their first time using twitter for a class and correcting their mistakes publicly would harm more than benefit their progress).
- Students are expected to contribute 5 posts per week (for 10 weeks) to get the 10 points awarded to this activity.
- At the end of the semester, the instructor asked the students to fill an evaluation survey to evaluate their overall experience with the social media.

Assessments & Grading	
TESTS	Activities
Midterm 1 (20 marks) Midterm 2 (20 marks) Final Exam (40 marks)	<b>1- Twitter Class Journal Project via Twitter Hashtag (10 Marks)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- once a week (5 postings for each submission)</li> <li>- sum up the ideas discussed in class. Or contribute your ideas about the literary works we read</li> <li>- interact with your friends in the course. You can teach us something new about the literary works we read for class.</li> <li>- posts should be free of grammar &amp; spelling mistakes.</li> </ul> <b>2- Compulsory Group Project (Graded out of 5)</b> AR Book Club Project (Book Trailers Creation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The class will be divided into 5 groups (4 student each)</li> <li>- Each group will create a book trailer for a book of their choice.</li> <li>- The instructor will program the AR content</li> </ul> <b>3- Final Activity Report (Graded out of 5)</b> Fill in the form on my website

Figure 11- The Instructor Grading and Assessments rules

### **3.5 The Role of the Researcher**

After about thirty days of experimental course administration via social media, participants received, on their Facebook page and Twitter pages, a direct links to electronic copies of the questionnaire to fill in and submit.

Along with the questionnaire, an invitation letter was sent. Students wishing to participate in the interview contacted me via my email or cell phone to arrange interview times. When the student who was interested in participating in the interview contacted me, I sent her links to the Information Letter and the Consent Forms. The participant was required to click agree and send me the forms before starting the interview. In the interview, I explained to the participant that the interview would be recorded and I made sure that the participant understood that they were free to withdraw at any time. I summarized the purpose of the research and all the required information including the confidentiality part.

Finally, I asked the participant if she wish to begin the interview. All the interviews took about twenty to thirty minutes. After completing the interview questions, I categorized the students' responses in order to code them and analyze them.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

**3.6.1 Questionnaires.** After receiving the questionnaire responses, the text-based and open-ended responses were transcribed in Microsoft Word and categorized into themes to be analyzed and coded. Closed-ended responses were analyzed according to the similar responses. Moreover, simple statistical analysis was applied on the closed-

ended questions (Percentage-Mean-Mode). In other words, the qualitative data was quantified to present frequencies. This qualitative data can be used to support the quantitative questionnaire data.

For the open-ended questions, I made a list of all the frequent and similar responses. In addition, I made a list of all the relative responses. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the questionnaire data, an interview was conducted.

**3.6.2 Interviews.** The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder, as well as on a recording application on my cell phone. After downloading the audio recording to my laptop, I started to transcribe the interviews using Microsoft Word. This step was done to facilitate the comparison between the data from the questionnaires and the interview data. In addition to that, the data transcription was used to facilitate the data coding according to the most frequent themes.

The questionnaire data and the interview data were meant to complement each other. The analysis results will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter4**

### **Results and Findings**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I will present the findings and the study results. After going carefully through the questionnaire responses and the interview scripts, the findings of this qualitative study were categorized into four themes. These four themes were the most frequent responses. Adding to that, the four themes, or categories, were the answers to my research questions.

In this chapter, I will present the four themes according to the following order: One, students' overall experience in using the social media; two, students' opinions regarding the use of social media as a learning tool; three, students' reasons behind preferring or not preferring the social media as a learning tool; and four, students' perspective on improving social media as learning tool.

#### **4.2 Findings**

**4.2.1 Students' overall experience.** This was detected from the students' responses either from the questionnaire or the interview. The data or the responses revealed that the age range of the twenty-five participants was between nineteen and twenty-nine, with a mean of 25.4. Moreover, all the participants were English majors who were taking the course Introduction in literature. Twenty-four out of twenty-five students reported that the social media activities or assignments were supervised and

graded by the instructor. Seventy four percent of the participants believed that these activities and assignments were a mix of collaborative and one-sided activities. On the other hand, 20 percent of the students stated that the activities were collaborative and only 4 percent of the students believed that the activities were one-sided. Upon answering the questionnaire questions, 22 out of 25 students reported that they were familiar with using social media before taking this course. Seventy three percent of the students said that they did not use social media in class before. However, the two of the students who said that they have used social media in other classes before reported in the interview that they have used it in an Islamic culture class. They didn't like the platform that they were using because it was the university blog, and it was hard to deal and they were not familiar with it.

In the questionnaire, all the participants reported that they did have an account before this course in one or more of the social media mediums. As a matter of fact, 72 percent of the students reported that they have an account on Facebook, while 44 percent said they have an account on YouTube. In the case of Twitter, it got the highest percentage, where 84 percent of the students said that they have an account on it. However, the purposes for using the social media varied among the students. Table 1 below will explain that the majority of the students (84 percent) use the social media for entertainment purposes, while only 36 percent of them use the social media for education purposes.

Table 1- Purpose of the Use of Social Media

<b>Purpose of the use</b>	<b>Number of observations</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Entertainment</b>	21 out of 25	84%
<b>Communication</b>	16 out of 25	64%
<b>Browsing</b>	11 out of 25	44%
<b>Education</b>	9 out of 25	36%
<b>Other</b>	3 out of 25	12%

Adding to that, 88 percent of the students also stated that they spend up to five hours every day on the internet using social media. While 12 percent of the students reported that they spend more than six hours on social media daily. In addition, when the students were asked in the questionnaire how often they used social media, 44 percent of them said “always”, 32 percent of the students reported that they “often” use social media, 24 percent of the students stated that they “sometimes” use social media, and “rarely” was the response of 4 percent of the students. As a matter of fact, during one of the interviews, one of the students reported that she rarely uses social media because she does not like it. As a matter of fact, she said, “I don’t have a Facebook account, and I hate using twitter” (interviewee 3).



#### 4.2.2 Students' opinions regarding the use of social media as learning tool.

The questionnaire revealed that 44 percent of the students spend long time using social media (Figure 12). Moreover, twenty-one out of twenty-five students stated that they prefer using social media as a learning tool, and one student said that she sometimes prefers it as a learning tool. Only three students did not prefer the use of social media as a teaching method. As a matter of fact, during the interview, interviewee 3 declared, “some people like this method and other don't... I don't prefer [social media]. I prefer the traditional way.” She also added, “I didn't love it at all, I saw some of my peers enjoying [social media] and posting a lot, but not me.” The same students said that her problem was not with a specific social media. As a matter of fact, she does not like to use any social medium in education at all.

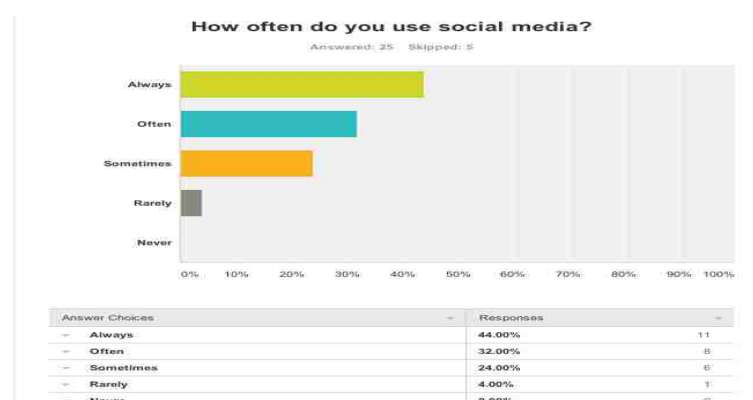


Figure 12- The Students' responses regarding their uses of social media

However, the majority of the participants reported that they liked and enjoyed using social media in their course. As a matter of fact, when I asked the students how to describe their over all experience using social media as learning tool, 84 percent of them

reported experiences ranging between “extremely satisfied” and “satisfied”, and only 16 percent reported a “fair” experience (Figure 13). During the interview, interviewee 1 described her experience as positive, and she added that she really enjoyed the use of social media in her class.

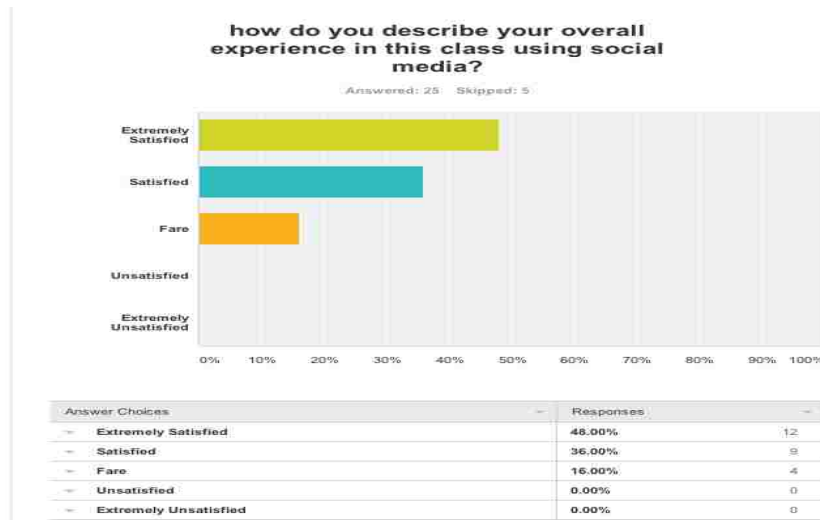


Figure 13- Students' opinion regarding social media in education

Not only were the majority of the students satisfied with the use of social media in education, but also many of them reported that they wished to use social media in all the courses they take. As a matter of fact, when I asked interviewee 2 if she recommends using social media in the other courses her respond was, “Absolutely, I wish all the classes use social media.” She also added, “This method makes me feel comfortable because I enjoy it, and it is fun to learn with the social media.”

A further discussion on the students’ reasons behind these responses will be explored in the following section.

**4.2.3 Students' reasons behind preferring or not preferring social media as a learning tool.** Upon reviewing and coding the interview and the questionnaire responses, many different reasons were found. Each student has her own personal reasons, so I tried to categorize all the response into four main themes. The first theme will be the personal reasons, the second will be the educational reasons, the third theme is the social reasons, and the forth one is the technical reasons.

Each of these themes is a headline that carries many other reasons under it. In the next few paragraphs, we will go further into the students' reasons.

*The personal reasons.* The first words most of the students use when I asked why do you like social media as a learning tool were "It's fun and easy to deal with." The questionnaire revealed the fact that most of the students who stated that they prefer using social media in the classroom enjoy this tool. This could be one of the reasons behind this preference. During the interview, interviewee 2 said the following:

I really recommend this method [social media] comparing to the traditional way.

It's much easier and more convenient. Everyone can learn from it, especially this time. It doesn't need a genius to learn how to deal with it. Anyone can do it.

Interviewee 1, who also declared that she enjoy using of social media in the classroom, said the following:

Social media is close to us and it is easy to deal with, especially Twitter,

YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. We are used to them. They are much better than the other social mediums that are not too popular, and we don't like to use

them [...] Twitter and Facebook are part of our lives. I consider YouTube as one of my brothers. I deal with it 24 hours a day. That way we like social media.

Adding to that, one of the questionnaire's participants stated "social media is a part of our daily life, so why won't we use it in our daily learning." So, along with the entertaining part, students prefer using social media as a learning tool because they feel that these platforms or mediums are close to them and, thus, social media presents some familiarity to them, and that, according to interviewee 2, can comfort the students.

On the contrary side, the students who did not like the use of social media as a learning tool, reported that they did not enjoy this method because they are not familiar with the social media. They found it hard to learn how to use it. One of the students wrote in the questionnaire that this was a new experience to her and she didn't know how to use Twitter, so she had to ask the instructor to teach her. Another student believed that this method was tiring and more difficult than it ought to be. As a matter of fact, the students reported that, if the platform used was hard to deal with or they were not familiar with it, then they prefer to do their assignments in the traditional way. However, it is important to say that, most of the students who didn't like the use of social media in education attributed their reasons to the lack of social media experience.

The second personal reason was the freedom of speech. Students reported that they will still like social media as long as they can express themselves and their thoughts freely. They said that they like posting whatever they feel is related to the course and interests them. They didn't need to copy each other and everybody can post what catches her attention and what interest her. The questionnaire findings also revealed that students

want to use social media to express themselves, write what they feel, and share it. As a matter of fact one of the students said, “I’m not going to like using social media in education if the instructor imposes her thoughts on me, or if she told me what to write.”

The last personal reason was related to the human personality. During the interview, interviewee 1 expressed her opinion. She said that one of the advantages of social media is that it gives her the chance to participate. She stated that “I can’t focus in more than one thing at a time, now [with the use of social media as a learning tool] I can focus on what is happening in the class, and when I go home I can post my participation.” She believes that social media is a multiple media. She said that, in addition to Twitter, the class watches YouTube videos a lot. The visual feature of the videos and the images make learning much more fun and enjoyable, compared to the traditional way, where they sit and read the textbooks. In reference to YouTube videos, interviewee 1 also added “plus, it’s more beneficial and easy to remember.” Another student stated in the questionnaire that we have different personalities, and we learn in different ways, so we should have multiple media methods. Adding to that, interviewee 1 believed that the use of social media as a learning tool can give the opportunity to the shy people to express themselves and participate without being afraid to speak in public. She said “students who didn’t have the gut to speak or participate in the classroom, have the chance now to participate.” However, interviewee 3 told me that she considers herself a shy person who doesn’t like to make lots of friends and who doesn’t like to use the social media as well.

Another student expressed her fear of social media and said that one of the difficulties she was facing in social media is that everybody can see what you post.

Another student said “I don’t want to look stupid.” All these concerns are due to the fear of tarnishing their personal images. As a matter of fact, interviewee 2 stated, “We are in week twenty, and the instructor told us that about three to four students didn’t tweet until now.” She also explained that she doesn’t know who they are or what their reasons were.

***The educational reasons.*** Many students reported in the questionnaire and the interviews that using social media to hand in their assignments or post their reflections was a good method to prove and document their participation. Interviewee 1 said that she likes the use of social media because now she can prove that she participates. Moreover, students reported that one of the advantages of social media is that it is hard to miss the information the others post.

During the interview, interviewee 2 said that when she studies for an exam, she goes through all her peers’ posts and comments, reading them in case she missed any points in the class. In other words, these posts help her to study and learn more.

Students also reported that, with the continuous regeneration in information in the social media, they learn a lot of new information all the time. As a matter of fact, one of the students reported in the questionnaire that she preferred the use of social media because there is new information every day.

Adding to that, students believed that the use of social media as a participation option improved their English writing skills. Interviewee 1 said that the instructor demands the use of proper English language in their posts and she always checks for spelling and grammar mistakes. Interviewee 1 added that she always takes her time to check her writing before posting to ensure her posts are free of mistakes because the

instructor always monitored the posts and commented on them if they got her attention or if there were any spelling or grammar mistakes in them. As a matter of fact, the students believed that this supervision could improve their language and their writing skills.

One of the most frequent reasons in the questionnaire responses was the time saving advantage. During the interviews, all the interviewees believed that social media could save time when used as a learning method. Interviewee 2 said, “Twitter saves my time, the traditional way assignments take triple the time.” In addition, students reported in the questionnaire that one of the advantages of social media is that you can participate and post your reflection or comments whenever you want and from the convenience of your own house.

Although many students reported in the questionnaire and the interviews that social media doesn't consume as much time as the traditional methods, lots of responses expressed the students' concern of the time problem. These time concerns are a result of internet technical problems that consume the students' time when they try to overcome these problems. As a matter of fact, interviewee 3, who expressed her dislike of social media due to the poor internet connection in her area, said, “[social media] doesn't take time at all to post a reflection, only about five min, but personally, I prefer the paper assignments.” On other words, despite the benefits interviewee 3 in social media she still against the use of it in education. She added that she doesn't have a good internet connection in her house plus she doesn't have enough time to use the university network because of her class times. So she believed that social media was the main causes for the loss of assignments marks.

*The social reasons.* Communication and knowledge building were the most common reasons for preferring social media as a learning tool among the study participants. Many students reported that the greatest and the biggest advantage of social media is the benefit they get from sharing their knowledge with their peers. The questionnaire responses revealed the fact that communication and interacting with others were the key factors in the success of the learning process. The students also reported that, by sharing their knowledge and communicating with their classmates and the other friends, they can learn more. As a matter of fact, interviewee 3 stated that the only advantage she sees in social media is the peer communication part. She said, “We can meet new and old friends as well, we can get new information from each other.” She added “Some students post information we did not know before.” Adding to that, when she was asked about the social media benefits, one of the students wrote in the questionnaire that “an outsider can participate and enrich our conversation.” So, in other words, most of the study participants believe that interaction between them and the others can increase their ability to learn. Interviewee 2 reported that this interaction improved her education process. She said the following:

I learn from my peers, they draw my attention to points I missed in the class [...] I read all the tweets if I want to study for the exam and sometimes I like to participate in the discussion to see if I’m right or wrong.

Interviewee 2 believes that the students interact more when social media is used because she thinks that students participate more if they have the freedom to discuss what is interesting them, and the class time does not allow them to discuss everything.



In addition to the students' interaction, most of the participants reported that the instructor's interaction is one of the social media's advantages. They said that the course instructor can take part in the discussion and comment on some of the issues that got her attention and discuss them from the students' perspective. This, according to the study participants, can enrich their educational process.

Students also reported that when they use social media as a learning tool, they can see what the others are doing and then learn from them. Some students believe that working with the others can teach them lots of new things and lead to positive experiences. They said that communicating with people around the world and sharing ideas and experiences were the most beneficial aspects of social media. However, two students reported in the questionnaire that people's behavior on social media was one of the difficulties they faced when using it.

***Technical reasons.*** One of the most common types of difficulty participants reported was technical difficulties. Students stated in the questionnaire that poor internet connection was the major disadvantage of social media. As a matter of fact, interviewee 2 said that sudden internet disconnections could delay assignment submissions. She also added that she heard some of her peers complain about the poor internet connection, and she believes that this problem depends on the area they live in. Interviewee 3 also agreed that the poor internet connection was the worst difficulty students faced, when it comes to using social media as a learning tool. She said that, according to her experience, internet connection is the main reasons behind her dislike of social media. She added, "Sometimes a week or two passes without internet connection in my house, I live in an

area that have a problem with internet connection most of the time and I don't have internet in my cellphone as well." She also talked about her concern regarding submitting her assignments late and the fact that she was losing marks because of this internet problem.

In addition to the poor internet connection, students were complaining about the difficulties they faced as the first users of social media. They reported in the questionnaire and the interviews that the instructor needs to train and teach them how to use some of the social mediums, especially if the students were not familiar of those mediums. They also reported that they were asking the instructor to help them in the use of these mediums in the first few classes. On one hand, interviewee 1 stated that she tried the university blog in a previous course and she found it difficult to use because she and her peers were unfamiliar with it. On the other hand, she likes Twitter because it is easy to use. Interviewee 3 also talked about her experience in using the university blog. She said that she had a bad experience with it, and she didn't like it because it was hard to access. In addition to that, many students reported in the questionnaire that they would prefer using social media as a learning tool if they know how to use it efficiently.

According to one student, using social media in education was a new experience to her.

Students reported that some of the challenges they faced in using social media as a learning tool were a result of the limitations of the medium itself. The Twitter characters limitation was the major challenge of using this platform. The 140 characters limitation was one of the difficulties students reported. Interviewee 2 said, "I really like social media, but sometimes the characters limitation on Twitter doesn't allow me to

write whatever I want.” Other students also reported in the questionnaire that the character limitation was a difficulty when using Twitter in their assignments. However, interviewee 1 talked about the solution of this limitation from her point of view. She said “If my post is too long, I take a snapshot or a screenshot of my comment and then I post it as an image on twitter.” So, to overcome this challenge, students found another way to benefit from Twitter. Other solutions and recommendations to improve the use of social media in education from the students’ point of view will follow.

**4.2.4 Students’ recommendation to improve the use of social media as a learning tool.** When the students were asked how they would use social media in their classroom if they were teachers, two out of twenty-five students said they would not use it at all, while the rest of the students suggested different ways to use it in education. Some students suggested making the use of social media optional for the students. In other words, the students will have the option to choose using or not using social media, and they will also have the alternative if they choose not to use social media. Other students suggested using social media only in English courses to improve the students’ language skills when they communicate with other students. Many students stated that they would use social media in class discussions, homework, assignments, journals, and activities. They also suggested using only the popular and well-known social mediums. These suggestions and recommendations were the most frequent ideas students stated in the questionnaire.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion and Limitations

#### 5.1 Review of the Major Findings and Research Questions

Upon reviewing the results of this qualitative study, I found out that the study findings determined the Saudi female undergraduate students' opinions regarding the use of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, as a learning tool. Moreover, the study results revealed the reasons behind the students' responses and the difficulties they experienced.

As a matter of fact, if we look at the study participants' ages, we will notice that their ages range from nineteen to twenty-nine, and that complies with the latest statistic that was published by Pew Research Center. According to this statistic, "the percentage of online adults who use social networking sites has steadily risen. As of January 2014,

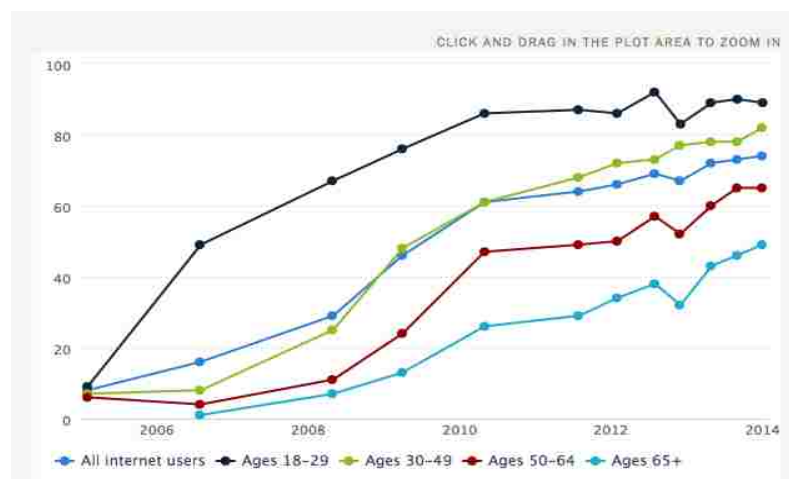


Figure 14- 89% of the users of social media are between 18-29 old (Pew research center, 2014).

74% of all online adults use social networking sites. For adults ages 18-29, 89% of them use social networking sites” (2014) (Figure 14). This is the highest percentage, and it has been rising over the years. As a matter of fact, in 2006, the social media users were only 49 percent of the social media population, and in eight years this number has risen to 89 percent (2014).

As can be seen, these statistics show the youth’s rising interest in social media. This can also be seen in my study results, where all the study participants reported that they already had one or more social media accounts. This is an indication of the popularity of social media among this age group. However, as I stated before, most of the students’ online activities before this study were limited to entertainment and communication purposes. Having said that, a study on the use of the internet in the Middle East conducted by Bayt.com and YouGov Siraj Research and Consulting found that the main reason for the use of the internet in the Middle East is to participate in social activities (Masmah, 2011). Adding to that, the findings of my research revealed that only 36 percent of the participants used social media in education. As a matter of fact the low percentage in the use of social media in education made the technical specialist Mohammed Badawi warn the Saudis of the overuse of social media for entertainment activities. In his speech about Twitter in education, during the Exhibition of International Education at its third session in Riyadh, Badawi said that using social media in education is the last concern of the social media population in Saudi Arabia (Althemairy, 2013). Badawi said that most of the activities of the Saudis were social

activities, with a little interest in educational activities. He also stressed the need to encourage the educators and the students to use social media as a learning tool (Althemairy, 2013).

It is important to notice that 88 percent of the participants in my study spend up to five hours a day using social media while 12 percent of the students spend more than six hours on social media a day. According to Badawi, this is considered a social media addiction. As a solution, he emphasized the importance of recruiting social networking in the field of education. He specifically mentioned the role of Facebook for universities, as well as YouTube, which is the best platform for education—in his opinion—as it contains a page under the name of "education," that provides access to many types of educational videos, as well as a special section for teachers to help them learn the teaching techniques. He also mentioned the vast potential of Twitter and how it can be widely applied in the field of education (Althemairy, 2013).

Another major finding was the fact that 84 percent of the participants prefer the use of Twitter as a learning tool. This high percentage corresponds with the fact that Saudi Arabia ranks the number one on Twitter worldwide, having the most active users in the world (the socialclinic, 2013). The popularity of social media among the youth in Saudi Arabia was noticeable in this study.

On the next few pages, a further discussion will be held to analyze the participants' responses and the research questions.

## 5.2 Research Question 1

How do Saudi female undergraduate students perceive social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube as a learning tool?

The answer to this question was revealed in the study findings. Eighty four percent of the participants declared in the questionnaire that they liked the use of social media in education. The majority of the study participants reported their satisfaction of the use of social media in education. As a matter of fact, twenty-one out of twenty-five students reported their satisfaction with social media as a learning tool. Similar to that, a Malaysian study conducted on the students' perception towards the use of social networking as an e-learning platform revealed that most of the people in the study sample had a positive perception towards the use of social networking in education (Tasir, Al-Dheleai, Harun & Shukor, 2011, p.73). According to the authors, "the study revealed that students have positive perceptions towards adopting social networking as an e-learning platform" (Tasir, Al-Dheleai, Harun & Shukor, 2011, p.73-74). So in other words, the majority of students have a positive perception toward using social media as a learning tool. Adding to that, many students in my study reported their desire to use social media in all the courses they take. As a matter of fact, when one of the students was asked if she prefers using social media in learning, she said "yes, I use it and like it and want to try using it in other courses." Another student, interviewee 2, declared in the interview that she wished that all the instructors used social media in their classes.

It is important, however, to notice that not all of the students agree on using social media as a learning tool. Unlike the students who reported their positive perception

towards social media, there were a few students who had either a neutral perception or a negative perception of social media in education. Having said that, it was noticeable that the students who reported their neutral opinion were either still not sure how to use social media as a learning tool or, as some reported, they might like the use of it only under certain conditions. According to one of the student's words, "it depends on how the instructor[s] use it."

On the other hand, there were three students who reported their dislike of social media. Interviewee 3, for example, was explicit about her dislike of the use of social media in education; she gave many reasons for her negative perception. These reasons range between personal and technical reasons.

The next few paragraphs will discuss and explore the student's reasons behind preferring or not preferring social media as a learning tool.

### **5.3 Research Question 2**

Why (or why not) do they prefer social media as a learning tool?

Students' responses regarding this question were varying. First, we will explore the reasons of the group who preferred social media as a learning tool. After that, we will explore the other group, who did not prefer social media as a learning tool.



**5.3.1 Students who preferred social media in education.** As I have mentioned before, most of the students in my study reported their preference for using social media in education. Their reasons were different, some of these reasons were personal and some were educational, while some reasons were social reasons. According to The social Media in Education website:

A recent Australian study shows that social media applications are a great way for those who are shy, insecure, or afraid of public speaking to still great a great education in which they can participate right along with students more comfortable in public forums. (2012, para. 1)

The study findings were compatible with my research participants' responses.

Interviewee 1, for example, mentioned this matter in her response when she was asked how she used social media in her class. She said that her peers and herself use it mostly for course participation, and she believes that social media gives the opportunity for shy students to participate without worrying about speaking and sharing their comments in public.

Students also talked about the fact that social media gave them the chance to post their response from the comfort of their houses and any time they wanted. These two features of social media made it an enjoyable and comfortable learning tool to the students. As a matter of fact, the Australian study about the benefit of online education for students revealed that:

Online education and social media in courses allows shy students, who are often reflective learner, to take the time they need to process the interaction and pace

themselves according to their emotional responses before participating. This reduces the panic and stress such students often feel in face-to-face classes. (The Social Media in Education, 2012, para. 1)

Using social media in education might not only reduce the panic and stress students face, but also it provides a familiar way to learn for some students. The familiarity of the social media environment made it easy and fun for the students to use such a tool to learn. According to statistics, college students spend about one hour and forty minutes per day on Facebook. Thus, as educators, we should meet those students where they are (Heiberger & Junco, 2010, p. 7). Moreover, 88 percent of the students in my research revealed that they spend up to five hours a day on social media, proving that those students are attached to the technology in their hands. This attachment creates familiarity with the medium itself. As a result of this familiarity, students started to enjoy the use of the social media in education because they live in it and deal with it most of the time. As a matter of fact, interviewee 1 stated during the interview that she liked the use of social media in education because she is familiar with it and, thus, she finds it easy to deal with, especially Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook. She considered social media as a member of her family because she uses it every day. She said:

Social media is close to us and it is easy to deal with, especially Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. We are used to them. They are much better than the other social mediums that are not too popular, and we don't like to use them [...] Twitter and Facebook are part of our life. I consider YouTube as one of my brothers. I deal with it 24 hours a day. That way we like social media.

Another student reported in the questionnaire “social media is a part of our daily life so why won’t we use it in our daily learning.” One can say that the generation we are talking about is a technology generation who is strongly attached to its technical devices because this generation considers the technology a tool of freedom. As a matter of fact, one of the students reported in the questionnaire that she likes social media as long she is free to express whatever comes into her mind. This sense of freedom is compatible with a report that was published on the BBC News. According to the report, Saudis have the highest amount of tweets around the world and that because the issue of the freedom of speech . The report asked why Twitter succeeded in Saudi Arabia. One of the Saudis answered, “because we are able to say what we couldn't say in real life. It's a breather from the suppression we live under, without fear” (BBC, 2014). So, in other words, one of the main reasons of using social media is the sense of freedom you get from expressing yourself.

Because the students are a technological generation, it is important for them to control the way they learn. Students in my research declared that one of the reasons they prefer social media as a learning tool is because they can learn in different ways. They reported in the questionnaire that one of social media’s benefits is that the students can learn in different ways. As a matter of fact, Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences theory states the following:

Individuals have very different kinds of intellectual strengths and these strengths are very important in how people learn and represent things in their minds and how do they use them... human are not the same, everything can be taught in

more than one way. (Howard Gardner interview, 2011)

Adding to that, Obari Alhusain, the editor of the New Education Journal, believes that new education technology helped in the spreading of the multiple intelligence theory, because now everybody can choose the technology that fits his/her ability (2014). As a matter of fact, interviewee 1 said that she likes learning via social media because everyone learns differently, and the student is free to choose the way he/she wants to show his/her understanding, whether it is by posting a YouTube video, a picture, or even an article. She also added that sometimes she enjoys watching a video clip because it is easy for her to remember. So, in other words, because every human is different, we need different ways to learn. In order to accomplish that, we need to use the technology in our hands to achieve our educational goal, which is to educate and reach the maximum number of students. That can be achieved, according to Obari, by using all the services that technology has in education (2014).

The other major benefit of social media is the interactive functions. Students reported that the most interesting part in social media is the ability to interact with others. Interviewee 3, for example, declared that the only advantage she sees in social media is peer communication. She stated, "We can meet new and old friends as well, we can get new information from each other." She also said, "Some students post information we did not know before." In other words, social media supported the interaction between the students and enabled them to communicate with each other and collaborate to build on each other's experience and knowledge. The combination of sharing, interaction, and collaboration resulted in a whole new interesting experience for those students. As a

matter of fact, Tasir, Al-Dheleai, Harun, and Shukor believe the following:

The collaborative and interactive learning environment that provided by social networking tools led to students' belief that these tools are the suitable tools for the contemporary learning environment in the university. Using social networking tools, student can share knowledge and exchange ideas with peers and teachers to enrich their knowledge and make more interactive learning environment. (2011, p. 74)

Social media gave the students the sense of controlling their learning process. As a matter of fact, one of the interviewees said that social media gave her the opportunity to check her mistakes by looking at her peers postings. Another student reported that she likes social media because she feels that she is free to write about whatever interests her, and her peers can discuss it with her. So, the sense of freedom and control attracted those students to social media. As a matter of fact, studies indicate that students like the feeling that they are responsible for their learning. They like to take control of what they learn. Tasir, Al-Dheleai, Harun, and Shukor said, "As a technology generation and because of their independent and dominant connection to the internet, students like to manage their learning environment, be a content producer, and like to be in regular interactivity with peers" (2011, p. 73). In other words, students like to play a bigger part in the educational process. They want to be producers, not only consumers.

As my study revealed, however, not all of the students liked social media as a learning tool. As a matter of fact, some of my study participants declared that they did not prefer social media in education. Their reasons will be discussed in the next section.

**5.3.2 Students who didn't prefer social media in education.** According to my findings, the main reason behind disliking social media in education was the technical problems students face. Many students reported that the poor internet connection was the major difficulty they had. As a matter of fact, and as I mentioned before, interviewee 3 stated that poor internet connection is the main reasons behind her dislike of social media. She said, "Sometimes a week or two passes without internet connection in my house, I live in an area that have a problem with internet connection most of the time and I don't have internet in my cellphone as well." She expressed her concern regarding submitting her assignments late and the fact that she was losing marks because of the internet problem. These technical problems can create frustrations for the students. As a matter of fact, the poor connection provided by the internet providers can frustrate the students and make them avoid using the internet technology. Actually, this was the main reason behind the negative social media perception for interviewee 3. She complained about the poor internet connection and how this problem affected her marks and stressed her. This problem led her to hate to deal with social media, not only in education, but also for entertainment. As a matter of fact, according to Andrew Njobvu, "slow Internet connections or older computers may make accessing course materials frustrating" (2010, p. 1). In short, internet problems can affect the students' learning motivation because frustration has a sociological impact on students' motivation to learn.

Along with the internet problems, students reported the difficulties they face as the first users of social media. In the questionnaire, students said that they found difficulties in using social media as a learning tool. They said that the need of instructor's

help is required. They need to be trained first on how to use it otherwise they will be lost and frustrated. As a matter of fact, the need of well-trained instructor is a necessity in e-learning classes. Researchers indicate that the lack of efficiency in the use of e-learning and the lack of the technological skills are two of the major issues that prevent or hinder the development of e-learning (Yaseen & Melhem, 2012). So, it is important to say that the role of e-learning instructors is to learn how to deal with technology in order to facilitate students' learning.

In the next section, students' recommendation regarding improving social media will be discussed.

### **5.4 Research Question 3**

What can be done to make social media a better tool for learning purposes? Students' suggestions regarding improving social media in education were varying. Some students suggested giving the option to the students to use or not to use social media. In other words, make it optional; moreover, students should also have the alternative if they choose not to use social media. This suggestion could be due to some of the technical and internet problems some students face. Other students suggest to use social media only in English classes to improve the students' language skills when they communicate with other students. The interaction with the others could improve the students' language skills.

Moreover, many students stated that they would use social media in the class discussion, homework, assignments, journals, and activities that require interaction with their peers. As a matter of fact, according to Lee Andrew Dunn, social media increases

students' motivation, engagement, collaboration, interaction, and information sharing (2013).

Students also suggested using only the popular and the well-known social mediums because they are familiar with them, and they get a sense of control if they knew what they are dealing with.

At the end, it is important to note that this is an exploratory study, further researches regarding overcoming the difficulties and challenges faced in e-learning in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia could be explored and conducted in the future.

### **5.5 Limitations of the Study**

The most significant limitation in this study was finding an instructor who was using all the three social mediums in the classroom; the study was limited to only one class and one instructor. This limitation resulted in a small sample of only one class. Only twenty-five students participated in the questionnaire and the interview sample was only three students. As a matter of fact, it was really hard to find students who would agree to participate in the interview. This was possibly due to the lack of acceptance of the interview idea in Saudi society, especially among females. Moreover, the fact that the interviewer was a stranger wanting to conduct an online interview could be one of the reasons for the lack of interest to participate in the interview.

Another limitation is that the only instructor who agreed to participate in this study was teaching an introductory course in literature offered by the department of European languages. This is an English course that was offered for the students in the



department of European languages who have good English skills. This linguistic factor could also affect the study findings. Moreover, this sample, with the advantage of English language skills, cannot represent the whole population, and the language challenges might not be identified in this sample.

In addition to that, and with only one instructor and one class, only one way of teaching and applying was investigated. It was, therefore, hard to compare more than one class and more than one instructor's techniques, and that could affect the study findings.

Moreover, this study could be limited to the fact that the instructor gave the students the option to choose their preferred social medium. As a result, there was a concentration on Twitter more than Facebook. This created unbalanced findings because the students evaluated Twitter more than Facebook and YouTube. This concentration on Twitter could be a major limitation. If the instructor arranged the class activities equally among the three main social mediums, then more accurate results may have been produced.

Finally, my concern as a researcher who is in another country while the course instructor was using the three mediums in her class, is that any difficulties between the course instructor and the students were absent from this study unless the students reported them. That, as far as I am concerned, may affect the accuracy of my research findings.

## **5.6 Recommendation for Future Studies**

Although we are not looking for generalization in this qualitative study, a good representing sample is required for future studies.

The sample for the present study comprised of twenty-five students fill out the questionnaire and only three students participated in the interview. This sample is only a very small proportion of the entire population of Saudi undergraduate female students. Therefore, a research study with a much larger sample size would be required to ensure appropriate generalization of the findings of the study. Moreover, a comparative study could explore the students' opinions and motivations more thoroughly, especially if two or more classes are compared, because that will give a good overall view of the study problem.

Because the area of e-learning is relatively new in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, intensive research is needed in this field of study. The following recommendations and research suggestions are derived from the study findings and limitations:

1. A comparative study between the communication among students in a traditional classroom and students in an e-learning environment.
2. The impact of social media on the learning outcomes of undergraduate female students in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
3. Identify difficulties that face e-learning in developing countries and find ways to reduce or eliminate these hindrances.
4. A comparative study between the educational outcomes of male and female students in e-learning classes.

## References

- Ajbaili, M. (2011). *Saudi Arabia opens largest women's university in the world*. *English.alarabiya.net*. Retrieved 3 April 2014, from <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/05/15/149218.html>
- Albahlal, M. (2012). *Communication and navigation are the main reasons behind the uses of the Internet in the Kingdom*. Retrieved 5 April 2014, from <http://www.alriyadh.com/746759>
- Ali, E. (2012). *Sudanese Centre for Scientific Research*. *Omerhago.blogspot.ca*. Retrieved 5 April 2014, from [http://omerhago.blogspot.ca/2012/07/blog-post\\_6174.html](http://omerhago.blogspot.ca/2012/07/blog-post_6174.html)
- Alkahtani, N. (2012). The impacts of social media and electronic mediating: Improving educational outcomes for Saudi women within an electronic social networking environment. *Research Commons*. Retrieved from <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/6327>
- Al-Naji, A. (2013, September 9). The successful experience of faculty members in the program of technical week. *al-jazeera*. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/2013/20130929/fe12.htm>
- Al-Rabai, A. (2013, September 18). Academy at the University of Taif forcing her students to send assignments via "Facebook". *Okaz Alyoum*. Retrieved from <http://www.okazalyoum.com/news/a/%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%A%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A9->

- %D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%81-  
%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%A8%D8%B1-  
%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7/
- Althemairy, A. (2013, February 22). Million users of social networks in Saudi Arabia without the benefit of learning. *Alegtisadiyah News*. Retrieved July 4, 2014, from [http://www.aleqt.com/2013/02/22/article\\_733633.html](http://www.aleqt.com/2013/02/22/article_733633.html)
- Alshahran, S. (2012). Open learning and distance education in the Arab world towards development and innovation. *Gulf University For Science And Technology*.
- Al Zumor, A., Al Refaai, I., Eddin, E., & Al-Rahman, F. (2013). EFL Students' Perceptions of a Blended Learning Environment: Advantages, Limitations and Suggestions for Improvement. *English Language Teaching*, 6(10), 95.
- Amnesty International. (2013, April 10). Saudi Arabia: 2013 promises to be a dark year for freedom of expression and of association. Retrieved from <http://www.amnesty.org/ar/library/asset/MDE23/015/2013/ar/0927befd-6d71-4044-99fb-f3d37cafc87d/mde230152013en.html>
- Anderson, P. (2007, February). What is Web 2.0? Ideas, technologies and implications for education. *JISC Technology and Standards Watch*. Retrieved from <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/techwatch/tsw0701b.pdf>
- An Exhaustive Study of Twitter Users Across the World - Social Media Analytics | Beevolve. (2012, October 10). *Social Media Analytics*. Retrieved September 4, 2014, from <http://www.beevolve.com/twitter-statistics/#a1>
- Arab Spring. (2015.).in *Marriam Webster Online*. Retrieved March 2, 2015, from [http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/arab spring](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/arab%20spring)

- BBC News. (n.d.). Why Twitter is so big in Saudi Arabia. *BBC News*. Retrieved September 4, 2014, from <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-25864558>
- Berge, Z., & Collins, M. (1995, April 1). Computer-Mediated communication and the online classroom in distance learning. *Computer-Mediated Communication Magazine* 2(4), 6. Retrieved from <http://www.december.com/cmc/mag/1995/apr/berge.html>
- Black, I. (2009, June 30) Saudia Arabia leads Arab regimes in internet censorship. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jun/30/internet-censorship-arab-regimes>
- Clark, R. (2002, September 10). Six principles of effective e-learning: What works and why. *Learning solution magazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.elearningguild.com/pdf/2/091002DES-H.pdf>
- Davis, K., Christodoulou, J., Seider, S., & Gardner, H. (2011). The theory of multiple intelligences. *The Cambridge Handbook Of Intelligence*, 485--503.
- Digital Arabia. (n.d.). Saudi Arabia. *Discover Digital Arabia*. Retrieved from <http://www.ddarabia.com/tag/saudi-arabia/>
- Does Online Education and Social Media Help Shy Students? - OnlineColleges.net. (n.d.). *OnlineCollegesnet*. Retrieved August 4, 2014, from <http://www.onlinecolleges.net/does-online-education-and-social-media-help-shy-students/>

- Dunn, L. (n.d.). Teaching In Higher Education: Can Social Media Enhance The Learning Experience??. *University of Glasgow*. Retrieved August 14, 2014, from [http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media\\_276225\\_en.pdf](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_276225_en.pdf)
- Educational System In Saudi Arabia. (2006, January). *The ministry of higher education, n.d*, 9-10. Retrieved April 4, 2013, from [http://www.sacm.org/Publications/58285\\_Edu\\_complete.pdf](http://www.sacm.org/Publications/58285_Edu_complete.pdf)
- Empowering Local Media Worldwide: "Saudi Arabia". (n.d.). *Interviews*. Retrieved from [www.internews.org/regions/mena/amr/saudi-arabia.pdf](http://www.internews.org/regions/mena/amr/saudi-arabia.pdf)
- Ertürk, Y. (2009). Report from the Human Rights Council, eleventh session, agenda item 3: *Report of the special rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*, from <http://daccessddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G09/128/22/PDF/G0912822.pdf?OpenElement>
- Fatany, S. (2012, July 28). The influence of Saudi social media. *Saudi Gazette*. Retrieved From <http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20120728131344>
- FEA-KAU. (2012). *The future of e-learning and distance education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*. *YouTube*. Retrieved 1 March 2014, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXB-sICJW9E>
- Gilman, L. (2001, January 1). Human Intelligence: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Retrieved March 2, 2015, from <http://www.intelltheory.com/mitheory.shtml>

- Grabowicz, P. (2014). *Web 2.0 and the Rise of Social Media | The Transition to Digital Journalism* | *kdmcBerkeley. Multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu*. Retrieved 7 July 2014, from <http://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/digital-transform/>
- Hamdan, A. (2005). Women and education in Saudi Arabia: Challenges and achievements. *International Education Journal*, 6(1), 42-64. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/61842790?accountid=14789>
- Hamoud, H. (2013). Social networking sites ... and ethical crises. *Alyaum.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.alyaum.com/News/art/83812.html>
- Hayes, C. (1998). *Beyond the American dream: Lifelong learning and the search for meaning in a postmodern world*. Wasilla: Autodidactic Press.
- Hewitt, J., & Scardamalia, M. (1998). Design principles for distributed knowledge building processes. *Educational Psychology Review*, 10(1), 75-96. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1022810231840>
- Heiberger, G. & Junco, R. (2011). Meet your students where they are: Social media. *NEA Higher Education Advocate*.
- Human Rights Watch. (n.d.). Saudi Arabia. *Human Rights Watch*. Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/re>
- Isabirye, A., & Dlodlo, N. (2014). Perceived Inhibitors of Innovative E-Learning Teaching Practice at a South African University of Technology. *Mediterranean Journal Of Social Sciences*, 5(4), 390.
- Johnson, T., & Vriens, L. (2013, January 9). Islam: Governing under Sharia. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from [www.cfr.org/religion/islam-governing-under-sharia/p8034](http://www.cfr.org/religion/islam-governing-under-sharia/p8034)

- Kassens-Noor, E. (2012). Twitter as a teaching practice to enhance active and informal learning in higher education: The case of sustainable tweets. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 13(1), 9-21. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/968112735?accountid=14789>
- Khalaf-Allah, M. (2013, March 1). Social networking sites. *Official website for Dr. Mohammed Jaber KhalafAllah*. Retrieved March 4, 2014, from <http://kenanaonline.com/users/azhar-gaper/posts/512902>
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology methods & techniques* (2nd rev. ed.). New Delhi: New Age International (P) Ltd..
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (n.d.). Jean Lave, Etienne Wenger and communities of practice. *infed.org*. Retrieved July 1, 2014, from <http://infed.org/mobi/jean-lave-etienne-wenger-and-communities-of-practice/>
- Martínez, Alemán, A. M., & Wartman, K. L. (2009). *Online social networking oncampus: Understanding what matters in student culture*. NY: Routledge/ Francis Taylor Group.
- Masmah, E. (2011, August 19). The main use of the Internet in Saudi Arabia is focused on social purposes. *Alriyadh News*. Retrieved September 4, 2014, from <http://www.alriyadh.com/671155>
- Mawhiba. (2011). Speech of Dr. Howard Gardner about multiple intelligences). *YouTube*. Retrieved February 2, 2014, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XS3nXtgSm34>



Messieh, N. (2012). *Arabic Overtakes English on Facebook in the Middle East. The Next Web*. Retrieved 2 May 2014, from <http://thenextweb.com/me/2012/05/30/arabic-overtakes-english-as-the-most-popular-language-on-facebook-in-the-middle-east/>

McDowall, A. (n.d.). Saudi media bypass stricter rules after Arab Spring. Retrieved from <http://in.mobile.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idINIndia59470720110921?irpc=984>

Ministry of Higher Education, (n.d.). King Abdullah scholarship program. *Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission*. Retrieved from <http://www.sacm.org/ArabicSACM/pdf/edu>

Ministry of Higher Education, (n.d.). King Abdullah scholarships program. *Ministry of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.mohe.gov.sa/en/studyaboard/king-abdulla-hstages/pages/default.aspx>.

Njobvu, A. (n.d.). Advantages and Disadvantages of e Learning. *Academia.edu*. Retrieved August 4, 2014, from [http://www.academia.edu/4052785/Advantages\\_and\\_Disadvantages\\_of\\_e\\_Learning](http://www.academia.edu/4052785/Advantages_and_Disadvantages_of_e_Learning)

Nyandaa, Z. (2012). Challenges and Opportunities of Technology Based Instruction in Open and Distance Learning: A Comparative Study of Tanzania and China. *Faculty of Education, The Open University of Tanzania*, 5, 130-145. Retrieved March 6, 2014, from <http://www.ubuntunet.net/sites/default/files/nyandaraz.pdf>

- Obari, A. (2014, June 19). Theory of multiple intelligences and technology education, any relationship?. *New Education*. Retrieved August 24, 2014, from <http://www.new-educ.com/les-tices-au-service-des-intelligences-multiples#.VAYDJ4BdXv0>
- Pew Research Center. (2014). *Social Networking Fact Sheet*. Pew Research Center's *Internet & American Life Project*. Retrieved 5 April 2014, from <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/>
- Radcliffe, D. (2013). *BBC - Blogs - College of Journalism - Rise and rise of Arabic on Facebook in Middle East*. *Bbc.co.uk*. Retrieved 7 December 2013, from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/blogcollegeofjournalism/posts/Rise-and-rise-of-Arabic-on-Facebook-in-Middle-East>
- Rosen, D., & Nelson, C. (2008). Web 2.0: A new generation of learners and education. *Computers in the Schools*, 25(3), 15. Retrieved from
- Samin, N. (2008). Dynamics of internet use: Saudi youth, religious minorities and tribal communities. *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* (p. 3).
- Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission to the U.S.A. (2006). Educational system in Saudi Arabia 2006. Retrieved from [http://www.sacm.org/Publications/58285\\_Edu\\_complete.pdf](http://www.sacm.org/Publications/58285_Edu_complete.pdf)
- Scardamalia, M., & Bereiter, C. (1994). Computer Support For Knowledge-Building Communities. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 3(3), 265-283.
- Schools. (2011, December 6). *YouTube for schools: Join the global classroom today* [video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NegRGfGYOwQ>

- SEG. (2008, September). Understanding multimedia learning: Integrating multimedia in the K-12 classroom. Retrieved from [s4.brainpop.com/new\\_common\\_images/files/76/76426\\_BrainPOP\\_White\\_Paper-20090426.pdf](http://s4.brainpop.com/new_common_images/files/76/76426_BrainPOP_White_Paper-20090426.pdf)
- Shabrg, S. (2012). A Quantum Leap to the Concept of Communication and Information in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Okaz*. Retrieved December 16, 2014, from <http://www.okaz.com.sa/new/issues/20121208/C>
- Skelton, A. (2012). *Social Demographics: Who's Using Today's Biggest Networks [INFOGRAPHIC]*. *Mashable*. Retrieved 1 August 2014, from <http://mashable.com/2012/03/09/social-media-demographics/>
- Smith, S. D. (2012). *Improving student employee training: A study of web 2.0 social media tools as a delivery model* (Order No. 3518060). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: Social Sciences. (1033213453). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1033213453?accountid=14789>
- Social Media. (2014). In *Oxford Dictionaries Online. Social media: definition of social media in Oxford dictionary (British & World English)*. Retrieved 3 January 2014, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/social-media>
- Social Media. (2014.). In *Webster Online*. Retrieved December 13, 2014, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media>
- Social Media Use by Age Group Over Time. (n.d.). *Pew Research Centers Internet American Life Project RSS*. Retrieved September 3, 2014, from <http://www.pewinternet.org/data-trend/social-media/social-media-use-by-age-group/>

- Social Media in Education. (2012). *Does Online Education and Social Media Help Shy Students? - OnlineColleges.net. OnlineColleges.net.* Retrieved 5 February 2014, from <http://www.onlinecolleges.net/does-online-education-and-social-media-help-shy-students/>
- Su, S. (2010). *Facebook's Top Ten Languages, and Who is Using Them - Inside Facebook. Inside Facebook.* Retrieved 1 April 2014, from <http://www.insidefacebook.com/2010/05/24/facebooks-top-ten-languages-and-who-is-using-them/>
- Sun, P., Tsai, R., Finger, G., Chen, Y., & Yeh, D. (2008). What Drives A Successful E-Learning? An Empirical Investigation Of The Critical Factors Influencing Learner Satisfaction. *Computers & Education, 50*(4), 1183-1202.
- Tasir, Z., AL-Dheleai, Y., Harun, J., & Shukor, N. (n.d.). Student's Perception towards the Use of Social Networking as an e-Learning Platform in. *Academia.edu.* Retrieved May 3, 2014, from [https://www.academia.edu/3036032/Students\\_Perception\\_towards\\_the\\_Use\\_of\\_Social\\_Networking\\_as\\_an\\_e-Learning\\_Platform\\_in](https://www.academia.edu/3036032/Students_Perception_towards_the_Use_of_Social_Networking_as_an_e-Learning_Platform_in)
- The Education News. (2012). *Distance education suffers from the problems of slow Internet. Saudied.com.* Retrieved 5 February 2014, from <http://saudied.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D9%8A%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%83%D9%84-%D8%A8%D8%B7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%AA/>

- The Social Clinic. (2012). *The State of Social Media in Saudi Arabia 2012*. (2012). *The Social Clinic RSS*. Retrieved August 4, 2014, from <http://www.thesocialclinic.com/the-state-of-social-media-in-saudi-arabia-2012-2/>
- The Social Clinic. (2013). *The State of Social Media in Saudi Arabia 2013*. *The Social Clinic*. Retrieved 9 May 2014, from <http://www.thesocialclinic.com/the-state-of-social-media-in-saudi-arabia-2013/>
- Times of India. (2012, December 14). 59% high school girls in Saudi Arabia use Facebook: Report - Times Of India. *Featured Articles From The Times Of India*. Retrieved from [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-12-14/social-media/35818927\\_1\\_high-school-girls-social-network-saudi-arabia](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-12-14/social-media/35818927_1_high-school-girls-social-network-saudi-arabia)
- Umm AlQuraa University. Obstacles to e-learning. (n.d.). *Umm Al Qura University*. Retrieved June 7, 2014, from <http://uqu.edu.sa/page/ar/97111>
- Väljataga, T., & Fiedler, S. (2009). Supporting students to self-direct intentional learning projects with social media. *Educational Technology & Society*, 12 (3), 5869.
- Veenema, S., & Gardner, H. (n.d.). Multimedia and Multiple Intelligences. *The American Prospect*. Retrieved February 8, 2014, from <http://prospect.org/article/multimedia-and-multiple-intelligences>
- Wenger, E. (2012). *Community of Practice: A Brief Introduction*. Retrieved 3 July 2014, from <http://wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/06-Brief-introduction-to-communities-of-practice.pdf>
- Wegerif, R. (1998). The social dimension of asynchronous learning networks. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 2(1), 34-49.

- Woodley, C., & Meredith, C. (2012). Supporting student transition through social media. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 26(2), 86-95. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1023529032?accountid=1478>
- Yaseen, B., & Melhem, M. (2014). Impediments to the use of e-learning faced by teachers in the Educational Directorate of the first Irbid. *The Palestinian Journal For Long Distance Learning*, 5(3).
- Zhang, Z., & Kenny, R. (2010). Learning in an online distance education course: Experiences of three international students. *The International Review Of Research In Open And Distance Learning*, 11(1), 17--36.

## APENDEX A: Consent form and information letter

### Social Media

#### Information Letter

##### LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Title of Study:** How undergraduate female Students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia perceive social media as a learning tool: An exploratory study

**The population:** Saudi female students from the first year of the undergraduate program in the King Abdul-Aziz University.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Alaa Kutbi from Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher: Alaa Kutbi, Mon- Fri from 6-10pm in Saudi Arabia local time, cell: +0966504639065, email: kutbi@uwindsor.ca or research supervisor Dr. Zuochen Zhang, email: zuochen@uwindsor.ca

##### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine how Saudi female undergraduate students perceive the social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as a learning tool. Moreover, The research investigates reasons behind their responses and the difficulties they may experience.

##### PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

**Questionnaire**

- You will receive an email with the questionnaire link.
- You are going to open the questionnaire link.
- Read the information letter.
- If you decided to participate press "Next" button.
- You are going to answer about 20 questions.
- By filling out the e-questionnaire you are consenting to participate
- Please do NOT write your name on it.
- After you finish filling it out, press the "Done" button to submit the questionnaire.

##### POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are NOT any potential risks and discomforts since your identification is confidential

##### POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

With the rapid rise of social media awareness amongst the youth and their engagement in public affairs, it is important to exploit this interest and awareness to improve our educational system. This study aims to examine if the Saudi female students are interested in using social media in the educational context and their reasons. The outcome of this study will assist us in building a solid educational method that suits the Saudi culture.

This study aims to improve the educational system in Saudi Arabia and this will have a great impact on students' learning and outcome.

##### PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

The subject will NOT receive payment.

##### CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

## Social Media

This study will remain between Alisa (researcher) and her advisor Dr. Zuoqien Zhang. Please note that the on-line survey is hosted by "Survey Monkey" which is a web survey company located in the USA. All responses to the survey will be stored and accessed on servers located in the USA. This company is subject to U.S. laws, in particular, to the U.S. Patriot Act that allows authorities access to the records of Internet service providers. If you choose to participate in the survey you understand that your responses to the questions will be stored and accessed in the USA. The security and privacy policy for Survey Monkey can be viewed at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/> "

### PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. If you choose to withdraw you have the option of removing your data from the study.

If you want to print this page, please go to File->Print



## Social Media

### Information Letter

#### FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

If the participants want to know the results of the study, they can contact me by phone or email, which I will provide in the information letter and the consent form.

Otherwise they can find my research in the university library after it is published.

Web address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date when results are available: 2014/7/1

#### SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

This data will not be used in subsequent studies.

#### RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty.

This research has received REB clearance. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3546; e-mail: [ethics@uwindsor.ca](mailto:ethics@uwindsor.ca)

#### SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

If you want to print this page, please go to File>Print

#### \* 1. Do you agree to the consent information listed on this form?

- Yes, I agree to the above consent form.

- No, I don't agree to the above consent form.

## Social Media

\*2. Your ages:

\*3. Are you familiar with using social media before this course?

- YES
- NO

\*4. Have you ever had an account in one or more of the following mediums?

- Facebook
- YouTube
- Twitter

\*5. How often do you use social media?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

\*6. In a typical day, about how many hours do you spend in using (YouTube-Facebook-Twitter)?

- 0-2
- 3-5
- 6-8
- More than 8

\*7. Usually, for what purpose do you use social media?

- Entertainment
- Communication
- Shopping
- Education
- Other

## Social Media

**\*8. Have you ever used social media for educational purposes in one of your university courses before?**

- Yes  
 No

**\*9. In this class, which medium did you use the most? Why?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*10. Does your teacher grade your social media activities?**

- Yes  
 No  
 Sometimes

**\*11. Does your teacher supervise your online activities?**

- Yes  
 No  
 Sometimes

**\*12. If your teacher supervises your online activities, can you explain how?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*13. Are these activities collaborative, one-sided or mix of both?**

- Collaborative  
 One-sided  
 Mix of both

**\*14. According to your own experience:**

**What are the difficulties of using social media as learning methods?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*15. What are the benefits from using social media as a learning tool?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*16. Which medium of the following, did you prefer as a learning tool?**

- Facebook  
 YouTube  
 Twitter

## Social Media

\*17. Do you prefer using social media in learning? Why?

---

\*18. If you become a teacher, how are you going to use social media in your class?

Explain.

---

\*19. Did you ever use one of these or any other mediums in other classes?

If you did, name the mediums please.

---

\*20. how do you describe your overall experience in this class using social media?

- Extremely Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Fair
- Unsatisfied
- Extremely Unsatisfied

## Social Media

### Recruitment Letter

#### INVITATION

Dear Students:

Aiaz Kutbi from the Faculty of Education, University of Windsor, is conducting a research study titled "How undergraduate female Students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia perceive social media as a learning tool: An exploratory study" This study aims to determine how Saudi female undergraduate students perceive the social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as a learning tool. Moreover, The research investigates reasons behind their responses and the difficulties they may experience.

We are looking for volunteers to participate in an telephone interview. If you would like to participate, please contact Aiaz Kutbi by email: [kutbi@uwindsor.ca](mailto:kutbi@uwindsor.ca). Thanks.

Sincerely,  
Aiaz Kutbi  
Faculty of Education  
University of Windsor

**Interview**

**Information Letter and Consent Form**

**LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

Title of Study: How undergraduate female Students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia perceive social media as a learning tool: An exploratory study  
 The population: Saudi female students from the first year of the undergraduate program in the King Abdul-Aziz University

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Alaa Kutbi from Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher: Alaa Kutbi, Mon- Fri from 6-10pm in Saudi Arabia local time, cell: +0966504638065, email: kutbi@uwindsor.ca or research supervisor Dr. Zuochen Zhang, email: zuochen@uwindsor.ca

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to determine how Saudi female undergraduate students perceive the social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as a learning tool. Moreover, The research investigates reasons behind their responses and the difficulties they may experience.

**PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

**Interview**

- Participate in an interview with Alaa
- If you agree to participate, you will need to read the information letter and the consent forms and agree to participate.
- In the interview, Alaa will read you the purpose, duration, time, and questions type of the interview.
- You will be interviewed for 30-45 min.
- Alaa will ask about 10 simple questions.
- The interview will be recorded owing to documentation matter.
- You are free to decline to answer any question.
- Your identity will remain confidential and will not appear in the research.

**POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are NOT any potential risks and discomforts since your identification is confidential

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

With the rapid rise of social media awareness amongst the youth and their engagement in public affairs, it is important to exploit this interest and awareness to improve our educational system. This study aim to examine if the Saudi female students are interested in using social media in the educational context and their reasons. If we know the result of this study we will be able to build a solid educational method that suit the Saudi culture. This study aim to improve the education system in Saudi Arabia and as a result of this improvement the students' learning ability and outcome in turn will improve.

**PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

The subject will NOT receive payment.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

## Interview

This study will remain between Alaa (researcher) and her advisor Dr. Zuo Chen Zhang. As you know the interview will be recorded. Only Alaa and Dr. Zuo Chen Zhang have the access to the recording. You have the right to review/edit the recording, and it will be erased after a year of the interview.

### PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. If you choose to withdraw you have the option of removing your data from the study.

If you want to print this page, please go to File>Print

## Interview

### Information Letter

#### FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE SUBJECTS

If the participants want to know the study result they can contact me by phone or email, which I will provide in the information letter and the consent form.

Otherwise they can find my research in the university library after it is published.

Web address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date when results are available: 2014/7/1

#### SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

This data will not be used in subsequent studies.

#### RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty.

This research has received REB clearance. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: [ethics@uwindsor.ca](mailto:ethics@uwindsor.ca)

#### SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

If you want to print this page, please go to File>Print.

**\*1. Do you agree to the consent information listed on this form?**

Yes, I agree to the above consent form.

No, I don't agree to the above consent form.



## APENDEX E: Consent for audio taping

**Interview****CONSENT FOR AUDIO TAPING****CONSENT FOR AUDIO TAPING**

Research Subject Name:

Title of the Project: How undergraduate female Students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia perceive social media as a learning tool: An exploratory study

I consent to the audio-taping of interviews.

I understand these are voluntary procedures and that I am free to withdraw at any time by requesting that the taping be stopped. I also understand that my name will not be revealed to anyone and that taping will be kept confidential. Tapes are filed by number only and stored in a locked cabinet.

The destruction of the audiotapes will be completed after transcription and verification.

I understand that confidentiality will be respected and that the audiotape will be for professional use only.

**1. Do you agree to the consent information listed on this form?**

- Yes, I agree to the above consent form.
- No, I don't agree to the above consent form.

## APENDEX F: Interview questions

### **Interview Questions**

1. Can you describe how did you use social media in this class?
2. How did you find your classmates interaction with the use of social media in that class?
3. What are the difficulties in doing your assignment via social media?
4. (Social- Technical)
5. Do you believe that this method consume or save your time?
6. In your opinion, how can we overcome these difficulties?
7. What about the advantages of this method?
8. Do you recommend this method in other classes? Please explain your reasons.
9. Do you prefer different learning method or using different medium? Elaborate.
10. Finally, what can you say about your experience in using social media as a learning tool?

Thank you for your participation in this interview.

## VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Alaa Kutbi

PLACE OF BIRTH: Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1982

EDUCATION: King Abdul Aziz University, B.Sc., Faculty of Home Economy, Child Studies, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 2004  
University of Windsor, MED, Faculty of Education and Academic Development, Windsor, ON, 2015