Assessment of the Impact of Social Media on Arab Youth

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ABSTRACT

Few studies have examined the impact of social media from the perspective of young Arab people. This study examines how university students in Saudi Arabia and Egypt perceive the effects of social media in three domains: psychological functioning; cultural values and thought processes; and morality and politics. Data collected through a questionnaire were gathered from a sample of 200 university students enrolled in both practical and theoretical university programs in both countries; more specifically, the sample was comprised of 100 female and 100 male students from six universities in Saudi Arabia (100 students) and Egypt (100 students). Students opinions are evenly divided about whether they believe that social media leads to negative outcomes for psychological functioning and culture/thought. In terms of morality and politics, Saudi youth believe that there are more negative outcomes than do Egyptian youth, and female Egyptian students believe that there are more negative moral and political outcomes than do their male counterparts. The implications of this study highlight the need for further analysis of the impact of social media on university students perceptions and actions.

Introduction

Social media, which involves interactions among people using computer technologies to form and communicate within online communities, is spearheading a new era of the Internet, one in which information and communication technologies play new roles in facilitating organized human undertakings (Parameswaran & Whinston, 2007). Nevertheless, very little is known about the impact of social media on university students in general and on Arab university students in

particular. Few studies have been published that describe the effects of social media on youth from their own perspectives. This study explores how a subset of university students in Saudi Arabia and Egypt perceive the influence of social media (and in particular the influence of Facebook and Twitter, which are the most frequently used social media platforms among Saudi and Egyptian youth), both on themselves and on others, in three broad domains: psychological functioning; cultural values and thought processes; and morality and politics.

The importance of this study stems from the fact that social media is becoming more effective and more influential than traditional media (Newman, 2011). It has proven to be a vehicle for change that facilitates the formation of groups for networking, gathering to protest, and supporting issues on the national and international levels. Karolak (2013) noted that "The series of recent uprisings in the Middle East is often referred to as a Facebook Revolution due to the role of social media in gathering supporters, organizing the movement, and coordinating widespread protests" (p. 168). Because of the openness, accessibility and low cost of this form of communication, the major platforms have emerged as powerful forums for free expression in the Arab world. Moreover, because of the unrestricted ability to publish, send and receive uncensored data, social media has become a vehicle for youth to make their voices heard and their feelings and perspectives noticed. Toivo (2012) has suggested that the influence that this affords is part of the advancement of communication technology itself.

In conservative and autocratic Arab states, social media offers a context for free and open communication; nevertheless, there is still a need to examine in an in-depth manner the potential for the major platforms to increase freedom of expression and foster political renewal. Youth are the vanguard of change, and social media is affecting their social and cultural values (Mahmoud, 2011).

Over the last few years, the use of social media has increased significantly in the Arab world, particularly in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Almost 41% of Arab Facebook users are located in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the UAE. This high level of interest has made Arabic the fastest growing language on Facebook. Given the growing availability of Internet services and the rapid development of other computer and communication technologies, the

number of users is expected to continue to increase rapidly over the coming years. The Arab Social Media Report (ASMR) (2012), an online series produced by the Dubai School of Governments Governance and Innovation Program, is one of the research reports indicating that Facebook registered an increase of 10 million Arab users between June 2012 and June 2013. According to statistics from September 2011 and March 2012, Saudi Arabia and Egypt were among the top five countries in terms of the sizes of their respective Twitter populations on a per capita basis. Moreover, in March 2013, Arab Twitter users generated 3,336 million tweets (ASMR, 2012).

Facebook is currently the largest and most ubiquitous social networking platform on the Internet. Launched in 2004, Facebook has since expanded significantly. The company opened its international headquarters in 2008, with an active user base of 100 million members; by December 2011, the company boasted a user base of 845 million, with more than 75% of these users residing outside the United States. Facebook users can create personal, group and event pages, can post photos, videos and text entries to other pages, can chat with other users in real time, can exchange private messages, and can share longer notes with other users (Dewey et al., 2012: 14).

Twitter, which was launched in 2006, is a popular social networking and microblogging service that can be used to send and receive text-based posts of up to 140 characters, known informally as "tweets." As with Facebook, Twitter use has also expanded rapidly (AlAgha, 2009). For example, Dewey et al. (2012) noted that, as of August 2011, Twitter users were generating a total of over 200 million tweets per day, up from 65 million per day the year before (p. 14). According to Mahmoud (2011), Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, the UAE and Lebanon were the five most prolific Twitter users among Arab countries. In March 2012, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, the UAE and Bahrain collectively generated 88% of the tweets emanating from Arab countries. Worldwide, the number of Arabic tweets sent in March 2012 was almost double the number sent in English - 62.1% versus 32.6% respectively (Mahmoud, 2012). The large number of visitors using the Arabic interface confirms the rise of Arab users on these two platforms.

The Arab Social Media Report (2012) made note of several important trends that highlight the surge in social media use across the

Arab world. First, it noted a steep rise in total Facebook users in the Arab world, from 37,390,837 in January 2012 to 45,194,452 in June 2012, which represents an increase of about 50% relative to the same time during the previous year (29,845,871 at the end of June 2011). Additionally, as of May 2013 the number of Facebook users was reported at 54,552,875, and youth between the ages of 15 and 29 continued to comprise about 70% of Facebook users in the Arab region, a percentage that had been maintained since April 2011 (ASMR, 2014).

With 2.4 million users per day, Egypt has the largest number of Facebook users in the Arab world (ASMR, 2014). Egypts April 6 Youth Movement - a movement expressing political discontent that was formed entirely online and is operated primarily through Facebook - gained sufficient momentum in 2008 to attract 71,000 supporters. Moreover, the fact that one quarter of all Facebook users in the Arab region are Egyptian (with 1.6 million new Egyptian Facebook users having joined between January and June 2012) suggests a very high level of interest in social media among Egyptian youth.

The situation is similar in Saudi Arabia where the fourth most visited website is Facebook, according to statistics collected by Alexa Internet, Inc. (2014), a company that specializes in collecting and providing commercial web-traffic data. Gulf countries dominate the top five Arab Facebook users as percentages of their respective populations. Saudi Arabia led this group with 830,291 Twitter users in 2012. In fact, media reports indicated that Saudi Arabia sent the most tweets per capita in the world in December 2013 (ASMR, 2014).

Given the widespread use and explosion of interest in social media, the current study aims at exploring how university students in Saudi Arabia and Egypt perceive the influences of social media participation on their own psychological functioning; on broader cultural values; and on morality and politics.

Literature Review

Although a number of studies have conceptualized the Internet as an information repository and the members of "Generation Y" as knowledge recipients, only a few studies have emphasized the role of youth as knowledge producers (Greenhow, 2010). In a recent study, AlMalki (2012) demonstrated how young female Saudi students at King

Saud University used social media to engage in dialogue about a range of issues. Her study revealed that a majority of students were using Twitter as a medium for dialogue and as a forum for exchanging knowledge. In another study on youth and social media, Sooryamoorthy (2011) argued that "Young people have important roles to play in stimulating public debate on critical issues, and maintaining freedom of expression and political ideology. In recent years, socio-economic conditions affecting the already marginalized and vulnerable status of young people have changed significantly, particularly for those in developing countries" (p. 607).

A recent study by AlKafaranah (2012) surveyed 250 students at Albalqaa Applied Science University in Amman, Jordan in regard to the effects of the Internet on students intellectual functioning. The study showed that the Internet raises significant issues for students in terms of culture, thought, morality and politics, but that the risk of negative effects on the psychological aspects of their lives is only moderate. The prolific use of social media by university students - which because of widespread Internet access has become part of their daily routine - seems to contradict previous literature, which suggested a high prevalence of poor reading skills and poor social skills, as well as a lack of focus on goals.

Various international studies reporting both positive and negative outcomes have addressed the effects of social media on youth. Carr (2008, 2010) found that Internet use reduces the kind of deep thinking that leads to true creativity. He also argued that the prevalence of hyperlinks and overstimulation characteristic of social media means that the brain must give most of its attention to making short-term decisions. Pinker (2010), on the other hand, argued that the Internet makes people smarter. He claimed that "far from making us stupid, these technologies are the only things that will keep us smart" (p. 20).

Small and Vorgan (2009) noted a positive effect of social media use in that young people are more likely to follow news updates and discuss the news, thus making them more aware of, and more involved in, social issues than otherwise. In 2010, Carr conducted a five-year study on users activity levels (i.e., engagement in social media) and found that "the current explosion of digital technology not only is changing the

way we live and communicate, but is rapidly and profoundly altering our brains'' (p. 12). Greenhow (2010) found that social media, when used by young people in certain contexts, enables new forms of inquiry, communication, collaboration and knowledge development, and can have both positive and negative cognitive, social and emotional impacts. Morozov (2012) observed that this technology has a negative impact on individual privacy, and that social networking can potentially be harmful to peoples ability to focus and work effectively. In particular, Miller (2012) asked ''whether todays students increasing reliance on technology had helped them become better informed about their government'' (p. 13).

The literature has revealed the broad impact of social media on different aspects of young peoples lives. For instance, social media helped move the Arab region toward social and political change before, during and after the ''Arab Spring,'' the term used to refer to the political upheavals in the Middle East that began in December 2010. This research study will help address the gap in the literature concerning the perspectives of youth in the Arab region with respect to social media and concerning its influence on the ways in which they think and feel.

Research Problem

Over the last five years, Arab youth in many Arab countries have engaged heavily in social media activity by participating in forums and thus empowering themselves in various ways. However, little has been documented about the impact of this social media engagement, specifically in terms of three domains: psychological functioning; cultural values and thought processes; and morality and politics. This study therefore addresses two main questions:

1 - How does social media affect the perceptions of university students in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, particularly with regard to their psychological functioning, cultural values, thought processes, moral behaviours and politics?

2 - Do university students perceptions about the effects of social media differ depending on their country of origin, age, gender or areas of study?

Variables Defined:

- "Youth" refers to college and university students from 18 to 30 years of age.
- "Social media"refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. The focus of this study is on Facebook and Twitter.
- "University students"refers to students enrolled in a university or college in Saudi Arabia and Egypt in the 2013 academic year.

Methodology and Procedure

The methodology used in this study was based on the collection and descriptive analysis of survey data, specifically with the objective of examining how university students in Saudi Arabia and Egypt perceive the influences of social media on their own psychological functioning, broader cultural values, and morality and politics.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study was composed of university students located in two Arab countries, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The sample consisted of 100 female and 100 male students in Saudi Arabia and Egypt in the disciplines of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, interior design (categorized as practical colleges); and education, science, and law (categorized as theoretical colleges). A convenient sampling approach was used in this descriptive study. The data were gathered from a sample of students enrolled in both practical and theoretical colleges in both countries. All of the participants had active Twitter and Facebook accounts.

Although each age group had almost equal numbers of students, there was a significant difference in age between the two countries. In Saudi Arabia, 34% of the students were between 17 and 23 years old, and 66% were older than 23, whereas in Egypt the percentages were almost the inverse: 70% were in the younger age group and 30% were in the older age group (see Table 1). This difference was statistically significant ($x2 = 25.96$, $p < .01$).

Table 1
Participants Age Group and Country of Origin

Age	Country		Total		χ^2	ρ
	Saudi Arabia	Egypt				
17-23	34	70	104	52%	25.96	< 0.01
23 +	66	30	96	48%		
Total	100	100	200	100%		

There was no difference between the two countries percentages of students according to gender (χ^2 = 1.66, ρ > 0.05). The overall proportion of females was 57.5% (with 31% of the sample being composed of women located in Saudi Arabia and with 26.5% of the sample being composed of women located in Egypt), and the overall proportion of males was 42.5% (with 19% of the sample being composed of men located in Saudi Arabia and with 23.5% of the sample being composed of men located in Egypt).

There was no significant difference between the two countries with regard to the percentages of students by institution type ($\chi^2 = 1.28$, $\rho > 0.05$). The overall proportion of students attending practical institutions was 49% (22.5% in Saudi Arabia and 26.5% in Egypt), and the overall proportion of students attending theoretical institutions was 51% (27.5% in Saudi Arabia and 23.5% in Egypt).

Survey Instrument

A questionnaire, based on a precedent used by AlKafaranah (2012) at Albalqaa University in Jordan, was used to measure students perceptions of social media. While the instrument was used by Al Kafaranah (2012) to measure the perceptions of youth towards the Internet (with a specific focus on three domains, namely psychological effects, culture and thought, and morality and politics), the researchers in this study modified the questionnaire and used it to measure the effects of social media on psychology (six items), culture and thought (seven items), and morality and politics (12 items) (see Appendix A).

In regard to the reliability of the scale used in this study, an exploratory factor analysis based on the maximum likelihood method was used to assess how well the questionnaire items aligned with the study questions and to analyze the interrelationships among the variables in order to identify and understand their common underlying domains (called factors). The results indicated that the three-factor solution had a reasonably good fit to the data, with the exception of one item from the psychological domain and two items from the morality/politics domain. Two items related to culture/thought had appreciable cross-loadings on the morality/politics domain; and one item related to the culture/thought domain should probably be discarded because it had a low loading on that factor (.318) and a cross-loading on morality/politics. The three-factor model explained 37% of the total variance. Bartletts test of sphericity had a chi-square value of 1442.981 and a df of 300 ($\rho < 0.001$), while the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index was.733 (see Appendix B).

Table 2
Scores Representing Average Positions on Each of the Subscales and on the Total Scale of Student Perceptions of the Three Studied Domains

Domain	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral position	Agree	Strongly agree
Psychological	6	12	18	24	30
Culture/thought	7	14	21	28	35
Morality/politics	12	24	36	48	60
Total	25	50	75	100	125

Data from the present study yielded Cronbach alpha values for the psychological, culture/thought and morality/politics subscales, and for the total scale[s?] of.69,.62,.71 and.81 respectively. These numbers indicate medium to high reliability of the instrument that was used to collect the data. To answer the research questions, the data were analyzed by means of a chi-square test and independent sample t-tests utilizing the Software Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Procedure

Teaching assistants volunteered to distribute hard copies of the questionnaire and to collect them from participants on university campuses in Saudi Arabia and Egypt over a period of three months during the summer of 2013. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each question on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The midpoint could be regarded as indicating a respondents neutrality about the item, or an unwillingness to commit to a position of either disagreement or agreement. Items for each subscale were added to form their respective totals, and these totals were added to produce a global score. In all cases, higher scores indicated a more negative view of the effects of social media. Participants demographic information (age, gender and program of study) was collected as well.

Results

The first research question asked if social media has an effect on the university students perceptions, particularly with regard to their psychological functioning, cultural values, thought processes, moral behaviours and politics. In order to obtain a general sense of how Saudi and Egyptian university students view social media, the mean scores on each of the subscales and on the total scale for the total sample were calculated; the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Scores on the Three Subscales and on the Total Scale for the Total Sample of Students Perceptions of the Three Studied Domains (n = 200, midpoint = 75)

Domain	Mean	SD
Psychological	19.0	4.3
Culture/thought	22.6	4.8
Morality/politics	41.5	7.2
Total	83.1	16.3

The results show that the participants had mean scores that were quite close to the midpoints for the psychological and culture/thought domains, but that there were also quite large standard deviations. This suggests that opinions varied across these two domains but were approximately evenly divided throughout most of the sample, despite the fact that a number of participants could have been either neutral or unwilling to commit to either agreement or disagreement. A slightly different picture emerged regarding the morality/politics domain, where the average score of 41.5 moved more noticeably toward the "agree" position (i.e., away from 36 toward 48), thus indicating some general movement toward agreement with the proposition that social media has negative effects on morality and politics. The large standard deviation, however, indicates that opinions varied in regard to this domain, as they had varied in regard to the other two. Finally, as might be expected, in overall terms the students perceptions were closer to the midpoint (75) than to the "agree" position (100). In summary, the participants perceived social media to have slightly more negative than positive consequences.

Differences Based on Country of Origin, Age, Gender and Type of Institution

Having established that the respondents showed some variety in their levels of agreement/disagreement regarding the perceived effects of social media, the researchers proceeded to explore the possibility of variation in the data based on demographic differences among the participants, as well as based on differences between the two countries. Table 4 presents the mean scores on the three subscales and on the total scale for the Saudi Arabian and Egyptian students respectively, along with the associated standard deviations and results of independent sample t-tests (see analyses for each university and college institution in each country separately in Appendix C). Although students from the two countries scored similarly on the psychological and culture/thought domains, the Saudi students viewed the effect of social media on the morality/politics domain more negatively than did the Egyptian students, and this significant difference was largely reflected in the total

Table 4
Average Scores on the Three Subscales and on the Total Scale of Student Perceptions of the Three Studied Domains According to Country of Origin (n = 200, midpoint = 75)

Domain	Saudi Arabia (n = 100)	Egypt (n = 100)	*t* value	ρ
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Psychological	19.4 ± 4.2	18.7 ± 4.3	1.16	> 0.05
Culture/thought	23.2 ± 4.6	22.0 ± 4.9	1.72	> 0.05
Morality/politics	43.1 ± 7.2	39.9 ± 6.7	3.21	< 0.001
Total	85.7 ± 12.4	80.6 ± 13.1	2.80	< 0.01

Table 5 presents the mean scores on the three subscales and on the total scale for the younger and older students separately, regardless of institution type, gender and country of origin. The data show that there were no significant differences between the two age groups on any of the three subscales or on the total scale.

Table 5
Average Scores on the Three Subscales and on the Total Scale of Student Perceptions of the Three Studied Domains According to Age Group (n = 200, midpoint = 75)

Domain	Ages 17-23 (n = 104)	Age 23+ (n = 96)	*t* value	ρ
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Psychological	19.16 ± 4.26	18.8 ± 4.25	0.496	> 0.05
Culture/thought	22.42 ± 4.80	22.77 ± 4.80	0.511	> 0.05
Morality/politics	40.76 ± 6.91	42.3 ± 7.38	1.547	> 0.05
Total	82.3 ± 12.74	83.9 ± 13.27	0.877	> 0.05

When the two age groups were compared only within the sample of Saudi students, there were no significant differences between them on

any of the three subscales or on the total scale. Similarly, when the two age groups were compared only within the sample of Egyptian students, there were no differences between them on any of the three subscales or on the total scale.

Table 6 presents the average scores on the three subscales and on the total scale for the male and female students separately, regardless of institution type, age group and country of origin. Male and female students from both countries scored similarly on the psychological and culture/thought domains. However, the female students evaluated the effect of social media on the morality/politics domain more negatively than did the male students, and this significant difference was reflected in the total scale scores.

Table 6
Average Scores on the Three Subscales and on the Total Scale of Student Perceptions of the Three Studied Domains According to Gender (n = 200, midpoint = 75)

Domain	Males (n = 85)	Females (n = 115)	*t* value	ρ
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Psychological	18.49 ± 4.16	19.40 ± 4.29	1.508	> 0.05
Culture/thought	22.03 ± 4.92	23.00 ± 4.67	1.410	> 0.05
Morality/politics	39.22 ± 6.68	43.2 ± 7.06	4.076	< 0.01
Total	79.75 ± 12.21	85.62 ± 13.03	3.206	< 0.01

When the males and females were compared only within the sample of Saudi students, there were no differences between them on any of the three subscales or on the total scale. However, when the males were compared with the females only within the sample of Egyptian students, the female students evaluated the effect of social media on the morality/politics domain more negatively than did the male students, and this significant difference was reflected in the total scale scores (see Table 7).

Table 7
Average Scores on the Three Subscales and on the Total Scale of Student Perceptions of the Three Studied Domains According to Gender among Egyptian Students (n = 100, midpoint = 75)

Domain	Male (n = 47)	Female (n = 53)	*t* value	ρ
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Psychological	18.10 ± 4.04	19.16 ± 4.48	1.238	> 0.05
Culture/thought	21.10 ± 5.4	22.81 ± 4.3	1.740	> 0.05
Morality/politics	37.38 ± 7.15	42.18 ± 5.60	3.760	< 0.001
Total	76.5 ± 14.07	84.16 ± 11.19	2.994	< 0.01

Table 8 presents the average scores on the three subscales and on the total scale for students attending practical and theoretical institutions separately, regardless of gender, age group and country of origin. There were no significant differences between students from the practical and theoretical institutions on any of the three subscales or on the total scale. Furthermore, when Saudi students from both types of institution were compared, there were no significant differences between them. Similarly, there were no significant differences between Egyptian students based on the type of institution that they attended.

Table 8
Average Scores on the Three Subscales and on the Total Scale of Student Perceptions of the Three Studied Domains According to Institution Attended (n = 200, midpoint = 75)

Domain	Practical (n = 98)	Theoretical (n = 102)	*t* value	ρ
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD		
Psychological	18.8 ± 4.2	19.2 ± 4.3	0.630	> 0.05
Culture/thought	22.4 ± 4.8	22.7 ± 4.8	0.525	> 0.05
Morality/politics	41.1 ± 7.34	41.9 ± 7.0	0.887	> 0.05
Total	82.2 ± 13.9	83.9 ± 12.1	0.889	> 0.05

Discussion

Social media appears to affect youth in multiple ways. OKeeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) observed that "because of their limited capacity for self-regulation and susceptibility to peer pressure, youth are at some risk as they navigate and experiment with social media" (p. 1). This finding seems to be consistent with the results of this study in which the majority ofparticipants indicated that social media has negative effects on their morality and politics.

The results highlighted the fact that the participants perceived that their social media involvement had a negative impact on them from a moral and political standpoint. The initial reading indicated that the culture/thought domain was not systematically affected, but that the moral/political domain was systematically affected. For instance, in one month in 2009 during the flooding of the port city of Jeddah, 45,000 Saudi youth offered to provide help through a Facebook page. Furthermore, "Several political movements in Egypt, for instance, were orchestrated via Facebook, including several political uprisings" (Harb, 2011, p. 3), which is a powerful reflection of the level of youth interest in the political aspects of social media in the Arab world.

Indeed, Al Kafaranah (2012) indicated that students use the Internet extensively to discuss and debate various issues, and suggested that social media moves youth into a different arena of communication, perhaps one that needs more self-regulation and self-scrutiny. This present study found that youth in Saudi Arabia and Egypt did not strongly agree that their political perceptions had changed, which is the opposite of the finding in the Dewey et al. (2012) report that "social media was a useful but not necessary tool for mobilizing protest activity during the Arab Spring" (p. 8). The results of the present study also indicated that female Egyptian students were more in agreement regarding some of the issues than their male counterparts, and that this might be related to the fact that women tend to be more inhibited and to perceive social media as having more potential for freeing their voice; however, this result might also be related to other factors. Golbeck, Robles and Turner (2012) indicated that women were more inclined toward being agreeable on social media. In this regard, it seems that Saudi Arabia female students more strongly agreed with some of the

items than did the Egyptian female students in reference to moral and political aspects, which is a finding that can largely be attributed to Egypts greater cultural openness.

Conclusions

This study was conducted with the objective of examining university students perceptions of the effects of social media in three domains: psychological functioning; cultural values and thought processes; and morality and politics. The results showed that university students perceived that the use of social media has a negative effect on the moral and political domain, but not on the culture/thought domain. The results also showed that female youth in the particularly conservative society of Saudi Arabia had engaged in Twitter discussions related to a range of controversial issues. The effects of social media on various aspects of young peoples lives have been well documented in the literature, particularly in the Arab world, where social media had a significant impact on the emergence and progress of the Arab Spring in 2011, a conclusion that is corroborated by this study. This impact of social media on youth in the Arab region was the main impetus for conducting this research study, specifically in an effort to better understand how youth in two major Arab countries perceive the changes brought about by this new technology.

Implications and Recommendations

It is expected that by 2017 the number of Arabs who will be online will exceed 100 million (Ghannam, 2011). This rapidly increasing number of Arab users highlights the need for more research to understand and explore the effects of social media on university students.

This research would be strengthened through the use of in-depth interviews conducted with a random sample of Saudi Arabian and Egyptian youth. In-depth analysis of youth participation in social media is needed in order to understand the level of impact that this technology is having on their perceptions and worldviews.

Future research in this area would also benefit from moving beyond statistical exploration to working with focus groups and unpacking the similarities and differences between the thoughts and perceptions of

Saudi Arabian and Egyptian youth. Another possibility would involve moving toward sample content analysis of Twitter exchanges and Facebook posts. Thus, an important area for future exploration is to acquire a better understanding of the impact of social media development and growth in the Arab region.

Limitations

Timing - especially given the upheaval in Egypt during the summer of 2013 - is an important dimension that was not considered in this study but that affects the types of issues with which youth become engaged. Except for the one positive domain of culture/thought, another limitation was the methodologys lack of capacity for capturing opinions about any positive outcomes that might be associated with social media.

تقييم أثر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على الشباب العربي

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الملخص

عدد يسير من الدراسات بحثت في تأثير شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي من وجهة نظر طلاب الجامعات. هذه الدراسة تسلط الضوء على تصورات ٢٠٠ طالب وطالبة في كل من مصر والمملكة العربية السعودية عن تأثير شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي على ثلاثة مجالات: التأثير النفسي، التأثير الثقافي والفكري، و التأثير الأخلاقي والسياسي. آراء الطلاب انقسمت بشكل متساو حيث يعتقدون أن شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي لها تأثير سلبي على الجانب النفسي والثقافي الفكري أما فيما يخص الجانب السياسي والأخلاقي فإن الشباب السعودي يعتقدون أن هناك نتائج سلبية أكثر من تلك التي يراها الشباب المصري. و الإناث من المصريين يعتقدن أن هناك آثاراً سلبية على الجانب الأخلاقي والسياسي أكثر من اعتقاد أقرانهم من الذكور. نتائج هذه الدراسة تؤكد على أن هناك حاجة لمزيد من الدراسات حول تأثير شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي على تصورات شباب الجامعات.

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Appendix A
Survey Questions

Psychological Effects

1 - Overuse of social networks leads to addiction and reduced social interaction.

2 - The use of social media leads to psychological disorders (aggression, anxiety, depression, etc.).

3 - The use of social networks leads to a greater prevalence of social alienation among individuals.

4 - Social networking makes a negative contribution to the formulation of its users personality, beliefs, values, concepts and views about the various aspects of life.

5 - The use of social networks promotes violence.

6 - The use of social networks leads to excessive admiration of others, and consequently undermines self-confidence.

Effects on Culture and Thought

1 - Social networking is a gateway for the cultural invasion of the nation.

2 - The indiscriminate dissemination of knowledge through social networking leads to a lack of objectivity and proper scientific evaluation.

3 - Social networks cause, or contribute to, a clash of cultures between peoples.

4 - The use of social networking leads to the reshaping of local cultures, and the altering of a persons mind in accordance with imported values.

5 - Although social networks make access to knowledge easier, they also promote laziness and curtail creativity.

6 - The use of social networking has negative effects on the human personality, beliefs, values, concepts and views of various aspects of life.

Effects on Morality and Politics

1 - The use of social networking leads to the emergence of ethnic and sectarian divisions and of nationalism in the community.

2 - The use of social networking affects the younger generations habits and values by increasing exposure to the West and Western ideas.

3 - The use of social networking undermines the foundations of the nations culture.

4 - The use of social networking deepens the political divide between nations.

5 - The use of social networking accelerates the transformation of political systems.

6 - The use of social networking leads to the promotion of consumer-marketing values that are contrary to our values, ethics and habits.

7 - Social networking is a tool to disseminate child pornography and other forms of corruption in our country.

8 - The use of social networking is leading to the loss of the nations identity in light of the strong publicity (i.e., advertising) that is promoted through informatics tools.

9 - The use of social networking leads to increased levels of complexity in terms of political relations and economic and social development.

10 - The use of social networking leads to the promotion of values, habits and norms that collide with Islamic ethics.

Appendix B
Factor Analysis Results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartletts Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.733
Bartletts Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1442.981
	df	300
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

Com-ponent	Initial Eigen Values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.287	21.147	21.147	5.287	21.147	21.147	3.558	14.232	14.232
2	2.118	8.472	29.619	2.118	8.472	29.619	3.249	12.998	27.230
3	1.893	7.572	37.191	1.893	7.572	37.191	2.490	9.961	37.191
4	1.634	6.538	43.728						
5	1.491	5.964	49.692						
6	1.308	5.231	54.923						
7	1.071	4.282	59.205						
8	1.056	4.223	63.428						
9	1.008	4.031	67.459						
10	.845	3.380	70.840						
11	.765	3.061	73.900						
12	.730	2.920	76.820						
13	.678	2.711	79.531						

Cont/ Total Variance Explained

Com-ponent	Initial Eigen Values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
14	.649	2.597	82.127						
15	.600	2.399	84.527						
16	.553	2.213	86.740						
17	.500	2.001	88.741						
18	.463	1.853	90.594						
19	.446	1.785	92.379						
20	.390	1.561	93.940						
21	.372	1.490	95.430						
22	.344	1.376	96.806						
23	.314	1.258	98.064						
24	.266	1.066	99.130						
25	.218	.870	100.000						

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood Method

Rotated Component Matrixa

	Component		
	1	2	3
z3	.694		
z2	.645		.282
z7	.584		
z12	.582		z10
.556	.221		
z4	.490		

cpnt/ Rotated Component Matrixa

	Component		
	1	**2**	**3**
z8	.451	.243	.237
z1	.436		.352
z9	.431	.237	
z6	.415		.265
s3		.665	
z5	.249	.639	
s6		.601	
z11	.340	.589	
s1		.584	
s7		.495	.210
s2	.361	.478	
q1		.414	
s4	.389	.407	-.230-
s5	.204	.318	
q5			.724
q6	.296		.643
q2		.352	.612
q4			.595
q3		.228	.490

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood Method
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Appendix C

Average Scores on the Three Subscales and on the Total Scale of Student Perceptions of the Three Studied Domains According to Country of Origin for Each Institution (n = 200, midpoint = 75)

			Saudi Arabia (N = 100)			Egypt (N = 100)			Total		
			n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD
Practical institutions	Psychology	Medicine	10	20.50	3.56	11	18.73	3.22	21	19.57	3.43
		Dentistry	12	18.58	4.72	16	18.63	5.05	28	18.61	4.83
		Pharmacy	12	18.82	4.17	14	18.79	3.70	26	18.85	3.84
		Int. design	11	20.09	4.18	12	16.83	4.69	23	18.39	4.66
		Total	45	19.47	4.14	53	18.28	4.25	98	18.82	4.22
	Thought and Culture	Medicine	10	22.00	3.62	11	20.54	4.96	21	21.24	4.33
		Dentistry	12	22.33	4.11	16	22.75	6.07	28	22.57	5.23
		Pharmacy	12	21.42	4.52	14	24.64	4.27	26	23.15	4.60
		Int. design	11	23.91	3.56	12	21.08	5.79	23	22.43	4.96
		Total	45	22.40	3.97	53	22.42	5.44	98	22.40	4.79
	Moral and Political	Medicine	10	40.90	7.81	11	36.91	8.93	21	38.81	8.46
		Dentistry	12	41.91	8.52	16	40.25	6.22	28	40.96	7.20
		Pharmacy	12	41.67	6.98	14	40.36	6.27	26	40.96	6.51
		Int. design	11	45.82	5.34	12	41.08	8.15	23	43.35	7.21
		Total	45	42.58	7.27	53	39.77	7.26	98	41.06	7.37

			Saudi Arabia (N = 100)			Egypt (N = 100)			Total		
			n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD
	Total	Medicine	10	83.40	13.36	11	76.18	15.09	21	79.62	14.42
		Dentistry	12	82.83	14.15	16	81.62	15.72	28	82.14	14.80
		Pharmacy	12	82.00	13.31	14	83.78	12.84	26	82.96	12.83
		Int. design	11	89.82	10.73	12	79.00	15.03	23	84.17	13.99
		Total	45	84.44	12.92	53	80.47	14.55	98	82.30	13.90
Theoretical institutions	Psychology	Education	17	19.24	4.32	16	17.44	5.51	33	18.36	4.94
		Law	19	20.21	4.26	16	19.25	3.47	35	19.77	3.89
		Science	19	18.42	4.32	15	20.73	3.26	34	19.44	4.01
		Total	55	19.29	4.29	47	19.11	4.35	102	19.21	4.30
	Thought and Culture	Education	17	24.12	6.15	16	21.19	4.85	33	22.30	5.67
		Law	19	23.53	5.46	16	21.50	3.76	35	22.60	4.80
		Science	19	23.79	3.37	15	22.00	4.55	34	23.00	3.97
		Total	55	23.80	5.00	47	21.55	4.32	102	22.76	4.81
	Moral and Political	Education	17	43.76	7.42	16	40.56	7.03	33	42.21	7.30
		Law	19	42.58	7.90	16	39.88	6.12	35	41.34	7.17
		Science	19	44.32	6.53	15	39.87	6.03	34	42.35	6.61
		Total	55	43.55	7.21	47	40.11	6.29	102	41.96	6.98
	Total	Education	17	87.12	13.05	16	79.19	13.61	33	83.27	13.71
		Law	19	80.32	13.75	16	80.63	9.63	35	83.71	12.21
		Science	19	86.52	9.68	15	82.60	11.26	34	84.79	10.42
		Total	55	86.63	12.03	47	80.77	11.45	102	83.93	12.08