

**A SURVEY OF SOCIAL MEDIA USERS IN SAUDI ARABIA TO EXPLORE
THE ROLES, MOTIVATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS TOWARD USING
SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PURPOSES**

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ABSTRACT

Abdulaziz B. Alothman

A SURVEY OF SOCIAL MEDIA USERS IN SAUDI ARABIA TO EXPLORE THE ROLES, MOTIVATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS TOWARD USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PURPOSES

In Saudi Arabia, the use of social media has increased civic awareness and youth interest in public issues. Thus, this study was to explore the perception of social media and the role these tools play in the social lives and political environment in Saudi Arabia through diffusion of innovation theory and uses and gratifications theory. In April 2013, this research surveyed a sample of 1,361 Saudis about their use of social media for social and political purposes. As result, this study found that Saudis appeared to constantly use social media for political and social purposes with high motivation of information seeking. Respondents indicated social media platforms, especially Twitter, connect them with others on the basis of social issues and common political interests. They, however, do not use it to recruit people to take an action against the government even on issues that are personally important. Even with some pessimists, participants expect that social media will encourage social movements and help to improve the society and the government.

DEDICATION

To my mother,

A great woman and lovely mother:

You always encouraged me to achieve my goals and follow my dreams.

Well, I am almost there.

Rest in peace

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First and foremost, I admit this research would not have been accomplished without my family's endless support and help. All thanks to my precious father, my lovely wife, and my dear sister and brothers for their encouragement and understanding throughout the duration of my studies.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The nature of mass communication, in general, requires close reflection of and constant adjustment to social changes to keep the audience informed. People in all societies make use of information acquired from others to make decisions about practical aspects of daily life. In modern times, people of different backgrounds live in close proximity to each other, but with extensive differences based on ethnicity, race, education, income, religion, and other characteristics.

The media today can play a key role in the advancement of nations and the progress of peoples to achieve their goals. This role became more active and has stronger influence in the areas of social relations, economics, and humanity in general. The media, therefore, can create a high standard that goes directly to humanitarian principles and creates a power of knowledge. U.S. President Gerald Ford in the seventies drew attention to the growing influence and impact of media as a new player in political life. He said, “The TV is a new machine by which the process of persuading the American people.” (Ancu & Cozma, 2009). In fact, we cannot ignore the social impact of the media as a means to achieve social transformation.

Over the past decade, scientists have examined how these new forms of communication could revolutionize the way people interact with their governments (Bimber, 1998; Gates, 2000; Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Ali, 2011; Howard, 2011; Samuel, 2011; Shirky,

2011). They expect that new media forms will be used to compel authoritarian governments to be more responsive to the wishes of its inhabitants. The new forms of media (such as mobile phones, blogs, and new social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) turned into tools used by a large proportion of the world's youth for change especially in the countries of dictatorship like Egypt, Iran, and others, too.

As an example of the tremendous growth and reach of social media, Demay (2011) gave a brief history of three most popular social media sites: Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. He wrote,

“Facebook was launched on February 4, 2004, from a Harvard University dorm room and has since grown into one of the most influential companies in the world. The breadth of Facebook is staggering. It has over 500 million active users, 50 percent of whom log on daily. Users send approximately four billion messages per day via Facebook Messages and upload more than three billion photos per month. YouTube, an online video community founded in February 2005, has more than two billion videos viewed and hundreds of thousands of videos uploaded per day. And Twitter, a social networking and microblog-ging site founded in March 2006, has approximately 200 million registered accounts, and 110 million "tweets" per day” (Demay, 2011, p. 55).

The story of the use of social media in developing nations so far is one of individual empowerment. Social media not only connect deprived nations to the outside world, but provides the power to shape the Internet in a way that is relevant to peoples' lives, the power to organize in scale, and the power to speak (Ali, 2011). These features make incredible social media tools that could be embraced by anyone with an eye towards development. Arab

Social Media Report (2011) argues, “The past two years has seen social media being used in a wide variety of ways in the Middle East, whether to rally people around social causes and political campaigns, boost citizen journalism and civic participation, create a forum for debate and interaction between governments and their communities, or to enhance innovation and collaboration within government.” (p. 1). In fact, social media is making it easier for the powerless to collaborate, coordinate, and give voice to their concerns which can change the traditional relationship between political authority and the people (Gladwell, 2010).

In Saudi Arabia, recently, there has been a lot of attention about the role of social media in promoting freedom and political reforms to develop the kingdom. Therefore, Saudis have adopted social media tools to express their opinion toward social issues especially when it comes as reaction to government decisions. Many YouTube shows created by young people in Saudi Arabia have been established to discuss society’s contentious issues that cannot be shown on the traditional media which are controlled by the government. It is somewhat normal now to see many aggressive comments on Twitter against the government that were not possible ten years before. Saudis have experienced a great jump in the internal and external communication aspects after the adoption of social media.

Thus, this study seeks to examine people’s perception of using social media in Saudi Arabia and the role these tools play in social issues and political development. How has social media stimulated Saudis to become more involved in public? What are the substantial issues that Saudis discuss in social media? What is the primary use of social media toward social and political issues in the country?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media as a tool of change

Social network websites are sites “that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p 211). In social media networks, information is usually shared through comments on posts or photos. Other communication apparatus accessible to users may include instant messaging, e-mail, sharing applications, groupings, and games among others (Ancu & Cozma, 2009). Social media, according to Valente (2010), would lead to focus on creating communications that generate greater interpersonal communication within networks and provide people with the tools needed to have these conversations.

Over the last ten years, the Middle East has experienced considerable growth in technology among the developing nations (Howard, 2011). Studies have revealed that Facebook users in the Middle East increased by more than three times from around 16 million users in January 2010 to approximately 45 million in June 2012 (see Figure 1). The young people account for around 75% of these users (Ali, 2011). In fact, Samuels (2011) explained how social media promote a decentralized social structure, when he said, “People with different backgrounds and interests link together over a shared set of demands. These

bottoms-up social movements begin without a set agenda or organizational hierarchy; instead, new media social movements combine technology with spontaneity, offering a new way of interacting with the world” (p. 32). Therefore, youth, in politically authoritarian states, have been fashioning Facebook into a vibrant and inclusive public square (Herrera, 2011).

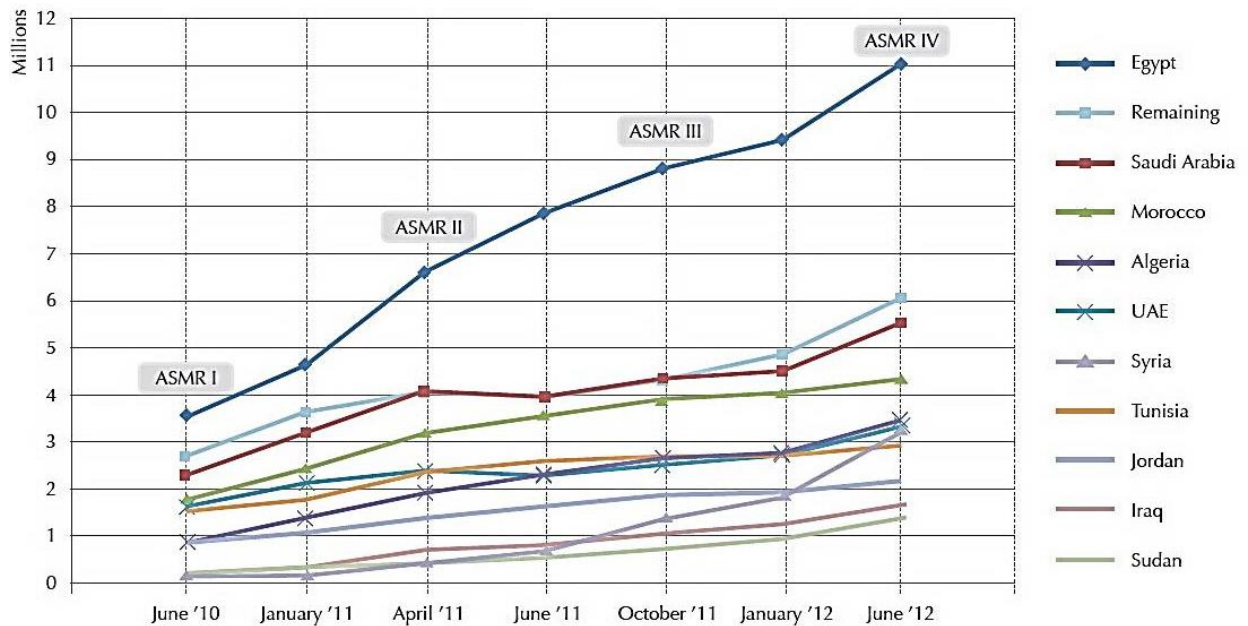


FIGURE 1: Number of Facebook Users in the Arab Region between June 2010 and June 2012 (Arab Social Media Report, 2012).

Recent protest movements, including the Arab Spring in 2011, a movement against fundamentalist vigilantes in India in 2009, the beef protests in South Korea in 2008, and protests against education laws in Chile in 2006, have used social media not as a replacement for real-world action but as a way to coordinate it and probably will be used of all future political movements (Shirky, 2011). Moreover, “the rapid adoption of social media applications like Facebook, Twitter, and others has thrust a set of issues upon society not previously encountered” (Cain, Scott & Smith, 2010, p. 1636).

In Arab spring, for example, Egyptian's various groups used social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter, to spread revolutionary messages. Prior to the first day of protest, 85,000 Egyptians pledged on Facebook to attend "Revolution Day" (Ali, 2011). Movement like "April 6" had over 90,000 Facebook fans, and, similarly, "We All Are Khaled Said" a fan page in Facebook had over 40,000 members. In the two weeks leading up to and including the first few days of the protest, Egyptians created 32,000 Facebook groups and 14,000 Facebook pages (Fowler, 2011). It is likely that a substantial number of the five million Facebook users in Egypt were in some way encouraged to attend the protests.

Twitter, on the other hand, has also revolutionized the manner in which information is shared in the region as well as the region's outlook on the rest of the globe. Deen Freelon gathered a massive database of around 6 million tweets touching on Arab countries that experienced protests, such as Tunisia, Yemen, Morocco, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, and Algeria. The analysis revealed that Twitter was instrumental in spreading breaking news, such as resignation of Mubarak, supporters of Muammar al-Qaddafi, or outset of protests (Hounshell, 2011).

Researchers have identified that social literacy is closely related with political freedom (Shirky, 2011). According to Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld (1948), mass media cannot change the general population's mind, but is attained through a two-step process. The first step involves transmission of opinions by the media. This is followed by the reaction from friends, colleagues, and family members. During this second stage, political opinions are formed. Social media can make a difference in this second stage in which a well-informed society can contribute to pushing for a given opinion. Just like the print media, Internet distributes both media production and media consumption (Shirky, 2011).

Other researchers have also conducted various studies with the aim of establishing the interrelation between Facebook use and political and public participation in regard to social capital theory (Ellison, Steinfield & Lampe, 2007; Valenzuela, Park & Kee, 2008). Facebook is characterized by its ability to sign up members and spread messages with much ease. This Facebook feature has allowed people to share information as well as form online groups that boost interaction among the people. These groups also can be used to share political opinions. In addition, these civic or political groups can be instrumental in accessing information that may not be accessible elsewhere. Therefore, people in such groups can access additional opportunities to undertake political activities (Valenzuela, Park & Kee, 2008). The participation of Facebook Groups users can be predicted by assessing their information needs. Park, Kee, and Valenzuela (2009) concluded that “Facebook Groups users’ political engagement is positively and significantly predicted by Facebook Groups use for gathering information about events, socializing, and self-status seeking” (p. 731). In a study of the impact of social networks on Japanese political participation by Ikeda and Richey (2005), results found that Japanese political behavior is fruitful to determine the influence of network capital on political participation and social networking does increase participation.

Do people have trust in social media? It is imperative to analyze people’s trust in social media, which can be used to analyze its extent of stimulating social change. “The first thing that is crippling the traditional approach to social change is the discovery that citizens are really angry about the system, and they understand what's wrong with it.” (Gates, 2000, p.111). According to Richters and Peixoto (2011), trust is “the measure of belief that a given entity will act as one expects” (p. 1). It is often associated with positive, desirable attributes,

but it may not always be the case. Trust can be instrumental in guiding human beings to make important decisions, especially when additional direct information is not available. Generally, people's trust is influenced by heuristic arbitrary factors as there is no formal agreement on evaluation of trust. Some analysts have identified that the general population is likely to trust information from the social media. According to a study by Scott, Smith, and Cain (2010), a substantial number of participants, around 89 per cent affirmed that information contained in online platforms was reliable. This reveals that the social media can be instrumental in bringing change in a society as people have trust on this mode of communication. In addition, social media has some aspects that make it eye-catching for many users.

According to Ali (2011), three components of social media are responsible for its massive following. To start with, social media does not target a given market. This implies that the information contained in social media platforms has not been fashioned to suit the interests of any entity. The other component that makes social media attractive is that it is user-friendly in that even people with basic technology skills can use it. The third factor as identified by Ali is that the popular social media platforms, such as YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook are available free of charge. This implies even people of low incomes can still employ these platforms, which can facilitate social change.

The relation between social change and mass communication theories

Emerging technologies have augmented the relationship between the Internet and politics. Social media has incorporated new technologies to link people and sites (Samuels, 2011). Consequently, an assortment of associations is established through the Internet, and

such structures are instrumental as they interact beyond race, gender, and traditional barriers. The diverse environments in which young people grow up in allow cultural exchange as well as smooth flow of communication with minimized entry barriers. Samuels (2011) concluded, “The decentralized nature of new media technologies also makes it hard for one group to control and dominate the social conversation” (p. 34).

Diffusion of innovation theory describes how social change occurs. Diffusion is the "process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" (Rogers, 2003, p. 5). Cultural anthropologists distinguish the significance of the dissemination of innovation. Such anthropologists have revealed that cultural changes will always occur after a new tool, belief, or ideas are incorporated into a people’s way of life. Such new factors may originate from within the society or adopted from external cultures (DeFleur, 2010). In his book *Diffusion of Innovations*, Everett Rogers (1962) suggests a total of five categories of adopters to standardize the usage of adopter categories in diffusion research. These categories of adopters are: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards which follows an S curve when plotted over time (see Figure 2).

According to Rogers (1962), the initial people to adopt an innovation are the innovators. This group is composed of young people who are very social, and are risk takers with a strong desire to invent. Such young people keep in touch with other innovators as well scientific sources that can assist them attain their goals. The innovators are followed by early adopters who are highly interested in issues affecting the society and are very vocal on issues of leadership. The third group with high propensity to adopt innovations is the early majority. These individuals adopt innovation after a lengthy time, and have a relatively slower pace in

innovation adoption. The late majority come in fourth in the adoption process. People in this group will adopt an innovation after a considerable part of the society has already adopted it. The laggards form the last group to adopt an innovation. People in this group are likely to be advanced in age, and usually have an aversion for change agents in the society. In addition, people in laggards group are determined to hold on to their traditions (Rogers, 1983).

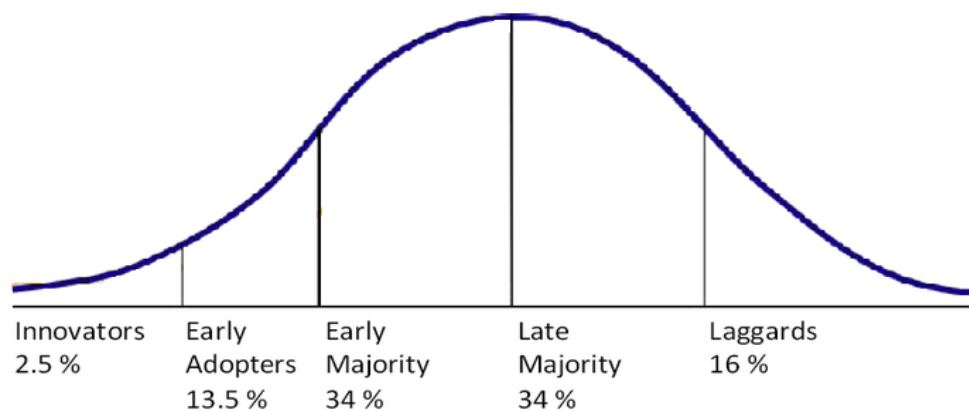


FIGURE 2: The diffusion of innovations according to Rogers (1962, 1983).

The benefits of social media in bringing change can be assessed in comparison to traditional media. The agenda setting of the traditional media may hinder the society from accessing some news. Consequently, the free flow of information is hampered, which leads people to search alternative ways of accessing information. Social media has provided people with an opportunity to access and share information with minimal limitations (DeFleur, 2010). For example, the length of time spent on the Internet by the Egyptians increased considerably during the national protests. Egyptians spent approximately 1,800 minutes during the revolution from around 900 minutes before the revolution (Reuters, 2011). The

traditional media would not have supplied the Egyptians with essential information regarding the revolution. Similarly, people are currently relying on the social media to obtain news that cannot be accessed easily through the traditional media.

The approach of uses and gratifications has been scrutinized as undeviating effects theory that focuses on what people do with social media, and not what change the media can have on people's lives (Katz, 1959). The view of researchers is that the general population is engaged in search of social media in an effort to satisfy some of their needs. "A change from earlier assumptions that audience members were an undifferentiated mass that passively receive media messages" (Kaya & Johnson, 2002, p.55). According to McLeod and Becker (1981), the use and gratifications approach has five basic assumptions, (a) the audience is active, (b) media use is goal-oriented, (c) media consumption fulfills a wide range of needs, (d) people have enough self-awareness to know and articulate their reasons for using the media, (e) gratifications have their origins in media content, exposure, and the social content in which the exposure takes place.

Despite the fact the uses and gratifications approach has been useful in examining various aspects of mass media, the same approach could be employed to scrutinize social media and Internet among other contemporary means of communication. "The Internet has been hailed as a tool to reinvigorate the democratic process by creating a new electronic public square that allows citizens to directly connect with each other and to contact government officials" (Kaya & Johnson, 2002, p.55). Therefore, several studies have examined what motivate individuals to use the internet for political information.

The Internet, however, satisfies exceptional needs for political reasons. To start with, the Internet has been widely used for surveillance purposes, which has a political angle

(Kaya & Johnson, 2002). In the United States, political news audiences via the Internet enlarged from about 30 million in 2000 to approximately 62 million in 2004. During the 2008 primaries, this audience augmented to around 120 million, which accounts for around 40% of the United States populations (see Figure 3) (Pew, 2004, 2008; Ancu & Cozma, 2009). Secondly, the Internet has been useful for people in search of some specific information that cannot be availed by other traditional media. Thirdly, the Internet has been used by people to gather information to arm them with appropriate information to discuss with other people. Finally, the Internet can be instrumental in entertainment for amusement and relaxation purposes (Kaya & Johnson, 2002).

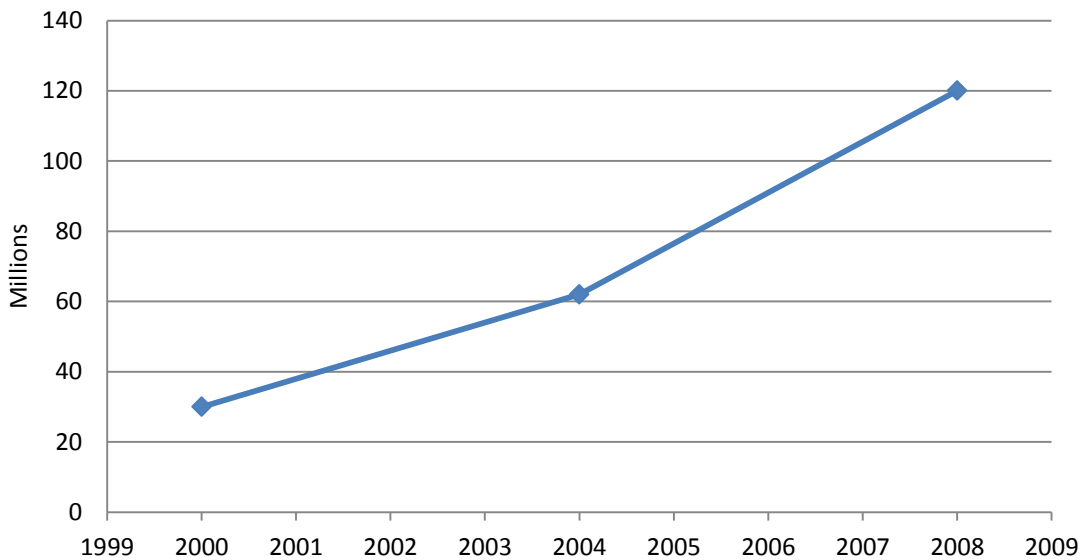


FIGURE 3: The audience for political news in U.S. (Pew, 2004, 2008; Ancu & Cozma, 2009).

The role of social media in Saudi Arabia

Back in the 90s, Saudi's satellite television was in its infancy and state censorship was pervasive. Fandy (2005) explained the industry of media in Saudi Arabia,

“As a general rule, the minister of culture and information made it his business to shape the content of all kind of media by enforcing harsh laws. Nevertheless, the explosion of media voices in the region (in the form of social media) has complicated his traditional control over content. Not only must the regime monitor the messages of a mushrooming media scene, it must now gauge its effect on an expanding population of a predominantly poor, illiterate youth” (Fandy, 2005, p. 11).

From the discussion above, it is evident that technology has revolutionized the culture of the people. Social media has made the world a small village as well as crushed the religious, political, and social taboos. In addition, social media has assisted communities in various parts of the globe to adopt changes to be in line with the international community. Many young Saudis are slowly expressing their dissatisfaction with their country's outdated institutions. For instance, their education system promotes rote learning as opposed to critical thinking. In addition, their intolerant religion has been a source of concern as well as the country's lagging behind economically as compared to their neighbors (Molavi, 2006).

In Saudi Arabia, the young's interest in public issues and civil awareness has been facilitated by social media. In addition, the social media has played a significant role in establishing new social dynamics and become an integral tool that links the government and the general population (Fatany, 2012). Recently, a study on social media in the Arab world found that the Saudis are the most active Facebook users in the gulf region (see Figure 4) and

second active Twitter users in Middle East (see Figure 5), with an estimated 393,000 using Twitter and nearly four million using Facebook (Arab Social Media Report, 2011).

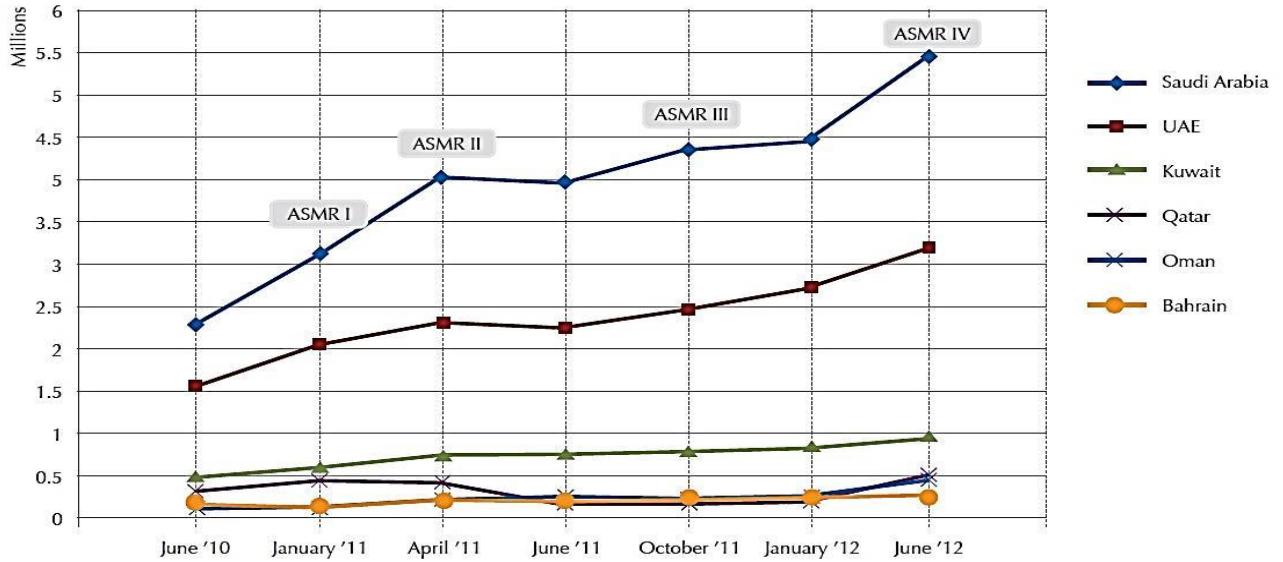


FIGURE 4: Number of Facebook Users in the Gulf Countries between June 2010 and June 2012 (Arab Social Media Report, 2012).

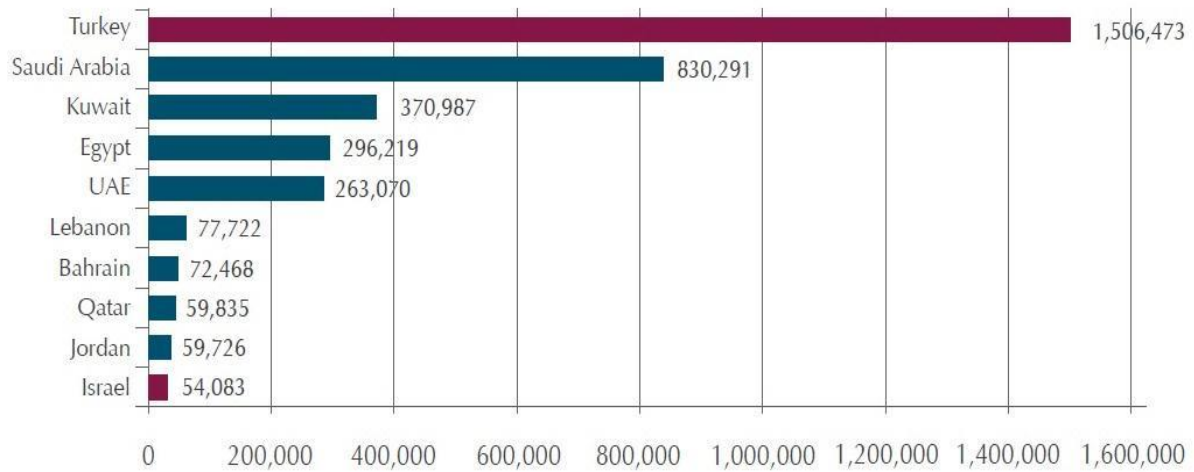


FIGURE 5: Number of Active Twitter Users in the Middle East (Arab Social Media Report, 2012).

However, Fatany (2012) concluded that the increased number of young activists on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, among other social media platforms, is an indication that the young generation is likely to play additional role in public matters than before. The echelon of the young people's alertness will also compel governments to address corruption and other issues that may derail the process of societal progress.

Although Saudi Arabia, the guardian of the Islamic holy places, is a conservative country as compared to other Middle East nations, it cannot be exceptional in relation to the effect of the social media (Samin, 2012). Saudi Arabia did not have experience adverse effects of the Arab Spring, but the spring had an impact in this country. In 2011, King Abdullah initiated some economic reforms aimed at averting civil unrest. These reforms cost the government approximately 135 billion Saudi Rials, which is equivalent to US\$36 billion. These reforms attained goals such as unemployment benefits, housing subsidies, conversion of temporary civil servants into permanent workers, and the increase of state employees' salaries by 15 per cent. These changes may have averted civil unrest, but analysts believe that additional reforms should be employed to ensure that this tightly controlled kingdom is shielded from civil unrest (Cannistraro, 2011).

Social media, as a tool, plays a significant role in facilitating Saudi youth engagement in civic and political activities. Nevertheless, individuals not interested in community, political or social issues can use social media platforms such YouTube's channels like Alatair, Maloob Alina, and A tasah to interact with others with common interests. In fact, "The potential of social media as an emerging yet powerful tool for drawing young adults' attention to societal concerns and uniting the young generation as active participants in society is there" (Park, Kee & Valenzuela, 2009, p. 733).

In addition, recent experiences in Saudi Arabia reveal the usefulness as well as the limitations on employing social media for political activism. Feras Bugnah was arrested in 2011 for employing aggressive statements against the government on YouTube. (Mackey, 2011) Bugnah was analyzing poverty levels in the capital city when he made the aggressive remarks. Also, several Facebook pages were established asking that government officials who were involved in corruption must be sacked. Moreover, many hashtags spread in Twitter that called for an elected parliament. In fact, these pressures from social media apparently have prompted the government officials to be involved in social media. Now, there are many officials who are active in Twitter while some have even created YouTube channels. The Minister of Labor even invited in November 2012 social media actives to dinner in order to explain new policy.

As a quick look, social media in Saudi Arabia remains heavily influenced by the traditional media magnates. The clergy (Mashaikh), who have a huge influence in Saudi society, are the most influential users in Twitter. But newspaper column writers and anchors in the traditional news channels still have considerable influence. Therefore, public opinion is moving in Twitter based on what these Mashaikh, writers, and anchors post, and they are accrued on the throne of the new media.

According to Tweepar (a website that observes and analyzes activities in Twitter in Saudi Arabia) the top ten users of Twitter which followed by people in Saudi Arabia in January 2013 contain four clergies and three television anchors. But when it comes to the influence and interaction, the most influence and interaction users were three producers of YouTube shows, three clergies, and two T.V anchors (Tweepar, 2013).

Development history in Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a relatively modern country. As a united country on the largest part of the peninsula area, it is still in the third quarter of the first century of its historical age. The date of the planned development in the kingdom has not finished its third decade yet. Despite the huge amounts of oil and the recent investment in the field of oil, mining and establishing huge industrial cities, the Kingdom is still a modern and developing country. Therefore, the Ministry of Economy and Planning created several five-year plans of development. And here a summary of these plans according to the Ministry of Economic and Planning website (2012):

First plan of development started with the first five-year development plan (1970-1975). In this plan the concentration was on constructing the infrastructure represented in telephone, water, electricity and health services. About \$21 billion was spent on this plan, 50% of such amount was spent on basic equipment.

Second plan of development (1975-1980) expanded its goals due to the increase in the resources of oil which doubled about nine times than the first plan. About \$173 billion was spent on this plan. Many studies were conducted in this plan to know the needs of the country upon which some of the new public faculties were created such as Ministry of public works and housing, development funds and supreme royal commission for Jubail and Yanbu which constituted the basis for the Saudi petrochemical industry.

Third plan of development: due to the success of the first and second plans in establishing the infrastructure, thinking shifted to productivity and continuing in completing the infrastructure. The strategy of the third plan of development (1980-1985) included the trend of making changes in the structure of the national economy to develop non-oil

productive sectors and to increase the participation of citizens in development and increasing economic and administrative efficiency. The achievements in this plan included developing educational, health, social and municipal services, desalination facilities, building dams, roads and civil aviation facilities in addition to starting production in the petrochemical factories. Achievements also included further establishing petroleum refineries, grain silos, national industries and activity of different development funds. It is in this period that the agricultural strategy resulted in raising the agricultural production leading to exporting some agricultural products. The total investment in this plan reached \$320 billion spent for development in general. 37% of the money was assigned to the productive sectors such as industry and agriculture.

Fourth plan of development: the general goals of this plan included new goals not mentioned in the three previous plans which included developing human resources, depending on producing and exporting crude oil as the major source of the national income, and continuing to make real change in the economic environment by shifting towards diversifying the productive base by concentrating on the agricultural and industrial activities and developing the potential mineral wealth and achieving the economic integration between the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in addition to completing the infrastructure. About \$266 billion were assigned to this plan. It achieved most of its goals in very difficult circumstances because of the fluctuations in oil prices in global markets and the policy pursued by the Kingdom to be the weighted state among countries exporting oil (OPEC) to achieve the required balance leading to reducing the Kingdom revenues from oil to the third. But the Kingdom resorted to using the general reserves to cover the expenses of the plan.

Fifth plan of development (1990-1995) which existed in unusual international circumstances and its general goals and strategies came to meet all political, economic and social changes for the Kingdom. Its general strategic foundations included undesirable economic or political effects and concentration on enhancing performance of the government agencies to reduce expenses of government without affecting the levels of the general services, increasing the role of the private sector in the national economy, achieving the balanced development among the regions of the Kingdom and connecting it with the population needs and taking the appropriate means to push the private sector to provide work opportunities for citizens. It also included replacing the non-Saudi employees with Saudis.

Sixth plan of development: all development plans in their general goals and strategic foundations are affected by the surrounding political, economic and social factors. The sixth plan (1995-2000) came as a response to the political and economic changes. On one side the gulf war created distinct political and security circumstances on all the countries of the region and on the other side the decrease of the oil revenues since the 1980s created new economic data which affected the country's income which was still dependent largely on oil.

Seventh plan of development (2000-2005) which consisted of three basic fields: supporting services, government efficiency and cooperation. In the first field the plan concentrated on the services of defense and security, education, social and health services and scientific and technical services including communication and information services. In the field of government efficiency, the plan concentrated on improving the performance of the government, rationalization, decreasing expenses, developing efficiency of operating equipment and maintenance, improving usage from such equipment and other procedures. In the field of cooperation, the plan concentrated on the necessity of cooperation in the issues of

supporting the private sector in development, moving towards “Saudization” of jobs and rehabilitation of manpower leading to improving efficiency.

Eighth plan of development: (2005 - 2010) concentrated on a number of priorities such as raising the standard of living, improving the quality of life, providing work opportunities for citizens, quantitative and qualitative expansion in educational, training, health, and social services, expanding in technical and applied sciences and encouraging initiatives and innovation and this concentration included coping with the quick global economic and technical developments, diversifying the economic base, improving the productivity of the national economy, enhancing the competitive abilities and the plan paid special attention to increasing the woman participation, strengthening the roles of family in community by developing the abilities of the Saudi woman and removing obstacles that deter expanding her participation in the economical and developmental activities.

However, the leaders in Riyadh still believe in more change and continued improvement. According to a speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs HRH Prince Saud Alfaisal to the Forum of Future in Morocco 2004, "We in Saudi Arabia firmly believe that modernization and comprehensive political, economic and social reforms are badly needed in our part of the world. We are fully aware that partial, minor and isolated reforms or cosmetic changes are not sufficient in this regard." In fact, these reform efforts include municipal elections and expanding the authority of the Consultative Council. The Center for National Dialogue was established to encourage diversity, tolerance and the strong participation of women. Also recently a group of Saudi activists of both genders formed an independent Commission for Human Rights to which all organs of government will be accountable in

case of any breaches or complaints. An independent Public Prosecution Authority was also established.

Along with the political reforms, the Saudi government is pursuing an ambitious program of economic reforms. Although Saudi Arabia is fortunate in this regard, many countries in the region are in dire need for a collective effort to solve their economic problems. The industrialized countries can show the same generosity the United States showed Europe after the Second World War through the Marshall Plan. They can play an effective role in this regard by allocating direct foreign investments, liberalizing trade policies, opening new markets and facilitating the transfer of technology. "The West also can encourage social interaction and exchange between the youth of our nations. Within the confines of the legitimate requirement of security, the impediments against the free movement of persons between us must be eased. To encourage shared values we need to facilitate direct contact." Alfaisal said.

Regarded to what has been discussed early in this paper, social media plays a significant role in facilitating youth engagement in civic and political activities. Overall, the political map in Middle East going to has a lot of change these coming years which probably affect the media in generally and social media in particular. The German philosopher Jürgen Habermas argued in his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) that print media helped to make Europe democratic by providing a space for discussion and agreement between the politically engaged citizens. Often before the state become fully democratic (Habermas, 1991; Shirky, 2011). Today, social media is playing this role. Indeed, the Middle East is in process of political and social changes due to the Arab Spring and other

youth movements. With useful tool such the social media, Saudis are looking forward for political reforms and social developments.

Research Questions

To address the role of social media in social and political issues in Saudi Arabia and Saudis' perception on social media for social and political development, the following research questions are asked:

RQ1: How do Saudis perceive their degree or level of innovativeness?

According to Rogers (1986), innovativeness and adopter category are innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. In fact, knowing the level of innovativeness in the society should give us clear idea of how open the society is to adopt new ideas or technologies.

RQ2: What is Saudis' uses and gratifications of social media when it comes to political and social purpose?

Explore what needs will be satisfied by using the social media for political and social information. Since the internet increases access to political information, this might create informed citizenry that participate more in political life and have some influence on political process (Bimber, 1998; Johnson & Kaye, 2000).

RQ3: Which social media sites do Saudis use for political and social purposes?

Every society has social media site that was most helpful when it comes to political and social uses. Facebook and Twitter in Arab Spring, YouTube in Iran, and Text messages in South Korea, for instance.

RQ4: What is Saudis' level of involvement in social media toward political and social issues?

Saudis, as other Arab countries' member, have fashioned social media in certain way to become available for political and social uses.

RQ5: What influences Saudis to adopt social media for political and social uses?

Participants were asked for influences regarding their adoption of social media for political and social purpose.

RQ6: What are the major issues that Saudis often discuss in social media?

Social media, in general, provide a fine place to discuss whatever people want to say especially on issues that matter to their personality and society. Some major issues that people in each society often keep in their daily discussions which give an idea of what this society consideration are important.

RQ7: What are Saudis' perceptions about using social media for political and social purpose?

Social media have impact on society and can lead the system there to change wither it is positive or negative. It is important to know how the members of society look at these tools in order to product their expectations.

RQ8: Do demographics information influence these previse questions?

Participant's age, gender, living town, education, economic levels, work status, the amount of social media utilization per day, and the time period for using

social media, does played role to stimulate Saudis into public issues and political/social development process in the country.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In Saudi Arabia, the use of social media has increased civic awareness and youth interest in public issues. It has become a paramount daily tool for many people and has emerged as one of the main methods of networking and social interaction between individuals and government. Therefore, this study seeks to examine Saudis' perception of using social media and the role these tools play in social issues and political development. An online survey was designed to attract socially and politically interested social media users. The survey conducted in April 2013.

Participants

This research conducted by surveying a sample of 1,361 Saudis who use social media sites by using the “Snow Ball” method. In fact, snow ball sampling employs the presumed social networks that exist between members of a target population to build a sample. According to Miller (2013), snow ball sampling is more directed and purposeful than many other non-random sampling techniques, such as convenience sampling that focuses only on the most easily identified and reachable members of a population. Therefore, participants were asked to take and answer the survey and then pass it to their “friends” on social media by posting and forwarding the link of the survey. Because the research focused on the role of social media in the Saudi society, the sample had to be from the adults among Saudi society.

Measures

In order to answer the 8 research questions, the survey instrument (see Appendix 1) has been divided into several sections:

Questions [1, 3, 4 and 5] asked participants to indicate which social media sites they have active account, the devices used to access social media, the time spent on social media, and the amount of money they spend monthly on personal internet services.

Question [6] asked participants to clarify their level of adopting new social media technology (RQ1), by using a 5-Point Likert agreement/disagreement scale with 10 statements developed by Savery (2005) and depend on Rogers' (1986) innovativeness and adopter category descriptions.

Question [7] asked how often participants use social media for political and social information. A 5-point Likert scale ([1] never – [5] always) was used.

Question [8] asked what motivate participants to use social media for political and social information (RQ2). The survey used 5-Point Likert scale with different statements derived from past uses and gratifications studies (Kaya & Johnson, 2002; Kaya, 1998; Mcleod & Becker, 1981, 1974). Participants indicated their level of agreement with the reasons for accessing social media. Possible responses ranged from [1] strongly disagree to [5] strongly agree.

Questions [2 and 9] were used to identify social media popular sites (RQ3). Multiple choices questions regarding social media sites that participants are using for political and social purpose. These choices include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Blogs, Keek, LinkedIn, Instagram, Google+, and participants had the opportunity to suggest others.

Question [10] addressed participants' level of involvement on social media (RQ4). Participants were asked to specify their level of involvement in political and social issues on a frequencies scale for the series of statements ([1] never – [5] always).

In question [11], participants were asked for influences regarding their adoption of social media for political and social use (RQ5). Multiple choice answers included peers, social event, and Arab Spring as well as the option “Other” if they have been influenced by things that were not mentioned in the previous choices.

Question [12] focused on major issues that Saudis often engage in discussion in social media (RQ6). A frequencies scale ([1] never – [5] always) was used for a series of issues in Saudi Arabia such as: political, social, economic, international events, corruptions, unemployment, and entertainment.

Question [13] addressed the participants' perceptions of using social media for political and social purposes (RQ7). Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on statements that addressed the effect of social media on Saudi society and development issues, the perspectives of roles and expectations, and the government reaction toward this role of social media.

Finally, questions [14] to [19] focused on the demographic information of the participants. These multiple choice questions address participant's age, gender, living town, education, economic levels, and work status. The idea was to know how this information played in order to stimulate this person into public issues and political/ social development process in the country.

Procedure

Because the native language of the sample was Arabic, the questionnaire was translated to Arabic and has been reviewed by a native Arabic speaker to validate the translation (see Appendix B). Then, by using the program “Survey Monkey”, the questionnaire was distributed online by using the social media sites. A link was posted on Twitter and Facebook and participants were asked to forward it to their friends. To reach the targeted sample, the researcher had to ask for help from actives in social media applications since they have access to large numbers of users in social media.

Data analysis

Data in this study was measured using correlation, frequencies, percentages, chi-square, and factor analysis. The test of significance was set at $p < .05$.

Human Subject Procedure

To insure Arkansas State University’s policy on the use of human subjects in research, the survey questionnaire has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in April 22, 2013 (see Appendix C). Participants, however, were informed of this approval at the beginning of the online survey.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING

Participants

A total of 1,361 responded to the survey. 997 (73.2%) completed the survey while 364 (26.7%) of the respondents withdrew before completing the survey. Also, 22 respondents who indicated their age as being under 18 were excluded from the analytical process. Thus, 975 people were included in the analysis.

Demographics

Examining the participants by gender showed that 55% (530 people) were male, and 45% (434 people) were female (see Table 1). The average age was 27.7 years old.

People with a bachelor degree were the majority of participants (534 or 55.1%). 168 (17.3%) have completed high school, and 154 (15.9%) have a master's degree. Also, 80 (8.2%) indicated that they have finished the diploma program (a two-year program after high school usually for technical and vocational training), while 28 (2.9%) have earned the PhD degree.

Participants' working status shows that 352 (36.4%) are students, 303 (31.3%) work for government and 155 (16%) work for companies. While 112 (11.6%) were either jobless or retired, there were 30 (3.1%) who run their own business. Result, also, shows that 190 (20.3%) are making between 8,000 – 11,999 S.R. (\$2,127.60 – \$3,191.22) monthly, 118

(12.6%) between 5,000 – 7,999 S.R (\$1,329.79 – \$2,127.39), and 117 (12.5%) between 15,000 – 20,000 S.R (\$3,989.36 – \$5,319.15). There were 160 (17.1%) making less than 3,000 S.R (\$797.88). However, 198 (21.2%) indicated that they are making an average of 5,207.82 S.R (\$1,358.05) monthly.

The majority of the participants (546 or 56.4%) were from Riyadh precinct (the capital), 113 (11.7%) from Mecca, 84 (8.7%) from Eastern Province, 41 (4.2%) from Medina, and 35 (3.6%) from Qassim. Also, there were 66 participants (6.8%) who indicated that they are living outside the country.

Table 1: Characteristics of participants

	Frequency	Present		Frequency	Present
By gender			By level of education		
Male	530	55.0%	Bachelor	534	55.1%
Female	434	45.0%	High school	168	17.3%
N = 964*			Master	154	15.9%
By living town			Diploma	80	8.2%
Riyadh	546	56.4%	PhD	28	2.9%
Mecca	113	11.7%	Less than high school	6	0.6%
Eastern Province	84	8.7%	N = 970*		
Outside the Country	66	6.8%	By working status		
Medina	41	4.2%	Student	352	36.4%
Qassim	35	3.6%	Government	303	31.3%
Tabuk	19	2.0%	Company	155	16.0%
Asir	18	1.9%	Jobless	105	10.9%
Jawf	13	1.3%	Own business	30	3.1%
Ha'il	12	1.2%	Retired	7	0.7%
Northern Border	8	0.8%	Other	15	1.6%
Najran	7	0.7%	N = 967*		
Jizan	6	0.6%			
N = 968*					

* All groupings do not equal 975 because of missing data.

Adoption of innovations

Respondents reported that they depend on their peers to convince them of the advantage of innovation that they were willing to adopt (71.4%) and agreed that their opinion

is respected by peers (59.5%) (see Table 2). Almost half of the respondents (435 or 46%) agreed they are always looking for innovations and they will adopt innovations (426 or 45.1%) but that they do not attempt to influence others. A majority disagreed with the statements that they are resistant to change (533 or 57.3%) and that they are suspicious of innovations (486 or 51.3%).

Table 2: Participants on adoption of innovations

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I need to be convinced of the advantage of innovations by peers	112 11.6%	163 16.9%	688 71.4%
my opinion about innovations is respected by peers	68 7.2%	317 33.4%	565 59.5%
I am always looking for innovations	168 17.8%	343 36.3%	435 46.0%
I will adopt innovations but do not attempt to influence others to do so	202 21.4%	316 33.5%	426 45.1%
I go along with innovations out of necessity	220 23.4%	301 32.0%	421 44.7%
I am venturesome and eager to be the first to try new innovation	185 19.3%	490 51.1%	283 29.5%
I adopt innovations and influence others to do so	229 24.0%	452 47.3%	274 29%
I am willing to follow the lead of others in adopting innovations	260 27.4%	355 37.4%	335 35.3%
I am resistant to change	533 57.3%	250 26.9%	147 15.8%
I am suspicious of innovations	486 51.3%	259 27.3%	203 21.4%
			N = 949*

* All groupings do not equal 975 because of missing data.

Influences

Results identified what influences Saudis to adopt social media for political and social uses. Thus, there were 35.1% influenced by peers. While 35.1% were influenced by social events, 13.9% were influenced by the story of using social media in Arab Spring. However, 15.9% of sample said they were influenced by other factors such as level of freedom, news are fast, business/education purpose, and tool to connect with world.

Uses and gratifications

Result shows a high percentage of respondents (36.8%) spend between 2 to 4 hours per day on social media (see Table 3). Roughly, one in four respondents (24.7%) spend less than 2 hours per day, 24.5 per cent spend between 4 to 6 hours daily while 17.1 per cent spend more than 6 hours each day on social media. When examining the devices used for social media, the majority of the sample reported using social media sites by smart phones (92.5%). There were 39.9 per cent who uses Laptops and 34.2 per cent uses Taps devices. In fact, participants spend an average of 208 S.R (\$55.32) on personal internet services monthly.

Table 3: Participants using social media

	Frequency	Percent
By time spend		
2 - 4hr	355	36.8%
Less than 2hr	238	24.7%
4 - 6hr	207	21.5%
6 - 8hr	91	9.4%
More than 8hr	74	7.7%
N = 965*		
By using device		
Smart phone	898	92.5%
Laptop	387	39.9%
Tap/IPad	332	34.2%
PC	136	14.0%
N = 971*		

* All groupings do not equal 975 because of missing data.

Respondents were very likely to use social media for political and social purposes. A high percentage (33.3%) use social media very often for political and social purposes. While 31.4 per cent who use it sometimes, 22.5 per cent always use social media for political and social purposes.

In fact, participants identify their motivations of using social media for political and social information as a helpful tool that provides the information they need (see Table 4). More than 8 in 10 use social media because information is easy to obtain (95.1%), allows them to get the news faster (94.3%), it helps them find specific political and social information (88.2%), and it helps them keep up with main issues of the day (87.3%). More than half see social media use as entertaining and exciting. It helps them see what officials are doing and their bias as well as providing them for discussion and ammunition to use in arguments. Less than half, however, agreed that social media help them relax (35%) even though they are not comfortable sharing their social problems on social media (43.9%).

Table 4: Participants' motivations of using social media for political and social information

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
because information is easy to obtain	13 1.4%	34 3.5%	912 95.1%
to get the news faster	13 1.3%	42 4.4%	909 94.3%
to find specific political/social information I'm looking for	22 2.3%	92 9.6%	849 88.2%
to keep up with the main issues of the day	32 3.3%	90 9.4%	839 87.3%
to help me decide about important things	77 8.0%	168 17.4%	719 74.6%
because it is entertaining	90 9.6%	199 21.1%	652 69.3%
because it exciting	57 6.1%	233 25.1%	640 68.8%
to see what an official is doing in his/her position	98 10.2%	231 24.1%	629 65.7%
to judge personal qualities of officials for unbiased viewpoints	103 10.7%	275 28.6%	584 60.7%
to give me something to talk about with others	122 12.7%	260 27.2%	575 60.1%
to use as ammunition in arguments with others	131 13.7%	294 30.7%	533 55.6%
because it help me relax	300 31.5%	319 33.5%	333 35%
to share my social problems to get the help I needed	421 43.9%	297 30.9%	242 25.2%
			N = 956*

* All groupings do not equal 975 because of missing data.

Social media sites:

Twitter was the highest social media site that respondents have active account in with 97.1 per cent followed by Facebook (64.5%) then YouTube (51.3%) (see Table 5). Likewise, Twitter was the most often site that a majority of participants' use for political and social information (81.6%), followed by Google+ (9.2%), then YouTube (4.6%) and Facebook (3.0%). When it comes to political and social discussions, Twitter, still, was the top social media site for respondents to use with 94.5 per cent follow by Facebook (20.4%), then YouTube (15.4%).

Table 5: Social media sites

	Frequency	Percent of Cases		Frequency	Percent of Cases
By participants' active account:			Sites used most often for political/social discussions:		
Twitter	946	97.1%	Twitter	899	94.5%
Facebook	628	64.5%	Facebook	194	20.4%
Instagram	508	52.2%	YouTube	146	15.4%
YouTube	500	51.3%	Google+	62	6.5%
Keek	383	39.3%	Keek	48	5.0%
Google+	279	28.6%	Instagram	37	3.9%
LinkedIn	92	9.4%	Blogs	7	0.7%
Blogs	31	3.2%	LinkedIn	3	0.3%
Other	51	5.2%	Other	27	2.8%
N = 974*			N = 971*		
Sites used most often for political/social information:					
Twitter	790	81.6%			
Google+	89	9.2%			
YouTube	45	4.6%			
Facebook	29	3.0%			
Instagram	3	0.3%			
Keek	1	0.1%			
LinkedIn	1	0.1%			
Other	10	1.0%			
N = 968*					

* All groupings do not equal 975 because of missing data.

Substantial issues

When one examined the issues subjects engaged in most often with other people using social media (see Table 6), the topics marked "often" or "always" most often were

social issues (47.4%), corruption (35.3%), entertainment (34.8%), and international issues and unemployment, both at 29.9 per cent. Sports was the most often listed as “never” at 41.1 per cent. Shopping and economic issues were rarely discussed.

Table 6: Substantial issues that participant engage in discussions in social media

	Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Always
Social issues	75 7.8%	150 15.5%	283 29.3%	313 32.4%	146 15.1%
International events	170 17.6%	191 19.8%	315 32.7%	201 20.9%	87 9.0%
Unemployment	216 22.5%	213 22.2%	245 25.5%	165 17.2%	122 12.7%
Entertainment	199 20.9%	183 19.2%	239 25.1%	189 19.8%	143 15.0%
Corruption	201 20.8%	185 19.1%	240 24.8%	183 18.9%	159 16.4%
Sports	394 41.1%	181 18.9%	143 14.9%	122 12.7%	119 12.4%
Political issues	310 32.1%	249 25.7%	213 22.0%	121 12.5%	74 7.7%
Shopping	297 31.0%	230 24.0%	234 24.4%	129 13.5%	69 7.2%
Economic issues	279 29.0%	278 28.9%	244 25.3%	121 12.6%	41 4.3%
					N = 949*

* All groupings do not equal 975 because of missing data.

Level of involvement

As for level of involvement on social media, categories noted as “often” or “always” included keeping up with society news (83.4%), keeping up with political news in Saudi Arabia (55%), sharing content related to political and social issues first posted by someone else (43.1%) and like or favorite material related to political and social issues that others have posted (41.1%) (see Table 7).

Respondents did not indicate involvement in recruiting people to get involved in societal issues or encouraging others to take action in issues important to themselves.

Table 7: Participants by level of involvement on social media:

	Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Always
keep up with society news	6 0.6%	10 1.0%	143 14.9%	405 42.3%	394 41.1%
keep up with political news in Saudi Arabia	83 8.7%	137 14.3%	211 22.0%	289 30.2%	237 24.8%
Post my own thought or comments on political or social issues	109 11.3%	223 23.1%	301 31.2%	192 19.9%	139 14.4%
Share links to political stories or articles for others to read	142 14.7%	250 25.9%	285 29.6%	186 19.3%	101 10.5%
Share content related to political/ social issues that was originally posted by someone else	114 11.9%	157 16.3%	276 28.7%	253 26.3%	161 16.8%
Debating or discussing society/political issues with others	216 22.5%	239 24.9%	263 27.5%	141 14.7%	99 10.3%
finding other people who share their views about important society/ political issues	197 20.5%	161 16.8%	259 27.0%	206 21.4%	138 14.4%
"Like/Favorite" material related to political/social issues that other have posted	142 14.7%	178 18.5%	247 25.6%	235 24.4%	161 16.7%
Recruit people to get involved in society issues that matter to them	399 41.6%	241 25.2%	184 19.2%	89 9.3%	45 4.7%
Encourage other people to take action on political/social issues that is important to me	255 26.5%	248 25.8%	224 23.3%	138 14.3%	98 10.2%
					N = 956*

* All groupings do not equal 975 because of missing data.

Perceptions

Respondents show an obvious agreement about the role of social media in political and social environment in Saudi Arabia (see Table 8). A high percentage agreed that social media encourage social movements against corruption (85.5%) and help people understand political and social issues (82.7%). Respondents also agreed that social media can lead society to change positively (79.5%) and encourage social movements in political reforms (78.9%) as well as human rights (78.3%) but, however, disagreed that using social media seek to dismantle society (61.2%). Almost two thirds of participants agreed that social media change the way people deals with the government. On the other hand, only half agreed that it would change the way government deals with the people or that it would force officials to do

their jobs better. A majority (64.9%) disagreed that social media will not change anything in Saudi Arabia.

Table 8: Participants' perceptions about using social media for political and social purpose:

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
encourage social movements against corruption	35 3.6%	105 10.9%	825 85.5%
helps people understand political/social issues	44 4.5%	123 12.7%	801 82.7%
can lead the society to change positively	46 4.7%	153 15.8%	771 79.5%
encourage social movements in political reforms	42 4.3%	162 16.8%	763 78.9%
encourage social movements in human rights	48 5.0%	161 16.7%	756 78.3%
changes the way people deal with the government	54 5.6%	172 17.8%	742 76.7%
shows officials care about what is going on social media	85 8.8%	189 19.6%	690 71.6%
encourage social movements in economic improvement	78 8.1%	225 23.4%	658 68.5%
pushes government to more changes and improvement	97 10.1%	256 26.6%	611 63.4%
is the best place to discuss political/social issues	149 15.5%	273 28.4%	539 56.1%
change the way government deal with the people	179 18.5%	279 28.9%	509 52.6%
force officials to do their job better	188 19.4%	294 30.4%	485 50.2%
will not change anything	624 64.9%	242 25.2%	95 9.9%
seeks to dismantle the society	589 61.2%	253 26.3%	120 12.5%
is just new technology that people are impressed with	489 50.5%	220 22.7%	259 26.8%
			N = 965*

* All groupings do not equal 975 because of missing data.

In brief, the majority of sample were 27.7 year old males who have a bachelor degree and are a student or working for government making an average of \$2,225.62 monthly. They spend around 4 hours daily on social media and were positive toward using social media for political and social purposes.

In order to answer RQ1 which was about how do Saudis perceive their degree or level of innovativeness, appropriate statements were factor analyzed using SPSS program (see Table 9). Statements were entered into an equamax rotation with an eigenvalue of 1.0 or greater required for classification. As result, four types of innovators were found. There were labeled as innovators, reluctants, adopters, and majority somewhat similar to the five types found by Rogers (1986).

Table 9: Saudis' degree of innovativeness

"When a new social media site has been established, . . ."	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
Factor 1: Innovators				
I am venturesome and eager to be the first to try new innovation	.81	-.09	.04	-.15
I adopt innovations and influence others to do so	.77	-.06	-.20	.06
I am always looking for innovations	.73	-.13	.14	.14
Eigenvalue= 2.31, Variance Explained= 23.90, Alpha= .71				
Factor 2: Reluctants				
I am resistant to change	-.03	.73	.03	-.03
I am suspicious of innovations	-.31	.68	-.16	.02
I go along with innovations out of necessity	.04	.57	.27	.15
Eigenvalue= 1.46, Variance Explained = 14.63, Alpha= .47				
Factor 3: Majority				
I will adopt innovations but do not attempt to influence others to do so	.10	.23	.75	.02
I am willing to follow the lead of others in adopting innovations	.43	.28	-.58	.03
Eigenvalue= 1.18, Variance Explained = 11.81, Alpha= -.16				
Factor 4: Adopters				
My opinion about innovations is respected by peers	.21	-.12	.23	.74
I need to be convinced of the advantage of innovations by peers	-.21	.21	-.26	.73
Eigenvalue= 1.06, Variance Explained = 10.62, Alpha= .21				

Innovators were those who are always looking for innovations, which are in this case new social media sites, are venturesome and the first to try them out and influence others to do so as well. Reluctants, the second type, were suspicious of innovations and resistant to change but they adopt innovations out of necessity. Adopters, another type, were those who need to be more convinced of the advantage of innovations and their opinion about

innovations is respected by peers. Late majority those who will adopt innovations even they are not willing to follow the lead of others and they do not attempt to influence other people.

RQ2 asked what is Saudis' use and gratification of social media when it comes to political and social purpose. The study found that a highly percentage of participants (36.8%) spend between 2 to 4 hours each day on social media, access social media by smart phones (92.5%) and spend monthly an average of 208 S.R. (\$55.32) on personal internet services.

Result show that participants are more likely to use social media for political and social purposes with 55.8 per cent of those who “often” or “always” using social media for political and social purposes. As to what motivated Saudis to access social media for political and social information, factor analysis revealed the following four motivations for obtaining political and social information from social media: information seeking/surveillance, entertainment, guidance, and social utility (see Table 10). Each factor had an eigenvalue of at least .85 (Because 3 statements loaded so low on other factor types, the 4th factor was accepted as legitimate as did Stevens, 1986 and Johnson & Kaya 2000).

Thus, participants use social media for political and social information for four types of motivations. First, information seeking/surveillance in social media help participant to get the news faster since the information is easy to obtain there, to find specific information related to political and social, and to keep them up with main issues of the day. Second, participants use political and social information to entertain themselves since this information is exciting and helps them relax. Third, they use social media to guide them to decide about important things or judge officials' personality and their work from unbiased viewpoint. And the fourth motivation is because political and social information in social media help participants socially. They use what is going on social media as subjects that they would talk

about with others and possibly as ammunition in arguments. Also, to share their social problems in order to get the help they needed.

Table 10: Motivations for using social media for political and social information

"I use social media for political and social information . . ."	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
Factor 1: Information seeking/Surveillance				
because information is easy to obtain	.88	.06	.05	.09
to get the news faster	.87	.02	.16	.08
to find specific political/social information I'm looking for	.73	.04	.31	.05
to keep up with the main issues of the day	.67	.06	.30	.06
Eigenvalue= 4.03, Variance Explained = 30.97, Alpha= .84				
Factor 2: Entertainment				
because it is entertaining	.05	.84	-.03	.10
because it help me relax	-.10	.83	.04	.10
because it exciting	.19	.75	.04	.25
Eigenvalue= 2.19, Variance Explained = 16.83, Alpha= .75				
Factor 3: Guidance				
to judge personal qualities of officials for unbiased viewpoints	.16	.02	.83	.11
to see what an official is doing in his/her position	.18	.01	.72	.17
to help me decide about important things	.22	.02	.59	.26
Eigenvalue= 1.42, Variance Explained = 10.92, Alpha= .67				
Factor 4: Social utility				
to use as ammunition in arguments with others	.15	.13	.19	.83
to give me something to talk about with others	.13	.16	.07	.83
to share my social problems to get the help I needed	-.11	.17	.25	.54
Eigenvalue= .88, Variance Explained = 6.77, Alpha= .67				

RQ3 asked which social media sites that Saudis use for political and social purposes. Significantly, more participants used Twitter for political and social purposes than any other site (790, 188)($x^2 = 229.370$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$). Result listed social media sites that most often use for political and social "discussions" as Twitter (94.5%), Facebook (20.4%), then YouTube (15.4%), and Google+ (6.5%). Alternatively, most often use social media site for political and social "information" were Twitter (81.6%), then Google+ (9.2%), YouTube (4.6%), and Facebook (3.0%).

RQ4 asked about Saudis' level of involvement in social media toward political and social issues. Respondents reportedly were more likely involved in following the society and

politics news in Saudi Arabia as well as sharing their own thoughts or others' contents that related to political and social environment in the country using social media. Respondents, however, do not encourage people to take physical action or recruit them to get involved in societal issues that were important to themselves. In other words, participants' level of involvement was to raise their point on political and social issues that matter to them without taking action or recruiting others to do so.

RQ5 asked what influences Saudis to adopt social media for political and social uses. Result show that the role of peers as well as social events that involved social media was the main influence to participant to fashion social media into social and political tool. Furthermore, the idea of using social media in Arab Spring (2011) to raise public opinion against government was indicated by respondents as one of factors which influenced them to use social media for political and social purposes.

RQ6 addressed the major issues that Saudis discuss in social media. Participants more often engage in discussion that relate to social issues and corruption. They sometimes talk about international issues or unemployment problems in Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, they more likely avoid discussions on politics or economic issues (see Table 6).

RQ7 addressed Saudis perceptions about using social media for political and social purpose. Factor analyzed was used and statements were entered into an equamax rotation with an eigenvalue of 1.0 or greater required for classification (see Table 11). Result revealed four categories of perceptions toward using social media for political and social purposes in Saudi Arabia: encouragement, improve society, affect government, and pessimism.

Thus, social media in Saudi Arabia is used to encourage social movements in many fronts such as political reforms, human rights, economic improvement, and against

corruption that push government to more changes and improvement. In order to improve the society and lead to positive change, social media give people better understanding of political and social issues and changes the way they deal with the government. Another category is that social media going to affect the government by change the way it deals with people and force officials to do their job better as long as it shows their care about what is going on social media. However, social media in Saudi Arabia have a pessimism perception. These types of individual do not see social media effectives at changing anything or that social media is powerful that it will dismantle the society.

Table 11: Saudis' perception

"Social media in Saudi Arabia . . ."	factors			
	1	2	3	4
Factor 1: Encouragement				
encourage social movements in political reforms	.80	.37	.13	-.12
encourage social movements against corruption	.77	.27	.14	-.13
encourage social movements in human rights	.76	.32	.16	-.14
encourage social movements in economic improvement	.68	.18	.31	-.21
pushes government to more changes and improvement	.65	.20	.35	.03
Eigenvalue= 5.89, Variance Explained= 30.26, Alpha= .88				
Factor 2: Improve society				
helps people understand political/social issues	.26	.80	.10	-.23
can lead the society to change positively	.16	.78	.11	-.22
changes the way people deal with the government	.29	.69	.21	-.09
is the best place to discuss political/social issues	.36	.50	.07	-.23
Eigenvalue= 1.92, Variance Explained= 12.79, Alpha= .79				
Factor 3: Affect government				
force officials to do their job better	.22	.00	.85	-.04
shows officials care about what is going on social media	.29	.07	.77	-.02
change the way government deal with the people	-.03	.35	.72	.10
Eigenvalue= 1.25, Variance Explained= 8.36, Alpha= .76				
Factor 4: Pessimism				
is just new technology that people are impressed with	-.14	-.08	.15	.78
seeks to dismantle the society	.03	-.26	.06	.77
will not change anything	-.13	-.10	-.44	.65
Eigenvalue= 1.00, Variance Explained= 6.65, Alpha= .64				

RQ8 asked if demographics information is related to degree of innovativeness, motivations, level of involvement, substantial issues, and perception. Therefore, correlation

analysis was used to identify significant relationships with age, gender, education level, and economic status:

Age

Older respondents were more likely to be suspicious of innovations ($r = .10, p = .002, df = 850$) and they go along with innovations just out of necessity ($r = .12, p = .01, df = 845$). They were more likely involved in sharing links to political and social stories or article for others to read ($r = .08, p = .014, df = 864$) and keep up with political news in Saudi Arabia ($r = .16, p = .01, df = 858$). Moreover, they more likely engaged with others on social media about political issues ($r = .10, p = .003, df = 866$), economic issues ($r = .18, p = .01, df = 864$), and unemployment ($r = .09, p = .008, df = 861$).

On the other hand, young people were less likely to resistant change ($r = .10, p = .003, df = 834$). They tend to use social media for political and social information to judge personal qualities of officials for unbiased viewpoints ($r = .70, p = .041, df = 862$) and give them something to talk about with others ($r = .09, p = .021, df = 857$). And they were more interested in using social media for political and social information for reasons like entertaining ($r = .13, p = .01, df = 841$), help them relax ($r = .10, p = .003, df = 852$), or because it is exciting ($r = .07, p = .026, df = 834$). They young were more likely to discuss entertainment topics ($r = .19, p = .01, df = 852$). However, younger participants more likely agree that social media can lead the society to positive change ($r = .10, p = .003, df = 870$) and change the way people deal with the government ($r = .07, p = .048, df = 868$).

Gender

Result found that males were more likely suspicious of innovations ($r = .06, p = .05, df = 938$) even though they were always looking for innovations ($r = .10, p = .02, df = 936$).

Males tend to share links to political articles with others ($r = .12, p = .001, df = 954$), post their own thoughts on political and social issues ($r = .09, p = .004, df = 954$), follow the political news in Saudi Arabia ($r = .28, p = .001, df = 947$), debate about political and social issues with others ($r = .18, p = .001, df = 948$), and find people who share their views about important political and social issues ($r = .10, p = .002, df = 952$). They more likely to encourage others to take an action on political and social issues ($r = .13, p = .001, df = 953$) and recruit people to get involved in society issues that matter to them ($r = .28, p = .001, df = 947$).

Males, also, were more likely to engage with others on social media about political issues ($r = .28, p = .001, df = 957$), economic issues ($r = .22, p = .001, df = 954$), corruption ($r = .20, p = .001, df = 959$), and unemployment ($r = .12, p = .001, df = 952$). They were more likely to agree that social media changes the way people deal with the government ($r = .07, p = .02, df = 958$), the way government deal with people ($r = .06, p = .04, df = 957$), push government to more changes and improvement ($r = .15, p = .001, df = 954$), shows officials care about what is going in social media ($r = .07, p = .02, df = 954$), and force them to do their job better ($r = .07, p = .003, df = 957$). Furthermore, males were more likely to agree that social media will encourage social movements against corruption ($r = .12, p = .001, df = 955$), and in economic improvement ($r = .08, p = .02, df = 951$).

Females, on the other hand, were more likely to use social media for political and social information because it help them decided about important things ($r = .08, p = .02, df = 954$), it is entertaining ($r = .28, p = .001, df = 932$), helps them relax ($r = .17, p = .001, df = 942$), is exciting ($r = .14, p = .001, df = 921$), and gives them something to talk about with others ($r = .08, p = .01, df = 947$). Moreover, females tend to discuss entertainment topics ($r =$

.21, $p = .001$, $df = 944$). And they were more likely to believe that social media in Saudi Arabia can lead the society to positive change ($r = .08$, $p = .04$, $df = 960$) even when they agree that social media is just new technology that people are impressed with ($r = .11$, $p = .001$, $df = 958$).

Education level

Result show that higher educated participants were more likely to engage in discussions with others in social media about political issues ($r = .07$, $p = .02$, $df = 963$), economic issues ($r = .11$, $p = .001$, $df = 959$), and unemployment ($r = .07$, $p = .02$, $df = 957$). They keep up with Saudi political news in social media ($r = .08$, $p = .01$, $df = 953$) and agree that social media shows officials care about what is going there ($r = .07$, $p = .04$, $df = 960$). In contrast, those with less education were more likely to be resistant to change ($r = .20$, $p = .001$, $df = 926$). They use social media because it helps them decide about important things ($r = .08$, $p = .01$, $df = 960$) or to use as ammunition in arguments with others ($r = .09$, $p = .008$, $df = 954$). Also, they were more likely involved in entertainments discussions ($r = .12$, $p = .001$, $df = 949$) and think that social media will not change anything in Saudi Arabia ($r = .10$, $p = .002$, $df = 957$).

Economic status

Participants with higher income were more likely to use social media for political and social information because information is easy to obtain ($r = .09$, $p = .005$, $df = 921$) and to help them decide about important things ($r = .08$, $p = .01$, $df = 927$). On the other hand, participants with less income were more likely to discuss political issues ($r = .09$, $p = .008$, $df = 929$), social issues ($r = .07$, $p = .02$, $df = 929$), and corruption ($r = .07$, $p = .04$, $df = 930$).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the perception of social media and the role these tools play in the social life and the political environment in Saudi Arabia. Through the diffusion of innovations theory and uses and gratifications theory, this study attempts to find the relation between social media and Saudis in social and political issues, especially to learn how Saudis share their political and social concerns in social media, to observe level of involvement and the use and motivations for posting in social network sites, and to determine differences among users based upon gender, age, education level, and economic status.

Degree of innovativeness

Research question one examined Saudis' level or degree of innovativeness. The study found that participants perceive themselves as positive toward adopting new social media applications. Result show that the majority of participants have active accounts in social media sites like Twitter (97.1%), Facebook (64.5%), and YouTube (51.3%). As for degree of innovativeness, Saudi participants were of four types: innovators, reluctants, early adopters, and majority. Rogers in the 1960s suggested five categories which were accrued at that time. But now people have apparently changed and types of innovations are different and easy to access as well as each society has characteristics that are different from other. Therefore,

adopting innovations, especially the social media, might look similar to what Rogers found different roles. In fact, the Saudi society is adopting many technologies and communication innovations very fast that would make them closer to the stage of other developed nations. Culture and society system has its own rules that might be different from what other nations have in order to adopt these innovations. These rules include gender, education level, and purpose of use which have special ideal in Saudi Arabia.

This study observes these types of innovativeness in Saudi Arabia. First, the innovators whom are young and willing to take the risks to try new innovations and influencing others to do so. The second type is reluctant which are individuals who have an aversion to change and are very traditional. They tend to be older and they adopt innovations only out of necessity. Third, the early adopters tend to be convinced of the advantage of innovations and have the highest degree of opinion leadership. And the fourth type is the majority who adopt innovations but do not attempt to influence other people.

With the key role of peers, participants were influenced to use social media as well as other factors such as social events that involved social media and the story of Arab Spring that fashioned social media to political and social use. It is not surprising if one knows the society construction in Saudi Arabia that gives peers and family huge value and influence. The family rule which is usually guided by the head of the house affects in the choices of the family members especially when these choices might have an impact on the name of family or it is history. Likewise, parents play a key role in child's choice of friends.

Uses and motivations

The study found that participants spend an average of 4 hours on social media per day

and half of the participants use social media very often for political and social purposes with high motivation of information seeking. More than 8 in 10 admitted using Twitter most often for political and social information. Participants tend to use social media for political and social information because it is easy to obtain and allows them to get the news faster especially when they are looking for specific political and social information. In Saudi Arabia, as mentioned in the review of literature, traditional media rarely talk about internal politics and never mention how the king behaves or discuss government decisions. Thus, participants found social media to have more credibility and was a fast way to get political news rather than through traditional media that were controlled by the government.

Entertainment is another motivation for Saudis to use social media. This information makes them excited and helps them relax because they use it as anecdotes in daily life. Also, Saudis use social media to guide them in social life as well as to use in arguments and discussions with others.

Level of involvement

Participants indicated social media helps them follow the news and allows them a way to share content about recent political and social issues. This content might come from their own thought or other material such as new articles or videos related to the issue first posted by someone else. They, however, do not use it to recruit people to take an action against the government even on issues that are personally important. And this is one explanation as to why Saudi Arabia was not affected significantly by the wave of Arab Spring (2011). Saudis themselves do not prefer taking physical actions in order to change the political and social environment in the kingdom.

Twitter, again, was the majority's first choice to use for political and social discussions followed by Facebook then YouTube. In fact, participants appeared to be very likely to engage in discussions with others on social media about social issues. These social issues are important to Saudis such as the right of women to drive, regional racism, and gender separation. These discussions usually involve people from the conservative party and extroverts. Indeed, social media has broken social, political and religious taboos that were in the past impossible for one to talk about or to take actions to change.

Moreover, corruption and international events were substantial issues that Saudis discuss on social media. People through social media try to expose corruption that involves government's development projects, corporation companies, and health care. On the other hand, it has become normal for Saudis to be involved in long discussions about many international events from the Arab revolutions, Palestine-Israel conflict, and the U.S. elections.

The researcher noticed that some participants said they avoid engaging in discussions about political and economic issues on social media. It is strange since they indicated obvious interest in using social media for political purposes. It might be, however, because there is confusion between "royal family" and "government" among Saudis since the king himself is the prime minister and many of his government members are from the royal family. Also, the absence of political cultivation in the education system and disruptions from traditional media have caused this confusion. Saudi media reduced different opinions into one opinion that makes any claim to extend political participation as a schism of nationalism. Similarly, the religious institution indicated that derailment can lead to sedition. Another reason could be the fear of authority. The study mentions earlier the story of the

YouTube show's producer who used aggressive language against the government and was jailed. Those using social media may be concerned that government is in fact watching what they say and will take action against those who criticize government.

Perception

The study revealed Saudis' perceptions toward using social media for political and social purposes as encouragement, improving society, affect government, and pessimism. Participants tend to agree that social media can be used to encourage involvement in political and social issues that Saudis face. These issues include human rights, corruption, and political reform which could push the government toward more changes and improvements. Indeed, the government in the past two years has had marked improvements. A national anti-corruption commission has been established, women have been nominated to hold high positions in public offices, and reformed local government and the judicial system. Another perception is social media improves society by helping people understand political and social issues better and somehow changes the way Saudis people deal with their own government. Government, on the other hand, makes officials more aware about what is going via social media. Participants agree that social media forces officials to do their job better and makes government think about the way they deal with people.

However, result indicated some pessimism about the effect of social media in Saudi Arabia to change things or that it might dismantle society. In fact, connecting the term "freedom" with "chaos" is in Saudi society's mentality. Still, new generation who grow up in the age of technology information receptivity has created his own theory of freedom that might look quite different from previous generations.

Conclusion

The story of the use of social media in developing nations so far is one of individual empowerment. People have fashioned social media to be a tool which helps them change and improve societies. Recently, there has been a lot of attention in Saudi Arabia about the role of social media in promoting political reforms and social improvement. Saudis have adopted social media tools to express their opinion toward social issues and political concerns. Thus, this study sought to observe the role and expectation of using social media in political and social environment in Saudi Arabia.

To conclude, Saudis appear to constantly use social media for political and social purposes. The advantage of social media tools, which cannot be controlled by government, is that they provide a place where people can speak freely, thus making these tools a favorite to Saudis. They are likely to use social media to improve the political environment and change the society positively.

Indeed, social media play a significant role in facilitating Saudis to engage in social and political activities. Respondents indicated social media platforms connect them with others on the basis of social issues and common political interests. Social media has become a powerful tool at attracting young people's attention to social concerns and political issues. However, it is important to note it is not admittedly directly pushing people to make change. Social media alone cannot make any changes even if people were to sit all day working on social media. But social media can provide a great opportunity for free expression and wild communication particularly among young people who try to make changes in their communities.

As for perceptions of social media in Saudi Arabia, the study suggest that it encourages social movements on many fronts such as political reforms, human rights, economic improvement, and anti-corruption. And as long as social media help people understand political and social issues better, society will improve, even if gradually. Government, on the other hand, is affected by social media and officials should become more careful about what is going on social media. However, those using social media in this sample have a pessimistic perception that it cannot change anything or would dismantle the society.

It is important to mention how useful studying the use of social media for political and social purposes in Saudi Arabia is. In fact, Saudis are heavy social media users in the region and there are no other studies that cover this area. This study, hopefully, will help social media activists, politicians, and future researchers since it provided a basic platform of who social media users are in Saudi Arabia. Especially, for those interested in using social media for political and social purposes. Overall, the Saudi political system and society structure will see changes in the coming years that can affect the media in general and social media in particular. Researchers should continue to study the relation of social media to these changes.

Limitations and future studies

This study has some limitations. As all participants came from an online audience, these results may not be generalized to the population of Saudi Arabia. Thus, using a probability sampling method in future studies about this topic could generate a more representative sample that could reveal more generalizable findings. Also, the lack of

capability to reach some Saudi resources (such as the population's demographics, Internet users, and social media researchers) has affected in some way the literature review section which weakened, consequently, the discussion in this paper.

Regarding the design of the survey, some participants indicated that the survey was long and others felt uncomfortable answering some questions that ask about political life in Saudi Arabia. As a result, 26.7 per cent did not complete the survey. Further studies might have a shorter questionnaire that asks indirect questions for more practical and beneficial results. Moreover, future studies might analyze the social and political content that Saudis post on social media and compare that with what this study found. Also, studying social media in Saudi Arabia that highly involved a social or political case could be helpful.

In fact, many of studies that examined the use of social media for political or social issues have focused on the populace but not on the role of governments, its officials, or other special audiences (educators, students, politicians, military, etc). It could be valuable to look at how these groups use social media and analyze their activities on social media. Furthermore, future study might identify other audiences or subject matter and how they use social media as well. There may be differences between countries in the Middle East and in other parts of the world.

APPENDIX A

Consent Form

Dear Participant,

This study is being conducted by **Abdulaziz Alothman** who is a master student of the Department of Journalism/College of Communications at Arkansas State University in order to better understand what people's perception of using social media in Saudi Arabia and the role of these tools play in social issues and political development process in the country. Your responses to interview questions are confidential and only available to the researcher and faculty supervisor. If you are Saudi citizen and at least 18 years old, you are eligible to participate in the survey.

To help protect your confidentiality, the surveys will not contain information that will personally identify you such as your name, email address or IP address. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only. The procedure involves filling an online survey that will take approximately 15 minutes. Please answer every question as accurately as possible.

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact the persons below:

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Dr. Gilbert Fowler
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This study has been reviewed and approved by Arkansas State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by federal law and University policies. If you have questions or concerns regarding this study please contact the Investigator or Advisor. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact **Kimberly Marshall** at 870-680-8568.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdrawal at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdrawal from participating at any time, you will not be penalized.

1. Which of these social networking sites do you have an active account in: (select all that apply.)

- Facebook Twitter YouTube Blogs Keek
 LinkedIn Instagram Google + Other:

2. Which of the following do you use most often for political/social information: (select only one.)

- Facebook Twitter YouTube Blogs Keek
 LinkedIn Instagram Google + Other:

3. I'm using the social media sites by:

- Smart phone Tap/iPad Laptop PC

4. How much time do you spend daily on social media sites:

- less than 2hr More than 2hr but less than 4hr More than 4hr but less than 6hr
 More than 6hr but less than 8hr More than 8hr

5. How much money do you spend on your personal internet services monthly?

S.R

6. When do you know about new social media sites has been established:

		S/Disagree	Disagree	Natural	Agree	S/Agree
a.	I am venturesome and eager to be the first to try new innovation					
b.	I adopt innovations and influence others to do so					
c.	I am willing to follow the lead of others in adopting innovations					
d.	I need to be convinced of the advantage of innovations by peers					
e.	I am suspicious of innovations					
f.	I am always looking for innovations					
g.	my opinion about innovations is respected by peers					
h.	I will adopt innovations but do not attempt to influence others to do so					
i.	I go along with innovations out of necessity					
j.	I am resistant to change					

7. How often do you use social media for political/social purpose:

- Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

8. I use social media sites for political/social information :

		S/Disagree	Disagree	Natural	Agree	S/Agree
a.	to help me decide about important things					
b.	to judge personal qualities of officials for unbiased viewpoints					
c.	to see what an official is doing in his/her position					
d.	to get the news faster					
e.	because information is easy to obtain					
f.	to find specific political/social information I'm looking for					
g.	to keep up with the main issues of the day					
h.	to share my social problems to get the help I needed					
i.	because it is entertaining					
j.	because it help me relax					
k.	because it exciting					
l.	to use as ammunition in arguments with others					
m.	to give me something to talk about with others					

9. Which of the following are you using for political/social discussions: (select all that apply.)

- Facebook Twitter YouTube Blogs Keek
 LinkedIn Instagram Google + Other:

10. When I'm using social media sites, I _____.

		Never	Seldom	Sometime	Often	Always
a.	keep up with society news					
b.	share links to political stories or articles for others to read					
c.	post my own thought or comments on political or social issues					
d.	encourage other people to take action on political/social issues that is important to me					
e.	share content related to political/social issues that was originally posted by someone else.					
f.	"Like/Favorite" material related to political/social issues that other have posted.					
g.	recruit people to get involved in society issues that matter to them.					
h.	keep up with political news in S.A					
i.	debate or discuss society/political issues with others.					
j.	finding other people who share their views about important society/political issues					

11. Which of the following has influenced you to adopt social media for political and social uses:

- Peers Social event Arab Spring Other:

12. How often do you engage in discussions with other people on social media about the following issues:

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
a. political issues					
b. social issues					
c. economic issues					
d. international events					
e. corruption					
f. unemployment					
g. entertainment					
h. sports					
i. shopping					

13. Social media sites in Saudi Arabia _____. (Please indicate YOUR agreement with the following)

	S/Disagree	Disagree	Natural	Agree	S/Agree
a. can lead the society to change positively					
b. help people understand political/social issues					
c. change the way people deal with the government					
d. change the way government deals with the people					
e. is the best place to discuss political/social issues					
f. is just new technology that people are impressed with					
g. seeks to dismantle the society					
h. push government to make more changes and improvement					
i. encourage social movements in human rights					
j. encourage social movements in political reforms					
k. encourage social movements against corruption					
l. encourage social movements in economic improvement					
m. show officials care about what is going on social media					
n. force officials to do their job better					
o. will not change anything					

14. age:

15. gender:

- Male
- Female

16. I'm living in:

- Riaydh
- Aseer
- Jouf
- Jazzan
- Hodod Shmaliah
- Haiel
- Najran
- Dammum
- Qussem
- Makka
- Maddina
- Outside the country.

17. Your level of education:

- Less than High School
- High School
- Diploma
- University
- Master
- PhD
- Other:

18. Where do you work:

- Government office
- Company
- Student
- Jobless
- Owen Business
- Other:

19. Economic status: (Monthly)

- Less than 3000 SR/Month
- 3000 - 4999 SR/Month
- 5000 - 7999 SR/Month
- 8000 - 11.999 SR/Month
- 12.000 - 14.999 SR/Month
- 15.000 - 20.000 SR/Month
- More than 20.000 SR/Month

APPENDIX B

عزيزي /عزيزتي

يهدف هذا البحث لمعرفة اتجاهات وعادات السعوديين في استخدامات مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي (تويتر، فيسبوك، يوتيوب،... الخ). وهو احد متطلبات حصولي على درجة الماجستير من جامعة ولاية اركنسا الحومية. إذا كنت سعودي وعمرك على الأقل ١٨ سنة، فأنت مؤهل للمشاركة في هذا الاستبيان.

يجب أن تعلم أن مشاركتك في هذا البحث تطوعية، بإمكانك اختيار عدم المشاركة أو الانسحاب في أي وقت بدون أي مسائلة أو جزاء . سوف تقوم بتعبئة استبيان الكتروني يستغرق بضعة دقائق فقط. رجاء اجب عن كل الأسئلة بدقة قدر الإمكان. وللعلم فإن جميع البيانات التي سوف تضعها سرية وللإستخدام الأكاديمي فقط. كما أننا لن نسألك عن البيانات الشخصية مثل اسمك، بريدك الإلكتروني، أو عنوان IP الخاص بك.

وللتأكيد على حماية حقوقك كمشارك، فإن هذه الاستبانة قد تمت مراجعتها واعتمادها من قبل (IRB) وهي مؤسسة اكاديمية تُعنى بحماية حقوق وسرية المشاركين في الأبحاث الاكاديمية في جامعة ولاية اركنسا الحكومية. وإذا اردت أن تتعرف أكثر على حقوقك كمشارك يمكنك التواصل مع كيمبرلي مارشل على هاتف رقم (+1870-680-8568).

إذا اردت معلومات أكثر عن هذه الدراسة يمكنك التواصل مع الباحث على الرقم 0565855088 أو من خلال البريد الإلكتروني :

abdulaziz.alothman@smail.astate.edu

كما أننا نقدر مساعدتك في نشر هذه الاستبانة بعد الإنتهاء من الاجابة عليها من خلال اعادة نشرها في مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بك.

شكراً لك،،،

اخوكم

عبدالعزیز العثمان

كلية الاعلام

جامعة ولاية اركنسا الحكومية

1. أي من مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي التالية يوجد لديك حساب مفضل؟ (يمكنك تحديد أكثر من خيار)

فيسبوك تويتر يوتيوب مدونة كيك
 لينكد ان انستقرام قوقل + اخرى

2. أي من مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي التالية تستخدمها عادة للحصول على معلومات اجتماعية او سياسية؟ (حدد خيار واحد فقط)

فيسبوك تويتر يوتيوب مدونة كيك
 لينكد ان انستقرام قوقل + اخرى

3. أنا استأخدم وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي (تويتر، فيسبوك، يوتيوب،... الخ) عن طريق (يمكنك تحديد أكثر من خيار):

هاتف محمول ايباد/تاب كمبيوتر محمول كمبيوتر شخصي

4. كم تقضي من الوقت يومياً على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي؟

أقل من ساعتين أكثر من ساعتين لكن أقل من ٤ ساعات أكثر من ٤ ساعات لكن أقل من ٦ ساعات
 أكثر من ٦ ساعات لكن أقل من ٨ ساعات أكثر من ٨ ساعات

5. كم تنفق من المال شهرياً على خدمات الإنترنت الشخصي؟

ريال سعودي

6. ماهو موقفك عندما تسمع عن موقع الكتروني جديد للتواصل الاجتماعي..... (رجاء حدد مستوى موافقتك في جميع العبارات التالية):

موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	اعتراض	اعتراض بشدة
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. مامدى استخدامك لمواقع التواصل الاجتماعي لأغراض اجتماعية أو سياسية؟

أبداً نادراً احياناً غالباً دائماً

8. انا استخدم مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي للحصول على معلومات اجتماعية/سياسية..... (رجاء حدد مستوى موافقتك في جميع العبارات التالية):

	ابدأ	نادرا	احيانا	غالبا	دائماً
أ					
ب					
ج					
د					
هـ					
و					
ز					
ح					
ط					
ي					
ك					
ل					
م					

9. أي من مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي التالية تستخدمها عادة في مناقشة القضايا الاجتماعية أو السياسية؟ (يمكنك تحديد أكثر من خيار)

- فيسبوك تويتر يوتيوب مدونة كيك
 لينكد ان انستقرام فوغل + اخرى

10. عندما استخدم مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، أنا..... (رجاء حدد مستوى موافقتك في جميع العبارات التالية):

	ابدأ	نادرا	احيانا	غالبا	دائماً
أ					
ب					
ج					
د					
هـ					
و					
ز					
ح					
ط					
ي					

11. مالذي اثر فيك لكي تستخدم مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي لأغراض سياسية او اجتماعية؟

- المقرَّبون مني حدث اجتماعي الربيع العربي اخرى

12. مامدى مشاركتك في نقاشات مع الاخرين خلال مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي في المواضيع التالية:

	ابدا	نادرا	احيانا	غالباً	دائماً
أ					
ب					
ج					
د					
هـ					
و					
ز					
ح					
ط					

13. مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي في السعودية (رجاء حدد مدى موافقتك في جميع العبارات التالية):

موافق بشدة	موافق	محايد	اعتراض	اعتراض بشدة	
					أ من الممكن ان تقود المجتمع لتغير ايجابي
					ب تساعد الشعب لفهم اكثر للقضايا السياسية والاجتماعية
					ج غيرت طريقة تعامل الشعب مع الحكومة
					د غيرت طريق تعامل الحكومة مع الشعب
					هـ هي المكان الانسب لمناقشة قضايانا السياسية والاجتماعية
					و هي فقط تقنية جديدة ابهرت الناس
					ز تسعى لتفكيك المجتمع
					ح تضغط على الحكومة لإحداث التغيير والتطور
					ط تشجع تحرك المجتمع تجاه حقوق الانسان
					ي تشجع المجتمع للمطالبة بتحسينات سياسية
					ك تحرك المجتمع تجاه قضايا الفساد
					ل تساعد في التحرك لتحسين الاقتصاد الوطني
					م اظهرت اهتمام المسؤولين تجاه ماينشر في هذه المواقع
					ن اجبرت المسؤولين على اداء افضل لاعمالهم
					س لن تقوم بغير شيء

14. العمر: سنة

15. الجنس: ذكر انثى

16. منطقة السكن:

الرياض مكة المكرمة المدينة المنورة الجوف القصيم حائل نجران
 المنطقة الشرقية عسير الحدود الشمالية تبوك جازان خارج المملكة

17. المستوى التعليمي

دون الثانوية ثانوية عامة دبلوم جامعي ماجستير دكتوراة

18. مجال العمل:

حكومي قطاع خاص اعمال حرة طالب عاطل متقاعد اخرى

19. الدخل الشهري:

١٥٠٠ - ٢٩٩٩ ريال ٣٠٠٠ - ٤٩٩٩ ريال ٥٠٠٠ - ٧٩٩٩ ريال ٨٠٠٠ - ١١,٩٩٩ ريال

١٢,٠٠٠ - ١٤,٩٩٩ ريال ١٥,٠٠٠ - ٢٠,٠٠٠ ريال اخرى ريال سعودي

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

ARKANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 2760
State University, AR 72467-2760
Phone:
870-972-2694
Fax:
870-972-2336
www.astate.edu
Jonesboro, AR

DATE: April 22, 2013

TO: Abdulaziz Alothman, master
FROM: Arkansas State University IRB

STUDY TITLE: [453405-1] - Social Media in Saudi Arabia: the Role and Expectations Toward Political and Social Development.*

IRB REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: April 22, 2013
EXPIRATION DATE: April 22, 2014
REVIEW TYPE: Exempt Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. Arkansas State University IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This study has received Exempt Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.

If you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Marshall at (870) 680-8568 or kmarshall@astate.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Amy Pearce

Amy Pearce, Ph.D.
IRB Chair and Associate Professor of Psychology
Office of Research & Technology Transfer

* This title was changed to what appear in the first page according to the thesis committee suggestion on July 2, 2013.

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