



Understanding Users Behavior in Social Networking in Saudi Arabia: A Survey

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Abstract— *With the widespread of smartphone in Saudi Arabia, social networking has become one the most frequently used websites over all kind. From the Middle East countries, Saudi Arabia has the largest number of mobile users on social media. There are many reasons for this: the ease and the availability of using it for everyone, different kind of news and knowledge sharing on it is faster, it is convenient to express opinion and ideas, One can also share their activities with other and so on. In this paper, we aim to study the behavior of users on mobile social network in Saudi Arabia. We plan to understand about the awareness of people using mobile social network. The present survey has been conducted covering most of the users from the kingdom of Saudi Arabia to study the behaviours on users on Social networks. Self- administered questionnaires was used for data collection. The study revealed majority users are depend on the social network to contact with their families. This result calls for more research about the usage of mobile social network in Saudi Arabia.*

Keywords— *Social networking, Mobile Social Networking, user behavior, Saudi Arabia*

I. INTRODUCTION

The World Bank estimates that over 50 per cent of the world's population has access to a mobile phone and by the end of 2017 the number of mobile phone users is forecast to reach 4.77 billion and 2.32 billion of these users use smartphone. The main purpose for phones was calling but now more and more people are using it to connect with the society and also for business usage. People become more interactive with the whole world. The number of Internet users has increased rapidly in the last years whereas it increased from 41% in 2010 to reach 74.9% by the end of Q3 2016, the number of internet users is about 24 million, its noted that the increase in the demand for Internet services and broadband was observed due to high use of social networking applications, video on demand (YouTube, snapchat) and gaming.[1] The number of Internet users in the Kingdom continues to rise rapidly, reaching about 24 million at the end of 2016, with a population penetration of 74.9%. In 2016, Saudi market is one of the most expanded marketing for phones. The statistics shows that 49 million phones are being used in the kingdom. 153% is the average of spreads for phones among users which means every user uses at least two phones [1]. Because people become more interactive as we mentioned before the facilities and variation of services provided by mobile phones became not sufficient for users. For that many users switched to smartphones. The usage of smartphone increases in all aspects of life. People are more interested in sharing their news by different media through social network.

The recent survey shows that 95% of the population in Saudi Arabia uses Smartphone and 85% of the populations are subscribed to mobile broadband people. One of the most active countries using social network daily in Middle East is Saudi Arabia. "Over 12 million active Facebook users and more than 53% of the users are active twitter users, making it the country with the highest twitter penetration worldwide. Even niche platforms such as Keek, Instagram and Path, are extremely popular in Saudi Arabia in comparison to other parts of the world" [2].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The young Saudi users are more frequently accessing the internet than older people and they are frequently using for chatting and entertainment [3]. Businessmen have a high reliance on the internet to complete their work and for commercial purposes. Other studies show that the majority of the people using the internet are men almost 85% and this is because of the fact that there are more facilities for men to access the internet from their work and even from coffee shops. Also, men spend the time on internet for most work purpose whereas women spend the time on different fun activities. Another interesting fact, internet has been affected other social technology like TV and has impact in users behavior like reading book and the use of chatting in social network effect the habit of talking on the phone [4].

The number of users who are using the social networking sites has rapidly increased in the Saudi Arabia due to the fact that the low average age of the country's population, Saudi Arabia ranks 7th globally in terms of individual accounts on Social media [5]. Saudi Arabia with no doubt is one of the main and largest markets for social network in the Middle East. Studies show Whatsapp and Facebook are the most popular social networking sites used in the kingdom. 97% of the social media users use Whatsapp daily in Saudi Arabia, and 81% use Facebook [5]. The ease of use and the opportunities to express their ideas and opinion, refers to the facilities of these social network where there is no limitation

to say what you think. Users of social network can use anonymities for more freedom of speech. Interestingly, Facebook has 12 million active users out of which 2 million users use their mobile to access the social network. 70% of the users of Social media use YouTube in KSA got more than 90 million videos that are watch daily. On the other hand twitter is the 5th most visited website in Saudi Arabia, The average Saudi users tweet 5 times a day [5].

An interesting point mentioned in 2016, Saudi Arabia is one of the fastest-growing Twitter markets in the world and Saudi 40% of twitter users in Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) [5]. Saudi Arabia has the highest Twitter penetration in the world, Studies by Omnicom Media Group (OMG) show social media habits of users in Saudi Arabia that 3 out of 7 are checking their social network before anything else. 54% of Saudis use social media as source for products and brands where only 23% use as tool for job search [10]. This percentage of time access the social network has some impact on the user’s behavior studies by [7] King Abdul Aziz University has illustrate the side effect of social network is the time that users spend on the internet that can be lead to isolated and losing of the normal social communication. 29% of users have been taking off visiting their relative because of the social network. An interesting studies show the reverse of impact on social behavior by [12] America survey explode people overall social network, they found the impact of social network has been increase the relationship and keep up close socially also, decrease the rate of socially isolate.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main goal of this research was to find out the user behavior in online social network particularly in Saudi Arabia and a survey was prepared with the main motive to ask questions to investigating the behavior of Saudi users in social network. The survey included both open-ended and close-ended questions. Survey Sample Population and Design: Most of the populations in the Saudi Arabia who access the internet are using the social media. We distributed our survey to all over the kingdom and received 2460 valid responses that were used for analysis.

Method of Data Collection: The survey was distributed through Google Forms. Collected data from the various source was compiled in an excel sheet and used for analysis. Users’ responses were obtained by publishing the survey through all social networks (WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and instgram). Ethical Considerations: As any research, participants were given the right to refuse completing the questionnaire. Also, participant’s privacy was respected and no personal information was collected. Data collected was only used for scientific research purpose and without intention to know any one’s personal behavior of usage of Social Networking in particular.

IV. RESULTS

For the data we collect it was found out that the majority of the people responding to the survey were female with 66% and the male respondents were 34% of the total survey carried out. The survey had questioner to even know about the respondents qualification 63% of the respondents were students and 13% were employees. 11% of the respondents were school students and 13% of the respondents were unemployed. The survey conducted shows that 99% of the respondents use smartphones to access the social media and only 1% of the respondents use laptops. The survey also highlights that 99% of the users used the social network from their home

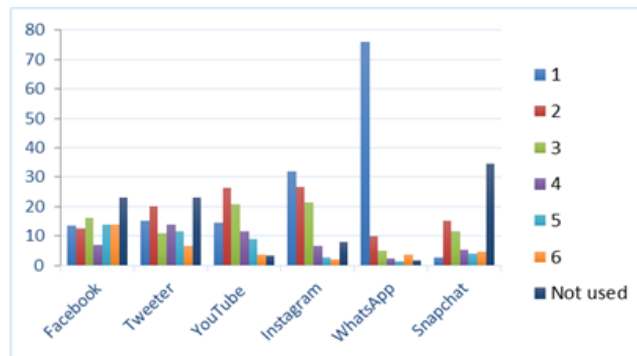


Fig 1: Social network usage

The result as depicted in Figure 1 highlights that the majority of the respondents use WhatsApp, and it is one the most popular social network with 76% of the respondents in favor of WhatsApp as their first order of preference. YouTube with 21.5% respondents is the second common social network for users and third mostly used is Instagram to be followed by Twitter. Snapchat was rarely used for most of respondents.

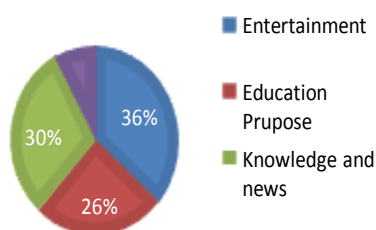


Figure 2: Percent the reasons do you use it

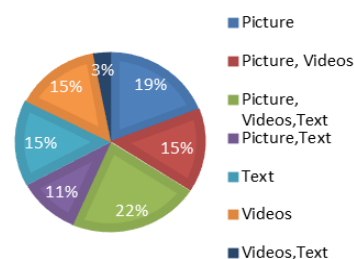


Figure 3: Percent the media liked

Responses in Figure 2, suggests that the majority of the respondents are using social network for entertainment with 36%, 30% of them use it for Knowledge and news and 26% of the respondents use it for Education purpose and the less 8% of the respondents use is to know new people. The other aspect which can be seen on the users interest in the media and the kind of media they like it was interesting to see from the responses that all forms of media is like by the respondents with 22% of users like all kind of media. 19% like only pictures where 15% prefer text and video. So, the like of media was equally preferred by the respondents.

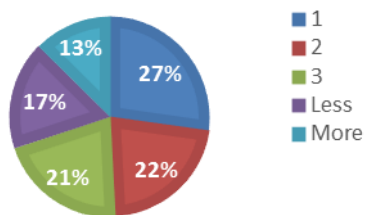


Figure 4: Percent of hours spend for work

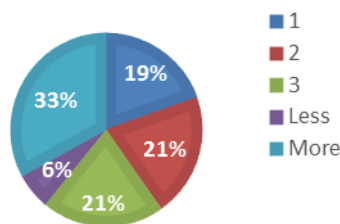


Figure 5: Percent of hours spend for fun

Another interesting aspect to find out how many hours do the user of social networking spend for work as shown in Figure 4, was that the 70% of the respondents use social networking for less than 3 hours in a day, and 13% use it more than 3 hours and 17% use it less than 3 hours in a day. For the question how many hours do you spend for fun 54% of the respondents spend more than 2 hours for fun.

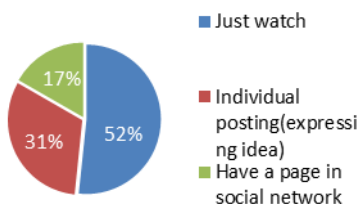


Figure 6: Percent of activation in social media

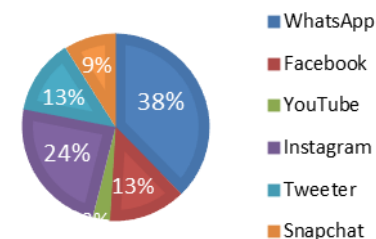


Figure 7: Percent interested to write a profile in

Here is almost of users see themselves not active in social network where 52% are just watching. In the privacy part, we wanted to investigate where people interesting for writing their profiles in social network. The majority was for WhatsApp. 76% liked to introduce their real personal information in social network.

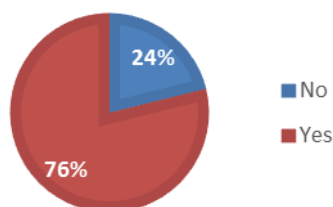


Figure 8: Percent use personal information

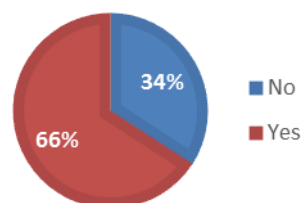


Figure 9: Percent think social network breaks privacy

The Figure 8 shows that 76% of the respondents use their real personal information on the social networking sites and 24% don't use their real information. When asked on a question on their opinion as shown in Figure 9 about the thinking of the users on social network does social networking breaks the users privacy almost 66% of the respondents believed the social network halts their privacy. Unlike 34% thought their privacy is secure within social network.

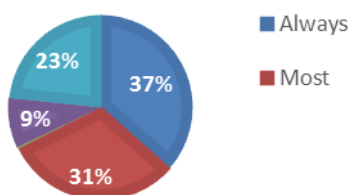


Figure 10: Percent dependent on to communicate family

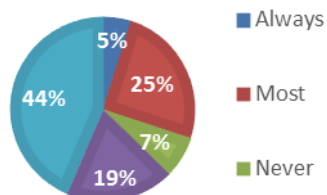


Figure 11: Percent trust the news in social media

An important aspect is the communication in between family through social media. So, we asked users how much they depend on social network to interact with their families. 37% are always sharing their news with relatives. The

above Figure 10 shows all users rely on social network in somehow to communicate with their families. So, no one chose 'never'.

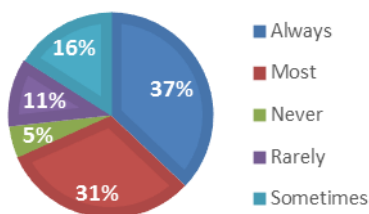


Figure 12: Percent check for truthfulness before sharing news

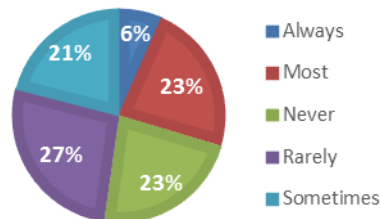


Figure 13: Percent trust URL in social media

As shown in Figure 11, In response to the news published in social network 5% always trust it and 44% of the respondents trust it sometime and only a mere percent of 7% never trust the news published on the social networks. Further as shown in Figure 12, when asked a question on do you make sure about the truthfulness of the news 68% of the respondents do check for the truthfulness of sharing news with others through social networking. We also wanted to investigate whether users trust any URL they received in social media. As shown in Figure 13, there were 27% of them rarely open it and 23% of the respondents never open the URL, which shows that the people are aware of not opening any unrecognized website or URL's shared on social networking.

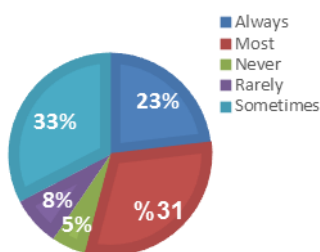


Figure 15: Social network as a platform for knowledge

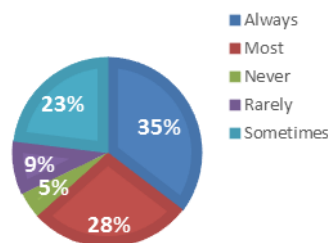


Figure 16: Social network makes you closer to people

Referring the improvement of social network as shown in Figure 14, 33% of users believe it is sometimes a good platform to increase their knowledge. Although, majority of them thought social media increased their bounds with others. 5% their relation did not improved as shown in Figure 15.

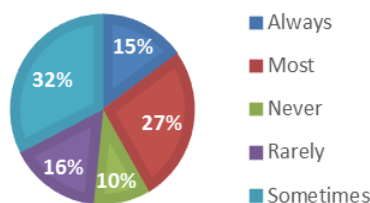


Figure 16: Percent social network effect your opinion

An interesting point, social network do not have any impacts in 10% unlike 32% of them believed it could change their opinion as shown in Figure 16

V. RESULTS

As can be seen from the result, most of the survey results put forward by get knows research but we were definitely able to find another interesting point. An important concern among the behavior of users in online social network is their arrangement of using the social network. WhatsApp got the highest percentage where 51% who make it the first social network used it for more than 3 hours. The second choice for users was YouTube. 27% of its users spend more than 3 hours. Although, most of users who have a page to share with other or who write in his/her personal page distribute news, knowledge, or photos. This is not surprising where the most second reason for using the social network is for knowledge and news. Also, 67% of them liked this media.

Another worthy point, it is the privacy. The majority believed the social network breaks their privacy. But still nearly everyone likes to introduce their real personal information in their profile. As we know social network has been one of the most popular platforms for publishing news. Its facilities provide easy way for people to share the news. Unfortunately, only 37% of users make sure of news before share with others. An interesting point, it is how much people depend on social network for communicating and knowledge. Expectedly, most of them rely on social media to know their relatives' news. Else, the majority see it as not always a good platform for information.

VI. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we describe the behavior of the users in the using social networking sites for all kind of them from the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According to the survey, we found that most of the users are interesting in social network because of the different kind of media sharing from knowledge, news and several of videos and pictures. Similarly users are not activating frequently on social network to share their own staff, most of users thought whether social network breaks their privacy for that we found rarely of them used their real information on writing their profile . We observe another behavior in social network; the majority of the users are depending on it to communicate with their family and sharing their new with them. Is social network a good site to relay on to communicate with relative and sharing personal information? Does social network break user's privacy? The results of this paper call for more in-depth research on user's behavior in social media. We recommend that users of social network needs to be more awareness of using it and be careful of providing their personal information.

VII. FUTURE WORK

We recommend that users of mobile social network needs to be more aware of using it in a proper way and to be careful of providing their personal information. They have to be sensitive to the security issues. We intend to propose a methodology that will enable the user to know how they can prevent the usage of their personal information when it comes to using them on social networking so that, others cannot access their personal information

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