

Investigation of the Psychological and Sociological Consequences of Facebook Usage towards Saudi Arabia University Students

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Abstract : Prompted by the widespread saturation of Facebook usage in Saudi Arabia, among university students to socialize with online members, this study investigated the usage, self-presentation, psychological and sociological consequences of the Facebook social networking site among undergraduate students in Saudi Arabia. The problem statement of this study was addressed by answering the following questions: 1) What motivation do undergraduate students have for joining Facebook? 2) How do undergraduate students consume Facebook? 3) In what condition do undergraduate students need Facebook? 4) How do undergraduate students manage their self-presentation via Facebook? 5) What are the experiences obtained by the undergraduate students from Facebook psychologically? 6) What are the experiences obtained by the undergraduate students from Facebook sociologically? 7) How have Facebook activities affected the lifestyle of the undergraduate students?. These questions were answered by analyzing in-depth interview data collected from twenty male undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 24 years selected from King Saud University (KSU) and King Khalid University (KKU) Saudi Arabia. Using thematic analysis, informants data were coded 'R1 to R20', validated and was transcribed to minimize error from translating into the study items from Arabic back to the English Language. Using purposive sampling method, informant perspective within the research context were explored. Data collection was confined to students' motivations for engaging in online activities, self-presentation, psychological and sociological consequences to their everyday life was investigated based on the theoretical and philosophical perspective underpinnings media and gratification paradigm and social influence theory. The findings contributed to the development of important study themes that supported the development of a new research framework. Based on the analysis, all the study questions were answered. The findings of this study showed that the students use Facebook for the purpose of interacting with others, getting information and as knowledge sources. In terms of self-presentation, this study revealed that the students portray themselves in the real and not fake image while socializing with others. Psychological and sociological consequences from the usage of Facebook are recorded ranging from cheerful to stress and from loneliness to having many friends. As a conclusion, this study conclusively drew that Facebook is a very persuasive medium of communication among the University students in Saudi Arabia that bridges across socio-cultural boundaries and unite students to interact as a community.

Keywords : Saudi Arabia, Facebook, undergraduate students, social network

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