Perceptions of Female Faculty Members at King Abdulaziz University on Social Media as a Teaching Tool: Challenges and Best Practices

Alaa Kutbi
University of Windsor

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

Recommended Citation
Kutbi, Alaa, "Perceptions of Female Faculty Members at King Abdulaziz University on Social Media as a Teaching Tool: Challenges and Best Practices" (2020). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 8322. https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/8322

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

By

Alaa Kutbi

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the Faculty of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2020

© 2020 Alaa Kutbi
Perceptions of Female Faculty Members at King Abdulaziz University on Social Media as a Teaching Tool: Challenges and Best Practices

By

Alaa Kutbi

APPROVED BY:

Y. Liu, External Examiner
Southern Illinois University

W. Park
School of Social Work

R. McQuirter
Brock University

C. Beckford
Faculty of Education

Z. Zhang, Advisor
Faculty of Education

January 24, 2020
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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

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

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

ABSTRACT

In the age of technology, everything is much faster and easier than it was in the past, but more complicated. The internet is one of the most powerful technologies of our time. Communication technology, for example, became one of the inventions that humans interact with the most, and that could be due to the urgent need to communicate with others. That could be why social media became so successful and popular among members of society. However, researchers have indicated that most of the students in Saudi Arabia are not experiencing the use of social media as a part of their formal education. The results of this mixed-methods study reveal that female Saudi faculty members have positive attitudes toward the use of social media as a teaching tool. Moreover, social media advantages and challenges influenced this attitude toward the use of social media as a teaching tool. The study also reveals that female Saudi faculty members have a low understanding of social media best practices and guidelines. Finally, the study findings suggest that understanding social media best practices could impact how faculty members’ use social media and empower female Saudi faculty members.

*Keywords*: E-learning, social media, learning technology.
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Madani, my daughters, Lana and Toleen, and my son, Faris. I give my deepest expression of love and appreciation for the encouragement that you gave and the sacrifices you made during this graduate program. Thank you for your support and company during late nights of typing. Thank you for encouraging me throughout the challenges of graduate studies and life. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this long process. I am truly thankful for having you in my life. This work is also dedicated to my parents, Ibraheem and Zainab, who have always believed in me and loved me unconditionally and whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Zuochen Zhang, for continuous support during my doctoral studies and research, for his patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge. His guidance helped me throughout this research and the writing of this thesis. I cannot imagined better advisor and mentor for my doctoral studies.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee, Dr. Wansoo Park, Dr. Clinton Beckford, and Dr. Ruth McQuirter, for their support, encouragement, insightful comments, and hard questions.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, my husband, and my kids for supporting me spiritually throughout my life.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY ................................................................. iii
ABSTRACT .................................................................................................. iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ........................................................................... vi
LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................... ix
LIST OF FIGURES ....................................................................................... x
LIST OF APPENDICES ............................................................................. xii

CHAPTER 1 .................................................................................................. 1
INTRODUCTION .......................................................................................... 1
  Rationale ................................................................................................. 1
  Significance of the Study ........................................................................ 5
  Perspective and Worldview ................................................................. 8
  Background Information and Purpose of the Study ......................... 14
  Research Questions .............................................................................. 18
  Theoretical Framework ........................................................................ 18

CHAPTER 2 ................................................................................................. 24
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ....................................................... 24
  Social Media in Education ................................................................... 24
  Faculty Perceptions on Social Media ................................................. 27
  Challenges That Limit or Hinder the Use of Social Media as a Teaching Tool .... 29
  Social Media Best Practices ............................................................... 38

CHAPTER 3 ................................................................................................. 46
METHODOLOGY ........................................................................................ 46
  Research Design .................................................................................... 46
  Research Plan ......................................................................................... 52
  Participants ............................................................................................ 54
  Data Collection ....................................................................................... 55
  Data Analysis ........................................................................................ 60

CHAPTER 4 ................................................................................................. 63
RESULTS ..................................................................................................... 63
  Quantitative Data Findings ................................................................. 63
  Qualitative Data Findings ................................................................. 63
  Survey Results and Findings .............................................................. 64
  .................................................................................................................. 73
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

Interview Results and Findings................................................................. 80
CHAPTER 5 .................................................................................................. 99
DISCUSSION............................................................................................... 99
Discussion ................................................................................................. 99
The Attitudes of Female Saudi Faculty Members toward the Use of Social Media as a Teaching Tool ........................................................................... 101
Knowledge and Understanding of Female Saudi Faculty Members Regarding Social Media Best Practices .................................................................................... 110
The Impact of the Comprehensive Understanding of Social Media Best Practices on the Agency and the Empowerment of Female Saudi Faculty Members .................. 113
How Female Saudi Faculty Members Perceive the Impact of Their Modeling of Social Media Best Practices in Their Teaching on Students’ Social Media Use .......... 116
Limitations ................................................................................................. 118
CHAPTER 6 .................................................................................................. 120
CONCLUSION ............................................................................................. 120
Conclusions ............................................................................................. 120
Ethical Issues ............................................................................................ 122
Recommendations for Future Studies .......................................................... 122
REFERENCES ............................................................................................ 124
APPENDIX .................................................................................................... 143
VITA AUCTORIS .......................................................................................... 174
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO THEIR FACULTIES .......... 64
TABLE 2. MEMBERSHIP IN SOCIAL MEDIA ................................................................. 66
TABLE 3. NUMBER OF YEARS PARTICIPANTS HAD THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS ......................................................................................................................... 67
TABLE 4. PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA IN EDUCATION .................................................................................................................. 71
TABLE 5. PARTICIPANT AWARENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ....................................... 75
TABLE 6. PARTICIPANT UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL MEDIA ............................... 77
TABLE 7. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO THEIR FACULTIES ......... 80
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. THE EARLIEST TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL (DAVIS ET AL. AS CITED IN ALWAHAISHI & SNASEL, 2013)........................................................................................................ 22

FIGURE 2. CHECKLIST FOR ONLINE INTERACTIVE LEARNING (THE HANOVER RESEARCH COUNCIL, 2009).................................................................................................................. 41

FIGURE 3. THE SEQUENTIAL EXPLANATORY DESIGN (WU, 2011, P.13)........................................... 48

FIGURE 4. VISUAL MODEL OF MIXED METHODS SEQUENTIAL EXPLANATORY DESIGN PROCEDURES. .................................................................................................................. 50

FIGURE 5. PARTICIPANTS’ AGES. ........................................................................................................ 65

FIGURE 6. PARTICIPANTS’ ACADEMICS RANKS .............................................................................. 65

FIGURE 7. PARTICIPANTS’ ACADEMIC DEGREES. ............................................................................. 66

FIGURE 8. THE AMOUNT OF DAILY TIME PARTICIPANTS SPEND ON SOCIAL MEDIA. .................................................................................................................................................. 68

FIGURE 9. MEMBERSHIP IN SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS................................................................. 69

FIGURE 10. PARTICIPANTS’ OPINIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN EDUCATION ................................................................................................................................. 70

FIGURE 11. KNOWLEDGE OF HOW SOCIAL MEDIA WORKS......................................................... 70

FIGURE 12. SHARING ON SOCIAL MEDIA ...................................................................................... 72

FIGURE 13. PROFESSIONAL/ACADEMIC MEMBERSHIP ON SOCIAL MEDIA .................. 72

FIGURE 14. PARTICIPANTS’ PROFESSIONAL/ACADEMIC ACCOUNTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA .................................................................................................................................................. 73
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

FIGURE 15. PARTICIPANTS’ KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES IN EDUCATION. ................................................................. 74

FIGURE 16. PARTICIPANTS’ OPINIONS ON THE EXISTENCE OF CLEAR GUIDELINES ON HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA IN AN EDUCATION AT KAU. .................. 74

FIGURE 17. THE RELIABILITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA ................................................................. 76

FIGURE 18. THE KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS ............................................... 76

FIGURE 19. PARTICIPANTS’ OPINIONS ON THE EXISTENCE OF GUIDELINES AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA. ........................................... 77

FIGURE 20. THE IMPACT OF TEACHERS ON STUDENT USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA . 78

FIGURE 21. THE IMPACT UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES ON STUDENTS’ USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA. ......................................................... 79
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SURVEY CONSENT FORM & LETTER OF INFORMATION ............... 143

APPENDIX B: SURVEY ......................................................................................... 151

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM & LETTER OF INFORMATION .... 163

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ................................................................. 172
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Rationale

In 2008, I came to Canada with my husband, who wanted to pursue higher studies in the field of engineering. At that time, I did not think that I would reach this far. However, when I got the opportunity to study in a master’s program with a scholarship from the Saudi government, in Windsor, Ontario, I welcomed this incredible opportunity. I started preparing by taking undergraduate courses in communication, media, and film. Because my bachelor’s degree is in Child Studies, I needed these courses to pursue my master’s in Communication.

My aspirations in the areas of communication and media began with my fascination with how media shapes and manipulates the news and ideologies that go on to shape society. Furthermore, I was interested in examining how such ideologies affect our understanding of the world. For example, when people watch a news channel or even read the news on the internet, they can misinterpret it. Of course, in some cases, people look beyond the hidden meaning and question what they read and hear. This mental process depends on many factors, such as language. News websites use language to manipulate readers and suggest certain views. In addition to a website’s language, the ways reporters encode their news affect the ways consumers decode it. This means, a reporter’s word choices can change the whole meaning of an event or subject on which he or she wants to shed light (Carpenter & McLuhan, 1956).

During my first year of studies in Canada, I experienced something different than I had experienced during my five years of studies in Saudi Arabia. It was a new experience for me to
observe the way in which some Canadian university instructors integrate social media into their classes, and the use of social media made my educational journey pleasant and highly interesting. Because of this growing fascination, I started to consider the impacts of media in Saudi Arabia. One year later, I applied for an instructor position at the female section of King Abdulaziz University in the Department of Communication and Media, a department that had only recently been established in Saudi universities. King Abdulaziz University was established in 1967 as a national university tasked with spreading higher education in the western area of Saudi Arabia. The university includes a number of branches that are located in the western region of the country. According to The Times Higher Education website (2018), King Abdulaziz University ranked in 1st place among Middle Eastern and North African universities. In 2016, the Saudi Ministry of Education announced that King Abdulaziz University had more than 5,490 Saudi faculty members (3,186 females and 2,308 males) 31,554 students, and 14 faculties (KAU, 2017). In January 2019, about 840 female faculty members moved from King Abdulaziz University to the newly established university the University of Jeddah (UJ, 2019).

As a Saudi faculty member in the Communication and Media Department and based on my experiences in both Saudi Arabia and Canada, I started to question Saudi universities’ reliance on traditional ways of teaching. According to Linah Sofi (2015), “the Saudi Arabian classroom is still teacher-centered … English language teaching [for example] is still mostly done through lectures. A communicative approach is rarely observed in public classrooms” (p. 10). In her paper, Sofi discusses her experience with learning English in a Saudi public school. She said,

As a student in Saudi Arabia, learning English in school was always a dull task. We sat in teacher-centered classrooms, and we had to receive instruction in Grammar-Translation
method. There was not any opportunity for students to interact with each other. The students were not given the chance to express themselves. We all had to listen to the teachers and repeat after teachers and agree with their opinions. Then we had to go home and do the homework accordingly. Therefore, the linguistic and communicative competence of most students in English was below average. (2015, p 30)

Incorporating multiple forms of media, such as movies, graphic novels, audio, video, songs, and other online activities, might be successful in turning traditional classrooms into communicative and student-centered classrooms (Sofi, 2015).

Social media components are considered multimedia content. “Multimedia is the term used to describe two or more types of media combined into a single package- usually denoting a combination of some or all of the following: video, sound, animation, text, and pictures” (Moga, n.d., para. 1). Social media, on the other hand, are the websites and applications that transmit the information using multiple types of media. According to Mathew Hudson (2017), social media is a series of websites and applications that are “designed to allow people to share content quickly, efficiently and in real-time” (para. 1). One of the most significant advantages of social media is that it connects people worldwide. Social media applications enable interaction between groups of people, regardless of their locations. Online interaction and discussion are important aspects of social media platforms. Social media applications are software designed by people with skills and specializations, allowing people to communicate and interact about ideas, themes, or goals. We can also describe social media as connecting groups of individuals that are often called friends who are bound together and share ideas. Unlike traditional classrooms that are designed for students who have time in their daily schedule, social media, as a form of e-learning, allows students to take classes in their own free time “without being forced to attend lessons at specific
times” (Brown, 2017, para. 6). The goal of social media Web technologies is to connect these individuals and take advantage of the Web’s ability to break the barriers of time and space (Oada, 2014).

According to Parslow, Lundqvist, Williams, Ashton, and Evans (2008), social media platforms like Facebook are “filling a key role in learning, by facilitating the formation of social connections based around social groupings rather than an educational subject” (p. 9). They added that these social groups are likely to create students “who are more motivated and engaged with the subject” (Parslow et al., 2008 p. 9). Therefore, researchers argue that social media platforms like Facebook are supporting “peer tutoring in ad hoc transient communities” (Parslow et al., 2008, p. 9).

On the one hand, social media enables users to communicate and interact with each other through messages, videos, and many other ways. The users’ common interests and goals unite them and bring them together, and that creates online communities where they can communicate and interact with each other and share their knowledge and ideas (Kutbi, 2015). On the other hand, traditional classrooms allow students to have a one-on-one experience with their teachers and exposes students “to practical skills that can be beneficial to their future career” (Brown, 2017, para. 2). According to Echo Brown (2017), “traditional education often provides a hands-on experience to all students who need to learn from practical lessons. It often has the necessary facilities and equipment for practical studies and activities” (para, 11). Traditional schools are great options for students who are looking for hands-on experiences or those taking chemistry, biology, dentistry, nursing, medicine, or athletics course.

Social media is considered to be a different and more advanced learning environment than the traditional learning environment. It provides open and unlimited resources that mainly
depend on communication and participation. It also gives a broad horizon for the exchange of experiences and experiments that can be used to foster innovation and creativity among students. In fact, researchers have found that social media provides an appropriate environment for modern education that meets the needs of the individual in a way that is consistent with the global technological revolution (Oada, 2014).

Having been in Canada for almost 10 years, I did not know about the latest updates in Saudi universities, so I talked to a faculty member who was considered to be an advocate of the use of computer-based technology in education. That enlightening conversation with Dr. Noora Al-Malki, former head of the e-learning program at King Abdulaziz University, revealed the poor use of social media in Saudi universities, and I felt the urge to explore the reasons for this. I wanted to do my best to come up with solutions to overcome any challenges that made faculty members reluctant to make use of social media as a teaching tool. Having said that, it is important to point out that statistics indicate that 90% of Saudi faculty members have active social media accounts (Al-Sharqi, Hashim, & Kutbi, 2016). Thus, I explored faculty members’ understandings of social media best practices because I believe that this knowledge is necessary for the successful use of social media as a teaching tool (Sun et al., 2008).

**Significance of the Study**

The latest statistics released by the Saudi Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) in 2019, reveal that “the usage of social media in the Kingdom in 2018 rose swiftly” (Mohammad, 2019, para. 3). The CITC report revealed that Saudis “in the age group of 20-24 years are the largest bloc with 98.70 percent of them using social media, followed by the age group of 25-29 with 98.10 percent” (Mohammad, 2019, para. 6). Because statistics show how widespread social media is among Saudi youth, I was interested in studying the use of social
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

media as an educational tool. Also, social media has not only social, educational, and personal benefits but also cost benefits, especially considering the economic situations in the world and the world’s limited resources. According to Kamy Anderson (2017), the main reason for switching from traditional classrooms to e-learning is the cost reduction advantage, as research shows that e-learning has much lower costs related to travel, physical classrooms, and learning materials (Anderson, 2017). E-learning is also considered eco-friendly, especially when it comes to saving on the use of paper, fuel for travel and energy (Reckerd, 2016). As a matter of fact, “A study by the Open University found that on average, the production and provision of distance learning courses consumed nearly 90 percent less energy and produced 85 percent fewer CO2 emissions per student than conventional campus-based university courses” (Kearney, 2016, para. 11).

Social media’s cost reduction advantage is important for Saudi Arabia because oil prices dropped in 2014, and this heavily impacted the Saudi economic system (Brinded, 2016). It is well known that Saudi Arabia’s economy is heavily dependent on oil revenues. According to Zach Schreiber, CEO of Point State Capital, Saudi oil prices are “currently trading at around $44, down from above $100 a few years ago” (Bryan, 2016, para. 3). As a result of the oil price crash, Schreiber indicates that Saudi Arabia set a plan to “wean itself off oil by 2030” (Sheffield, 2016, para. 7). The Saudi government has a new vision; it aims to foster non-oil income enterprises. According to the Saudi government, the Saudi Vision 2030 goes beyond replenishing sources of income that have weakened or preserving what [Saudis] have already achieved. [Saudis] determined to build a thriving country in which all citizens can fulfill their dreams, hopes and ambitions. Therefore, [Saudi government] will not rest until [their] nation is a leader in providing opportunities for all through
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

education and training, and high-quality services such as employment initiatives, health, housing, and entertainment. (Vision 2030, para. 9)

Using social media as a teaching tool can contribute to the cost-cutting strategy that the Saudi government wants to use. By using social media in education, university instructors can benefit from all the free services and resources that social media offers. Moreover, students and instructors can communicate and submit their work without the need to drive to the university classroom. This could reduce some transportation expenses for students and instructors.

Despite the fact that there are many statistics that show the widespread of social media usage among Saudi youth, when it comes to the use of social media as a teaching tool in Saudi Arabia, statistics show something different. Al-Sharqi, Hashim, and Kutbi (2016) conducted a study on the use of social media as a teaching tool among the faculty members at King Abdulaziz University. This study revealed that approximately 70% of faculty members never used social media in teaching while 24% used it only in one course in their entire teaching careers (Al-Sharqi, Hashim, & Kutbi, 2016). These numbers indicate that additional research should be conducted to investigate the lack of social media use in the Saudi education system and the challenges that limit its use.

Social media is very important for university instructors and students because it is used to create learning communities that provide support, opportunities, and information to students and communities members. Students can use this information for development and personal growth (Alemán & Wartman, 2009; Nagele, 2005). Social media is also used to deliver courses, and it enhances learning and teaching with academic support services, such as tutoring, feedback, and mentoring (Rosen & Nilson, 2008).
In her research paper, “Twitter as a Teaching Practice to Enhance Active and Informal Learning in Higher Education: The Case of Sustainable Tweets” Eva Kassens-Noor wrote the following:

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

The results of her study revealed “potential opportunities and pitfalls that Twitter could bring to the e-learning community in higher education” (Kassens-Noor, 2012, p. 9).

**Perspective and Worldview**

My critical theory perspective emerged from my understanding of the Marxist theory. According to this theory society is divided into two classes. The first class is the ruling class or the bourgeoisies, and the second class is the working class or the proletariat (Trainer, 2017). According to Bowens et al. (2013), “Each class is defined by its relationship to the major means of production” (p. 1). The ruling class, which is the minority in society, is made up of people who own all the properties of industries and commerce, such as factories, companies, banks, and retail stores. Politicians and judges are also part of the ruling class. As I said before, and according to Karl Marx’s theory, the ruling class is a small group in society. Therefore, their names are usually well known.

The working class is “all the people who create all the goods and services in capitalist society. These workers are only able to survive by working for someone else” (Bowens et al., 2013, p. 2). The ruling class gets its profit by exploiting the labor of the working class. In other
words, the working class, which is made up of most of the people in a society, works for the elite ruling class. The elites control the wages, working conditions, and most importantly, social ideology. The ruling class includes factory owners, telecommunications providers, bankers, company owners, politicians, and judges. They want to maintain the status quo and their power, so they try to control people’s ideologies by using television commercials and news, for example, to convince the working class that gaining more money will make them happy. The ruling class convinces the working class that they need to work hard to gain as much money as possible. The ruling class also uses news stations to achieve its agendas (Allmer, 2015).

As I said earlier, my understanding of Marxism heavily influenced my critical theory perspective. According to Creswell (2007) “Critical theory perspectives are concerned with empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender” (p. 27). Critical theory perspectives also involve analyzing society to envision new possibilities (Creswell, 2007). Critical theory is related to challenging a society’s ideology and trying to change it. This ideology, as I believe, is imposed by the society’s ruling class. With their power, the elites can manipulate the value system, beliefs, perceptions, and morals of a society so that their views become acceptable as cultural norms. This unconscious acceptance justifies the social, political, and economic status quo of the ruling class.

Traditional Marxists believe that the education system works in the interests of the ruling class. “According to the Marxist perspective on education, the system performs three functions for these elites: reproduces class inequality, legitimates class inequality, [and] it works in the interests of capitalist employers” (the Revisesociology, 2015). In other words, Marxists consider teachers as a tool to promote the elites’ ideas and beliefs. In Marxists’ view, the education
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

system’s goal is to brainwash the new generation with the ideology of the ruling class (the Revisesociology, 2015).

However, with the emergence of the internet and Web 2.0, the power structures have changed. Thomas Allmer (2015) states that social media websites are “sites of power struggles, and are able to support both the commons and the commodification of the commons. New information technologies appear as both instruments for the circulation of commodities and means for the circulation of struggles.” (p. 150) In other words, social media are fields of conflict in this power struggle between the ruling class and the working class. Social media is able to support both the elite and the public. It is a tool used for exerting power, domination, and counter-power (Allmer, 2015). In social media, both sides have the chance to obtain power. Yet, I believe that social media can shift the power from the ruling class’ hands to the working class’ hands. Social media is a technology that facilitates information sharing, communication, and online discussion among its users. Ordinary public users are, in many cases, the content generators. Thus, to some extent, they can create and share any content they wish to publish. Social media enables the working class or middle class to gain some control over media production (Fers, 2012). People are not passive audience members anymore; they are active audience members when they contribute to generating news and knowledge, and most importantly, they can make a difference. What happened in Egypt during the Arab Spring revolution in 2011 is a great example of the power shifting from the ruling class to the working class. According to Doaa Abdo and Zeinab Zaazou (2018), all Egyptians people wanted at that time was “better salaries and working conditions” (p. 65). During that time “the rich
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

became richer and the poor suffered more from poverty and lacking essentials” (Abdo & Zaazou, 2018, p. 65). Egyptian people were miserable because they believed that there was no hope left for a better future for them and their children.

The following is true according to Karl Marx’ theory:

An economic revolution would occur, due to the unequal distribution of wealth.
According to Marx, the upper class has the wealth and power in its hand and they are the one who exploit the lower class. This eventually leads to certain problems, foremost among them poverty and income equality (Abdo, Zaazou, 2018, p. 66).

The use of Twitter by the Egyptian protesters to communicate and inform the international world of what was happening in Egypt was surely a successful strategy that led to many important changes in Egypt. Researchers argued that social media applications like Twitter and Facebook “had transformed the dynamics of movements organizing in the Arab world, making these revolutions possible” (Clarke & Koçak, 2019, para. 2). Because social media platforms played huge role in the Arab Spring revolutions, the Egyptian and other Arab Spring uprisings gave this revolution names such as “Facebook revolutions” and “Twitter revolutions” (Clarke & Koçak, 2019). Moreover, Clarke and Koçak (2019) believe that when social media is put into the hands of tech-savvy activists, it can serve “as a vital tool for seeking change, freedom and justice” (para. 15).

Finally, after 18 days of protests that unfolded all over Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, former Egypt president, stepped down after 30 years in power. In 2012, Egyptians voted in their first free presidential elections (El Mallakh, 2017).

When I chose to conduct my doctoral research in the area of social media as a teaching tool in the female section at King Abdulaziz University, I had the great potential of social media
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

platforms as teaching tools in my mind. Based on my experience, research, and observations, I know that Saudi universities still heavily depend on traditional teaching methods. I am not saying that traditional teaching methods are ineffective, but I believe that university faculties should not neglect or ignore the benefits that can be obtained from the use of social media platforms as educational tools.

I decided to make some changes and cast light on the great potential of the use of social media as an educational tool. This study aims to change the dominant thought in the Saudi community that the only way to learn is through lectures and textbooks. I aim to encourage Saudi faculty members and students to think critically about what they read. They should not take what they hear or read as absolute fact, especially these days, and because of that, I believe in the importance of media literacy and social media best practices for faculty members and students.

Because people often create media to influence us in particular ways, the need to be informed of media literacy and social media best practices is vital. Media literacy teaches us, as readers, viewers, or consumers, about the need to view the media contents “objectively, with the goal to find out or analyze what is being presented” (Moffat, 2019, para. 3).

According to Moffat (2019) as a media-literate viewer one must be “able to read or view the media and decipher what messages are being conveyed. Analyze the images to decide whether they present a fair depiction of both sides of the argument” (para. 4). Moffat added that it is important for us to “consider the source of the information and ask ourselves what the person’s objective is. This can clarify whether it is a reliable source or not” (2019, para. 4).

I chose to focus on studying female faculty members. There were many reasons for this decision. First, Saudi universities are gender-segregated, which means they have separate sections for females and males. As a female researcher, it is easier for me to gain access to the
female section than the male section of the university. The other reason behind my choice to focus my research on female faculty members is related to my feminist research perspective. It is well known that Saudi Arabia has been criticized for its human rights record, especially women’s rights and equality issues. The source of these issues is the society’s traditions, values, and beliefs. However, over the past three years and after the announcement of Saudi Vision 2030, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has undergone a ground-breaking period of transformation.

Empowering Saudi women is one of the Saudi Vision 2030 goals. This vision highlights the significance of women’s participation in all aspects of the Saudi society (Saudi Gazette, 2019). It also focuses on the importance of encouraging and supporting women’s visions and accomplishments by providing them with appropriate work environments and equal opportunities in employment or training (Saudi Gazette, 2019). According to Vision 2030,

Saudi women are yet another great asset. With over 50 percent of our university graduates being female, we will continue to develop their talents, invest in their productive capabilities and enable them to strengthen their future and contribute to the development of our society and economy. (n.d., para. 1)

In 2017, the Saudi government made many decisions in women’s favour, the most important of which were the decisions to allow women to drive, the decision to allow school girls to exercise in their schools, and the choice to allow families to enter sports fields. A number of decisions issued by the Ministry of Justice, such as its decision about women’s right to custody (Almustadaty, 2018) and the approval of the law on harassment “combat sexual harassment in the Kingdom, which is considered a crime according to Islamic law” (Nugali, 2018, para. 3). According to the Interior Ministry’s security spokesman, Mansour Al-Turki, “This law is to help all individuals live a normal life without any incidents of harassment”
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

(Nugali, 2018, para. 7). In fact, Saudi Arabia “has recently witnessed a wide-ranging series of reforms. The ambitious Vision 2030 aims to have women more involved and less segregated than before” (Nugali, 2018, para. 6).

Despite the recent changes in women’s rights in the country and the Saudi government’s attempts to improve the lives of women in the country, Saudis still live in a patriarchal society in which men have authority over women in most aspects of life. I believe that social media platforms can provide females with opportunities to learn, gain experience, earn money, and see things that they might not have encountered before. It also provides them with the opportunity to be financially independent. It could give them some degree of equality with the opposite gender, the members of which have more freedom to express themselves, move, and travel. In fact, over the past few years, social media has contributed to giving a voice to Saudi women. Through Twitter and Facebook, Saudi women created the ‘Women2Drive’ campaign and other hashtags, which gave them a voice to be heard. Now, Saudi women have the same right as men to drive their own cars (Smith-Spark, Anderson, & Sirgany, 2017). According to Bianca Britton (2017), “More [Saudi] women, in particular, are using YouTube to express their views—their videos have become so popular that consumption of female-related content in the Kingdom increased by 75% since last year” (para. 3).

**Background Information and Purpose of the Study**

In the past decade, the world has witnessed many developments. An explosion of knowledge has resulted in the prevalence of satellites, the internet, and mobile phones. These technologies brought about changes in different areas of life and imposed political, economic, social, intellectual, and cultural challenges. These changes are reflected in our physical,
intellectual, moral, and spiritual lives and affect our ideals, values, norms, and lifestyles (Almagthawi, 2011).

Saudi Arabia has gone through dramatic cultural, economic, and social transitions in a short period. There is a renewed lifestyle in Saudi Arabia, especially regarding technology and communication. In fact, the Saudi government’s restrictions on the media have changed since the Arab Spring incidents in 2011, which make up what is known as the Middle East Revolution (Cook, 2015). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia used to be a country with many regulations regarding television, newspapers, and the internet, especially concerning political and religious content. All media should be free of political opposition to the government and sexual content. However, over the past several years, Saudi Arabia has grown in a democratic direction because as Hussein Shobokshi, the columnist for the Al Arabiya news channels, said, “I don’t think that what has been going on in the last 10 years will be pulled back… Saudis, especially the youth, are becoming extremely creative and entertaining in delivering their message online” (McDowall, 2011, para. 9). Therefore, to show this democratic orientation, the Saudi government was tolerant of criticisms of Saudi ministers and other members of the government. To enjoy this new democracy, groups of youth started their own broadcasting shows in what is called, “the new Saudi media.” According to CNN (2012), the new Saudi media “is an alternative media platform” that is led by the new generation of Saudi male and female comedians that use YouTube to discuss and reflect on the political and social issues that occur in the country in a comical way without crossing any religious boundaries. Omar Hussein is an example of a Saudi YouTube comedian who found his stage on YouTube. His show, Al-Tayer, which is based on local political humor, has drawn hundreds of thousands of view. Omar is part of a growing trend whereby Saudi comedians and journalists are using social media platforms to address Saudis.
These social media celebrities are pushing the barriers of society through their popular and controversial talk shows (Omar’s Interview with CNN, 2012). Saudi youth said that they wanted to change the community by reflecting on and questioning what they see and hear so they can decide what to believe and what not to believe (Omar’s Interview with CNN, 2012).

Social media in Saudi Arabia. Emerging technologies have undoubtedly helped us to easily communicate. One of the most important means of communication in this digital age is social media. Social media is a group of technology applications and platforms that enable users to communicate and interact with each other at any time. Users can also share their ideas, thoughts, videos, audio files, and many other forms of content via social media software. Moreover, social media can empower teachers and students to share information in new ways and build a new sense of community (Hughes, 2016).

Statistics show that social media usage has significantly increased in Saudi Arabia. In fact, social media plays an important role in Saudi society. The latest statistics released by the Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) revealed that “the usage of social media in the Kingdom in 2018 rose swiftly, touching 91.7 percent of the total population” (Mohammad, 2019, para. 3). The CITC statistics show that Saudi Arabia “has the highest annual growth rate of social media users anywhere in the world” (2019, para. 10). The statistics also reveal that the number of Saudi social media users grew by 32%, which is high compared to the worldwide average of 13% (CITC, 2019).

Currently, the country has the largest number of Twitter users in the world (Aslam, 2019). According to the Social clinic website statistics, the number of Saudi Twitter users “grew more than 3,000% from 2011 to 2012, and currently accounts to 50,000,000 tweets per month” (2013, para.3). The Saudi per-capita consumption of YouTube is also the highest in the world.
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

(Mesbah & Almujaibel, 2019, p. 1). Adding to that, “With the rapid rise of social media amongst youth and their engagement in public affairs, it is important to understand this area to improve the Saudi educational system” (Kutbi, 2015, p. 2)

To leverage the benefits of social media applications, universities have had to look into applying them as a best practice and strategy. Although best practices are lacking in Saudi Arabia, research points to some suggested outlines for using these tools in education. At King Abdulaziz University, empirical studies have revealed that a focus on developing strategies for the use of social media as instructional and learning tools that encourage and support student learning is required (Shabrg, 2012).

In many developing countries, computer illiteracy and the lack of technological knowledge are barriers to technology-based learning. For example, although the number of colleges and institutes has increased in the Arab region, Dr. Edrees Ali (2012) believes that both students and instructors are still very illiterate when it comes to e-learning applications. However, I have not found a single study on the educational social media challenges or obstacles in Saudi Arabia. I have also not come across any study related to social media best practices among Saudi faculty members.

In my mixed methods study, I explored the attitudes of female Saudi faculty members on the use of social media as a teaching tool. Moreover, I investigated the factors that influence these attitudes, as well as female Saudi faculty members’ experiences, knowledge, and understandings of social media best practices and their perceptions of its impact on their students. Finally, in this study, I explored how the understanding of social media best practices can impact the student usage of social media and empower female Saudi faculty members.
Social Media Education in Saudi Arabia

Research Questions

My research was guided by four fundamental questions and one sub-question:

1. What are the attitudes of female Saudi faculty members toward the use of social media as a teaching tool?
   - What are the factors that influence these attitudes?
2. What knowledge and understanding do female Saudi faculty members have regarding social media best practices?
3. How can a comprehensive understanding of social media best practices influence agency and empower female Saudi faculty members?
4. How do female Saudi faculty members feel about the impact of their modeling of social media best practices in their teaching on students’ social media use?

Theoretical Framework

Humans are social creatures. We learn by interacting with each other. Our daily interactions and communications with the people and the environments around us affect us in one way or another. People learn (consciously or unconsciously) by observing other people’s behaviors. According to researchers, this is called social learning theory. Albert Bandura, the leading figure of social learning theory, claims that this theory posits that learning occurs within a social context; people learn by observing, imitating, and modeling one another (Nabavi, 2012). According to Bandura’s theory, “we learn from our interactions with others in a social context. Separately, by observing the behaviors of others, people develop similar behaviors. After observing the behavior of others, people assimilate and imitate that behavior” (Nabavi, 2012, p. 5). Bandura believes that people are often reinforced to model others’ behaviors. They can be reinforced by the model itself because they have observed the model’s positive, desired
outcomes. According to social learning theory “people who are being observed are called models and the process of learning is called modeling” (Nabavi, 2012, p. 6). In other words, the consequences of the imitated behavior lead to reinforcing our learning. We learn many behaviors from other people just because it gives us satisfaction. For example, if a teacher compliments a student for doing extra work in the class, another student might imitate that student and do extra work to get the same compliment from the teacher. Taking this further, Spencer (2015) postulates that students should “…have a motivation for learning. Social learning theory suggests that motivation can originate from being rewarded or punished, as when we are in a similar situation, we will imitate or avoid the behavior based on our past experience” (para. 8). Having said that, it is important for teachers and instructors to make sure the behaviors they model are appropriate.

When it comes to social media platforms, one must say that social media technologies have fundamentally changed the way that social interaction occurs within our world. In fact, social media can be a great environment for social learning if it is used correctly. Shannon Deaton reveals the following:

In this interactive social media world, the application of social learning theory presents an opportunity to promote leaps in student achievement, as cognitive concepts of attention, memory, and motivation are encouraged by social media. Likewise, these traits are widely sustainable through social media, increasing cognitive processes associated with learning and knowledge acquisition. (2015, p. 2)

Contrary to what some people assume about how social media isolates its users, social media platforms offer endless social learning possibilities. Social media is technology that is used to engage a group of people and give them opportunities to communicate and learn from
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

each other. It also allows them to build on each other’s knowledge in an enjoyable way. Social media users can build their own learning communities in which they can share and exchange knowledge (Hewitt & Scardamalia, 1998). Social media enables online communities to “form quickly and communicate effectively” (Sinéctica, 2015, para. 9). Students in these communities usually share common interests. Moreover, “Giaccardi (2012) highlights social media in a “participatory culture,” that is, it features on encounters with heritage and on the socially produced meanings and values that individuals and communities ascribe to it” (Giaccardi, 2012, as cited in Sinéctica, 2015, para. 9). According to Giaccardi, in participatory culture, people no longer blindly absorb and consume what large media corporations distribute. They participate in media creation (Giaccardi, 2012, as cited in Sinéctica, 2015). In fact, social media users act as curators of content. Social technologies enable public information exchanges, as well as and the development of peer activities and the promotion and legitimization of participation. Digital networks expand our surroundings and modes of engagement (Sinéctica, 2015).

Moreover, students can observe each other’s participation in social media, and the likes they receive from their instructors and peers can reinforce their learning. Students can watch and observe YouTube videos, for example, and learn by watching someone verbally describe a task or physically demonstrate a behavior. According to Ruby Spencer (2015) “video and audio in e-learning are powerful methods for recreating this experience. Virtual classroom technology takes this one step further by allowing real-time teacher presentation, commenting and collaboration” (para. 5). The virtual classroom enables students to communicate with each other. In online classes, students can “view presentations or videos, interact with other participants, and engage with resources in work groups” (Ferriman, 2013, para. 4). Social media enhances the cognitive
processes of memory, motivation, and attention. Thus, one can say that social media platforms can improve learning in the social context (Myhre, Mehl, & Glisky, 2017).

Deaton believes that “educators may positively impact student achievement through the use of modern Educational Technologies. Educators should embrace this paradigm shift, preparing students to accept a role in the great “knowledge exchange” on the world’s digital stage” (2015, p. 4).

To successfully use this technology in education, teachers and instructors must play a big part in the learning process. This cannot happen unless educators accept and adopt the use of technology as a teaching tool. According to Timothy Teo (2011), “Technology acceptance can be defined as a user’s willingness to employ technology for the tasks it is designed to support” (p. 1). In the past decade, educators have shown increasing interest in implementing new technologies in education. “Teachers spent much of their planning time to consider how technology could be harnessed for effective lesson delivery and assessment to be conducted” (Teo, 2011, p. 1). In fact, they are taking advantage of technological facilities. However, researchers who study social media networks from an educational perspective have just begun to find important educational advantages in collaborative learning, particularly concerning the adoption of social media among teachers (Al-Rahimi, Othman, & Musa, 2013).

The acceptance of new technology plays a significant role in teachers’ decisions to adopt or avoid new technology. Davis (1986) introduced the technology acceptance model (TAM) in 1986 in his doctorate proposal (Figure 1). His model was built on the theory of reasoned action. This theory “attempts to explain why individuals engage into consciously intended behaviors” (Al-Rahimi, Othman, & Musa, 2013, p. 91). Davis’ TAM predicts the likelihood of a new technology being adopted by a group of individuals or organizations. Davis’ model suggests that
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

when an individual is presented with a new technology, many factors influence his or her decision about the adoption of this technology (Rauniar, Rawski, Yang, & Johnson, 2014). The TAM can be explained by two constructs: perceived ease of use (PEU) and perceived usefulness (PU). Davis believes that behavioral intentions to use new technologies are the results of their PEU and PU. Venktatesh and Davis (2000) define PEU as “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort” (p. 10). In other words, PEU shows how much effort an individual must exert to use a new technology while PU is defined as “The degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance” (Rauniar et al., 2014, pp. 9–10). PU refers to the user’s belief about whether adopting the technology will contribute to improved performance. Both PEU and PU have impacts on one’s intention to use a new technology, whereas PEU also has a direct influence on PU (Al-Rahimi et al., 2013).

![Technology Acceptance Model Diagram](source:Davis et al. (1989), Venktatesh et al. (2003))

**Figure 1.** The earliest technology acceptance model (Davis et al. as cited in Alwahaishi & Snasel, 2013).

Social media raised offers users endless services and benefits. Between the 1990s and the early 2000s, many types of social media were launched. Some succeeded and still exist, and some failed and vanished. The related literature shows that the “failure of many of these sites can be attributed to its inability to garner acceptance and popularity among the target users” (Rauniar
et al., 2014, pp. 9–10). Open Diary, for example, was an online blogging and journaling website. Just like today’s social media applications, Open Diary users could add friends and change their privacy and security settings so that only their friends could see what they wrote. It was founded in 1997, but the website was shut down in 2014 after two security breaches drove its users toward alternative blogging sites (Bernazzani, 2017). Another example is Friendster, which was “launched in 2002, was rebranded as a social gaming website in 2011, and shuttered completely in 2015” (Bernazzani, 2017, para. 7). It was the first social media network that enabled users to create profiles and share content with their friends and followers. Friendster could not compete with the other similar and popular websites, and it was not widely adopted by users’ friends and families, so it failed (Bernazzani, 2017).

The growing numbers of social media users, such as Facebook and Twitter users, suggest that these popular platforms are easy to use and suit users’ needs. Thus, they are accepted by their users. Adding to that, social media platforms offer differing services and features to meet the demands of users. In other words, “Each social media application offers certain primary services, and accordingly offers various types of tools and applications to add utilitarian value to its audiences” (Rauniar et al., 2014, pp. 9-10).

Educators can take advantage of the diversity of services offered on social media platforms. They can adopt one or more social media platforms as teaching tools. Rahimi et al. (2013) give a great example of the educational benefits of the use of Facebook. They say that “Facebook is being considered as an educational tool because of its beneficial qualities such as enabling peer feedback, goodness of fit with social context, and interaction tools” (Rahimi et al., 2013, p. 90). Finally, the acceptance of technology among educators can enhance students’ learning outcomes and provide them with endless educational possibilities and experiences.
Social Media in Education

Computer-based learning platforms, which help in distributing lecture notes and other course information, have become immensely popular in universities and colleges in recent years (Hughes, 2016). They are portals for students to upload assignments and chat with lecturers and one another. These platforms allow for easy integration with social media services so that lecturers can push content automatically to apps like Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn (Hughes, 2016). Many scholars believe that the emersion of Web 2.0 facilitates the communication between individuals through the structure of a virtual community (Smith, 2012). Smith states that “the current format of the World Wide Web functions as a place for consumption, information sharing, and participation by users” (2012, p. 4). Moreover, Mohammed Khalf-Allah (2013), defines social media as having technological applications on Web 2.0. The aim of these applications is to foster global interaction and communication between various individuals. This communication and cooperation enables group members to get the most benefit from the community.

Johnson (2014) states that “educators also claimed that use of social media enabled students to see how their social network can influence their school activities and gave students a real-world perspective of how to collaborate and remain engaged in the classroom and in learning activities” (p. 44). Educators should promote and embrace the use of social media in education because it does not replace the existing curriculum. Rather, it transforms it (Matei, 2010).
One of the most important advantages of social media is that it can help to construct a knowledge-building community. Hewitt and Scardamalia (1998) believe that “a Knowledge-Building Community is any group of individuals dedicated to sharing and advancing the knowledge of the collective” (p. 82). They believe that computer-learning environments enable permanent community interactions. On this topic, they write the following:

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

Social media enables mass collaboration between students. Using social media in education means creating an environment where students connect with each other and respond and interact at preferred times from preferred places. It is different than other online technologies like as email because although email is a mass communication tool, email cannot provide real-time interaction, such as updates, likes, 24/7 availability, and other social media features (Bradley, 2010).

White (2011) also argues that computer-based technology “encourages student collaboration, group work, helpful comments and online discussions” (p. 44). In fact, researchers have found that the “virtual environment may promote critical thinking that leads to higher achievement and more satisfaction in collaborative learning” (Alavi, 1994, as cited in Zhang & Kenny, 2010, p. 1).

Students can take part in complex projects and tasks using new technologies. Location and distance do not matter, and students can work together on teams. The goal of using
technology, or social media, in education “is to create communication systems in which the relations between what is said and what is written, between immediate and broader audiences, and between what is created in the here and now and archived are intimately related and natural extensions of school-based activities” (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1994, p. 266). In such an environment, students can reach their maximum potential. In a study dealing with third- and fourth-grade students who use social media (blogs) to write their assignments, the teacher noticed that students started to come to school early to use the school computers to write and post their blogs and that the quality of the students’ work increased. Thus, the “students’ grades went up by as much as 50%” (Kessler, 2010, p. 3).

Educators must understand that every student is unique and learns differently. Thus, it is important for course content to appeal to all learners. Bustillos (2014) wrote that “Creating an environment in which the adult perceives they are all unique individuals with unique needs rather than just an identification number in cyberspace is an essential component to student success” (p. 11). Educators must present information that enhances student learning. Moreover, it is equally important for educators to provide students with learning content in ways that make them want to participate and learn (Zolinas, 2016).

In a study conducted on students’ perceptions on the use of social media as an educational tool, students said that social media use improved their English writing skills. One of the students said that the teacher demands the use of proper English language in their posts and she always checks for spelling and grammar mistakes (Kutbi, 2015). She added that she always edits her writing before posting so that her posts are free of mistakes because the teacher comments on spelling and grammatical mistakes. In fact, the students believed that this process improved their language and writing skills (Kutbi, 2015).
Moreover, social media provides students with authentic learning experiences. According to Ann-Marie Fiore (2018), authentic learning experiences “are created around real-life, genuine purposes. They engage students in critical thinking and twenty-first-century learning, teach important skills such as research and collaboration, and improve student learning” (para. 2). Teachers can create authentic learning experiences by using social media platforms to develop scenarios that learners encounter in real-world settings (Fiore, 2018). Fiore (2018) argued that “social media tools, such as blogs and wikis, can help learners find a broader community where they can share information and resources” (para. 2).

In summary, social media supports collaborative learning, engages individuals in critical thinking, and enhances communication and writing skills through writing activity. Moreover, it enables students to work in private environments. In addition to these advantages of using social media in education, social media supports social collaborative learning, information sharing, content creation, and knowledge and information aggregation and modification.

**Faculty Perceptions on Social Media**

One study that explored the perceptions of university faculty members about the use of social media in formal and informal education revealed that “most of the student population used Facebook for personal communication and LinkedIn for professional purposes. The study also found that academic activities using social media were designed to be informal reinforcements to classroom teaching rather than conventional assessment tools” (Al-Sharqi, Hashim, & Kutbi, 2016, p. 2).

According to Zolinas (2016), “technology is constantly evolving and new apps are being introduced. The best resources for discovering new technologies are right in front of us: our students” (p. 1458). Researchers believe that students are the quickest way to identify the best
and most popular online resources (Dziuban, Moskal, Brophy, & Shea 2007). In fact, researchers believe that “It is important for instructors to stay up to date and research any new technologies that should emerge in the future for enhancing student’s engagement in asynchronous learning” (Zolinas, 2016, p. 1458).

Educators must know the pros and cons of using technology in education (Alsharhan, 2012). Alsharhan believes that “educators need new pedagogical thinking and ongoing work to prepare faculty members and teachers for this new era” (2012, p. 13). Many researchers and scholars believe that educators require effective and proper preparations to be able to teach online courses because educators’ perceptions of online learning can impact the whole educational process. According to Sun et al. (2008), “attitude toward using computer and network technology in delivering education and training will impact students’ attitudes and affect their performance” (p. 1194). Instructors’ and students’ positive attitudes toward social media in education can help improve the educational process.

Sun’s study revealed that instructors’ attitudes toward e-Learning are one of the critical factors that affect learners’ perceived satisfaction (2008). The other factors include “e-Learning course flexibility, e-Learning course quality, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and diversity in assessments” (Sun, 2008, p.1).

Rodney Johnson (2014) believes that “the roles of teacher and student have inarguably been reversed from the way studies are normally implemented. In previous studies and implementations of these studies, teachers were the ones introducing new techniques and strategies to students” (p. 9). He also discusses the changing dynamics of teaching. Students are becoming increasingly familiar with the operative use of technological tools and how the instructors need to catch up with them. Students become more creative when they use social
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

media. For example, in a study conducted on the perceptions of Saudi students on the use of social media as a learning tool, one student said that she found a way to overcome Twitter’s 140 character limit. She talked about it from her point of view, saying “If my post is too long, I take a snapshot or a screenshot of my comment and then I post it as an image on twitter.” So, by overcoming this challenge, students found another way to benefit from Twitter.

To catch up with students’ technology attachments, instructors must change and adjust their teaching styles and techniques to keep students engaged in learning. However, this does not just involve adding technology to the classroom (K-64, 2012). According to the educational institution K-64 (2012), tech-savvy teachers need to direct their activities in a way that enhances student learning. Teachers need to educate their students, and students need to be mindful of what constitutes reliable information and sources on the internet and what constitutes second-hand information. According to Aric Mitchell

The Internet is a giant educational playground filled with millions and millions of pages of useful knowledge, but it’s also a bit of a Wild West, where anyone can say anything and perpetuate it as fact. [Students] need guidance in understanding how to decipher good education from the bad. (n.d., para. 6)

It is a teacher’s job to prepare and teach their students how to be critical in the online environment. It is also important for teachers “to prepare students in the ways of using good judgment, while igniting their passions enough so that their desire to learn will take flight” (Mitchell, n.d., para. 6).

Challenges That Limit or Hinder the Use of Social Media as a Teaching Tool

The beneficial possibilities of social media also bring potential risks and challenges that are related to users’ safety and privacy, technical difficulties and technical and media literacy.
Users’ safety and privacy. Any new technology is a double-edged sword. Social media is no different than any new technology; it can be a helpful or a harmful tool. Despite the many advantages of social media in education, social media’s increased visibility brings great “exposure to vulnerability and the possibility of embarrassment or failure in a very public space” (Osborne, 2011). Research studies have shown that some students may feel vulnerable and uncertain in their online communication and isolated because of a lack of non-verbal cues and social presence in the online environment (Muilenburg & Berge, 2005). Moreover, students may feel lost, uncertain and isolated in the online environment, especially if they do not know how to communicate with their peers. Zhang and Kenny (2012) discussed the challenges that face non-native English speakers and international students when they take online courses. In their article “Learning in an Online Distance Education Course: Experiences of Three International Students”, the two authors focused on the online experience of three international students who were enrolled in a Canadian university that offers an online master’s program. The study findings revealed that when working in the online environment, the three international students experienced feelings of isolation, frustration and alienation because they did not feel confident enough to communicate freely with their domestic peers. A study by Kutbi (2015) revealed that some students are afraid of tarnishing their personal images, so they avoid interacting with their peers on social media. In that study, one of the students expressed her fear of social media and said that one of the difficulties she was facing in social media was that everybody could see what she posted. She also said, “I don’t want to look stupid” (Kutbi, 2015, p. 53). Students’ fear and the anxiety of being humiliated and embarrassed in front of their peers could be due to the widespread prevalence of cyberbullying.
Cyberbullying is one of the most difficult issues that youth have to deal with when using social media. According to Bahati Russell (2017) “what people tend to overlook is the fact that words do hurt. Although these things that are hurtful are not being said online, saying them online can amount to just as much hurt and maybe even more” (para. 1). Cyberbullying is a form of bullying or harassment that takes place through digital devices such as cellphones, computers, and tablets. According to Stopbullying.gov, the most common place where cyberbullying occurs is on social media platforms. This “includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior” (stopbullying.gov, n.d.).

One of the most dangerous aspects of cyberbullying is that it reaches its victims in the privacy of their own homes; there is no safe zone. According to the Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network, “Kids who are cyberbullied feel an intense sense of isolation, fear, loneliness and despair. Their desperation can sometimes lead to acts of self-harm or tragically, even suicide” (n.d.).

The best approach to protecting students from cyberbullying is to create social media user guidelines. On one hand, educational institutions “should create a policy that deals with cyberbullying that happens outside of school and then ensure students know that they can be punished” (Muthler, 2015, para. 5). Teachers, on the other hand, should “play a crucial role in setting high expectations for online behavior” (Muthler, 2015, para. 2). Some open conversations between teachers and students about online safety could teach students to set personal and professional boundaries. As a result, students may feel more comfortable with reporting incidents like cyberbullying and online harassment (Muthler, 2015).
Social media privacy is a very important issue of which teachers and students should be aware. It is well known that upon creating an account, most social media sites require personal information such as your birthday, location, and email address. If students are not careful and share their personal information on their social media accounts, they could be victims of many crimes such as identity theft (Muthler, 2015). In fact, Sarah Muthler (2015) believes that sharing personal information on social media with strangers “can make [students] vulnerable to sexual predators.” She added that “Students fail to consider how the things they post online can haunt them years down the line” (Muthler, 2015, para. 3).

Another issue associated with social media privacy risks is private information disclosure. According to researchers, “Users’ privacy on social network sites is one of the most important and urgent issues in both industry and academic fields” (Li, Lin, & Wang, 2015, p. 882). The disclosure and publicizing of a person’s private information could lead to serious legal and financial consequences (Wasser, Lyons, & Koczerginski, 2017). Teachers should be aware that publishing any private facts about their young students, such as their names, faces, and even handwriting, should not be allowed without acquiring parental consent (Higgin, 2017).

Social media companies such as Facebook have a long history of violating users’ privacy agreements and disclosing users’ private information and selling it. In 2007, Facebook announced the addition of Beacon. According to Thomas Allmer (2015) “Beacon was part of Facebook’s advertisement system for the purpose of allowing targeted advertisements, which sent data from external websites to Facebook. After a class action lawsuit, Facebook had to shut down the service in September 2009” (p. 79).

Thomas Allmer (2015) believes that social media advertising practices create data protection problems. He gave another example of Facebook’s privacy and personal data abuse
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

and forwarding. In 2011, a group of Austrian law students founded “Europe-v-Facebook” to raise people’s awareness about Facebook’s privacy and personal data abuses and forwarding (Allmer, 2015). According to Allmer

The group has reported Facebook for permanently violating the data protection right in the European Union and thereby undermining a fundamental human right. “Europe-v-Facebook’s” objectives are to claim data transfer transparency, launch opt-in systems on social platforms, and to create open social networks. Facebook … is under investigation by the Irish Data Protection Commissioner after receiving 22 complaints by the group in August 2011. (2015, p. 80)

So far, Irish courts have not yet made any decision regarding the Europe-v-Facebook case (Hill, 2018).

Facebook was again more recently involved in another data privacy disclosing scandal. According to CBC News, “Facebook Inc. and the political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica have been sued in the United States for obtaining information belonging to 50 million of the social media company’s users without permission” (CBC, 2018). Cambridge Analytica was linked to the election of US president Donald Trump and other political incidents in the UK (CBC, 2018).

Some critical studies see media in general as a “capitalism medium and result of economic, political, and cultural processes, and is mutually mediated with antagonisms in economy, politics, and culture” (Allmer, 2015, p. 79). Thomas Allmer believes that

Technology is the medium and outcome of these contradictions. Although the development of technology as a social process is the result of processes of negotiation and conflicts of interests between individuals, economic factors such as large
corporations play a dominant role in this process, because available resources decide power dimensions extensively and intensively (2015, pp. 79–80).

This critical view raises many questions regarding the manipulation of media by elites and how these elites are trying to control the way people think. Luckily, youth are becoming increasingly aware of how media works. Studies have shown that youth are becoming more informed about online protection needs. According to the Pew survey on American teens “60% of teens said that they had made their Facebook profile private so that only their approved friends could see it. Another Pew survey found that 70 percent of teens had sought advice about how to manage their privacy online” (Muthler, 2015, para. 4).

Educators should have classroom-based conversations about how technology works. Students might be experts in using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat, but they need to know how these applications collect and store data. According to Sarah Multher (2015), “Platforms such as Facebook, [Snapchat] and Instagram keep permanent records of all of the information they collect” (para. 6).

Educational institutions have a moral and legal responsibility to protect their students and teachers and consider their safety and privacy. Thus, educational institutions must create a process for dealing with potential cyberbullying and abusive behavior (Osborne, 2011).

**The quality of technology and internet services.** Computer-based technology and its success can be very dependent on the quality of the technology and internet services being used. High-quality internet allows for pleased instructors and students, and this satisfaction is key to the success of any learning approach. According to Sun, Tsai, Finger, Chen, and Yeh (2008), internet and technology quality have great impacts on computer-based learning. Slow connections and internet speeds can be challenging for instructors and students and negatively
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

affect the education process. “The higher the quality and reliability in IT [Information Technology], the higher the learning effects will be” (Sun et al., 2008, p. 1188). Researchers have noticed that poor technology and slow internet speed can be frustrating for instructors and students in an e-learning environment. Researchers state, that “in e-learning environments, poor technology with slow response time or frequent technical difficulties will definitely discourage learners and discourage students from taking online courses” (Sun et al., 2008, p. 1195). In a study that was conducted at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia that explored students’ views regarding the advantages and limitations of blended learning, researchers found that “48% of the students mentioned technical and internet problems as the major challenge to their successful learning via Blackboard” (Al Zumor et al., 2013, p. 10). Another study of the effects of technology and internet quality on e-learning was done at the University of Technology in South Africa (Isabirye & Dlodlo, 2014). In this study, the researchers investigated the apparent barriers to e-learning practices by using the experiences of 10 university academics and found that technical and internet problems were the key issues (Isabirye & Dlodlo, 2014). The authors state that in the e-learning environment, many users report slow internet connections and constant internet service disruptions at the university. These problems caused difficulty with downloading Web content and disruptions to the teaching and learning process. The authors also wrote about other technical problems involved in computer-based technology, such as maintenance challenges, installation problems, and slow connections.

Internet and technology problems are issues that are seen all around the world, but researchers have noted that problems related to technology and the internet are most common in Arab countries and developing countries (Ali, 2012). According to Open University of Sudan’s Computer and Information Technology Program Coordinator, Dr. Ali, this could be a result of
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

the high prices of internet services (Ali, 2012). Although computer software and hardware prices have dropped, networking is still expensive because networks still depend on communication providers and city infrastructures, which are still weak in the Arab world and developing countries (Ali, 2012).

**The lack of computer and technology knowledge and skills.** A major challenge in computer-based technology is the lack of knowledge or skills that are necessary to use these technologies (Umm AlQuraa University, 2014). Many researchers believe that the lack of technological knowledge and computer literacy are common obstacles. In fact, the Senior Affairs and Educational Issues Ministry in Saudi Arabia reported that the lack of appropriate educational technology at all grade levels could cause a lack of excitement in the educational process and lead to boredom among teachers and students (Sultanah, 2012). Boredom and lack of excitement can negatively impact educational outcomes.

Although the number of colleges and institutes in Sudan has recently increased, Dr. Edrees Ali (2012) believes that the lack of experience in technology and computer literacy among the students and instructors are still high in the Arab region. This is not a belief among researchers in Sudan alone. Researchers in Jordan also indicate that a lack of efficiency in computer-based technology and a lack of technological skills are the main problems that prevent the growth of technology in the Arab world (Yaseen & Melhem, 2012). If the instructors or students have difficulty dealing with computers and do not have the skills required to use e-learning software, then this will affect their learning processes. According to Yassen and Melhem (2012), the lack of qualified staff trained on how to deal with modern technologies and design online courses is an obstacles faced in adoption of e-learning in the Arab region. Moreover, the absence of systems and regulations concerning how to evaluate students works in
the online environment is challenging (Yaseen & Melhem, 2012). Another study conducted by a Kuwaiti researcher (Alsharhan, 2012) indicated that the major difficulties in the Arab world relate to introducing new technology to education to create a rich educational environment.

There is a lack of technological knowledge and resources in not only Arab countries but also other developing countries like Tanzania and China. Nyandara (2012) stated that China has many problems with technology-based learning and its use. She wrote that researchers have “found challenges like awareness and attitudes toward ICT, inadequate funds for staff development and infrastructure development, insufficient or qualified staff and lack of a systematic approach to ICT implementation in case of using existing infrastructures already in place” (p. 135).

Poor infrastructure and resources and the high cost of internet access, which are required for the new curricula, could be the reason for this (Nyandara, 2012). In developing countries like China, there may also be some national and governmental security limitations that affect internet use. The use of the internet is limited in these countries because some foreign websites may be blocked (Nyandara, 2012).

Tanzania is another developing country that is in a similar state. These challenges include insufficient technical and academic staff with appropriate skills, unsupportive mindsets, lack of electric connectivity, reliability, and telecommunication networks, expensive internet access, low internet speeds, the lack of content that meets users’ expectations, knowing that some government and local institution websites demoralize the users who search for certain online content, and the “shortage of technological resources and infrastructures, and traditional educational cultures and learning styles” (Nyandara, 2012, p. 135).
Social Media Best Practices

Smiciklas (2012) defines social media best practices as a “plethora of standards, guidelines and case studies aimed at benchmarking the best way to do things across various digital channels. These best practices can be very effective in building a strategic and tactical foundation for your organization’s social media plan” (para. 2). Social media best practices strategies include many behavioral instructions for students and instructors. These strategies provide guidelines on how to effectively use social media. They also include things such as being honest and respectful and protecting privacy (Brock University, n.d.).

The Hanover Research Council (2009), which is a research and analytics provider, issued a report in 2009 about the importance of applying best practices strategies on “the planning and management of online instruction, the actual teaching process, and student assessment and evaluation” (p. 2). The report gives many examples and guidelines about how to effectively design, teach, and evaluate online courses (Figure 2). One of the guidelines is the checklist for online interactive learning (COIL). According to Rebecca Renner “Interactive learning is a pedagogical model that encourages students to be part of the lesson instead of passive observers” (2018, para. 3). The COIL “serves as a guide for online faculty evaluation and to call attention to engagement, interaction and presence in the online classroom” (Clay, n.d., para. 2). The checklists were originally introduced in the Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration (The Hanover Research Council, 2009). These guidelines were incorporated with Bell Pelz’s three principles of effective online learning. The first principle is to “let the students do (most of) the work” (The Hanover Research Council, 2009, p. 3). Pelz believes that if the students spend quality time engaging in the content, then they will learn more of the content. The second
principle is that “Interactivity is the heart and soul of effective asynchronous learning” (The Hanover Research Council, 2009, p. 3), which means students need to interact with each other, their instructors, the course content, assignments, discussions, and all class activities. The final principle is to “strive for social and cognitive presence” (The Hanover Research Council, 2009, p. 4). According to Pelz’ third principle, “there are three forms of presence for which to strive in online learning environments: Social Presence, Cognitive Presence, or Teaching Presence” (The Hanover Research Council, 2009, p. 4). Social presence is when students bring their unique personalities to the online environment. Cognitive presence happens when an instructor and students construct meaning through their online discussions while teaching presence is “the facilitation and direction of cognitive and social process for the realization of personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes” (The Hanover Research Council, 2009, p. 4). Given these points, it is important to know that social media best practice strategies and guidelines are important to the success of any online environment (The Hanover Research Council, 2009). It is equally important to consider and understand the students’ physical environment before planning a curriculum.
## COIL Categories

### Category 1: Student Behaviors Meet Criterion

- Demonstrate their prerequisite technology skills at beginning are adequate for hardware, software and website use.
- Seek opportunities to, and support for, interacting with instructor and other students.
- Actively participate in all online activities.
- Actively involved through writing and interaction in web-based courses (improves student writing performance).
- Use a variety of communication techniques to enhance online learning.
- Personalize themselves by publishing online biographies and photographs to allow other members of the class to visualize them.
- Seek assistance in understanding and mastering different learning strategies.
- Demonstrate prerequisites and become more proficient in technology communication skills.

### Category 2: Faculty-Student Interactions

- Provide clear and adequate guidance.
- Use action research regularly to evaluate the success/failure of the course and meet student concerns.
- Personalize communications by/with student-student and student-teacher.
- Use variety of communication techniques to provide for greater empathy and personal approach than e-mail and website alone.
- Plan for increased time for student interactions as compared to traditional courses.
- Clearly delineate institutional policy on cheating and plagiarism at start of course.
- Maintain separate e-mail account for web courses.
- Forward responses to frequently asked questions to all students to avoid duplication.
- Give faculty reduced load and increased support to develop course materials.
- Provide students with continuous, frequent support, feedback.
- Scaffold virtual discourse construction.
- Emphasize importance of good study skills throughout course.
- Closely monitor each student’s progress.
- Create opportunities to coach and facilitate student construction of knowledge.
- Give negative comments to students privately, preferably by phone.
- Clearly delineate course requirements.
### COIL Categories

**Category 3: Technology Support**
- Insure a low level of technological difficulties in accessing web site and communication.
- Provide adequate, friendly, easy, continuous technical support.

**Category 4: Learning Environment**
- Use structured activities to provide an effective framework for online learning.
- Mandate smaller class sizes for online courses to give faculty appropriate time to deliver quality instruction board.
- Use flexible deadlines to motivate students, maintain communication, and allow for technical problems.
- Create social interaction through group collaboration to facilitate high achievement.
- Use streaming audio for reading online
  - Present course content in a manner that hierarchically structures the sequence of information.
  - Organize web site to enable student to interact with the content, other students, and instructor.
  - Create welcoming, safe, nurturing online environment.
  - Present problem-solving situations in a realistic context.
- Provide opportunities for students to question instructor to insure accuracy of understanding.
- Create opportunities for students to communicate with each other to share understanding of course content.
- Provide opportunities to collaboratively construct knowledge based on multiple perspectives, discussion and reflection.
- Provide opportunities for students to articulate and revise their thinking to insure accuracy of knowledge construction.
- Ensure equitable environment exists for gender differences in learning styles, reduction of barriers to participation, and communication.
- Include cooperative and collaborative learning to distribute workload through group and support female students’ preferred method of connected learning.
- Promote gender equality by encouraging females to post messages while asking males to subside if a pattern of male domination is noticed.
- Insure an equitable learning environment exists for all.
- Allow time for reflection at end of course.
- Include “warm-up” period with light-hearted exercises aimed to help student get to know one another.
  - Start online course with all students together at the same time.
  - Provide equal access to the shared conversation in the course.
- Provide opportunities for students to control online learning and structure it for themselves.
  - Provide discussion forums encouraging open and honest dialogue.
  - Conduct a teleconference during and at the end of the course to discuss successes and problems.
  - Use computer conferencing to develop overall critical thinking skills.

---

*Figure 2. Checklist for online interactive learning (The Hanover Research Council, 2009).*
Despite recent changes in the Saudi government’s orientation, Saudis are known as a controversial society. Saudi Arabia is governed by Sharia law, which is derived from the Holy Quran and the example set by the Islamic prophet Muhammad in the Sunnah. The country has many limits in religious and ethical areas that have to do with various types of media, such as the internet. Saudi Arabia has the unique status of being the country that has many restrictions (Black, 2009). Some of these restrictions are related to the publication of pornography and immoral content. Saudi researchers have conducted many studies on the importance of monitoring social media usage and content. Almaghthawi (2011) conducted a study about social media restriction in Saudi Arabia. He proposed the addition of a set of religious, moral, social, and cultural restrictions on social media. He believes that these restrictions can help maintain the religious, psychological, financial, intellectual, and cultural values, beliefs, and identities of youth (2011). In order to do that, the Communication and Information Commission in Saudi Arabia issued a guideline booklet on cyber security and crimes that lists a range of punishments for several cybercrimes (n.d).

Along with moral and ethical social media best practice knowledge, Saudi educators must have knowledge about these religious and political restrictions in their country. They need to be educated about social media in general and best practices to be able to use social media in education.

**Social media code of conduct.** No one can argue that, well trained, skilled, and knowledgeable teachers provide the foundation for a high-quality education system in which every student receives excellent teaching. As professional educators, we must always continue to uphold high ethical standards as part of the online code of ethics. “Respect, integrity,
transparency and honesty are at the heart of what we stand for and the key to our future success” (The Communication Council, 2012, p. 2). According to the Australian Communication Council (2012), “social media code of conduct aims to provide specific guidance on best practice behavior when working and operating within social media” (p. 2). In fact, many universities around the world have social media codes of conduct or ethical guidelines on their official websites to protect their students and employees. The purpose of these codes, according to the University of East Anglia in The United Kingdom, is to do the following: encourage good practice to protect the university, its employees, students, and business partners and make employees and those with comparable honorary status aware that the university will treat unacceptable “electronic behavior,” through social media and other means, in the same way as it would treat other unacceptable behaviors (2012).

The Toronto District School Board also lists some policies, procedures, codes of behavior, and rules for teachers who use social media in their teaching. The board’s guidelines aim to ensure the users’ personal safety. It advises users to not reveal any personal information and to report any suspicious messages or activities. The Toronto District School Board cautions online users about posting and sharing unacceptable materials, such as illegal, inappropriate, and abusive content (Toronto District School Board, n.d.).

Moreover, it is important for teachers and students to ensure that they understand and think critically about social media. Media literacy is “the ability to bring critical-thinking skills to bear on all media. It is the ability to interpret and value media content and to understand media’s cultural, political, commercial and social implications” (Tallim, 2015, para. 10). Media literacy encourages people “to probe behind media artifacts” (Tallim, 2015). It encourages both teachers and students to ask questions about the messages hidden behind what they watch and
read, and it also helps them to think about the target audience and the reasons behind what is being communicated. Being critical also teaches you to think about the multiple perspectives of any news or incident (Tallim, 2015). Media education makes you ask many other questions, such as the following:

Whose voices are heard, and whose are absent? What strategies does this message use to get my attention and make me feel included? How do the unique elements and codes of a specific genre affect what we see, hear or read? How might different audiences interpret the same media production? (Tallim, 2015, para. 8)

Teachers and students need to know that they are part of the struggle in the social media environment (Allmer, 2015). They are both influencing and being influenced by the popular culture, because new technology gives them the power not only to be part of news production but also the chance to be more critical in choosing what to believe.

Moreover, Leona Ungerer (2016) believes that, “being literate in the 21st century requires being able to decode and comprehend multimodal texts and digital format and engage with these texts in a purposeful manner” (p. 4). Media literacy is a process that embraces the social, collaborative, and dynamic facets of the digital technologies (Ungerer, 2016). Leona Ungerer (2016) stressed the importance of taking seven factors into consideration when it comes to the use of social media in education: understanding format type and delivery mode, evaluating user feedback, creating a context for user-generated information, evaluating dynamic content critically, producing original content in multiple media formats, understanding personal privacy, information ethics, and intellectual property issues, and sharing information in participatory environments. According to Ungerer, teachers need to have knowledge of printed and non-printed information, such as Wikis and YouTube, and know how to deliver the information.
Teachers also “need to contextualize [online] information by critically evaluating the validity and reliability of all source types, including those that are user-generated” (Ungerer, 2016, p. 5). It is equally important to teach students about these types and how to differentiate between reliable sources and unreliable sources of information. To do that, students should learn how to “consider the person’s level of expertise and distinguish whether a source of information is formal or informal in nature” (Ungerer, 2016, p. 5). Students need to learn how to distinguish between facts and opinions in online sources. They need to be able to assess online materials, including the reliability of websites and the authenticity and relevance of materials. Because social media platforms are open to all users, “students have to make vital choices about the particular media format for expressing their view and the online site or tool for doing so” (Ungerer, 2016, p. 5). They must be able to produce and share original content and consider ethical issues, such as personal privacy and intellectual property, such as copyrights (Ungerer, 2016).

As mentioned previously, social media best practices strategies aim to ensure the safety of students and teachers. Simply put, social media best practices strategies are a set of rules and guidelines that protect online users from any harm that could happen to them. Applying these guidelines might encourage students to model teachers’ behavior.
In this mixed methods study, I explored the perceptions of female Saudi faculty members on the use of social media as a teaching tool. My research was guided by four fundamental questions and one sub-question: What are the attitudes of female Saudi faculty members toward the use of social media as a teaching tool, and what are the factors that influence these attitudes? What knowledge and understanding do female Saudi faculty members have regarding social media best practices? How can a comprehensive understanding of social media best practices influence agency and empower female Saudi faculty members, and how do female Saudi faculty members feel about the impact of their modeling of social media best practices in their teaching on students’ social media use?

To gain a broad, deep, and rich understanding female Saudi faculty members’ perceptions on the use of social media as a teaching tool, a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was chosen for this study.

**Research Design**

The mixed methods approach is gaining acceptance in social science fields such as sociology, health and education (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). According to Caryn West (2012), “The fundamental principle of mixed method research is that the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a better understanding of the problem than either approach can achieve alone” (p. 70). Researchers defined mixed methods as “a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and ‘mixing’ or integrating both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the research problem” (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2009, p. 3).
In fact, mixed methods research combines the strengths of qualitative and quantitative methodologies and minimizes their weaknesses because it can help in answering questions that cannot be answered using a singular approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Another reason for selecting the mixed methods research approach was the need to understand what information is encoded in quantitative data so the interpretation will be meaningful (McKim, 2017).

According to Courtney McKim (2017), “mixed methods is critical in understanding complex phenomena because it allows readers to understand and explain” (p. 213). In other words, mixed methodology research “provides more breadth, depth, and richness as compared with either quantitative or qualitative methods alone” (McKim, 2017, p. 213).

The rationale for mixing both qualitative and quantitative data in one study is that “neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient, by themselves, to capture the trends and details of a situation” (Ivankova, Creswell, Stick, 2009, p. 3). When we combine quantitative and qualitative methods, the two methods complement each other and allow us to engage in robust analysis because they take advantage of the strengths of each other (Ivankova, Creswell, Stick, 2009).

In this study, I chose a mixed methods research design because I needed the quantitative data from the surveys to describe the characteristics of the population being studied. The demographical data I obtained from the quantitative survey helped me understand the population’s characteristics. Moreover, the quantitative data enabled me to identify patterns in my study participants’ responses. The quantitative data was also useful in understanding participants’ general knowledge, attitudes, and opinions about the use of social media in education.
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

The qualitative data on the other hand, enabled me to gain an understanding of the participants’ underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights and an understanding of their perceptions toward the use of social media in education. The qualitative data helped me understand some of the quantitative responses, such as those about participant usage of social media as educational tool. In the quantitative survey, most of the participants stated that they use social media in teaching. However, the qualitative interview revealed something different.

For the above reasons, a mixed methods research approach was chosen for collecting the study data (Figure 3). In fact, I chose a mixed methods *sequential explanatory design* for this study because it allows me to collect my data in two phases. In the first phase, quantitative data are collected and analyzed followed by qualitative data collection, which is the second phase (Creswell, 2013). The purpose of a Sequential Explanatory Design “is to use the qualitative results to further explain and interpret the findings from the quantitative phase” (Creswell, 2013, p. xx). Again, the rationale for choosing this approach, is because there are few studies that were conducted to examine the use of social media as an educational tool in Saudi Arabia. The existent studies in the field didn’t show enough depth to understand Saudi faculty members perceptions and attitude toward the use of social media in education.

*Figure 3. The sequential explanatory design (Wu, 2011, p.13).*
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

As I mentioned earlier, the use of sequential explanatory design allowed me to collect my data in two phases. The first phase was the quantitative research approach, this phase provided me with general understanding of the research problem and guided me to design my interview question for the second phase. In the second phase, I used this knowledge that I gained from the quantitative data result and analysis to go deeper and explore participants' reasons, views, motivations and understanding of social media as an educational tool (Figure 4).
Figure 4. Visual model of mixed methods sequential explanatory design procedures.
When I chose the mixed methods design, I had to deal with the issues of priority, implementation, and integration of the quantitative and qualitative approaches in my study.

**Priority.** According to researchers, “priority refers to which approach, quantitative or qualitative (or both), a researcher gives more weight or attention throughout the data collection and analysis process in the study” (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2009, p. 9). Creswell (2003) believe that it is hard to make a decision about the weight you will give to a certain approach, he believe that this decision depends on the researcher’s interest, population and what a researcher looking to emphasize in his study (Creswell 2003).

In this study, from the very beginning, I decided to give priority to the qualitative data approach despite its being the second phase of the research process. My decision was influenced by the purpose of this study to identify and explain the factors that influenced Saudi female faculty members’ attitudes toward the use of social media as a teaching tool and their understandings of social media best practices. This understanding needs to be explored using a qualitative approach.

**Implementation.** Implementation refers to “whether the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis come in sequence, one following another, or concurrently” (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2009, p. 10). In this study, I first collected and analyzed quantitative data using an online survey. The goal of this phase was to gain a general idea of participants’ views and opinions regarding the use social media as a teaching tool and identify any data worthy of extra exploration in phase two. Then I collected and analyzed qualitative data to help explain
some of the survey finding and understand participants’ knowledge, views, and opinions of the use of social media as a teaching tool.

**Integration.** Integration refers to “the stage or stages in the research process where the mixing or integration of the quantitative and qualitative methods occurs” (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2009, p. 11). In this study, the quantitative and qualitative phases were connected in the first stages when the results of the survey data analysis from the first phase of the study informed and guided the data collection in the second phase. Moreover, I integrated the quantitative and qualitative findings during the interpretation stage in the study.

**Research Plan**

After the Research Ethics Board in the University of Windsor approved my study, I requested a letter from the Saudi Bureau in Ottawa to facilitate my mission in Saudi Arabia. In that letter, the Saudi Bureau indicated that I am the recipient of a scholarship from the Saudi government and that I need to collect my data from King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia. The letter contains a request for the university’s officials to facilitate my mission. I emailed this letter along with the recruitment letter and the electronic link of the survey to the Research Service Unit at the Deanship of Graduate Studies at King Abdulaziz University. The Research Service Unit distributed the invitation letters and the electronic survey link. The invitation letter or the recruitment letter and the survey link were sent to each faculty member at the university’s female Campus by email. In the emails, the recipients were asked to participate in the study survey and to forward the recruitment letter to all the female Saudi faculty members. The participation recruitment letter included information about my study, such as the title and purpose, what the participant will be asked to do if she chooses to participate, and the expected duration of participation. Moreover, I clearly state in the recruitment letter that participation is
voluntary and that participant information will be kept confidential. At the end of the recruitment letter, I included my contact information so the participants can contact me if they have any questions or are willing to participate in my study. The letter also included the electronic survey link. Once the participant agrees to participate, she could click on the attached survey link, and she would find the consent and information forms. If the participant wished to proceed, she could click on the “agree” button and then move on to the survey questions.

The survey consent and information letters include a brief summary of my study. The letters describe what willing participants will be asked do, as well as the expected duration of their participation. It is made very clear that participation is voluntary and that personal information will be kept confidential. The forms also include my contact information so participants can contact with any questions. Before submitting their completed surveys, the participants were asked if they are willing to participate in face-to-face or phone interviews.

After receiving and analyzing the survey responses, 30 participants moved on to the next stage, which involved face-to-face or phone interviews. The interview participants were chosen according to two criteria: They needed to be from different faculties and represent a combination of those who use social media as a teaching tool and those who do not. The face-to-face interview participants received information and consent forms before the interview. The two forms included a brief summary of my study. The letters also included information about what the participants will be asked to do if they choose to participate in the interview and the expected duration of participation. I also clearly stated that participation is voluntary and that the participant’s information will be kept confidential. At the end of forms, I include my contact information so the participants can contact me if they have any questions. After reading and signing the forms, the interviews could be started. The phone interview participants, received a
link containing the information and the consent forms. By clicking “agree” at the end of the forms, the participants consented to participate in the interview.

**Participants**

A total of 245 female Saudi faculty members from 14 different faculties of King Abdulaziz University were recruited to participate in the quantitative part of this study (the survey), and a total of 30 participants were recruited for the qualitative part of this study (the interviews). The survey sample size was determined according to the population’s actual size of female faculty at King Abdulaziz University, the margin of error and the confidence level. In this study, the actual population size was 2,346, and I chose 5% as a margin of error with a 90% confidence level. After calculating these values, I found that 245 is the ideal number of participants for the survey.

The sample size used in qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews is usually smaller than that used in quantitative methods. According to Shari Dworkin (2012), different sample sizes are used in qualitative and quantitative research methods “because qualitative research methods are often concerned with garnering an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon or are focused on meaning” (para. 3). In-depth interviews are inductive and emergent in their process, while a quantitative method such as a survey is “concerned with making generalizations to a larger population of interest and does not tend to rely on hypothesis testing” (Dworkin, 2012, para. 3).

The number of interview participants was determined according to the recommendations of experts on qualitative research. Researchers believe “there are no specific rules when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research” (Statistics Solutions, n.d.). However, Janice Morse (1994) suggests approximately 30–50 participants for a qualitative study,
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

while John Creswell (1998) suggests only 20–30 participants. Thus, 30 participants were chosen to participate in the interviews for this study.

As I mentioned earlier, at the end of the electronic survey, participants were asked if they were willing to participate in face-to-face or phone interviews. Only five of the participants left their contact information, indicating that they were willing to participate in the interviews. However, only three of them responded when I tried to contact them to arrange meeting times and dates. The three participants introduced me to other faculty members who were also willing to participate in the interview. However, to include participants from different faculties, I had to go to the faculties and introduce myself and ask if someone was willing to participate in my study. Unfortunately, because I was collecting my data between exam days and summer vacation, I did not find as many faculty members as I expected. Some of the faculty members refused to participate because they were not interested, busy, or they do not use social media in education and were not willing to share their reasons for that. Only eight of the interview participants said that they do not use social media in education, and one of those participants stated that she does not use social media at all. Twenty-two of the interview participants stated that they use social media in teaching. The 30 interview participants were chosen according to two criteria: They were from different faculties and represented a combination of those who use social media as a teaching tool and those who do not.

Data Collection

Mixed-method studies are conducted to gain a deep understanding of human behaviors and changes and are used when researchers need a method that helps in understanding the hidden meanings behind actions and words. The method must uncover the causes of human behavior. According to Kothari (2006), qualitative research techniques “aim to discover the underlying
motivates and desires […] to find out how people feel or what they think about a particular subject or institution” (p. 3). Kauthari also added that “qualitative research is especially important in the behavioral sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motivates of human behavior” (2006, p. 3).

Quantitative research, on the other hand, “is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics” (DeFranzo, 2011, para. 3). Quantitative methods are used to quantify behaviors, attitudes, and opinions. This method is used to generalize results from a large sample population. According to Susan DeFranzo (2011), “Quantitative Research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research” (para. 3).

For the above reasons, and to understand the responses well, I used two techniques as research methods: surveys and interviews.

**First phase: Surveys.** Due to the mixed methods approach used in this study, a survey was chosen to be my first instrument. Surveys are commonly used in research studies to “collect self-report data from study participants. A survey may focus on factual information about individuals, or it might aim to obtain the opinions of the survey takers” (Cherry, 2018). In fact, surveys are one of the most common quantitative tools used in research because surveys can be used to collect data and describe any phenomenon (Cherry, 2018). Kendra Cherry (2018) believes that surveys “offer researchers a way to collect a great deal of information in a relatively quick and easy way. A large number of responses can be obtained quite quickly, which allows scientists to work with a lot of data” (para. 2).

For this study, I chose to use surveys as a data collection tool for more than one reason. First, the survey data gave me a summary of the participants’ demographic information, such as
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

age, faculty, and academic background. Second, the survey data gave me a general idea about the participants' opinions, knowledge, and views of social media as a teaching tool. This general idea cast the light on more than one specific topic that I had to explore more in the next phase of the study—qualitative data collection. The survey enabled me to gain a general idea about what is important to the participants, as well as gather meaningful opinions, comments, and feedback.

The third and most important factor for choosing to use surveys as a data collection tool is the anonymity and privacy of surveys as a data collection tool. According to Susan DeFranzo (2012) “Respondents are more likely to provide open and honest feedback in a more private survey method. Methods such as online surveys, paper surveys, or mobile surveys are more private and less intimidating than face-to-face survey interviews or telephone surveys” (para. 3). Participants might feel open, comfortable and safe in an anonymous and private survey because no one can identify or judge them.

The 30 survey questions were designed to answer the research questions. The survey questions’ validity and reliability were examined by three research experts to ensure the accuracy of the survey questions and to make sure the questions measure what they are intended to. Moreover, the survey questions were examined to ensure their consistency in terms of whether the same kind of information or similar responses are given each time they are asked.

The survey close-ended questions were used to gather information about participants’ backgrounds, knowledge and opinions. The survey also included demographic questions.

The first set of 4 questions included demographic questions about background, age, academic level, and so on. The second set of questions (13 questions) was related to the use of social media in general and in education. Moreover, these questions dealt with social media challenges and obstacles. The third set of questions (12 questions) was about knowledge of
social media best practices. The final question asked the participants to write their comments and suggestions and I also ask the participants to contact me if they are willingness to participate in the study interview.

A total of 245 participants completed the electronic survey, and 61 faculty members left the survey without completing it. I used Qualtrics software. Using online survey websites, no one else is able to modify the design of the questionnaire except me. The survey was accessible for participants only for answering questions.

According to Qualtrics (2018), all customer data collected using the software are stored in a single secure data center; data do not ‘float’ around in the cloud. Qualtrics also states that their servers are

Protected by high-end firewall systems, and scans are performed regularly to ensure that any vulnerabilities are quickly found and patched. Complete penetration tests are performed yearly. All services have quick failover points and redundant hardware, with complete backups performed nightly (Qualtrics, 2018, para. 3).

The survey link included the consent form and information letter. After the participants completed the electronic surveys, they clicked on the “done” button to submit their responses.

**Second phase: Interviews.** The purpose of conducting interviews is to explore individuals’ experiences, views, perspectives, beliefs, and motivations on specific matters (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). However, some people argue that the purpose of interviews “is not what is going on inside one person’s head, but what is going on inside lots of people’s heads” (Luker, 2008, p. 1952). When the researcher hears about a common problem from the people he or she interviewed, especially if they do not know each other, then the
researcher can assume that he or she is tapping into something worthy of investigation (Luker, 2008).

According to Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick, (2008) “Interviews are believed to provide a ‘deeper’ understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods” (para. 7). Thus, the second instrument I decided to use is interviews.

For this study, I wanted to conduct interviews because I knew that the survey data would reveal information that required additional exploration and clarification. Although there were no direct connections between the survey participants and the interview participants, the interview enabled me to deeply explore the survey participants’ responses and understand some of the reasons for them, such as the participants’ understandings of the term “social media.”

There were 14 questions on the interview sheet. I chose a semi-structured interview style because this type of interview does not limit participant responses, and it gave me the opportunity to explore responses further. Moreover, “the flexibility of this approach, particularly compared to structured interviews, also allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the research team” (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008, para. 5).

After analyzing the survey responses and revising the interview questions, I contacted the participants who agreed to participate in the interview to arrange a meeting time. The interviews took about 30–45 minutes. Interviews were carried out either via phone or face-to-face. Two of the participants preferred phone interview, the first participant was traveling at that time so it was hard to conduct a face-to-face interview and the second participant said that she simply does not prefer face-to-face interview. Twenty-eight of the participants chose face-to-face interview. The
interviews were conducted in their university offices, and because it was almost summer time vacation, there was not much of students in the university campus.

The participants signed the Interview Consent and Audio Taping Form, which was emailed or handed directly to them (if it was a face-to-face interview). In addition, at the beginning of each interview, each participant was reminded of her right to refuse to answer any question and to withdraw at any time. The participants were informed that their identity information will remain confidential. The participants were also informed that the interview will be recorded. At the end of the interview, the participants were thanked. I also made sure that participants have my contact information in case they want to contact me in the future for the study results.

Data Analysis

The mixed methods Sequential Explanatory Design of this study allowed me to collect the data in two phases.

First phase. The quantitative data that were collected from the surveys allowed me, after the analyses, to get a sense of the overall perspective of the participants on the knowledge and the use of social media. This also gave me insight into the challenges the participants face when it comes to social media usage in education.

After collecting the survey responses, I examined the survey findings to find the unique and interesting responses that needed to be explored deeper in the interview. Then I revised the interview questions sheet based on the survey findings.

According to researchers, theme identification can be carried out in two levels: the semantic level and latent level (Boyatzis 1998; Braun & Clarke 2006). Theme identification at the semantic level focuses on what has been written or said; in other words, it focuses only on
what is visible and apparent in the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) believe that “[semantic level] within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written” (p. 84).

For the latent level, to analyze the phenomenon under study, the emphasis goes beyond the obvious words, and the underlying and hidden ideas are focused on. While “a thematic analysis typically focuses exclusively or primarily on one level” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.84). In this study, through the thorough reading of transcripts and reviewing of codes, categories and themes, themes were established on both levels. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the researcher should start looking for themes once all data have been coded. As part of this process, the researcher analyzes the data to organize and collate codes and their associated extracts into initial or potential themes. A theme is “a phrase or sentence describing more subtle and tacit processes” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 282) or several connected categories. According to Braun and Clarke a theme is “something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (2006, p. 82).

After Qualtrics survey software analyzed each survey, data were coded and analyzed based on similarities. All the closed-ended responses were coded and analyzed for similarity. Moreover, simple descriptive analysis (mean-median-mode) was applied to analyze the close-ended question responses. “Descriptive statistics is the term given to the analysis of data that helps describe, show or summarize data in a meaningful way” (Leard statistics, 2018). In this study, the use of descriptive statistics enabled me to describe the basic features of the data. They provide simple summaries of the participations and their measures. The descriptive statistics...
provide a powerful summary that helped me identify patterns in the data. In other words, the descriptive statistics presented information about frequencies and distribution.

To gain a deep understanding of the participants’ survey responses, interviews were conducted following the surveys.

**Second Phase.** The qualitative phase allowed me to go deeper into the survey findings to understand the reasons behind the survey participants’ responses.

When each interview discussion had finished, I listened to the audio tape recordings and took preliminary notes on the overall findings of the conversation and specific quotes that seemed relevant to the objectives of the study. Then the findings were transcribed into various main themes. I also recorded any odd responses and made a list of all the relative responses.

After coding and analyzing both the survey and interview responses, I combined the most frequently identified themes in the survey data and the interview responses to answer my research questions.
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, I present and list the results of the survey and interview analyses, which eventually answer my primary and secondary research questions. First, I present the survey findings followed by the interview findings. The discussion of these findings will be in the next chapter.

Quantitative Data Findings

Survey. The findings of the surveys were categorized into five main themes after I carefully examined the survey responses. Five themes and categories were chosen to answer my research questions.

1. Participant knowledge of social media in general.
2. Participant knowledge regarding the use of social media in education.
3. Participant knowledge of social media best practices in education.
4. The impacts of understanding social media best practices on female faculty members and students.
5. Participant suggestions about how to encourage the use of social media as an educational tool.

Qualitative Data Findings

Interviews. The interview scripts were also examined and categorized into five main themes. The first theme is the participants’ knowledge of social media. The second theme is social media in education. The third one is social media best practices. I also write about the impact of social media best practices on female teachers and students. The final theme is participant’s suggestions regarding the use of social media in education.
Survey Results and Findings

Demographics. A total of 245 female Saudi faculty members from King Abdulaziz University were recruited to participate in the survey. The participants were from 14 different faculties. Table 1 below shows the distribution of the participants according of their faculties.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants faculty</th>
<th>Participants number</th>
<th>Participants percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Art and Humanities</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Economics and</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Sciences</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Home Economics</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Institute</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Nursing</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Medicine</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Pharmacy</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Dentistry</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Graduate Studies</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Law</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Engineering</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Engineering</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Tourism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About 45% of the participants were between 35 and 44 years old, and 26% were between 25 and 34 years old. A total of 16% of the participants were between 45 and 54 years old, and about 12% of the participants were over 55 years old (Figure 5).
About 88% of the participants held jobs as lecturers and assistant professors at the university while 8.7% of the participants were teaching assistants, 7% were associate professors, and about 6% were full professors (Figure 6).

Most of the participants were doctoral degree holders. About 53% of the participants have doctoral degrees while 39% participants are master’s degree holders, and about 6% are
bachelor’s degree holders. A total of 1% of the participants declared that they are doctoral students, which makes them master’s degree holders (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Participants’ academic degrees.

Knowledge of female faculty members at King Abdulaziz University about social media. A total of 97.2% of the participants stated that they are social media members, and 2.7% of the participants said that they do not have social media memberships (Table 2). These 2.7% of the participants revealed that they have many reasons for not having social media accounts. One of the reasons was that the participants are not interested in joining social media. Another reason was not knowing how to use social media. Moreover, in the survey, some participants stated that they do not enjoy or trust social media websites. Some of the participants also said that using social media is against their beliefs.

Table 2

Membership in Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership in social media websites</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>97.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The survey also revealed that 4% of the participants had accounts on social media for less than a year, 16% had their accounts for two to five years, and about 80% of the participants had accounts on social media for more than five years. Some of the participants revealed the number of years for which they have had social media accounts, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3
*Number of years Participants had Their Social Media Accounts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of years</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, more than 80% of the participants stated that they spend two to six hours a day using social media applications, while 7% spend seven to 12 hours on social media each day. Eleven percent of the participants spend an hour or less on social media every day (Figure 8).
When the participants were asked in the survey about the platforms that they consider to be social media, more than 89% of the participants considered WhatsApp to be social media and about 83.7% said that Instagram is social media. Furthermore, 78.8% stated that Twitter is considered to be a social media platform, and 75.5% indicated that Facebook is social media. A total of 49.4% of the participants stated that YouTube and emails are parts of social media platforms, and 45.6% said that Snapchat is social media. A total of 21.7% of the participants stated that the Blogger platform is considered to be social media, and 20.6% believed that Google is social media. When it comes to Google Plus, 15.7% of the participants said that it is social media while 13.5% of the participants stated that Flickr is part of the social media platform. A total of 9.7% of participants indicated that Windows Live is social media, and 8.7% indicated that Myspace is social media. 3.8% of the participants considered Friendster to be social media.

Figure 8. The amount of daily time participants spend on social media.
Moreover, when the participants were asked about the number of social media platforms in which they have membership, 95% said between 1 and 10 platforms while 2.7% said that they do not have accounts in social media and 2.1% said that they have more than 11 social media accounts (Figure 9).

According to 91% of the participants, keeping in touch with family and friends is the main reason for using social media. Seventy-nine percent of the participants said that finding information is why they use social media. Moreover, 67% of the participants use social media for professional and academic purposes and 43% use it for establishing and maintaining professional and business contacts. A total of 64% use social media to share information, and 22% uses it for getting opinions. 32% of the participants indicated that they use social media for sharing videos, photos, and music, and 6% of the participants indicated that they use social media for other purposes, such as fun and shopping.

Knowledge of female faculty members at King Abdulaziz University about social media in education. When the participants were asked if they had ever used social media as a teaching tool, more than half of them (about 59%) said “no,” and 39% of them said that they had used social media as a teaching tool before.
The participants were also asked if they agree or disagree that social media is important in education. About 79% of them strongly agreed or agreed, and 12% chose to disagree with that statement (Figure 10).

![Figure 10. Participants’ opinions on the importance of social media in education.](image)

The participants were asked if they believe it is necessary to be informed on how media tries to convey its messages, and more than 86% of them strongly agreed or agreed. About 9% of the participants disagreed with that statement (Figure 11).

![Figure 11. Knowledge of how social media works.](image)

When the participants were asked for their opinions on how teachers can use social media as a teaching tool, several responses were recorded. However, about 81 participants replied “I
don’t know,” “I’m not sure,” or “I don’t use social media in education.” The remaining participants suggested the following main ten techniques (Table 4).

Table 4

*Participant Suggestions on How to Use Social Media in Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching techniques using social media</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing (links, assignments, quizzes, feedback, information, photos, videos, opinions)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating group discussion</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with students</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching YouTube videos</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking the class subjects with the extra online resources</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating virtual classroom</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating new activities (projects, games)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating blogs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating channels in YouTube</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting experts’ opinions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

About 68% of the participants shared their thoughts on university, classes, or colleagues through social media, and 31% of them indicated that they had never shared their thoughts on university, classes, or colleagues through social media (Figure 12).

Moreover, about 77% of the participants revealed that they do not have academic or professional social media accounts while 29.6% said that they do have a professional/academic social media account (Figure 13).

Figure 12. Sharing on social media.

Figure 13. Professional/academic membership on social media.
When the participants were asked about the platforms on which they have academic/professional social media accounts, about 50% of the participants have an academic/professional account on WhatsApp, and about 27.8% said that they have professional accounts on Twitter. In addition, 16.3% stated that they have accounts on Facebook, and 15.3% of the participants use Snapchat for academic purposes. A total of 14.7% of the participants revealed that they have accounts in Instagram for academic reasons, and 11.4% said that they have an academic account on Google Plus. 7.6% of the participants have accounts on YouTube, and 5.4% have academic accounts on Windows Live. About 35% of the participants revealed that they do not have an academic or professional account in the above social media platforms (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Participants’ professional/academic accounts on social media.
Knowledge of female faculty members at King Abdulaziz University about social media best practices in education. 29% of the participants had heard about social media best practices in education or social media usage guidelines. The remaining participants were not sure of the meaning of social media best practices or had simply never heard about them (Figure 15).

![Figure 15](image)

Figure 15. Participants’ knowledge about social media best practices in education.

I asked the participants if they think that King Abdulaziz University has clear guidelines or instructions on how to use social media in an educational context, 34% said that the university does not have clear guidelines and more than 10% said that they are not sure if the university has guidelines on how to use social media in an educational context. However, about 18% of the participants indicated that the university has clear instructions on how to use social media in an educational context and more than 35% said that the university has clear guidelines on how to use social media in an educational context to some degree (Figure 16).

![Figure 16](image)

Figure 16. Participants’ opinions on the existence of clear guidelines on how to use social media in an education at KAU.
Moreover, the participants were asked if they believed that university instructors have a clear understanding of social media ethical standards, such as safety and privacy risks and professionalism. More than half of the surveyed participants (52%) said that the university instructors have a certain degree of understanding of social media ethical standards. A total of 26% of the participants said that the instructors do not have a clear understanding of social media ethical standards, and about 19% of the participants said that the instructors have a clear understanding of social media ethical standards.

In the survey, I asked the participants if they were aware of social media privacy and safety risks. Their responses were as follows (Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The awareness of</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>To some degree</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I’m not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social media privacy risks</td>
<td>70.65%</td>
<td>24.40%</td>
<td>2.70%</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media safety risks</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5.40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About 43% of the participants also believe that social media platforms are not private, about 37% believe that social media platforms are private to some degree, and approximately 18% of the participants think that social media platforms are private.

When I asked the participants if they agree or disagree that social media is always a reliable source of news, more than 81% of their responses ranged between strongly disagree and disagree and about 13% ranged between strongly agree and agree (Figure 17).
In addition, more than half of the study participants (57%) believe that teachers cannot tell the difference between real news and fake news in social media, and about 32% of the participants believe that teachers can tell the difference between real news and fake news in social media (Figure 18).

Figure 17. The reliability of social media

Figure 18. The knowledge of social media news.
Most of the participants (59%) stated that the existence of social media guidelines would encourage them to use social media as a teaching tool, and 9% of them indicated that this would not encourage them to use social media as a teaching tool (Figure 19).

The participants were asked if the understanding of social media best practices makes social media safe to use in education and understanding these guidelines is important for instructors. The participants’ answers to these two questions were as follows (Table 6)

Table 6

Participant Understanding of Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding social media guidelines makes</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>To some degree</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I’m not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safe to use</td>
<td>52.70%</td>
<td>33.10%</td>
<td>9.20%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important for instructors</td>
<td>84.20%</td>
<td>11.40%</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The impact of understanding social media on female faculty members and students.

More than 70% of the participants believe that understanding social media guidelines makes them confident about using social media in teaching. About 22% of the participants also said that
understanding social media guidelines makes them more confident to a certain degree about using social media in teaching, and 6% said that understanding social media guidelines will not make any difference in their confidence about using social media in teaching.

In the survey, some of the participants explained how understanding social media guidelines makes them confident about using social media in teaching. They said that understanding the guidelines makes them feel safe because by knowing these guidelines, they can avoid posting or saying something that they are not supposed to. They also said that by knowing and understanding social media usage guidelines, they will be more aware of social media risks. One of the participants added that the knowledge of social media guidelines protects the instructors’ and the students’ rights. However, another participant said that, sometimes, putting guidelines and restrictions on how to use social media could hamper student and instructor creativity.

Moreover, 96% of the participants believe that a media-literate teacher could positively impact students’ usage of social media while 3% of the participants disagreed with that (Figure 20).

![Figure 20](image)

**Figure 20.** The impact of teachers on student usage of social media
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

In addition, about three-quarters of the participants (74.4%) indicated that understanding social media best practices or guidelines could impact students’ usage of social media. A total of 17% of the participants think that the students’ knowledge of social media guidelines could impact students’ usage of social media to a certain degree, and 4% of the participants think that understanding social media guidelines will not impact students’ usage of social media (Figure 21).

![Bar chart showing the impact of understanding social media guidelines on students’ usage of social media.](image)

*Figure 21. The impact understanding social media guidelines on students’ usage of social media.*

Faculty members’ suggestions about how to encourage the use of social media as an educational tool. The participants’ responses regarding their suggestions to encourage teachers to use social media as a teaching tool were organized into three main themes. These themes are the needs for technology, training, and rewards. One of the participants, for example, said that we should educate teachers on how to use social media in education before trying to motivate them to do so. Moreover, seven of the participants raised the issue of social media risks. They said that because students are attached to social media platforms, teachers should receive proper training on social media risks so they can warn their students of the risks and drawbacks of using social media. Four of the participants said that the university administration should reward...
instructors who attend workshops on the use of social media in education and use social media in the classroom, with either promotion points or prizes.

Many participants emphasize the importance of providing university classrooms with the latest technology and equipment and that the university administration should provide intensive training for faculty members on the following: first, the importance and benefits of using social media in academic contexts, second, the techniques and strategies that the instructors need to have to use social media in education, and third, the knowledge of social media best practices in education guidelines. The last theme is the importance of rewarding faculty members who effectively use social media in their teaching.

Interview Results and Findings

A total of 30 female Saudi faculty members from King Abdulaziz University were recruited to participate in the interview. The participants were from 12 different faculties. Table 6 below shows the distribution of the participants according of their faculties.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Art and Humanities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Economics and Administration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Home Economics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Institute</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Nursing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Medicine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Pharmacy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Dentistry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Graduate Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants’ knowledge of social media. Participants’ knowledge of social media was examined from two sides. The first side was the participants’ definitions of social media and the second side is the participants’ reasons of using social media.

Social media definition. The first question I asked during the interview was how to define social media. The reason for asking this question was that the survey participants seemed to misunderstand what social media is. I received various responses, but most of the interviewees defined social media as applications or platforms that allow us to communicate with friends, family, and colleagues. Other participants defined social media as multimedia applications that allow us to share information. Another participant defined social media as “social platforms that allow individuals and groups to meet and communicate” (Interviewee 6). Many of the interviewees define social media by the functions and services it provides. For example, Interviewee 6 said, “social media is a free and reachable means of communication.” Interviewee 22 said that social media is “a group of applications allow anyone to share information” and added that social media is a means to the freedom of speech. Three participants (interviewees 7, 16, and 29) indicated that social media is platforms that connect people and allow them to learn something new. A couple of interviewees (interviewees 15 and 23) said that social media is a double-edged sword. During the interviews, many participants indicated that emails and SMS messages are part of social media. Most of the interviewees also believed that Blackboard is a social media platform. Thus, before completing the interview, I had to explain that email, SMS, and Blackboard are not social media platforms.
Participants’ reasons of using social media. The interviewees were asked about their reasons for using social media. From their responses, five major themes emerged as reasons or ways in which social media was used. These major themes were communication, learning, teaching, sharing, and entertainment.

Communication. More than half of the interviewees revealed that they use social media for communicating with friends, family, colleagues, and students. Interviewee 3, for example, said that “I mainly use social media for communication. I use WhatsApp to communicate with my family and my friends.” Another interviewee said that “I use WhatsApp to communicate with my students’ group leader who communicates with the other students to deliver my messages” (Interviewee 4). Three participants revealed that they use emails to communicate with their students. One of them said, “of course I use social media with my students. I use the university email to communicate with my students” (Interviewee 30).

Learning. Another reason to use social media is for learning. Eight of the interview participants revealed that they use social media for learning. Interviewee 8 said that she uses social media to look for new staff and information such as the latest fashion trends or new cooking recipes. Other participants also declared that social media helps them learn new information and allows them to be updated about latest news (interviewees 2, 8, 14, 16, and 28). Moreover, Interviewee 30 said that, usually, social media informs her of the latest news, even before the official sources.

Teaching. Many interviewees revealed that they use social media in teaching. Most of them said that they use WhatsApp to inform students about class updates, such as cancelations or delays, and to answer students’ questions and concerns. In addition, two interviewees stated that
they use social media platforms, such as Twitter, to discuss some of the subjects that they are studying (interviewees 2 and 9). Another interviewee said that she uses social media to send exercises to her students and send them the feedback (Interviewee 22). Of course, many participants believed that email and Blackboard are social media platforms.

*Sharing.* Sharing information was another reason for using social media. Interviewee 10 said that she uses social media to share her personal news with her family and friends. Another interviewee stated that she shares her opinions and views in social media (Interviewee 13). Furthermore, interviewees 2 and 17 revealed that they always use social media to share information, news, and photos. Nine of the interviewees revealed that they sometimes exchange official and secret documents through social media platforms such as WhatsApp.

*Entertainment.* Another reason for using social media is the entertaining feature of social media platforms. Two of the participants said that they use social media for shopping (interviewees 1 and 6). Interviewee 1, for example, stated that she uses applications such as Instagram for shopping. Another participant said that she just uses social media for fun and to waste her time (Interviewee 12).

**Participant knowledge of the use of social media in education.** When the participants were asked how they can use social media as a teaching tool, two of them did not want to answer to this question because they did not believe that social media is an effective educational tool (interviewees 10 and 21). However, most of the interviewees said that they could use social media as a supporting tool to enrich the educational content. Almost half of the interviewees suggested using social media applications, such as WhatsApp and emails, to communicate with students and answer students’ questions and concerns. Interviewee 20 said that, sometimes, students ask her to explain points that they did not manage to grasp in class, so she sends them
voice messages through WhatsApp to explain what they did not understand. Other participants said that they can use social media to inform their students when class is canceled or if there is any delay in class time.

Interviewees said that social media platforms could also be used to share students’ assignments, quizzes, and feedback. Two participants said that social media is an effective way to share articles and surveys (interviewees 15 and 27)

Participants also suggested that they can use social media platforms like YouTube for watching and sharing educational documentary videos. Interviewees said that students can watch clips or videos at home before having a class discussion about it (interviewees 4, 13, 16, 26, and 28). One of the interviewees (Interviewee 2) said that she uses YouTube videos to teach her students new lessons. She said that she asks the students to watch the video and try to imitate and master the skill that they see in the video.

Other participants suggested using applications like Twitter and Facebook to create course accounts and post articles, videos, and photos for online discussions. In fact, three participants said that instructors can create hashtags for the courses or subjects that they wish to discuss on Twitter and ask the students to follow the hashtag and add to it (Interviewees 11, 3, and 7). Moreover, one of the interviewees said that “learners can follow experts’ social media accounts and learn from them” (Interviewee 9). She added that she asks her students to follow some of their field experts’ Facebook, Twitter, and even Snapchat accounts to get new and updated news.

During the interview, I asked the participants about the impact of social media on the educational process. Most of the responses fell into three main categories: the enhancement of course content, the enhancement of student learning, and the improvement of teacher
performance. The three categories are connected to each other. The enhancement of the course content leads to the enhancement of student learning, and these two goals cannot be achieved unless we improve teacher performance.

**Enhancing course content.** According to most of the participants (86%), using social media as a teaching tool enhances course content. More than half of the interview participants indicated that using social media could enrich the content of the courses they teach because social media offers various free resources that support the course curriculum. These extra resources could increase and expand students’ knowledge. Interviewee 15, for example, said that in her opinion, social media is an effective teaching tool because it has many resources that back up and enrich the curricula. The participants mentioned many examples of how they could use social media to impact the educational process. Many of the participants said that they use YouTube videos to give their students additional information sources (Interviewee 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 11, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22, and 30). Another participant (Interviewee 8) said that she asks her students to use Pinterest to get new and creative ideas. Four of the interviewees (1, 6, 26, and 30) said that they use Twitter because it is an open information source. They ask students to follow relevant experts’ accounts to benefit from their experiences and expertise. However, one of the participants believes that one problem with social media is that it is open and available for anyone (Interviewee 29). She thinks that this could impact the educational process negatively because any person can join social media and interact with the students. She added that social media privacy policies do not protect students from outside risks (Interviewee 29).

**The enhancement of students’ learning.** Most of the participants believe that social media has a positive impact on student learning. In fact, about half of the interviewees said that applying social media in education adds joy and excitement to the educational process. Three of
the interview participants said that because the students are members of a technological generation, they prefer to communicate through technologies (interviewees 1, 2, and 9). Participants also believe that using social media as a teaching tool breaks the barriers and make students relaxed and open to new prospective (interviewees 9 and 13). According to Interviewee 9, social media helps students remember information for longer than the traditional teaching way, which impacts the final outcomes, which is students’ grades. Interviewee 9 gave an example of an experiment that she conducted on her students. In her experiment, she divided the students into two groups. In the first group, she used social media as a supporting tool. The students in the second group were taught in a traditional way. At the end of her experiment, she tested both groups to find out who gained more knowledge and asked the two groups about their experiences. She found that the students who used social media scored higher than those in the other group. The students in the group that used social media said that they were having fun while they were learning (Interviewee 9). However, one of the interview participants said that because students are addicted to technology, using social media as a teaching tool could distract students and waste their time (Interviewee 21).

Another positive impact of social media in education is that it enhances student learning by allowing students to interact with each other and engage in a meaningful discussion (interviewees 6 and 20). Interviewee 14 said that in online discussions, students learn from each other. Another participant (Interviewee 10) said that although she is against the use of social media in education, she thinks that online discussions could increase students’ critical thinking skills. Participants also believe that using social media as a supporting tool has a great impact on student learning because it takes individual differences into consideration (interviewees 7 and 8).
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

Interviewee 7 added that “social media give the students extra time to respond, especially the shy student.”

Participants talked about multiple media features of social media platforms and the various platforms that suits most of the learner’s types. Interviewees also talked about how social media helps in clarifying some of the lessons they teach. Social media enables students to repeat videos that they did not understand or find better videos or visuals for the lesson (Interviewee 9). However, Interviewee 3 said that “if we rely on social media sources some of the students won’t show up for classes because they will depend on the existence of these sources.”

**Improving teacher performance.** According to some of the participants, social media has a positive impact on facilitating teachers’ jobs. Three interviewees (interviewees 6, 18, and 27) said that social media made life easier for them because this technology helps them keep permanent records of student performance. Interviewee 6 said, “in social media activities, I don’t need to worry about losing student’s papers.”

When asked about the advantages of using social media as a teaching tool, Interviewee 1 said, “it’s a good thing to use technology such as social media in something useful.”

The participants’ responses regarding the advantages of the use of social media in education varied, but the most common response was the fact that “social media platforms are fast.” One of the participants (Interviewee 2) said that one of the greatest advantages of using social media is that you can quickly reach many students at the same time. Another participant said that social media enables its users to communicate quickly and easily. She added that students are connected to their devices; they are always on their smartphones, and the chances for them to miss messages are low (Interviewee 15). Participants also believe that because communication in social media is fast, its use saves users’ time. Interviewee 12 said that instead
of turning on her computer, looking for an internet connection, and worrying about whether the students will get her messages on time, she can simply use social media applications, such as WhatsApp, to send messages to her students. Four of the interviewees (2, 12, 15, and 26) also stated that one of the most important advantages of social media is that it changed their space and time perception. One of the participants said that social media enables you to contact an enormous number of students from the comfort of your office, home, or even your car (Interviewee 26).

According to the interview responses, other advantages of using social media in education are its ease of use and popularity. Many of the interviewees declared that they use social media because they are familiar with many of its applications (Interviewee 1, 6, 16, 23). They added that they use social media applications, such as WhatsApp and emails, almost every day. Moreover, students love these applications (Interviewee 16). According to Interviewee 23, the popularity of social media among Saudi students made social media the best communication means in Saudi Arabia. Some of the interviewees believe that because social media is so popular among students, they enjoy learning through it. In addition, one of the participants said that when students enjoy learning through social media platforms, they tend to engage in discussion more frequently than usual (Interviewee 15). According to Interviewee 8, this engagement encourages self-learning and information acquisition. Interviewee 9 stated that when students use social media as a learning tool, they interact with and learn a lot from each other. In addition, online interaction and discussion improves students’ language proficiency, critical thinking, and the acceptance of others’ differences (Interviewees 8, 10, 12, and 22).

Many of the participants believe that social media is synonymous with multimedia applications (Interviewee 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 19, and 23). They said that one advantage of using
social media as an educational tool is that it enables its users to exploit its various multimedia content in education. One of the interviewees said that the endlessly-updated resources on social media platforms makes social media a perfect teaching tool for all types of learners (Interviewee 4). Moreover, another participant said that social media, with its broad content, expands learners’ horizons (Interviewee 12).

During the interview, Interviewee 11 said that the documentation feature on any technology is too important for her. She said that in social media, everything is documented and stays there forever. The participants talked about the fact that no paper is needed for the online exercises and paper assignments cannot go missing. Interviewees 6, 11, and 19 also mentioned how that could help the environment. Furthermore, one of the participants said that she can depend on social media for delivering her messages, and if anyone denies getting the messages, she can prove the opposite (Interviewee 9). Another advantage of the documentation features in social media is that the fact that students, even the absent students, have permanent access to the online information (Interviewee 8).

On the contrary, some of the participants believe that one of the disadvantages of using social media as a teaching tool is the students’ reliance on social media as an information source. Participants stated that the way social media works enables anyone to post and share all types of information without any control or supervision (interviewees 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 16, 17, and 29). Interviewees 2 and 16 said that one of the biggest disadvantages of using social media is its ability to spread rumors and false information. Two of the interviewees (interviewees 2 and 9) said that it is annoying to hear or see students quoting untrue information that they heard on the social media. Participants also said that because social media is public, it has no control or limits, anyone can log in and interact with students. They added that it is easy for students to lose track
of conversations or post improper or irrelevant posts on social media. Moreover, some users log into social media with nicknames and do not use their real identities. This could cause many troubles for a course instructor who decides to use social media with her students in her course because she has to be sure that students are safe in that environment (interviewees 1, 15, and 16).

Social media safety and privacy risks are some of the major concerns that participants have. Two of the participants talked about the fact that social media accounts can be hacked and they do not want that to happen when they are communicating with their students because this could harm students and the university instructors (interviewees 14 and 21). Furthermore, participants revealed that when they give students their personal account information, students tend to contact their instructors at inappropriate times and occasionally send irrelevant messages to their instructors (interviewees 11, 16, and 27). In addition, revealing instructors’ personal contact numbers could disturb the instructors’ personal lives (Interviewee 10). During the interview, one of the interviewees said, “one of my students contacted last night around 2 am” (Interviewee 11). Another interviewee said that “when students have your cellphone number, they keep calling you and bugging you over their grades and sometimes insignificant matters” (Interviewee 15). The interviewee added “once, I received a call from one of my student’s mother asking me to change her daughter’s grade” (Interviewee 15).

According to one of the interviewees, one of the disadvantages of using social media in education is that students sometimes misunderstand messages. She added that because of the absence of verbal communication and social presence in some social media applications, students misunderstand what the instructor wants. That is why she prefers to send voice messages to her students (Interviewee 15).
Another major disadvantage of using social media as an educational tool is technical problems. Most of the participants said that they cannot rely on technology when it comes to teaching. Most of the interviewees’ technical problems can be divided into four concerns. The first one is internet connection issues.!The second is technological breakdowns. The third is that technology constantly changes. The fourth is the need for training. Nine of the interviewees said that the university internet connection is not too strong and they cannot rely on it and that, sometimes, it takes a while before they can download something (interviewees 2, 5, 11, 14, 16, 21, 22, 25, and 28). Moreover, one of the participants said that sometimes you cannot rely on the technology. She gave the example of her going to her classroom ready to show her students an educational video on YouTube to find out that the projector and the speakers were broken. She added that it took about the whole semester to fix the problem (Interviewee 9). Another technical problem is that instructors sometimes cannot keep up with technology and changes to the popular social media applications. One of the participants said that technology is always changing and that it is difficult for her to be updated all the time. She added that even hacking techniques and the viruses are changing, so sometimes, using social media in education is overwhelming (Interviewee 14). Finally, the absence of training on how to use social media in education is one of the issues that participants face. Many of the interviewees said that some of the instructors refrain from using social media because they are not familiar with it (Interviewee1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 16, 20, 22, 25, 29). One of the participants said that instructors are afraid to use social media because they are not sure how to use it safely in an educational context (Interviewee 3).

According to many of the participants, ignorance of technology is the main reason for the lack of use of social media as a teaching tool in Saudi Arabia (Interviewee1, 3, 6, 8, 11, 12, 22, 25, 29). one of the participants said that teachers do not like to give up the traditional teaching
style because they do not want to depend on technology because it is not reliable. She gave an example of her colleague who prefers the traditional teaching style using her book and board marker. This instructor prefers to hand out her work and assignment manually because she believes that her work would be at risk of being stolen or lost if she sent it online (Interviewee 6).

Another participant stated that some of the instructors are not aware of the importance of technology and the benefits that social media can bring to curricula. Those instructors believe that using technology requires extra effort and time from them, and they are not yet ready to do that (Interviewee 3). Moreover, Interviewee 20 declared that the class time does not allow teachers to use extra educational sources, such as social media, and thus, teachers do not use it. She said, “it takes too long to plan a lesson using social media, and the class time is too short. That’s why teachers think that using social media isn’t worth the effort” (Interviewee 20).

Another reason for the rare use of social media in education in Saudi Arabia is that social media applications are not officially certified by the university. In other words, the university would not recognize any conversations with the students in these applications. One of the participants said “if I send an announcement in the WhatsApp to my students and one of the students said that she didn’t get my message, I can’t take any official action against her because WhatsApp is not recognized by the university” (Interviewee 17). Another participant (Interviewee 15) said that although the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced the Anti-Cyber Crime law, whereby officials identify any violation in the online environment as a crime, people still do not take social media seriously.

Participants also revealed that the lack of clarity about how to use social media in education is another reason for its rare use in education. According to many of the interviewees (interviewees 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 13, 15, and 28), teachers are afraid that students might get into
controversial political, racial, or religious discussions via social media, and teachers are not knowledgeable on what to do in such situations. Moreover, some of the teachers believe that there is no need to use social media in education. Interviewee 9 said, “teachers are used to the traditional teaching style and they like it this way.”

**Participant knowledge of social media best practices in education.** When I asked the interview participants what social media best practices in education or social media usage guidelines are, all 30 participants said, “I don’t know.” Some of them also said that they had not heard about it. However, I asked them to try to guess what these guidelines are. One of the participants said “it tells you how to use social media” (Interviewee 18). Another participant said that social media usage guidelines teach you technical procedures for social media usage (Interviewee 11). One of the participants said that social media usage guidelines explain how to find information on social media platforms (Interviewee 25). Another one said “maybe… what to post and how” (Interviewee 13). Interviewee 3 said the guidelines tell you what you are allowed and not allowed to do in social media. Two of the participants said that social media best practices are like product user manuals that teach you how to use social media (interviewees 7 and 8). However, few of the interviewees said that social media guidelines might be the communication rules for social media (interviewees 8, 9, 15, and 26). Moreover, five of the participants (interviewees 4, 5, 14, 17, and 22) said that social media usage guidelines are the ethical standards that users must follow in social media.

The participants were asked if they knew whether King Abdulziz University had its own social media best practices guidelines. A total of 27 participants said that they are not aware of the existence of such guidelines. Three of the participants said yes, the university has its own social media usage guidelines, and when I asked where, they referred to the university’s circulars
and decisions regarding revealing professional information on social media (Interviewees 10, 16, 21).

Most of the participants agreed that the Saudi guidelines should include ethical guidelines, such as respecting others’ opinions, privacy, traditions, norms, and professionalism. One of the interviewees said that students and instructors should think before they post; they should not speak up their minds without thinking first (Interviewee 21). Three of the participants (interviewees 4, 10, and 14) said that the guidelines must include instructions on how to avoid plagiarism.

Most of the participants believe that political standards should be included in the Saudi social media usage guidelines. Interviewee 6 said that Saudi social media users should respect Saudi law and not get into meaningless political discussions. Moreover, some of the participants said that university instructors and students should not get into or encourage any discussion that promotes political problems.

According to most of the interview participants, Saudi social media usage guidelines should include religious standards and restrictions. Interviewee 23 said that instructors and students should respect the country’s religion. One of the interviewees said that the guidelines must state that users are not allowed to post any religiously-offensive posts, such as insults to others’ religions, doctrines, or prophets (Interviewee 6). Another participant said that social media posts should not include any pornography and that when students or instructors decided to upload photos, these photos should be decent and modest (Interviewee 11).

During the interview, I asked participants what media literacy is. At first, most of the participants were not sure about the meaning of media literacy, but then they started to define media literacy according to their understandings. Three of the participants said that media
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

literacy tells you the importance of media and teaches you when and why to use media (interviewees 2, 11, and 19). Other interviewees (interviewees 10, 16, 22, and 27) said that media literacy teaches you how to use media. Another participant (Interviewee 27) said that media literacy teaches you how to find information on media outlets. Moreover, three participants (interviewees 1, 10, and 18) said that media literacy gives you knowledge about new media and platforms. Four of the interviewees (interviewees 9, 12, 15, and 30) said that media literacy is about being critical, knowledgeably, and analytically when it comes to media. Two of the interviewees (interviewees 13 and 15) added that being media-literate means understanding the hidden messages in media. Some of the participants (interviewees 2, 9, 12, and 20) said that being media-literate means understanding how media works and the psychological effects of using media and how to exploit media for one’s benefit.

When I asked the participants how a teacher can be media-literate, most of the interviewees said by educating herself. They agreed that reading can broaden teachers’ horizons. Other participants stated that being critical is important because it prevents teachers from blindly accepting information. Some of the participants (interviewees 5, 7, 11, 12, and 15) believe that experience plays a big role in being media-literate because with experience, teachers will ensure that the information sources they use are trustworthy and credible. They also believe that a media-literate teacher should check multiple sources for the information she wishes to learn and share. Moreover, two of the participants (interviewees 2 and 8) believe that being educated will be reflected by your examination and acceptance of new information. They added that it is important for teachers to attend conferences and workshops to educate themselves to be open-minded and accept others’ points of view.
The impact of understanding social media best practices on female teachers and students. More than half of the participants indicated that media literacy has a positive impact on boosting teachers’ self-confidence. One of the participants (Interviewee 28) said that a media-literate teacher will have a deep understanding of how media works, and this understanding will make her confident about her information. Participants also agreed that media literacy makes teachers aware of how to choose information sources and how to receive and share information (interviewees 1, 9, 10, 12, 22, and 30). Interviewee 1 said “being media literate makes you look for trusted and credible information sources.” Another participant (Interviewee 7) said that media literacy is the skill of knowing how and where to find trusted information.

Furthermore, some of the interviewees (interviewees 2, 4, 5, 15, 16, and 23) said that media literacy teaches the teachers how to be open-minded and accept others’ opinions and differences. Many of the interviewees said that media literacy strengthens teacher personalities. For example, one of the participants (Interviewee 27) said that when a teacher is media-literate, she will know how to respond to any question she receives by referring to the correct source. Three of the participants (interviewees 3, 2, and 8) added that a media-literate teacher would make a great speaker. Another interviewee said that media literacy makes teachers look smart because they are careful in choosing their information sources (Interviewee 13). Two of the participants said that media literacy makes teachers appear mature because media-literate teachers understand the world better than other teachers (interviewees 2 and 4).

According to all the interview participants, a media-literate teacher is a role model for her students. The participants agreed that students are affected by their teachers and could learn a lot from their teachers because according to Interviewee 9, teachers are like icons in their students’ eyes, and they like to follow them. Moreover, two of the participants (interviewees 21 and 28)
believe that when students take media-literate teachers as role models, they will learn how to be open-minded and accept others’ views. Some of the participants (interviewees 7, 9, and 17) believe that a media-literate teacher can educate her students on effective privacy and safety practices for social media. They gave examples of teaching students how to use media safely, what to post and share on social media, and how to search for trusted information. Some of the participants (interviewees 1, 3, 5, 8, and 14) believe that teachers can influence their students by being consultants and offering guidance. They educate students, spread media awareness, and discuss contemporary issues related to the media.

When the participants were asked about how understanding how social media works empowers female Saudi teachers, different responses were recorded. The most common answer was that when teachers understand how social media works, they can use it to make their voices heard. Many of the participants said that Saudi females can use social media platforms to share their opinions, ideas, and thoughts. Interviewee 6 said that women can use social media “to share their work and achievements with the world.” She gave examples of two ladies; the first one is a Saudi female mayor who always shows her achievements on Snapchat, and the other lady is her colleague who gives math lesson on YouTube. Another participant (Interviewee 11) said that women can use social media to show their support for other women. They also have the freedom to support and follow whomever they want.

In addition, other participants said that “social media platforms gave Saudi women way to shine” (Interviewee 9). Interviewees 4, 11, 18, and 20 talked about the fact that some people use Twitter to deliver their voices and messages to the Saudi government, and most of the time, they get the government’s attention and their problems get solved. In fact, Participant 18 said that the she thinks that the Saudi government identifies the issues that concern society on social
media platforms. Moreover, participants believe that social media gave Saudi women the opportunity to talk about gender and quality issues in their society (interviewees 2, 10, and 15). According to Interviewee 10, Saudi women can utilize social media to make changes to their society. Interviewee 26 added that if Saudi women know how to use social media in the correct ways, then they can use it to make real differences in the world. Participant 10, for example, said that when a woman knows how to use social media well, she can change social traditions and norms. According to many of the interviewees (interviewees 1, 4, and 29), if women know how to utilize social media well, then they can use it as a source of income. They gave the examples of the use of Instagram for marketing and selling women’s goods and products. They also talked about how a teacher can present lessons on social media platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp. Teachers can also use social media to find jobs.

**Participant’s suggestions regarding the use of social media in education.** Most participants suggested that the university administration should arrange an educational workshop for the faculty members to educate them on the importance of the use of social media in education. Moreover, the participants (interviewees 4, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16, and 28) think that social media usage guidelines should be taught in these workshops and that the university must share its guidelines with its faculty members and students on the university website. Two of the participants (interviewees 4 and 12) suggested that the university should offer rewards for the best uses of social media in education such as certificates.
In this chapter, I answer my four fundamental questions and one sub question. I also discuss my research limitations and provide recommendations for future studies.

Discussion

After I examined the survey responses, I noticed that there was a big misunderstanding about what social media is among the participants. Many of the participants considered email and Google Search to be social media platforms. The survey revealed that 30% of the participants have academic social media accounts, yet 49% of the participants said that email is considered to be social media and 21% of the participants said that Google Search is social media. Therefore, I had to go deeper in the interviews to closely examine the female Saudi faculty members’ understandings of social media and its platforms. Furthermore, during the interviews, many of the participants stated that email and SMS messages are part of social media. Most of them also indicated that Blackboard is a social media platform. They said that any technology that enables us to contact and communicate with each other is social media. It seems that the faculty members are confused about the difference between social media and other communication tools such as email, SMS and Blackboard. According to Anthony Bradley, there are two key distinctions between email and social media. He said, “E-mail is a distribution mechanism and social media is a collective mechanism” (2010, para. 6). Email is a communication tool, where people can distribute their messages to one or more recipients via the internet. Social media on the other hand, “is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration” (Rouse, 2019, para. 1). Social media enables mass collaboration while email is a mass communication
tool. According to Bradley (2010), “mass collaboration involves more people than you can fit in a room to effectively collaborate.” He added “a critical differentiation of social media is the potential for the masses to collaborate as never before and the mass aspect is what leads to the unprecedented and distinct value of social media” (Bradley, 2010, para. 8). Therefore, and for the above reasons, one must say that email is certainly social but not social media. Creating social media includes creating an environment where people connect with other people, respond and interact with the others in their preferred time and place. Although, someone can argue that email facilitates some parts of that, it fails to provide real time interactions, such as updates, likes, 24/7 availability, and other social media features.

Blackboard was designed as a dedicated virtual learning environment (VLE), “provided by institutions such as universities specifically for their staff and students” (Parslow, Lundqvist, Williams, Ashton, & Evans, 2008, p.3). According to Parslow, Lundqvist, Williams, Ashton, and Evans (2008), all content on Blackboard is “arranged by courses, which map to the modules students are enrolled on” (Parslow, Lundqvist, Williams, Ashton, & Evans, 2008, p.3). Social media platforms such as YouTube, wiki and blog tools are available on Blackboard, but they are only viewable by people enrolled in a course specific to a particular social media platform such as a blog or wiki. “Students do not have control over access permissions, although they can modify the privacy settings for the personal information” (Parslow, Lundqvist, Williams, Ashton, & Evans, 2008, p.3). According to researchers, students often avoid Blackboard because “they feel it is restrictive, confusing and that they are being watched” (Parslow, Lundqvist, Williams, Ashton, & Evans, 2008, p.3).

Social media, on the other hand, provides users with “simple publishing and asynchronous communication tools. It also provides a limited, and slightly esoteric,
permissions model, allowing control of access to various content at a group level” (Parslow, Lundqvist, Williams, Ashton, & Evans, 2008, p.3).

SMS (short message service) is a one-to-one communication tool. Communication through SMSs is sent by one individual directly to another individual in a personal, private space. Social media, in contrast, is a one-to-many communication tool, which means that social media communications “are sent out by one …and broadcast to many people on one platform” (Doherty, 2014, para2).

In short social media consists of applications like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest. SMS is another form of communicating like emails and phone.

The Attitudes of Female Saudi Faculty Members toward the Use of Social Media as a Teaching Tool

Although 68% of the survey participants said that they do not have academic accounts in social media, most of the study participants have a positive attitude toward the use of social media as a teaching tool. In fact, more than 79% of the survey participants responded that social media is important in education, and about 68% of the survey participants indicated that they have shared their thoughts on university, classes, or colleagues through social media more than once. The interview participants revealed that the use of social media in education positively impacts the educational process. According to the participants, using technology as a learning tool enhances student learning by improving course content and teachers’ jobs. The participants talked about how social media characteristics can support students’ educational processes. According to the interview participants, social media platforms take students’ individual differences into consideration. The different social media platforms offer multiple ways of
learning, which may suit most students’ needs. In fact, teachers ask their students to use multiple mediums (like Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube) in their learning could have positive impacts on the student learning process. According to Edward Spoone, “multimedia learning seeks to give instructors the ability to stimulate both the visual and auditory channels of the learner, resulting in better progress” (2015, p. 11). Moreover, according to a theory called dual encoding, Clark believes that content communicated with text and graphics can affect our long-term memory and, thus, the learning process in general (Clark, 2002). In addition, Alhusain Obari, the editor of the New Education Journal, believes that new education technology, such as social media, helped in the spreading of multiple intelligence theory because now, everybody can choose the technology that fits their ability and interest (2014). In fact, Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory states that

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

(Mawhiba, 2011)

Moreover, one of the interview participants indicated that social media gives students, especially shy students, extra time to respond to their teachers and peers, (Interviewee 7). An Australian study revealed that social media platforms are great teaching tools for shy or insecure students, as well as those who are afraid of public speaking (Social Media in Education, 2012).

The study participants indicated that social media can enhance student learning by improving the learning environment. The participants mentioned how students enjoy learning through social media because they are attached to their devices and they are the technology generation. This generation is referred to as Generation Z. According to Tracy Francis and
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

Fernanda Hoefel “Members of Gen Z—loosely, people born from 1995 to 2010—are true digital natives: from earliest youth, they have been exposed to the internet, to social networks, and to mobile systems” (2018, para. 1). Participants believe that social media is an important educational tool because students enjoy social media. Thus, they enjoy using it as a learning tool. Researchers believe that

- Good perception too is contributed by the feeling of comfortness in one’s own personal environment. It helps to motivate students to spend longer time communicating online because they tend to not physically meet their teachers to seek answers and information pertaining the lesson learned. (Jamari, Zaid, Mohamed, Abdullah, & Aris, 2017, p. 268)

- Moreover, Interviewee 15 said that students tend to engage most in the topics they discuss on social media because they enjoy learning through social media applications. Another participant indicated that students’ online communication, discussion, interaction and engagement encourages self-learning, critical thinking, and information acquisition.

- According to researchers, a social media platform “aims to engage students’ interest especially among students who are less interested toward learning, and as a platform to enhance students’ 21st century skills such as communication, collaboration, information searching, leadership and problem solving” (Jamari, Zaid, Mohamed, Abdullah, & Aris, 2017, p. 268).

- Participants also believe that online interactions and discussions on social media improve student language proficiency and critical thinking (interviewees 8, 10, 12, and 22). Moreover, when students interact with each other, they build on each other’s knowledge and, thus, learn (Interviewee 9). According to researchers, social media platforms like Facebook have “the potential in enhancing interpersonal and critical thinking skills by aiding in an effective knowledge transfer process as well as improving writing skills of the students” (Jamari et al.,
The online interaction between students encourages them to learn from their peers and eventually enhances collective learning. Scardamalia and Bereiter discussed the benefits of using computer-supported technology. They said that when students work collectively, “they seem to be functioning beyond their years, tackling problems and constructing knowledge at levels that one simply does not find in ordinary schools, regardless of the caliber of students they enroll” (1993, p. 281). Moreover, Sulaiman Alqahtani stated that the most beneficial factors of technologically-enhanced teaching and learning platforms is the following:

The ability of these platforms to provide the advantages of ubiquity, synchronicity, and connectivity. These innate characteristics of social networking technologies are seen to support vital academic functions such as knowledge construction, sharing of ideas and resources and critical thinking. (2016, p. 278)

According to some of the study participants, social media is a great teaching tool because it is an environmentally friendly tool. Some of the interviewees said that social media helps save the environment because no paper is needed for online assignments (interviewee 6, 11, and 19). One of the interviewees said that social media and its unlimited resources give you the chance to be creative in designing new assignments (Interviewee 6). In fact, Miri Shonfeld and Hagit Meishar-Tal believe that teachers in paperless institutions “develop a solid rationale relying on ideas for teaching and learning in a paperless environment, and use varied technologies and develop innovative pedagogies” (2017, p. 194).

The few participants with negative attitudes toward the use of social media in education revealed that students’ addictions to social media do not need to be encouraged by teachers. According to researchers “disagreement on the use of social media for enhancing academic activities transpire due to distraction and obsession issues” (Jamari, et al., 2017, p. 269). About
91% of the surveyed participants revealed that they use social media for communicating with family and friends. In fact, it is well known that social media was created mainly for socialization and entertainment. However, nowadays, people are using it for education too. The researchers suggested that the use of a proper teaching plan from the teachers’ side and a self-control plan from the students’ side might eliminate students’ technology distractions. Jamari et al. stated that “Facebook can be a positive tool for teaching and learning but can also be a negative tool that disengage students if it is not appropriately utilized” (2017, p. 269). They added that adapting social media platforms for educational purposes is not an easy task. However, it is achievable with appropriate planning and guidelines for teachers and students. Moreover, Jamari et al. said that “Students too should practice good time management and aware of the priorities while learning online to ensure its successful implementation” (2017, p. 269).

Social media, as a teaching tool, was meant to ensure the effective engagement between students and their instructors. According to Nicola Osborne (2017), effective student engagement in social media enables students and instructors to construct and build learning communities in which users can interact with, reflect upon, experiment with, and analyze the educational content. The interview participants indicated that they mainly use social media applications for communicating with their students. They gave the example of their use of WhatsApp to contact students. In 2008, researchers suggested that they “have yet not achieved high levels of effective technology use, either in the United States or internationally” (Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2011, p. 256). Peggy Ertmer and Anne Ottenbreit-Leftwich added that “86% [of the teachers] reported using technology for communication tasks. Similarly, 93% of the teachers …reported using technology to communicate with colleagues or parents” (2001, p. 256). More than ten years later, participants reported that their main reasons for using social media technology in
education is still communication. Peggy Ertmer and Anne Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) wrote the following:

> It is time to shift our mindsets away from the notion that technology provides a supplemental teaching tool and assume, as with other professions, that technology is essential to successful performance outcomes (i.e., student learning). To put it simply, effective teaching requires effective technology use. (p. 256)

Researchers believe that we need to help instructors understand how to use technology, such as social media, to “facilitate meaningful learning... which enables students to construct deep and connected knowledge, which can be applied to real situations” (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2011, p. 257).

Factors that influence female Saudi educators’ attitudes toward the use of social media as a teaching tool. Teachers’ attitudes toward the use of social media depend on their acceptance of new technology. This plays an important role in teachers’ decisions to adopt or avoid new technology. The TAM by Davis suggests that when someone is oduced to a new technology, many factors influence his or her decision about whether to adopt or avoid this technology (Rauniar, Rawski, Yang, & Johnson, 2014). According to Venkatesh and Davis’s model, “both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use were found to have a direct influence on behaviour intention” (Lai, 2017, p. 27). The interview participants revealed that one of the biggest advantages of using social media in education is its ease of use and popularity. The participants said that they use social media because it is easy to use for both teachers and students.

Moreover, the study participants’ attitudes toward social media as a teaching tool were influenced by many factors, such as the benefits and drawbacks of using it. Most of the interview
participants said that they use social media platforms because these platforms offer fast ways to reach and communicate with their students. According to Rdouan Faizi, Abdellatif El Afia, and Raddouane Chiheb, “web-based platforms could actually be used to enhance communication between the different actors of the educational system, namely, student, faculty and staff” (2013, pp. 51–52). Moreover, researchers believe that when student share information or links or interact and comment on each other’s posts “they get engaged with each other instantly. The use of social media has made it easier and faster to interact with peers or teachers about class-related topics” (Faizi, Afia & Chiheb, 2015, p. 52).

Interviewee 12 stated that social media applications made it easy for her to communicate with her students without worrying about having a computer device and Wi-Fi and social media enable her to send her messages to the students by simply using social media applications, such as WhatsApp, to send her messages. In fact, Rdouan Faizi, Abdellatif El Afia, and Raddouane Chiheb (2013) said that “Social media can improve communication not only between students and teacher but also among students” (p. 52). Further, one of the participants believes that social media changed people’s space and time perceptions because it enables us to contact an enormous number of students from the comfort of our office, home, and even car (Interviewee 26).

According to Alla Zaykova, social media platforms “enable the formation of communities regardless of their geographic proximity and the participation in conversations by large numbers of people simultaneously” (2015, para. 1). Zaykova added that social media liquefies our perception of time and space by creating the sense that users can occupy multiple spaces at once. Social media changed the way we understand these concepts regarding social interaction (2015).

The ability to enhance student learning by engaging students in meaningful discussions was another factor that influenced participants’ attitudes toward the use of social media in
education. The interview participants indicated that social media platforms enable students to communicate, share and interact with each other, and engage in a meaningful discussion. According to Rayanne Dany, although students are continuously connected to the internet through their devices and always transmitting information to their friends and family, the information they share “is a lot more than just hilarious videos or vacation snapshots. People share views, opinions, tips, projects, study material and other such useful stuff with each other. They exchange helpful information for classes and examinations” (2019, para. 7). Moreover, participants believe that in social media environments, student communication and interaction is meaningful because students always learn from each other. Rayanne Dany believes that students’ “ability to access, evaluate, maintain and share information is fantastic without even being aware that they are actually developing such skills day-by-day. The older generations need to understand the magnitude of this new style of communication” (2019, para. 8).

Despite all the benefits of social media, which influence university faculty members’ and students’ attitudes toward the use of social media as a teaching tool, few of the participants reported the drawbacks of using social media that impact their willingness to use social media as a teaching tool.

The number one challenge faculty members face when it comes to the use of social media in education is technical problems. Participants discussed many problems and challenges that they believe they have an impact on their ability or desire to use social media as a teaching tool, such as poor internet connections, technology changes and breakdowns, and the need for instructors’ technology awareness. According to Sun, Tsai, Finger, Chen, and Yeh, 2008), “poor technology with slow response time or frequent technical difficulties will definitely discourage learners and discourage students from taking online courses” (p. 1195), and the quality of
technology and internet connections have huge impacts on user satisfaction (Sun, et al., 2008, p. 1188). A few of the participants stated that, sometimes, technology breakdowns, such as the broken speakers or projectors, prevent them from utilizing social media in their teaching.

Furthermore, the participants revealed that other instructors and educators do not use social media in education either because they do not know how to use social media as a teaching tool or because they are still attached to the traditional teaching style. David Nagel (2014) said the following:

Resistance to technology comes in many forms, but one of the key resistance challenges identified in the report is ‘comfort with the status quo.’ According to the researchers, teachers and school leaders often see technological experimentation as outside the scope of their job descriptions. (para. 7)

Most of the participants in the interview revealed that training and workshops are needed for university instructors to prepare them to utilize social media in teaching. According to researchers, well prepared and trained instructors are needed in technology-based learning. Researchers indicate that the lack of efficiency in the use of e-learning and the lack of the technological skills are two of the major issues that prevent or hinder the development of e-learning (Yaseen & Melhem, 2012).

Most of the study participants had concerns regarding the privacy and the safety of social media platforms. According to the study survey, 70% of the participants said that they are fully aware of social media privacy risks, and 24% of the participants said that they are aware of the privacy risks to a certain degree. Moreover, 63% of the participants indicated that they are fully aware of the safety risks in social media applications, and about 32% said that they are aware of these risks to some degree.
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

The interview participants expressed their concerns regarding how social media platforms are public and open to everyone and how this could harm students and teachers. According to researchers, although social media platforms are open to anyone who wants to participate, users who have privacy concerns about their personal information are vigilant about safeguarding it (Zaidieh, 2012). According to Ashraf-Jalal Zaidieh, “a lot of the information individuals’ supply on social networking sites is elective, users are progressively more comfortable with displaying a great deal of personal information online” (2012, p. 19).

Knowledge and Understanding of Female Saudi Faculty Members Regarding Social Media Best Practices

Most of the study participants were not aware of the term “social media best practices” or “usage guidelines.” In fact, more than half of the survey participants said that they had not heard about social media best practices or social media usage guidelines before. During the interview, all of the participants indicated that they did not know what social media best practices in education are. Even when I briefly explained the meaning of the term, few of the participants showed full understanding of the concept of social media usage guidelines. Several participants (interviewees 8, 9, 15, and 26) believe that social media best practices are the rules of communication on social media platforms. Moreover, five of the participants (interviewees 4, 5, 14, 17, and 22) indicated that social media usage guidelines are the ethical standards that teachers and students must follow when they use social media. The Australia’s Department of Education stated that

These guidelines also outline the professional boundaries to protect you and your students from potential misinterpretation of the staff student relationship; and are relevant to all
interaction between you and your students at all times, both during and outside of working hours, and wherever a staff–student relationship exists. (2016, p. 1)

More than 84% of the survey participants indicated that having the knowledge of social media best practices and guidelines is important for teachers. Researchers believe that “the lines between professional and personal endeavors are sometimes blurred, these Guidelines also address recommended practices for use of personal social media” (NYC, 2016). According to Henderson, Auld, and Johnson (2014), social media platforms have been the subject of considerable negative media focus in terms of privacy and safety risks, such as cyberbullying, and predatory behavior. This has resulted in ethical and moral concerns arising among educators. Henderson, Auld, and Johnson believe that social media usage guidelines help educators understand how to use social media in teaching while being conscious of social media risks.

According to the interview participants, Saudi social media usage guidelines should include ethical, professional, religious, and political guidelines. The interview participants suggest that the ethical and professional guidelines are the general known morals and standard guidelines that exist in any educational institute around the world. Moreover, the ethical guidelines include the Saudis’ traditions and norms. The religious and political guidelines however, are unique standards that have been designed and outlined for the Saudi community. Most of the participants believe that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia needs its own religious and political guidelines that are inspired by Islamic law. In fact, one of the participants (Interviewee 15) said that because the anti-cybercrime law identifies any violation action in the online environment as a crime, so the need for understanding social media usage guidelines is important.
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

Having clear knowledge of social media best practices, such as user privacy and security, is necessary for educators. According to researchers, “employees are responsible for understanding the rules, terms, and privacy settings of the social media sites they are using” (Montgomery County Public School, 2019, para. 12). They are also responsible for the security of their social media accounts, especially if they are using them to communicate with students. Moreover, educators are fully responsible for all activities, comments, and posts from their professional account (Montgomery County Public School, 2019). According to Henderson, Auld, and Johnson (2014), “social networking sites blur the boundaries between professional/school and personal lives, thus there has been considerable caution on the part of teachers and institutions” (, p. 2). In fact, social media professional accounts should have appropriate privacy and security settings. However, we should keep in mind that nothing online is truly private and secure. When the survey participants where asked if they believe that social media platforms are private, 38% of the participants said that social media platforms are private to some degree, 70% percent of the participants revealed that they are fully aware of social media privacy risks, and 63% of the participants said that they are fully aware of the safety and security risks. However, 20% of the survey participants believe that other Saudi faculty members have a clear understanding of social media ethical standards, such as safety and privacy risks and professionalism. This data indicates that most of the participants believe that they have the knowledge and awareness of social media ethical standards while their colleagues are not aware of these ethical standards. More than half of the surveyed participants believe that clear knowledge of social media usage guidelines makes it safe to use in education. In fact, educational institutes around the world have social media usage guidelines on their official websites. These guidelines exist to protect students and employees. The purpose of these
guidelines is to protect the university, employees, and students from engaging in unacceptable electronic behavior on social media platforms (University of East Anglia, 2012). More than half of the survey participants stated that the existence of social media guidelines could help and encourage them to use social media as a teaching tool.

The Impact of the Comprehensive Understanding of Social Media Best Practices on the Agency and the Empowerment of Female Saudi Faculty Members

Understanding social media best practices requires one to understand how media works and its impacts on society. According to the Center of Media Literacy, online safety is the main concern that made educators demand media literacy education for students (n.d.). The Center of Media Literacy (n.d.), believes that media literacy “is an umbrella term for teaching children the skills to be active and safe participants with media of all types. The critical thinking skills required to become media literate can be applied to any message from any medium” (para. 4). Media literacy is “the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication” (Lynch, 2017, para. 4). Moreover, media literacy helps in interpreting messages to understanding underlying hidden messages in online environments (Lynch, 2017).

Researchers in the Center of Media Literacy said, “it does not make a difference if the message comes from social media, television, websites, videogames, radio, print or cell phone, the same skills are needed to interpret and make wise choices about what is seen and heard” (CML, n.d., para. 4).

Most of the interview participants were not aware of the meaning of media literacy. However, four of the participants indicated that media literacy is the ability to be critical, knowledgeable, and analytical when dealing with media. According to some of the participants, media literacy enables female instructors to decode messages and be open-minded to accepting
multiple perspectives and views. According to Leona Ungerer, a media-literate teacher should be able to decode and understand and analyze multimodal texts and digital formats (2016). Moreover, media literacy encourages teachers and students to look beyond the obvious messages for hidden meaning. Media-literate teachers and students should always question the credibility of information sources (Tallim, 2015). The survey findings revealed that 86% of the participants believe that it is important for teachers to be informed on how media works. Moreover, 80% of the participants do not trust social media as a source of news. However, the survey revealed that 57% of the participants believe that teachers cannot differentiate between real news and fake news on social media. According to the interview participants, teachers should educate themselves and work on themselves to acquire the skills that teach them how to be critical in choosing their information sources.

When I asked the participants how a teacher can be media-literate, most of the interviewees said by educating themselves. They agreed that reading can broaden teachers’ horizons. Other participants stated that being critical is important because it prevents teachers from blindly accepting information. Some of the participants (interviewees 5, 7, 11, 12, and 15) stated that experience plays a big role in being media-literate because with experience, teachers will ensure that the information sources that they use are trustworthy and credible. They also believe that a media-literate teacher should check multiple sources for the information that she wishes to learn and share.

Participants believe that a media-literate teacher has a strong personality and will not be too worried about what others think about her or afraid to say something controversial if she believe in it. Participants also indicated that a media-literate teacher is confident and more knowledgeable than other teachers. Moreover, participants said that media literacy has a positive
impact on boosting teachers’ self-confidence and knowledge. Interviewee 28 indicated that a media-literate teacher has a deep understanding of how media works, and this understanding will give her confidence in the credibility of her information. Moreover, media literacy helps teachers choose information sources from which to receive and share information (interviewees 1, 9, 10, 12, 22, and 30). Researchers stated that “media literacy empowers people to actively participate in society” (Simons, Meeus, & T’Sas, 2017, p. 100). It enables teachers to critically think about all media. It also teaches them to interpret and evaluate media content to “understand media’s cultural, political, commercial and social implications” (Tallim, 2015, para. 3).

According to the interview participants understanding how social media works and how to deal with it could empower female Saudi teachers. The participants believe that if female teachers know how to utilize social media effectively, they can get huge benefits from it. Participants said that teachers can use social media platforms, such as the Instagram, for self-marketing their teaching services online. Moreover, female teachers can present lessons through YouTube to share their knowledge with everyone. Participants also said that teachers can use social media to make their voice heard. The participants said that teachers could use social media to share their opinions, achievements, ideas, concerns, and thoughts. Researchers believe that “social media can help with education for self-empowerment, recognition of women’s rights, and benefiting from other experiences outside the Arab region” (Mourtada & Salem, 2011, p. 11). Racha Mourtada and Fadi Salem believe that social media could be an empowering tool for women, enhancing their participation in several facets of their lives, including the legal (by promoting women’s rights), economic (enhancing entrepreneurial and employment opportunities), political (increased political
Moreover, Interviewee 10 stated that Saudi females can utilize social media to change social tradition and norms. Another participant said that if Saudi women understood how to use social media correctly, then they could use it to make real differences in the world. One of the participants talked about the Women 2drive campaign. The campaign started on YouTube in 2011 and resulted in women being allowed to drive in 2018. Another example is the use of Twitter to raise female Saudi teachers’ concerns regarding suburban employment and transportation. This concern has reached the Saudi government thus, the Saudi government had to study that to reach to a solution. Challenging and changing social ideologies is one the advantages of social media because social media enables its users to gain control over media production (Fers, 2012). If female instructors knew how to use social media in a correct way, then they could turn from passive audience members to active audience members who can contribute to generating news and knowledge and utilize social media platforms to make a difference in the world.

**How Female Saudi Faculty Members Perceive the Impact of Their Modeling of Social Media Best Practices in Their Teaching on Students’ Social Media Use**

A total of 96% of the survey participants stated that a media-literate teacher could positively impact students’ usage of social media. According to the interview participants, students are affected by their teachers and can learn a lot from them by observing and following their behaviors and attitudes toward social media and other online activities. In fact, the social learning theory “argues that individuals are capable of learning by modeling the behavior of others as well as the outcomes of the observed behaviors” (Goetzman, 2014, para. 2). Three of
the participants (interviewees 7, 9, and 17) indicated that a media-literate teacher can teach and show her students effective privacy and safety practices to use in the online environment, in general, and social media platforms, in particular. They gave examples of educating students on how to use media safely, what to post and share on media, and how to search for trusted, reliable information. According to Ungerer, “Teachers should learn and provide students with the opportunities to learn how to create and share digital information by “collecting, filtering, and customizing digital content” (2016, p. 2).

Participants revealed that although students might look like technology experts, they are not aware of how to filter the information they received, and as a result, they spread and believe rumors and false information (Interviewees 2, 16). Annabelle Timsit believes that Most students lacked the basic ability to recognize credible information or partisan junk online, or to tell sponsored content apart from real articles…many assume that because young people are fluent in social media they are equally savvy about what they find there. Our work shows the opposite. (2019, para. 5)

Two of the interview participants (interviewees 21 and 28) indicated that if students took media-literate teachers as role models, then they would learn how to be critical and cautious, yet open-minded, and accept others’ views through observation or instruction. Moreover, 74% of the survey participants indicated that when students understand social media usage guidelines, their online behaviors would change. Simons, Meeus, and T’Sas (2017) said that teachers “can help students become media literate by teaching them how to cope with the opportunities and risks associated with media. Promoting the media literacy of students is part of the pedagogical mission of education” (2017, p. 100). Participants believe that teachers should educate students on how to be critical. They should spread media awareness and discuss contemporary issues
related to the media (interviewees 1, 3, 5, 8, and 14). Researchers emphasize the role of educators in directly and indirectly spreading media awareness:

Schools in the USA are now at the center of a nascent effort to teach kids at a young age how to evaluate the stories they encounter online, as teachers, school districts, and nonprofits attempt to design curricula, apps, and assessments that can prepare students to become more critical consumers of information. (Timsit, 2019, para5).

Finally, the interview participants said that the existence of social media usage guidelines is necessary to protect teachers and students from misusing social media websites. Moreover, social media usage guidelines are important to encourage instructors to utilize social media effectively.

Limitations

This study may be limited due the fact that I only investigated female university participants. The findings of this study cannot be applied to male university members or middle school teachers. Although, I conducted a mixed methods study, I realize that a big part of my method predominantly relies on self-reporting, and some researchers may find self-reporting to be an unreliable method. I find it to be an important tool for behavioral research.

Participants’ misunderstandings of what social media is and the impacts of their understandings of social media on the study findings could be one of the limitations of this study. The confusion about what social media means and what it includes influenced participants’ responses in the interview. Moreover, this confusion might have impacted the implementation of social media as a teaching tool. For example, a participant said that she uses social media as a teaching tool, but what she meant was that she uses email to contact her students and send them course materials. In this example, although the participant stated that she uses social media as a
teaching tool, she did not use any social media platforms and she did not use it as effective teaching tool. Such data cannot reflect how faculty members actually use social media in education because there was a confusion about what social media includes. However, I believe that this is a very important finding because it demonstrates the participants’ knowledge of social media. It also raised a big concern about the accuracy of the previous Saudi studies in this field.

Another limitation is that there are many changes created by the social and political situations in Saudi Arabia. Things are quickly changing in the country, especially when it comes to Saudi women’s rights. These fast and constant changes could have impacts on many aspects of this study, such as people’s beliefs and the education system.
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Conclusions

Social media technology can serve as a powerful tool to enhance education, communication, and learning. This technology can provide both educational and professional benefits, including the preparation of teachers and students to succeed in their educational and career endeavors. Teachers’ perceptions and understanding of social media usage and best practices in education is very important to ensuring the effective and appropriate utilization of social media as a teaching tool.

This study revealed that most of the participants have positive attitudes toward the use of social media as a teaching tool in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, female Saudi faculty members are aware of most social media advantages and challenges. Although many participants expressed their privacy concerns regarding social media usage, it was interesting to find that some of the participants share their personal cellphone numbers with their students and then complain when students contact them at inappropriate times and occasionally send irrelevant messages.

However, the participants’ understandings of what constitutes social media were misguided. Some of the participants believed that social media includes any communication means without any exceptions or special characteristics. They considered email and Google Search to be social media platforms. Most of the participants’ understandings of the use of social media as a teaching tool were mainly based on its use as a communication rather than collaboration tool. Thus, most of the participants considered themselves using social media as a teaching tool.
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

The study showed that the attitudes of female Saudi faculty members toward the use of social media as a teaching tool are influenced by their experiences, knowledge, and understanding of social media. The services that social media provides or the challenges faculty members face when they use social media impact their attitudes and decisions to use or reject social media as a teaching tool.

The participants showed little understanding and knowledge of social media best practices guidelines. This could be due to the lack of the existence of social media best practices guidelines at King Abdulaziz University. Saudi universities need to develop social media usage guidelines. They can also adopt other universities’ guidelines and modify them to fit Saudi legal, religious, and tradition standards.

Few of the study participants showed a comprehensive understanding of the term “media literacy”. Female Saudi teachers need to be educated on the importance of media literacy and how media works to transform this knowledge to their students. Students tend to copy and imitate teachers’ behaviors when it comes to using technology because students are attached to these technologies and they enjoy learning through them. A media-literate faculty member has a great potential to positively impact student behaviors in the online environment. Teaching students how to correctly use social media could result in positive online behavior in the future.

Understanding social media best practices and the power of social media empowers female Saudi teachers. They can use social media to educate themselves and share their opinions, voices, knowledge. Saudi teachers can use social media platforms, such as YouTube and Instagram, to boost their careers. They can also use social media to defend their rights and talk about gender equality and make a real change in the society and their lives.
In conclusion, social media can be a powerful weapon in female Saudi instructors’ hands if they know how to utilize it in an efficient manner. Saudi universities should organize workshops and short courses to train and educate their employees on the use of social media in education. In addition, instructors should take responsibility for their own learning and start educating themselves on how media works.

**Ethical Issues**

Although I consider myself to be a faculty member of the same institution at which I conducted my study, there were not any ethical issues related to conflicts of interest because I have no relationships or connections with the participants because I have spent the last ten years in Canada. Moreover, I ensured that I did not ask participants any questions that could reveal sensitive information or affect them, especially in the interviews. The privacy of the participants was protected, including in the final report (Gimbel, 2014).

Lastly, because I investigated social media as a teaching tool, I did not ask questions or tell the participants how they are supposed to do their work because my job here is not to teach them or to tell them what I believe is right or wrong (Gimbel, 2014).

**Recommendations for Future Studies**

There are a number of gaps in our knowledge about the real use of social media as an educational tool in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that follow from my findings and would benefit from further research. Moreover, the utilization of social media in education is relatively new in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, so intensive research is needed in this field of study. The following recommendations and research suggestions are derived from the study findings and limitations:
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

1. A correlation study on faculty member age, academic rank or degree, and their usage of social media as a teaching tool

2. A comparative study between female and male usages of social media as a teaching tool

3. A comprehensive in-depth study that explores how faculty members use social media in education

4. A comparative study that focuses on the use of educational technology in Saudi Arabia and one of the developed countries
REFERENCES


SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

Alwahaishi, S., & Snášel, V. (2013). Modeling the Determinants Affecting Consumers’
Acceptance and Use of Information and Communications Technology. *International

blended learning environment: Advantages, limitations and suggestions for
improvement. *English Language Teaching, 6*(10), 95.

Overrated. Retrieved June 2, 2018, from https://elearningindustry.com/elearning-is-
essential-not-overrated-5-key-reasons

*Anti e-Crime Act.* (n.d). Retrieved from
http://www.citic.gov.sa/ar/RulesandSystems/CITCSys tem/Documents/LA_004_A_Anti-
Cyber Crime Law.pdf


Australia, The government of Western Australia, Department of Education. (n.d.). *Guidelines
for the Use of Social Media* (pp. 1-5).

practices-faq

from www.hanoverresearch.com

SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA


SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA


SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA


CNN. (2012). Retrieved December 12, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PvfAWXaQmg


SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA


SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA


SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA


SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA


SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA


SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA


doi:10.28945/3899


SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

http://www.onlinecolleges.net/does-online-education-and-social-media-help-shy-students/


SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA


UJ. (2019). Female faculty members numbers [E-mail to the author].

University of East Anglia. (2012). Code of conduct on social media use. Retrieved May 12, 2019, from https://www.uea.ac.uk/hr/employee-information/policies/social-media-conduct

SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA


University of East Anglia. (n.d.). Code of Conduct on Social Media Use. Retrieved October 01, 2016, from https://www.uea.ac.uk/hr/employee-information/policies/social-media-conduct


SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

https://journals.qou.edu/index.php/jropenres/article/view/427


LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE OF STUDY: Perceptions of Female Faculty Members at King Abdulaziz University on Social Media as a Teaching Tool: Challenges and Best Practices

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Alaa Ibrahim Kutbi from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. This research will contribute to my PhD dissertation. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher: Alaa Kutbi, Sun–Thu from 6–10 pm Saudi Arabia local time at cell: +966504638065, email: kutbi@uwindsor.ca or research supervisor Dr. Zuochen Zhang, email: zuochen@uwindsor.ca.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes of Saudi female faculty members toward the use of social media as a teaching tool. Moreover, I will investigate the factors that influence these attitudes toward the use of social media as a teaching tool and the Saudi female faculty members’ experiences, knowledge, and understanding of social media best practices and their perceptions of their impacts on their students. Finally, in this study, I will explore how understanding social media best practices could empower Saudi female faculty members.
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Survey

• You will receive an email with the survey link.
• You will open the survey link.
• Please read the information letter and the consent form.
• If you decide to participate, press the “agree” button.
• You will answer about 30 questions.
• Please do NOT write your name on the survey.
• By pressing the “Done” button, you consent to participate.
• After you finish filling out the survey, press the “Done” button to submit it.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There will be low data security risks associated with the electronic survey.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits to the study participants.

Social media can be a very important learning tool for university students because it can be used to create learning communities that provide support, opportunities, and information to students and new members. Students and members can use this information for their personal development and growth (Alemán & Wartman, 2009; Nagele, 2005). By using social media in education, university instructors can benefit from all the free services and resources that social media offers.
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

The subject will NOT receive any payment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. This study will remain with me (the researcher) and Dr. Zuochen Zhang (my supervisor). Please note that the online survey is hosted by Qualtrics, which uses a Canadian server. The data are hosted in Canada.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Survey participants are free to withdraw from the study before submitting their surveys. However, after submitting the survey, I will not be able to remove any data because the survey is anonymous, and I can not identify anyone’s data.

FEEDBACK ON THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

If the you want to know the results of the study, you can find a brief summary of my research on this website https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/

Otherwise, my research can be found in the university library after it is published.

Web address: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/

Date when the results will be available: 1/1/2020
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, publications and presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact:

Research Ethics Coordinator,
University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948;
e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

• PRINT
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE OF STUDY: Perceptions of Female Faculty Members at King Abdulaziz University on Social Media as a Teaching Tool: Challenges and Best Practices

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Alaa Ibrahim Kutbi from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. This research will contribute to my PhD dissertation. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher: Alaa Kutbi Sun–Thu from 6–10 pm Saudi Arabia local time, cell: [cell number], email: [email] or the research supervisor Dr. Zuochen Zhang, email: [email]

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes of Saudi female faculty members toward the use of social media as a teaching tool. Moreover, I will investigate the factors that influence these attitudes toward the use of social media as a teaching tool and the Saudi female faculty members’ experiences, knowledge, and understanding of social media best practices and their perceptions of their impacts on their students. Finally, in this study, I will explore how understanding social media best practices could empower Saudi female faculty members.

PROCEDURES
If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

Survey

• You will receive an email with the survey link.
• You will open the survey link.
• Please read the information letter and the consent form.
• If you decide to participate, press the “agree” button.
• You will answer about 30 questions.
• Please do NOT write your name on the survey.
• By pressing the “Done” button, you consent to participate.
• After you finish filling out the survey, press the “Done” button to submit it.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There will be low data security risks associated with the electronic survey.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits to the study participants.

Social media can be a very important learning tool for university students because it is used to create learning communities that provide support, opportunities, and information to students and new members. Students and members can use this information for their personal development and growth (Alemán & Wartman, 2009; Nagele, 2005).

By using social media in education, university instructors can benefit from all the free services and resources that social media offers.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

The participant will NOT receive any payment.
CONFIDENTIALITY

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

This study will remain with me (the researcher) and Dr. Zuochen Zhang (my supervisor).

Please note that the online survey is hosted by Qualtrics, which uses a Canadian server. The data are hosted in Canada.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Survey participants are free to withdraw from the study before submitting their surveys.

However, after submitting the survey, I will not be able to remove any data because the survey is anonymous, and I can not identify anyone’s data.

FEEDBACK ON THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

If the you want to know the results of the study, you can find a brief summary of my research on this website

https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/

Otherwise, my research can be found in the university library after it is published.

Web address: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/

Date when the results are available: 1/1/2020

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, publications and presentations.
RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study.

○ Agree

○ Disagree
Survey Questions

1- Faculty/department

2- Your age:
   - Less than 25 years old
   - 25–34 years old
   - 35–44 years old
   - 45–54 years old
   - 55–64 years old
   - Over 64 years old

3- Your academic rank:
   - Teaching assistant
   - Lecturer
   - Assistant professor
   - Associate professor
   - Full professor
4- Your highest academic degree:

- Bachelor
- Master
- Doctorate
- Other (Please explain)

5- Which of the following platforms do you consider to be social media? You can choose more than one:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Windows Live
- Instagram
- Friendster
- Google Search
- Flickr
- Blogger
- MySpace
- Google Plus
- WhatsApp
- Email (e.g., Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail…)
- Snapchat
6- Are you a member of social media websites?
   o Yes
   o No
   o I’m not sure

7- If your answer to the previous question is No, then choose the reason why. (You can choose more than one)
   I don’t know what social media is
   I don’t know how to use social media
   I am not interested in joining social media
   I joined once, but I didn’t enjoy it
   It’s against my beliefs
   I don’t trust social media
   Weak internet connection
   List any other reasons:

8- How many social media platforms are you a member of?
   o None
   o 1–10
   o 11–20
   o Above 20
9- Do you have a professional account on social media?
   o Yes
   o No
   o I’m not sure

10- For which of the following social media platforms have you created a professional profile? You can choose more than one

   Facebook
   Twitter
   YouTube
   Windows Live
   Instagram
   Friendster
   Flickr
   Blogger
   MySpace
   Google Plus
   WhatsApp
   Snapchat
   None
   Other
11- How long have you been using social media platforms?
   - I don’t use social media
   - 1–6 months
   - 7 months to a year
   - 2–5 years
   - More than 5 years

12- On average, how much time do you spend daily on social media?
   - Less than 1 hour–1 hour
   - 2–6 hrs
   - 7–12 hrs
   - More than 13 hours

13- Why do you use social media? (you can choose more than one)
   - Finding information
   - Professional purposes
   - Playing games
   - Making professional and business contacts
   - Keeping in touch with family and friends
   - Making new friends
   - Getting opinions
   - Sharing videos/pictures/music
   - Sharing information
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

List any other reasons:

14- Have you ever used social media as a teaching tool in your classroom?
   
   o Yes
   o No
   o I’m not sure

15- In your opinion, how can teachers use social media as a teaching tool?

16- Social media applications are important in education.

   o Strongly agree
   o Agree
   o Neither agree nor disagree
   o Disagree
   o Strongly disagree

17- Do you share your thoughts on university, classes, or colleagues through social media?

   o Always, when I have something to say
   o Sometimes
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

- I have, but only a small number of times
- I have never done it but would consider it
- I have never done it and would not consider it

18- Have you ever heard about social media guidelines or best practices in education?

- Yes
- No
- To some degree
- I’m not sure

19- Are you aware of social media privacy risks?

- Yes
- No
- To some degree
- I’m not sure

20- Are you aware of social media safety risks?

- Yes
- No
21- Do you think that university instructors have a clear understanding of social media ethical standards such as safety and privacy risks and professionalism?

- Yes
- No
- To some degree
- I’m not sure

22- As a Saudi university faculty member, do you think that King Abdulaziz University has clear guidelines or instructions on how to use social media in an educational context?

- Yes
- No
- To some degree
- I’m not sure

23- Do you believe that social media platforms are private?

- Yes
24- Do you believe that understanding social media guidelines makes you more confident about using social media in teaching? How?
   o Yes
   o No
   o To some degree
   o I’m not sure
   o How?

25- Do you think the existence of a guideline could help you or encourage you to use social media as a teaching tool?
   o Yes
   o No
   o To some degree
   o I’m not sure
26- Does clear knowledge of social media guidelines make it safe to use social media in education?

- Yes
- No
- To some degree
- I’m not sure

27- Do you think that knowing about social media best practices or guidelines is important for teachers?

- Yes
- No
- To some degree
- I’m not sure

28- Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements

- Social media is always a reliable source for news.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
- **Teachers can tell the difference between real news and fake news on social media.**
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- **As an educator, I think it is necessary to be informed on how messages are conveyed on social media.**
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

- **A media-literate teacher could positively impact students’ usage of social media.**
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
29- Do you think that understanding social media best practices or guidelines could impact students’ usage of social media?

- Yes
- No
- To some degree
- I’m not sure

30- If you believe that social media is a useful tool in education, what are your suggestions for encouraging teachers to use social media as a teaching tool?

If you want to participate in the study interview, please contact me by

Email: Kutbi@uwindsor.com or leave your preferred contact information below

Thank you for your cooperation.
APPENDIX C: Interview consent form and information letter

LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW

Title of Study: Perceptions of Female Faculty Members at King Abdulaziz University on Social Media as a Teaching Tool: Challenges and Best Practices

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

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes of Saudi female faculty members toward the use of social media as a teaching tool. Moreover, I will investigate the factors that influence these attitudes toward the use of social media as a teaching tool and the Saudi female faculty members’ experiences, knowledge, and understanding of social media best practices and their perceptions of their impact on their students. Finally, in this study, I will explore how understanding social media best practices could empower Saudi female faculty members.
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

Interview

- Participate in an interview with me
- If you agree to participate, you will need to read the information letter and the consent forms and agree to participate.
- The interview will be audio-taped.
- In the interview, Alaa will read you the purpose, duration, time, and type of questions on the interview.
- You will be interviewed for 30–45 min.
- I will be asked 14 simple questions.
- The interview will be recorded for documentation purposes.
- You are free to decline to answer any question.
- Your identity will remain confidential and will not appear in the research.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There will be low psychological, emotional and social risks associated with the interviews.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits for the participants.

Social media can be a very important learning tool for university students because it can be used to create learning communities that provide support, opportunities, and information to students and new members. Students and members can use this information
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

for their personal development and growth (Alemán & Wartman, 2009; Nagele, 2005).

By using social media in education, university instructors can benefit from all the free services and resources that social media offers.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

The subject will NOT receive payment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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

This study will remain with me (the researcher) and Dr. Zuochen Zhang (my supervisor).

The interview will be recorded. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the recording. You have the right to review/edit the recording, and it will be erased a year after the interview.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time up to ONE week after the interview without any consequences of any kind. You cannot withdraw from the study after the data has been analyzed and published.

You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may remove you from this research if circumstances arise that warrant doing so. If you choose to withdraw, you have the option of removing your data from the study.
FEEDBACK ON THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

If the you want to know the results of the study, you can find a brief summary of my research on this website

https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/

Otherwise, my research can be found in the university library after it is published.

Web address: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/

Date when results are available: 1/1/2020

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, publications and presentations.

RIGHTS OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact:

Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca
Title of Study: Perceptions of Female Faculty Members at King Abdulaziz University on Social Media as a Teaching Tool: Challenges and Best Practices

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

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the attitudes of Saudi female faculty members toward the use of social media as a teaching tool. Moreover, I will investigate the factors that influence these attitudes toward the use of social media as a teaching tool and the Saudi female faculty members’ experiences, knowledge, and understanding of social media best practices and their perceptions on their impacts on their students. Finally, in this study, I will explore how the understanding of social media best practices could empower Saudi female faculty members.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

Interview

- Participate in an interview with me
- If you agree to participate, you will need to read the information letter and the consent forms and agree to participate.
- The interview will be audio-taped.
- In the interview, Alaa will read you the purpose, duration, time, and type of questions involved in the interview.
- You will be interviewed for 30–45 min.
- I will be asked 14 simple questions.
- The interview will be recorded for documentation purposes.
- You are free to decline to answer any question.
- Your identity will remain confidential and will not appear in the research.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There will be low psychological, emotional and social risks associated with the interviews.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits for the participants.

Social media can be a very important learning tool for university students because it can be used to create learning communities that provide support, opportunities, and information to students and new members. Students and members can use this information for their personal development and growth (Alemán & Wartman, 2009; Nagele, 2005).

By using social media in education, university instructors can benefit from all the free services
and resources that social media offers.

**COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION**

The subject will NOT receive any payment.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

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

This study will remain with me (the researcher) and Dr. Zuochen Zhang (my supervisor).

The interview will be recorded. Only me and my supervisor will have access to the recording. You have the right to review/edit the recording, and it will be erased a year after the interview.

**PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time up to ONE week after the interview without any consequences of any kind. You cannot withdraw from the study after the data has been analyzed and published.

You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may remove you from this research if circumstances arise that warrant doing so. If you choose to withdraw, you have the option of removing your data from the study.
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

FEEDBACK ON THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

If you want to know the results of the study, you can find a brief summary of my research on this website https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/

Otherwise, my research can be found in the university library after it is published.

Web address: https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/research-result-summaries/

Date when results are available: 1/1/2020

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies, publications and presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study [Perceptions of Female Faculty Members at King Abdulaziz University on Social Media as a Teaching Tool: Challenges and Best Practices] as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

____________________________________
Name of Participant

____________________________________
Signature of Participant Date
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct the research.

_____________________________________ ____________________

Signature of Investigator Date
Interview Questions

1. How do you define social media?

2. Why do you use social media?

3. In your opinion,
   - What are the disadvantages of using social media as a teaching tool?
   - What are the advantages of using social media as a teaching tool?

4. In your opinion, how can social media be used as a teaching tool?

5. How can the use of social media as a teaching tool impact the educational process?

6. What are the reasons behind the infrequent use of social media in education in Saudi Arabia?

7. What are social media best practices in education or social media usage guidelines?
SOCIAL MEDIA EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

8. In your opinion, what should be included in the Saudi social media usage guidelines?

9. What is media literacy?

10. How can a teacher be media literate?

11. What are the impacts on the teacher of being media literate?

12. What are the impacts of media-literate teachers on their students’ usage of social media?

13. How can the understanding of how social media works empower female teachers?

14. What are your suggestions to encourage teachers to use social media as a teaching tool?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Done
VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Alaa Kutbi

PLACE OF BIRTH: Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1982

EDUCATION:
(2004) King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah
Bachelor of Science in Child studies

(2011) University of Windsor, Windsor, Started
prerequisites courses in Communication, Media
and Film Department

(2012-2015) University of Windsor, MED, Faculty of
Education and Academic Development

(2015- 2020) University of Windsor, PhD, Joint PhD in
Educational Studies Program