

MOTIVES FOR THE USE OF TWITTER BY ARAB YOUTH

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ABSTRACT:

The study aims to identify the reasons why the Arab youth prefer to use *Twitter* and whether their age, gender, educational level and country of origin play a crucial role in their use of *Twitter*. In order to answer the aforementioned questions, a descriptive survey method was conducted using a digital survey, which was distributed via *Twitter*, *Google+*, *Facebook* and *LinkedIn*. The study presents a number of outcomes regarding the preferences of *Twitter* usage by Arab youth; the analysis and discussion related to the first research question shows that Arab youth prefer *Twitter* because it is easy to use and gives them more room to explain their opinions and thoughts freely. Regarding the variety of *Twitter* usage among the research sample, the analysis and discussion associated with the second research question claims that there are statistically significant differences in the usage of *Twitter* amongst the Arab youth that can be attributed to age, gender, educational level and their home country.

KEYWORDS:

Arab youth, the Internet, media preferences and usage motives, online social media, *Twitter*

1 Introduction

The number of *Twitter* users around the world reached 319 million at the end of April 2017 (according to the *Twitter* website's statistics). In the Arab World, the Bahrainis and Kuwaitis were the most frequent users of *Twitter* compared to the other Arab populations. This was measured by the number of users divided by the percentage of distribution of (3.43) and (3.37) for Bahrain and Kuwait respectively, followed by Qatar, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Egypt topped the list of *Twitter* users in the Arab region with 129,000 users. The use of *Twitter* in the Arab region continues to rise; according to the results of the *Arab Social Media Report* issued in the first half of 2017 by the Dubai School of Government, from March 2012 to March 2017, there was a steady increase of 2 million active accounts per year as shown in Figure 1.¹

¹ SALEM, F.: *The Arab Social Media Report 2017: Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policymaking in the Arab World* (Vol. 7). Dubai: MBR School of Government, 2017, p. 45.

Twitter Growth Rates in the Arab Region between 2012 and 2017 (Monthly Active Users)

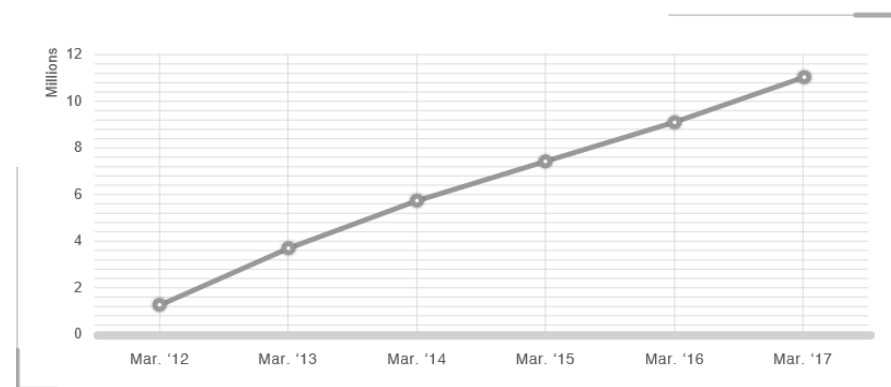


Figure 1: The growth rates of Twitter usage in the Arab region

Source: SALEM, F.: *The Arab Social Media Report 2017: Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policymaking in the Arab World* (Vol. 7). Dubai: MBR School of Government, 2017, p. 45.

Research has revealed a positive relationship between the average extent of the daily use of social networks in general and the use of *Twitter*. The more *Twitter* is used, the more other means of communication are used, daily. Developers in the sphere of digital communication consider *Twitter* to have unlimited capabilities; they benefit from its blogging system in terms of programming and creating digital applications, especially since *Twitter* offers its micro-blogging services free of charge to all users, including other social networks.

Twitter has become a new and influential media platform that might be subject to control, but only in a relatively limited way. This has contributed to the emergence of non-traditional media and cultural expressions and the emergence of controversial role models that occasionally post their tweets. Perhaps what distinguishes *Twitter* from other social media is that the user does not need high or even mediocre writing skills. All the users need is to have an opinion or an attitude and to post it online through a short sentence as an expression of their rejection, support or criticism.

Jack Dorsey and Evan Williams, the founders of *Twitter*, believe that *Twitter* attracts its users due to its “ease of use and instant access”.² It performs a task no other website or social medium before have been able; to disseminate people’s conversations and quick comments about their daily lives to the public via their private accounts, which gives them various opportunities for posting and expressing many things which they were unable to articulate a couple of years ago. The great advantage of *Twitter* is that it expands the segment of those interested in public affairs, in addition to its distinction through the features of mobilisation and focus. *Twitter* collects scattered ideas and phrases posted by unrelated persons under one word, the so-called ‘hashtag’. Hashtags may turn into influential media momenta.

Twitter has generated the possibility of greater development of the lives of individuals on the personal, social and political levels. It has become a virtual world that offers individuals, groups and organisations of all kinds a way of expressing their opinions on issues and topics they are interested in with an unprecedented amount of freedom. It is open to all attitudes and everybody is permitted to use it.

Along with other social media, *Twitter* has become a prominent source of information that many people depend on for news and knowledge of what is happening in the world. It has imposed itself as a serious competitor to traditional media, playing an important role in the dissemination of news and exchange of information and overcoming control mechanisms applied by many governments on traditional media. This role is too important to be ignored.

The intellectual influence of *Twitter* on its young Arab users has become greater than that of ‘traditional’ intellectuals, ‘old elites’ or even traditional media, especially in the Gulf, Levant and Iraq. The predominant use of *Twitter* is in the Gulf region, especially since the social medium became available in Arabic in 2012. The Gulf countries occupy the top five rates of *Twitter* use in the Arab World. According to Dick Costolo,³ the chief executive of the social network, the use of *Twitter* in the Arab World is more prevalent among the youth; that is, it is preferred by those under the age of thirty who represent the majority of the population of the region.

From this point of view, the study focuses on attempting to identify the motives and reasons for Arab youth’s preference for *Twitter*, and on the ways they use it in their daily lives. Our goals are to identify why these media audiences prefer *Twitter* and determine the extent to which youth use *Twitter* in Arab countries – in terms of their gender, age, varying educational levels and different countries of origin. Thus, the following research questions arise:

RQ1: What are the motives for the Arab youth to use *Twitter* (in comparison with other available online social media)?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the motives of the use of *Twitter* among the Arab youth which can be attributed to their age, gender, educational level and country?

We further reflect on the issue through two hypotheses. The first one is that young Arabs prefer *Twitter* due to its ease of use as the founders of *Twitter*, Jack Dorsey and Evan Williams, believe. *Twitter* users are attracted to *Twitter* because “it is easy to use and can be instantly accessed”⁴ and because it provides more opportunities to express opinions and thoughts freely. Our second hypothesis is based on the statistics which suggest that there are significant differences in the use of *Twitter* and the reasons for preferring it among various segments of the Arab youth which can be attributed to gender, age, level of education and country of origin.

2 Methodology

Our research is based on quantitative methodology which monitors the reality of the phenomenon and analyses it according to specific research data and variables. Therefore, we decided to use the quantitative questionnaire survey in order to find out more about how the Arab youth used the social network *Twitter* and measure their preferences related to using this service. We chose to collect data via an electronic questionnaire survey. We disseminated the questionnaire through social networks (*Twitter*, *Google+*, *Facebook*, *LinkedIn*) as well as through e-mail communication. The questionnaire included 16 questions divided into two main areas of interest:

1. The questions posed in the first section focused on the extent to which the Arab youth use *Twitter*.
2. The questions posed in the second section reflected on the preferences of the Arab youth related to *Twitter* and their diverse motives of using it.

While analysing the obtained data, we relied on the theory of uses and gratifications, i.e. on the opinion that the individual audience members willingly determine which communication means they use and which contents they choose. Our approach thus focused on the users’ motivations to use *Twitter*, their preferences associated with *Twitter* and the gratifications generated from the use.

2 MERTHY, D.: *Twitter: Social Communication in the Era of Twitter*. Cairo: Dar Al Fajr Press, 2014, p. 15.

3 ELARESHI, M., AL-JABER, K., GUNTER, B.: *Social Media in the Arab World: Communication and Public Opinion in the Gulf States*. London: I.B.Tauris, 2016, p. 6, 7.

4 ELARESHI, M., AL-JABER, K., GUNTER, B.: *Social Media in the Arab World: Communication and Public Opinion in the Gulf States*. London: I.B.Tauris, 2016, p. 15.

Many researchers consider the use of social networking sites on a wide public level as a new opportunity to revisit and apply the model of uses and gratifications that is concerned with the psychological and social needs of the public, claiming these audiences are active, effective and selective in using mass media to satisfy their desires and needs. This model initiates the use of the available means to achieve communication goals on the one hand; on the other hand, it claims that one satisfies his social and cultural needs and desires resulting from the media use.

To process and analyse data obtained by the questionnaire, we used the following statistical methods:

- a) The Mann-Witney Test; a non-parametric test equivalent to the t-test for two independent samples which tests whether two separate samples follow the same distribution or not. It is weaker in use than the t-test, but has been used due to the non-availability of t-test conditions in order to examine the statistical differences between: males and females, the age groups of 18- to 25-year-olds, 26- to 32-year-olds and 33- to 40-year-olds, the educational level and the relevant country variable.
- b) Chi-Square Test to either verify or falsify the null hypothesis that there is no correlation between (gender, age, educational level, country) and some dependent study variables.

In terms of validity and reliability, the study was based on two measures of validity and reliability, namely:

- a. The Validity Face, which reflects the agreement of the arbitrators that the tool is actually valid to achieve the objective for which it is prepared. In order to achieve this methodological requirement, we presented the questionnaire to 3 different arbitrators; all of them were Professors specialising in media studies. They were affiliated with the Faculty of Information at Baghdad University, the Faculty of Information and Communication at the University of Algeria and the Faculty of Information at Yarmouk University in Jordan; mostly to ensure that the used researched method (questions situated in the questionnaire, its sections and paragraphs) were acceptable and that they met the objectives of the study. As a result, some questions were deleted, some were changed and some paragraphs were added based on the observations and guidance of the arbitrators.
- b. The Content Validity is concerned with the extent to which the content of the research tool is consistent with the purpose for which it is designed. The aim here is to verify the validity of the content of the questionnaire before the distribution of the questionnaire. As we were determined to achieve the content validity as well, the coefficients of correlation between the score of each paragraph, the total score of the section and the total score of the questionnaire were calculated by applying the questionnaire to a random research sample consisting of 30 young respondents from a number of Arab countries; all of them were students of Al Ain University for Science and Technology we are affiliated with.

3 Research Sample

As we have mentioned above, the purpose of the study was to identify the reasons why the Arab youth prefer *Twitter*. To achieve this goal, we designed a questionnaire containing questions that were aimed at covering the main spheres of interest. The questionnaire was distributed electronically; the hypertext link referring to it was made available for a full month from the 12th of April 2017 to the 12th of May 2017 on *Twitter*, *Google+*, *Facebook*, *LinkedIn* and in various specific groups on *Facebook*. The final number of respondents reached 1,026 research participants; 26 forms were excluded because they were not complete and/or lacked answers to one of the first personal data questions related to gender and age. So the number of responses acceptable and viable for entry, processing and analysis was exactly 1,000 forms.

3.1 Gender

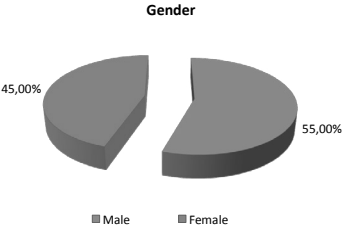


Figure 2: The research sample distribution according to gender

Source: own processing

The results show that male Arab youths use *Twitter* more than young females. Men represented 55% of *Twitter* users while women represented 45%. These results were not surprising, given the previous reports and studies (conducted on different samples, in various Arab countries) on *Twitter*, according to which Arab men seem to be freer to use social networks than Arab women.

However, in our case there still seemed to be a remarkable increase in the number of female *Twitter* users. *The Arab Social Media Report* from 2017 mentions that women represent 32.4% of *Twitter* users surveyed in the Arab region, and that Bahrain, Algeria and Lebanon were the most balanced in the use of *Twitter* by males and females. Relevant ratios are as follows:

- 56% of men compared to 44% of women use *Twitter* in Bahrain;
- 57% of men compared to 43% of women use *Twitter* in Algeria;
- 58% of men compared to 42% of women use *Twitter* in Lebanon.

Furthermore, Yemen and Iraq are the least balanced when comparing male and female use of *Twitter*. Relevant ratios are as follows:

- 83% of men compared to 17% women use *Twitter* in Yemen;
- 82% of men compared to 18% women use *Twitter* in Iraq.⁵

The issue is illustrated in the following Figure:

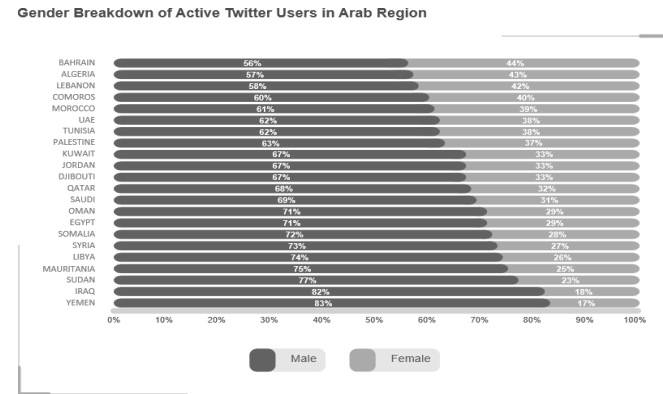


Figure 3: The users of *Twitter* in the Arab region based on gender

Source: SALEM, F.: *The Arab Social Media Report 2017: Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policymaking in the Arab World* (Vol. 7). Dubai: MBR School of Government, 2017, p. 47.

⁵ SALEM, F.: *The Arab Social Media Report 2017: Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policymaking in the Arab World* (Vol. 7). Dubai: MBR School of Government, 2017, p. 47.

It is quite clear that the number of male users of social networks is greater than the amount of female users in the Arab region. As the findings of the Dubai School of Government study show, despite their active participation in societal and political transformations in the Arab World, Arab women still use social media less than men. The gap between the Arab women's use of social media and the global average is large due to the societal and cultural constraints the Arab women have to face; these prevent them from being actively involved.

The problem of the relatively low number of social media users among Arab women thus still exists, although women constitute almost half of the Arab World population. Nevertheless, Arab men and women are increasingly looking at social media as effective tools for women's empowerment despite the 'virtual' gap observed in the gender perspective, at least according to the third edition of the report conducted in collaboration with the Gender and Public Policy Programme a regional study aimed at identifying male and female views on the use of social media by Arab women as a means of Arab women's, civil, political and economic empowerment.⁶

3.2 Age

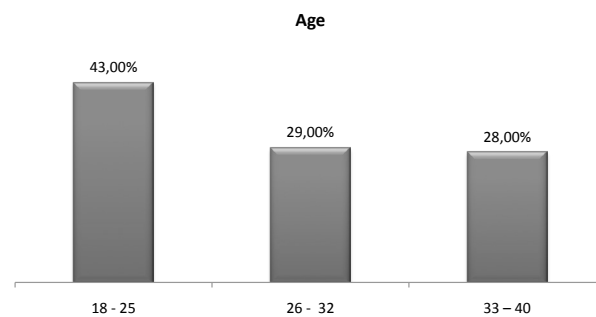


Figure 4: The study sample distribution according to age
Source: own processing

The figure above shows that approximately half of our research sample was 18 to 25 years old, constituting 43% of the whole sample. Members of the sample aged 26 to 32 constituted 29% of the research sample. Those aged 33 to 40 constituted 28% of the sample.

It is clear that most of the respondents belonged to the youngest age group. Most social studies describe this age group as the youth or the young adults. This is entirely in line with the research conducted by the research group Pew (2005), which found out that the number of adult users with personal accounts on social networking sites had quadrupled, rising from 8% to 35%.

The lower the age of adult users, the more likely they were to use those social networks. About 75% of adult Internet users aged 18-24 had personal accounts on social networking sites, compared to 57% for those aged 25-34 and 7% only for those aged 65 or more.⁷ It seems that young Arab users are far more familiar with social media (e.g. *Twitter*) than older generations. That is, old generations report that they have encountered some difficulties while using *Twitter*.

6 DUBAI SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT: The Role of Social Media in Arab Women's Empowerment. In *Arab Social Media Report*. 2011, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 11. [online]. [2018-04-17]. Available at: <<https://arabsocialmediareport.com/UserManagement/PDF/ASMR%20Report%203.pdf>>.

7 EMIRATES TODAY: *Facebook Helps Make Better Friends*. [online]. [2018-04-17]. Available at: <<http://www.pewresearch.org/category/publications/>>.

3.3 The Educational Level

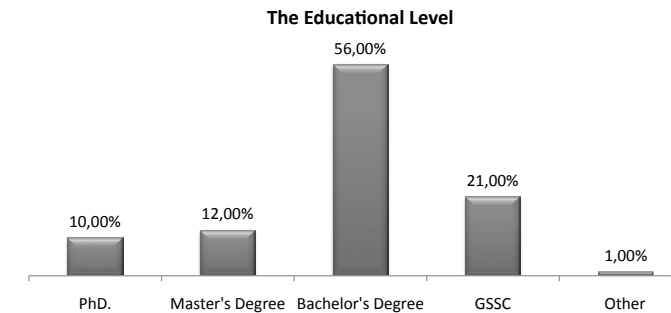


Figure 5: The distribution of the research sample according to the educational level
Source: own processing

The figure above shows that more than half of the respondents (56.4%) held a Bachelor's degree; 21% of them held General Secondary School Certificates (GSSC); 12% held Master's degrees; 10% held PhDs and 1% held other educational certificates. There was a clear indication that most users of social networks possessed higher levels of education, which corresponds to the highest proportion of the most representative age group in the sample (people who were 18-25 years old). Most of those in the Arab World either study at or have graduated from universities.

This suggests that there is a big difference between our results and the outcomes of the study conducted by Strategy & Centre (2012), stating that the ADG is highly educated as well, which also drives greater technology use. Among those not currently in university, more than half have already earned their degree. The vast majority of the ADG is either still studying or has recently completed their degree. One in six ADG members is a full-time college student (primarily at state-funded institutions). Among non-students, a majority (54%) have university degrees. The percentage is higher for women (at 60%) than men (49%).⁸

3.4 Country of Origin

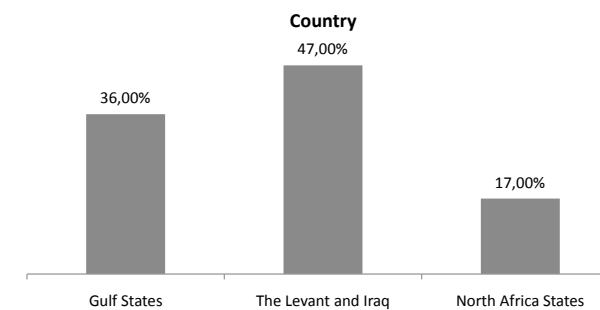


Figure 6: The distribution of the research sample according to the country of origin
Source: own processing

The research found out that about half of the respondents (47%) were from the countries of the Levant and Iraq, while 36% came from the Gulf States and 17% from North Africa. Given the numbers and percentages of respondents from all Arab countries, the majority of respondents were from the following countries:

8 SABBAGH, K. et al.: *Understanding the Arab Digital Generations*. New York : Booz & Company, 2012. [online]. [2018-04-17]. Available at: <<https://www.strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/Understanding-the-Arab-Digital-Generation.pdf>>.

- Iraq – 26.5%,
- UAE – 22.7%,
- Jordan – 14.9%,
- Saudi Arabia – 11.3%,
- Algeria – 8.8%.

These results differ from those in the *Arab Social Media Report*; in that particular case, the highest percentages of *Twitter* users in the Arab region are in Saudi Arabia (29%), Egypt (18%) and Algeria and the UAE with an equal ratio of 9%.

Distribution of Active Twitter Users in the Arab States

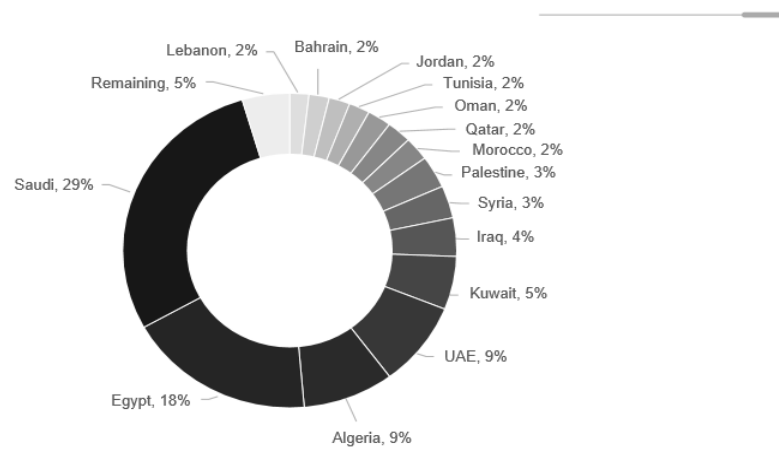


Figure 7: The users of *Twitter* in the Arab region according to their countries of origin

Source: SALEM, F.: *The Arab Social Media Report 2017: Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policymaking in the Arab World* (Vol. 7). Dubai: MBR School of Government, 2017, p. 45.

These figures and ratios are in line with the results of studies conducted in other Arab countries. The Middle East is increasingly dependent on social networking in comparison with other forms of personal communication (face-to-face communication, e-mail or telephone). According to the study conducted by Universal McCann, the global media and marketing consulting firm, there is an ongoing regular contact between each person in the region with about 38 people through social networks. In addition, the role of these networks has developed from a source of information and shopping to become a mirror of the lives of users who constantly update their accounts to transfer their conditions and coverage of their daily lives by uploading images and videos and writing opinions and comments on a regular basis. In addition to watching and sharing videos on the Internet, using IM, visiting their friends' profiles on social media and reading blogs, an increasing number of active Internet users in the region averaging 60% have opened a personal page on a social media website over the past six months.⁹

These findings explain one of the statements in our previous study titled *Forms of Interaction among Young Arab Users of Social Networks* that many users of these platforms in the Arab society interact more in communities that adopt 'tribal' standards and culture. They interact in the form of 'an electronic tribe' or 'tribes', in accordance with what is commonly presumed by researchers and specialists – that digital communi-

9 EMIRATES TODAY: *Facebook Helps Make Better Friends*. [online]. [2018-04-17]. Available at: <<http://www.pewresearch.org/category/publications/>>.

cation tools have been established for what is known as 'e-communities'. However, those who knew us the best (as researchers) in the real social life were those most likely to interact with us and answer the questions posed in the questionnaire. Their answers in the questionnaire were shared with us and shared by the most knowledgeable people in their social life.¹⁰ This further reinforced the findings of a number of other studies in the field, the most important of which is the study of the Pew research group claiming that adolescents and adults alike use social networking sites such as *Facebook* and *Myspace* to 'stay in touch' with older friends rather than to make new friendships.

As we further claim in the study mentioned above, interactivity can be defined as the process that takes place in the communication process through which media provide interactivity and encourage the effective user at the same time. So the availability of interactive elements does not necessarily mean that it will make the user more active or effective; however, it is the user (and his/her characteristics) that is more prominent in the presence of the communication means that increase interactivity.¹¹ "Interactivity" is a self-activity that supports the user's cognitive orientation in relation to the means of communication and its contents. It is a tool to increase the level and activity of communication processes, to maximise participation and effectiveness during media use.¹²

4 Results

4.1 The Extent of the Arab Youth's Use of *Twitter*

Having an Account on *Twitter*

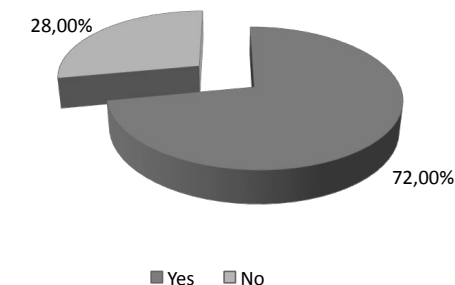


Figure 8: The distribution of respondents in terms of having an account on *Twitter*

Source: own processing

Figure 8 shows that nearly three quarters of respondents (72%) had a *Twitter* account. This is consistent with a number of other reports and studies on the use of social media in the Arab region. According to the latest *Arab Social Media Report 2017*, the total number of active *Twitter* users in the Arab region reached 11.1 million in March 2017, almost doubling the number *Twitter* users recorded in 2015 (i.e. 5.8 million users). Saudi Arabia continued to lead the region in terms of the number of interacting users with 2.6 million users per month, representing 29.9%. Egypt ranked second with 1.7 million users representing 18%, and Algeria

10 AISSANI, R.: Forms of Interaction among Arab Young Users of Social Networks. In *Arabian Journal of Media and Communication*, 2016, No. 15, p. 80-81.

11 AISSANI, R.: Forms of Interaction among Arab Young Users of Social Networks. In *Arabian Journal of Media and Communication*, 2016, No. 15, p. 80-81.

12 AISSANI, R.: Forms of Interaction among Arab Young Users of Social Networks. In *Arabian Journal of Media and Communication*, 2016, No. 15, p. 80-81.

has 774,000 new users since 2014.¹³ Even before that, the *Social Media in the Arab World* report, issued by the Summit of Arab Social Entrepreneurship in 2015, had asserted that about one third (32%) of the users of social media among the respondents had had a *Twitter* account, and the highest rates had been recorded by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (53% and 51%, respectively), while the lowest had been in Libya and Syria (14% and 12%, respectively).¹⁴

According to another report, many Arab political, media and social elites participate in *Twitter*, which makes a difference in presenting their positions, expressing opinions and interacting with other people. Most of news websites and newspapers have their own *Twitter* accounts as well and post all of their news on *Twitter* in brief.¹⁵

Our research found that statistically, there were significant differences between males and females in terms of the extent of owning a *Twitter* account (Mann-Whitney U = 111321.000, P Value = 0.000). The extent of female ownership of a *Twitter* account was found to be higher than in case of males. The female mean was 528.30 and the male mean was 477.38. In terms of the extent of ownership of a *Twitter* account, statistically, there were no significant differences between the respondents in different age groups and with different educational levels. Statistically, there were, however, significant differences between the respondents attributed to the country in terms of the extent of owning a *Twitter* account (Kruskal-Wallis = 63.626, P Value = 0.000). It was found that the extent of ownership of the participants from North African countries was significant, that is, the highest, by a mean value of 544.08.

The Reasons Why Some Respondents Do Not Have Accounts on Twitter

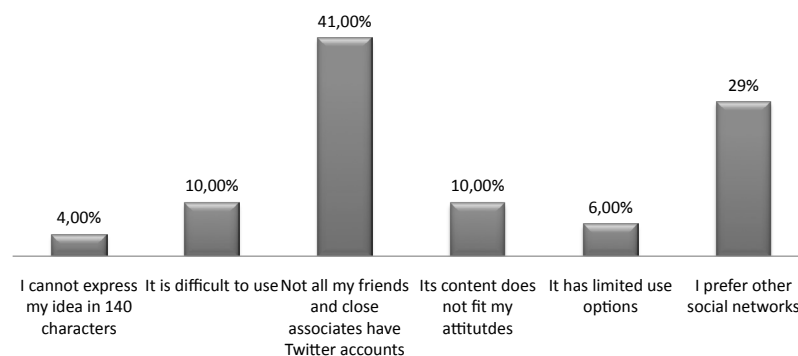


Figure 9: The reasons why some respondents do not have accounts on Twitter

Source: own processing

The respondents who did not have an account on *Twitter* represented 28% of the sample. They ranked the reasons for not having a *Twitter* account as follows:

- 41% indicated that not all friends and close associates had *Twitter* accounts.
- 29% preferred other social networks.
- 10% responded that *Twitter*'s content was not arranged in accordance with their preferred approaches to the use of social networks.
- 10% indicated the difficulty of *Twitter* use in general.
- 6% stated that *Twitter* had limited usage options.
- 4% claimed that personal ideas and thoughts may not have been expressed in 140 characters.

13 SALEM, F.: *The Arab Social Media Report 2017: Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policymaking in the Arab World* (Vol. 7). Dubai : MBR School of Government, 2017, p. 44, 45.

14 SALEM, F.: *The Arab Social Media Report 2017: Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policymaking in the Arab World* (Vol. 7). Dubai : MBR School of Government, 2017, p. 34.

15 DUBAI SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT: *Arab Social Media Report, Transforming Education in the Arab World: Breaking Barriers in the Age of Social Learning*. [online]. [2017-12-12]. Available at: <http://stmjo.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/ASMR_5_Report_Final.pdf>.

These findings also show that the two main reasons for not having a *Twitter* account were the non-spread *Twitter* use among friends and close associates and the preference for other social networks. As we believe, the two reasons are mutually connected since some users' preference for other social networks (they often referred to *Facebook* because it is the most widely used social networking site in the world and in the Arab World as well) emerged from the lack of *Twitter* interactions between them and their close friends and associates, which confirms once again the existence of the 'electronic tribe' or 'tribes'.¹⁶

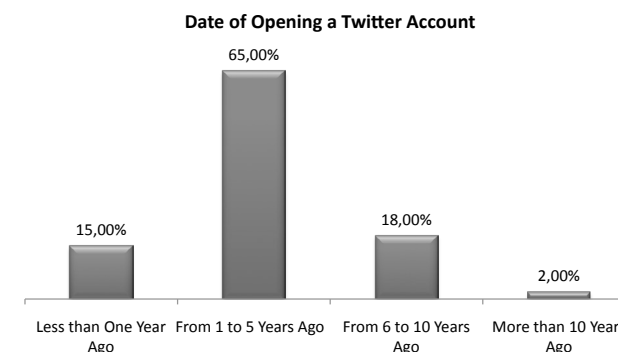


Figure 10: The time of opening Twitter accounts as stated by the research participants

Source: own processing

It was found that more than half of the respondents had opened *Twitter* accounts 1 to 5 years ago (64.6%), then there were those who had done so 6 to 10 years ago (18.4%), less than one year ago (15.2%), and finally more than 10 years ago (1.8%). Thus, if most respondents had used *Twitter* for 1-5 years, i.e. an average of at least 3 years for each user, and if *Twitter* had been active for 11 years (until mid-2017), then the ratio of the activity of the majority of users to the system's activity was as follows:

$$\text{Percentage (100\%): } \frac{\text{The number of years of participants' use of Twitter (Mean = 3 years)}}{\text{The number of years of Twitter's existence (11 years)}} = 27\%$$

This means that the proportion of the activity of the young respondents who claimed to use *Twitter* to the whole time period of *Twitter*'s existence was 27%. It is a clear indicator of the somewhat low activity of the young Arab respondents who use *Twitter*. It is almost asynchronous with the system's activity, since the number of *Twitter* users has significantly grown in the Arab region during the last five years (2012-2017), particularly between March 2012 and March 2017, with an increase of about 2 million active accounts per year, as stated in the findings of the *Arab Social Media Report* issued in the first half of 2017 by the Dubai School of Government mentioned above (see Figure 1).¹⁷ Our research data indicates that there were statistically significant differences among the respondents in the different educational levels in terms of the date of opening a *Twitter* account (Kruskal-Wallis = 10.324, P Value= 0.035). Statistics show that the respondents possessing the GSSC were significant, with a high mean value of 386.58. Statistically, there were no significant differences between males and females or between different age groups in terms of the date of opening a *Twitter* account. There were however, significant differences among the different Arab countries in terms of the date of opening a *Twitter* account (Kruskal-Wallis= 41.154, P Value= 0.000). It was found that there were significant differences related to the respondents from the Gulf countries with a high mean value of 407.24.

16 AISSANI, R.: Forms of Interaction among Arab Young Users of Social Networks. In *Arabian Journal of Media and Communication*, 2016, No. 15, p. 80.

17 SALEM, F.: *The Arab Social Media Report 2017: Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policymaking in the Arab World* (Vol. 7). Dubai : MBR School of Government, 2017, p. 45.

What Device Do You Use for Checking Your Twitter Account?

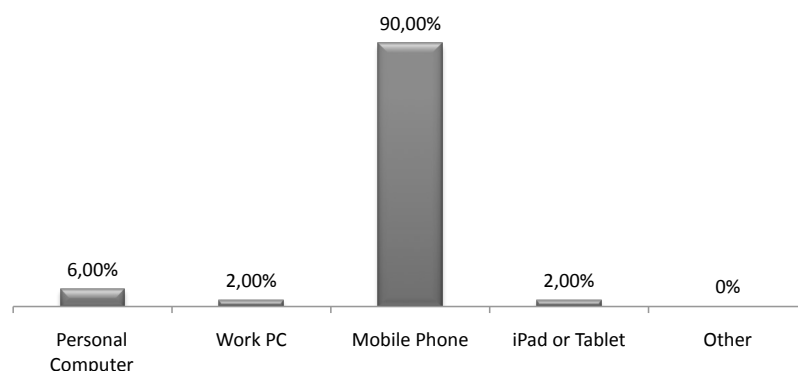


Figure 11: The device used by the respondents to access Twitter

Source: own processing

The vast majority of the research participants (90%) claimed to visit their *Twitter* accounts via mobile phones, laptops, iPads or tablets and desktops. In this context, the *Social Media in the Arab World* report states that about 25% of the social media users in the Arab World use *Twitter* via their smartphones or tablets, and Twitter usage rates are highest in both the UAE and Bahrain (45% and 40%, respectively), while the lowest are in Libya and Syria (5% and 1%, respectively).¹⁸

Moreover, the *Smart, Well-informed and Ready to Join: Customer Loyalty in the Middle East* study indicates that the use of smartphones in the Middle East is higher than in many other countries (with the exception of Australia's Millennium generation). However, it is interesting to note that the Millennials in the Middle East do not outperform other generations in this region significantly.

According to the given study, 87% of the Millennials and 84% of other generations have smartphones, compared to 59% and 36% in the United Kingdom. These figures and percentages show that the role of smartphones in managing the value exchange process applies to all age groups, not just to the young people. That is, it is not surprising that the spread of the smartphone has reached higher levels of use in the countries under comparison, including the pursuit of social opinion, and a greater level of interest in the functions, and not just the chatting and sending SMS. Once again, it is amazing to note so much attention among the other generations compared with the Millennium generation.¹⁹

Our research claims that statistically, there were significant differences between the respondents on the different educational levels in terms of the device used for use of *Twitter* (Kruskal-Wallis = 41.821, P Value = 0.000). The respondents with PhD. degrees were found to be statistically significant, with a high mean of 379.72. There were also significant differences, statistically, between the respondents in the different age groups in terms of the device used for *Twitter* interactions (Kruskal-Wallis = 6.561, P Value = 0.038). It was found that the respondents aged 18 to 25 were significant with a mean of 368.74. Statistically, there are no significant differences between males and females in terms of the device used for accessing *Twitter*. There were, however, significant differences between the respondents attributed to the country in terms of the device used for *Twitter* (Kruskal-Wallis = 30.631, P Value = 0.000), and it was found that statistics related to the respondents from the Gulf countries were of the highest significance with a mean of 376.60.

18 ARAB SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS SUMMIT: *Social Media Report*. Dubai : ASMR, 2015, p. 35.

19 LACEY, P., LIPS, J. P.: *Smart, Well-informed and Ready to Join: Customer Loyalty in the Middle East. Shedding Light on the Customers Behaviors Today and Its Impact on Business Tomorrow*. New York, London, Dubai : EMEA, Emma Inc., 2013, p. 16.

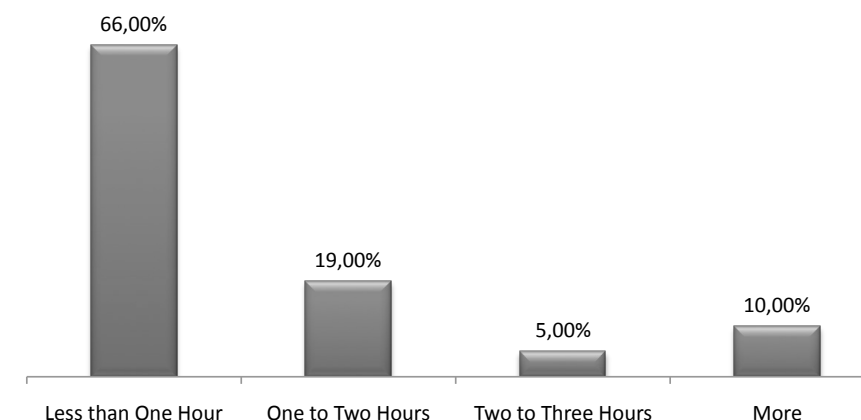


Figure 12: The time the respondents spent daily by using Twitter (approximately)

Source: own processing

It was found that most respondents (65.9%) spent less than an hour a day by browsing their accounts on *Twitter*, and that 19.2% of them spent one to two hours doing the same thing, while 9.9% spent with *Twitter* more than three hours a day and 5.1% two to three hours.

Similarly, the findings of the study titled *Saudi Youth Use of the Social Networking Site of Twitter and Its Impact on the Degree of Their Relationship with the Traditional Media* indicate the widespread use of *Twitter* among university youth as a major feature and pay attention to the length of their daily interactions with the site.²⁰ This corresponds with the nature of the activities of the respondents on their *Twitter* accounts as shown in Figure 20: 28% of them follow-up and read only, 16% re-tweet, 15% tweet, 13% like tweets posted by other people and 12% reply and comment.

This confirms what the founders of *Twitter*, Jack Dorsey and Evan Williams, think – that the users' attraction to this network is caused by the ease of use and instant access to it.²¹ The findings of our study show that there were significant differences, statistically, between the respondents on the different educational levels in terms of the amount of time spent using *Twitter* (Kruskal-Wallis = 19.084, P Value = 0.001). Statistically, the respondents with a doctorate were found to be significant with a high mean of 395.48. There were no significant differences between the respondents in different age groups or between males and females in terms of the amount of time spent using *Twitter*.

However, there were significant statistical differences between the respondents from different countries of origin in terms of the amount of time spent using *Twitter* (Kruskal-Wallis = 79.616, P Value = 0.000). The statistics related to the respondents from the Gulf countries were found to be significant with a high mean of 420.16.

20 AL SWEID, M.: *Saudi Youth Use of Twitter and Its Impact on the Extent of Their Relation to Traditional Media, A Field Study on a Sample of Public and Private Universities Students in Riyadh*. Paper presented at the international scientific conference Social Media Applications and Problematic Methodology. College of Media and Communication, Mohammed Bin Saud Islamic University, presented on the 11th of March 2015.

21 MERTHY, D.: *Twitter: Social Communication in the Era of Twitter*. Cairo : Dar Al Fajr Press, 2014, p. 15.

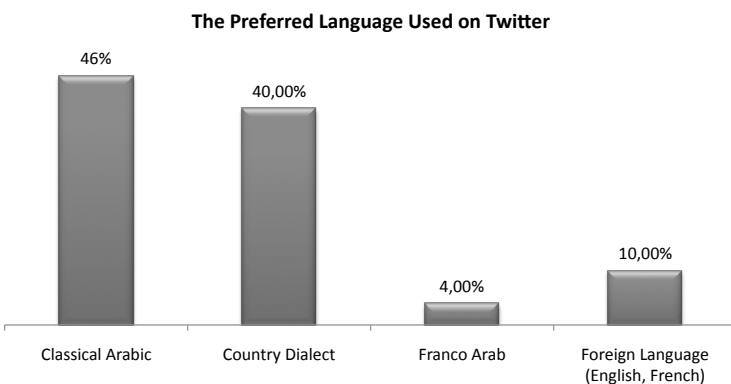


Figure 13: The preferred language used by the research sample for tweets or hashtags on Twitter
Source: own processing

Almost half of the respondents, 46% preferred to use standard Arabic while on *Twitter*. 40% used their country's dialect, while 10% used a foreign language (English, French) and 4% used Franco Arab. Similarly, the *Arab Social Media Report* shows that 72% of the respondents participate in hashtags or comment in Arabic, 16% in English and 12% in other languages, as shown in the following Figure:

Language Use on Twitter across the Arab Region (Mar 2016)

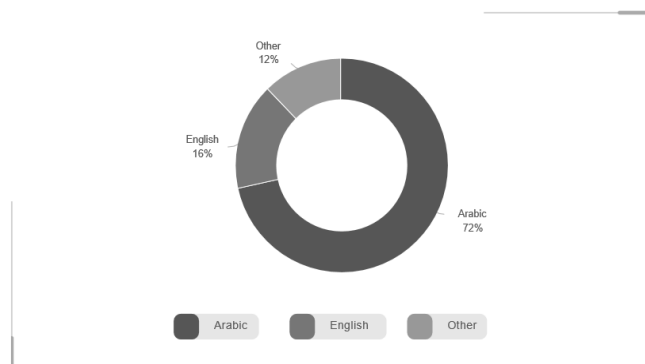


Figure 14: The language used by Arab Tweeters

Source: SALEM, F.: *The Arab Social Media Report 2017: Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policymaking in the Arab World* (Vol. 7). Dubai: MBR School of Government, 2017, p. 53.

Statistically significant differences between males and females in terms of the preferred language of *Twitter* participation were found (Mann-Whitney U = 48236.000, P Value = 0.000). The findings suggested that females were the most significant at a mean of 407.68. There were significant differences between respondents in different age groups in terms of the preferred language of tweeting or writing hashtags (Kruskal-Wallis = 68.385, P Value = 0.001). The sample aged 18-25 was found to be the most significant with the highest mean of 417.78. Statistically, significant differences were found in the different educational levels in terms of the preferred language of tweeting or hashtags (Kruskal-Wallis = 15.996, P Value = 0.003). It was found that the respondents with other educational levels were statistically significant with a mean of 423.25. Furthermore, there were statistical differences between the respondents according to their countries of origin in terms of the preferred language of tweeting or hashtags (Kruskal-Wallis = 10.808, P Value = 0.004). The research sample from North African countries was found to be statistically significant with a mean of 385.23.

4.2 Motives for Twitter Use by the Arab Youth

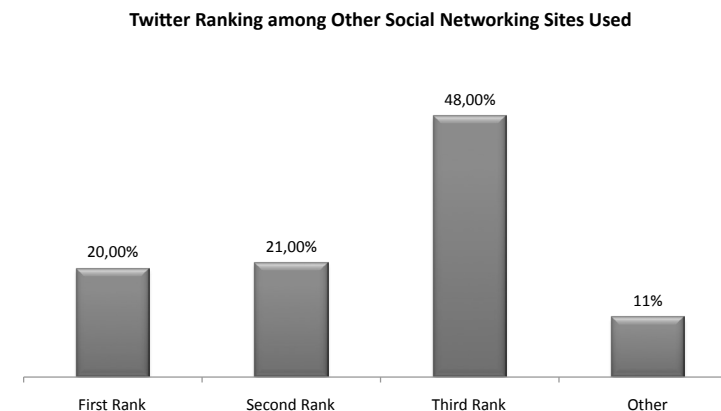


Figure 15: The rank of Twitter among other social networks, as indicated by the research sample
Source: own processing

Twitter came in third place in about half of the sample (48.6%), in second place in 20.8% of cases and in first place for 19.6% of the respondents. It is necessary to consider the results of the *Social Media Report 2017* here:

- *Facebook* is the most widely used application in the Arab region compared to other applications, with 156 million users active at the beginning of 2017, compared to 115 million users a year ago. *Facebook* accounts in the region have more than doubled over the last three years. With regard to the percentage of users among the Arab countries, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are ranked first at 95% in each country, followed by Bahrain, Kuwait and Jordan. The number of young users amounts to 64.3%, while the percentage of women users is about 32.3%, which is significantly less than the global average.²²
- The total number of active *Twitter* users in the Arab region reached 11.1 million in March 2017, nearly doubling the number of 5.8 million users existing three years ago. Bahrain and Kuwait ranked first in the number of active users on *Twitter*. Algeria ranked second in the number of *Twitter* users in the Arab region, followed by Egypt and the UAE.
- The number of tweets in the region in March 2016 was about 849.1 million, which means that the figure had increased to 59% within two years. The number of tweets in the Arab World is 27.4 million tweets a day. Most of the tweets are from Saudi Arabia with 33.9% of the region's tweets, while Egypt's tweets amount for 20%. Kuwait has the highest active users' rate of 4.2 million tweets daily, followed by Saudi Arabia and Palestine. Male *Twitter* users in the Arab World declined to 32.4% in 2016 compared to 36% two years earlier.²³

Another study, titled *College Students' Use of Social Media. Site Preferences Uses and Gratifications Theory Revisited*, concludes that *Twitter* is the second largest social networking site favoured by students.²⁴ *Twitter* is also ranked second in terms of usage intensity after *WhatsApp* in Qatar, at least according to the results of the report *Identification of Social Networks in Qatar* (*Twitter* is used by 46% of the respondents).²⁵

22 SALEM, F.: *The Arab Social Media Report 2017: Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policymaking in the Arab World* (Vol. 7). Dubai: MBR School of Government, 2017, p.33,34

23 SALEM, F.: *The Arab Social Media Report 2017: Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policymaking in the Arab World* (Vol. 7). Dubai: MBR School of Government, 2017, p.44.

24 EZUMAH, B.: College Students' Use of Social Media. Site Preferences Uses and Gratifications Theory Revisited. In *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2013, Vol. 4, No. 5, p. 27-34.

25 MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY-QATAR: *Identification of Social Networks in Qatar Report*. Qatar: ict QATAR, 2015, p. 9.

Following the previous figure, we found out that the ranking of *Twitter* among other social media sites was influenced by age (Chi square = 26.011, P Value = 0.000), educational level (Chi square = 39.908, P Value = 0.000) and country of origin as well (Chi square = 106.524, 0.000), but there is no difference on the gender level.

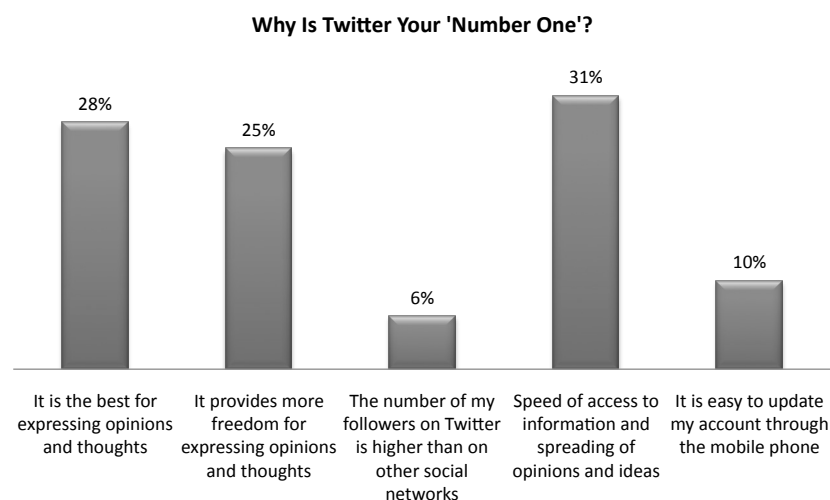


Figure 16: The reasons for preferring *Twitter* and ranking it first
Source: own processing

The respondents' responses to the given question were as follows:

- 31% favoured the speed of access to information and the quick spreading of ideas and opinions,
- 28% stated it was the best for the expression of opinions and ideas ('the best words are the shortest'),
- 25% indicated that it made them feel freer to express their thoughts and ideas,
- 10% underlined the ease of updating *Twitter* accounts through the mobile phone,
- 6% claimed that the number of their followers on *Twitter* is higher than on other social networks.

Thus, the three most valued characteristics of *Twitter* are:

- the speed of conveying information,
- the preference for expressing opinions and ideas,
- the degree of freedom *Twitter* provides.

These are the main reasons why some respondents preferred *Twitter* in the first place in terms of its use and following. The data also indicated that the reasons for preferring *Twitter* and placing it first were influenced by the country of origin variable (Chi square = 27.356, P Value = 0.002).

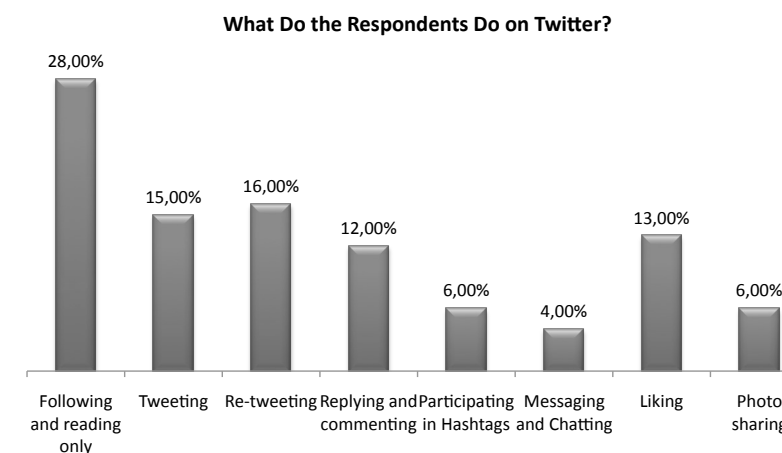


Figure 17: What the respondents do on *Twitter*
Source: own processing

The results of the figure above show that most respondents favoured the following activities on *Twitter*:

- 28% following and reading only,
- 16% re-tweeting,
- 15% tweeting,
- 13% liking *Twitter* posts of other people,
- 12% replying and commenting,
- 4% participating in hashtags,
- 6% sharing photographs documenting their life,
- 4% messaging and chatting.

The obtained data further shows that what the respondents did when they visited *Twitter* was influenced by gender (Chi square = 68.390, P Value = 0.000), age (Chi square = 46.383, P Value = 0.000), their educational level (Chi square = 58.027, P Value = 0.003) and countries of origin (Chi square = 151.341, P Value = 0.000).

Similarly, the study titled *Saudi Youth Use of Twitter and Its Impact on the Extent of Their Relation to Traditional Media* concludes that the intensity of *Twitter* use in case of young people is concentrated within following and reading only, re-tweeting, tweeting, less often within replying and commenting or participating in hashtags.²⁶ Moreover, the results of the *Social Media in the Arab World* report, published by the Summit of Arab Social Entrepreneurs, held between the 17th – 18th of March 2015 at the Dubai World Trade Center (including the findings related to the impressions measurement of some users living in the Arab World regarding social media and their social networking habits) show that:

- More than half of the users (55%) in the Arab World mainly use social media to connect with people while accessing information, watching videos and listening to music; sharing photos is the second most important reason for using social media (12%).
- As for the type of activities the respondents do most of the time while using social media, conversations are the most common activity among users in the Arab World (50%), followed by reading blogs published by other people (18%).²⁷

²⁶ AL SWEID, M.: *Saudi Youth Use of Twitter and Its Impact on the Extent of Their Relation to Traditional Media, A Field Study on a Sample of Public and Private University Students in Riyadh*. Paper presented at the international scientific conference Social Media Applications and Problematic Methodology. College of Media and Communication, Mohammed Bin Saud Islamic University, presented on the 11th of March 2015.

²⁷ For more information, see: ARAB SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS SUMMIT: *Social Media Report*. Dubai : ASMR, 2015.

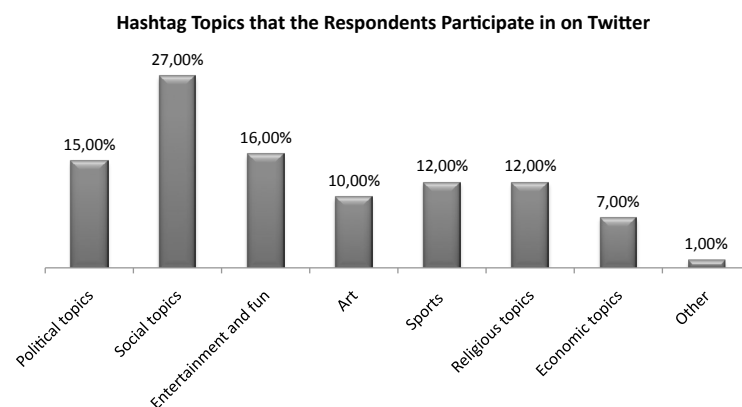


Figure 18: Hashtag topics in which the respondents participate on Twitter

Source: own processing

It is clear from the figure above that the most important topics that the respondents participated in are in the following order:

- 27% of them followed social topics,
- 16% sought entertainment and fun,
- 15% were interested in political topics,
- 12% in sports,
- 12% in religious matters.

The study titled *Saudi Youth Use of Twitter and Its Impact on the Extent of Their Relation to Traditional Media* claims that the most important topics followed on *Twitter* are:

- local affairs,
- community issues,
- public affairs,
- sports and recreational topics,
- topics that have achieved good following rates,
- modern technologies and devices,
- religious topics,
- information and facts,
- foreign affairs,
- medical and intellectual topics.²⁸

The study *Twitter Usage Habits of Undergraduate Students* presents similar findings; images, videos, music, news, IT topics and magazine news stories are the most important elements and these are also most shared by students who use *Twitter*, which indicates that students predominantly tend to use *Twitter* for entertainment and fun.²⁹

28 AL SWEID, M.: *Saudi Youth Use of Twitter and Its Impact on the Extent of Their Relation to Traditional Media, A Field Study on a Sample of Public and Private University Students in Riyadh*. Paper presented at the international scientific conference Social Media Applications and Problematic Methodology. College of Media and Communication, Mohammed Bin Saud Islamic University, presented on the 11th of March 2015.

29 BICEN, H., CAVUS, N.: Twitter Usage Habits of Undergraduate Students. In *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 2012, Vol. 46, p. 335-339.

The results of the respondents' arrangement of the main topics that are discussed on *Twitter* show that they are most interested in social affairs and entertainment. *Twitter* performs a task few other social media are able to perform. It transfers people's conversations and comments about their daily lives immediately, displaying their personal gatherings to the public; it provides them with the opportunity to post items and express themselves. The major advantage of *Twitter* is that it broadens the circle of people interested in public affairs. In addition, *Twitter* is known for its feature of mobilisation and concentration through collecting scattered ideas and similar phrases posted by people all around the world. It seems that *Twitter* is anchored deeply within the personal, social and political life of individuals.

The selection of hashtag topics in which the respondents participate on *Twitter* was influenced by their gender (Chi square = 105.828, P Value = 0.000), age (Chi square = 111.407, P Value= 0.000), educational level (Chi square = 71.436, P Value = 0.000) and countries of origin (Chi square = 72.706, P Value = 0.000).

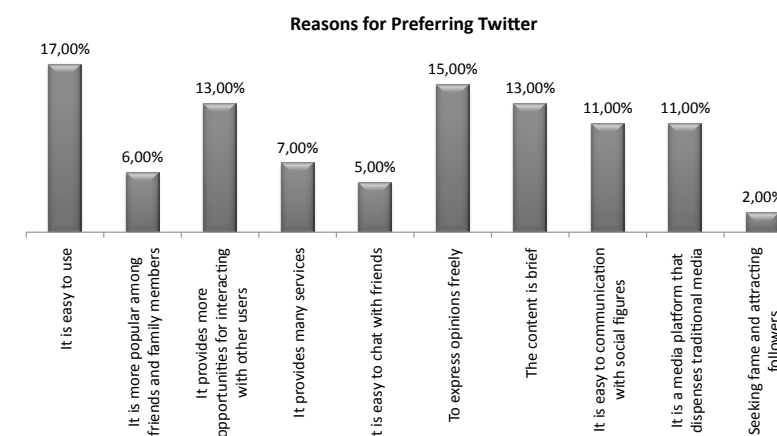


Figure 19: The reasons why the respondents prefer using Twitter

Source: own processing

It is obvious from the respondents' responses that the most important of these reasons came in the following order:

- 17% indicated *Twitter* was easy to use,
- 15% claimed that *Twitter* allows free expression of opinions,
- 13% stated that it provided more opportunities for interaction with other users,
- 13% preferred the brief participation content,
- 11% welcomed a media platform that dispenses traditional media,
- 11% preferred the ease of communication with different social figures.

The study titled *Predicting the Use of Twitter in Developing Countries: Integrating Innovation Attributes, Uses and Gratifications, and Trust Approaches in Informing Science* concludes that there are several elements that influence the use of *Twitter*, namely the need to gather information, the need to spend free time and the achievement of personal ambitions, while the theory of confidence is not an influential element in the use of *Twitter*,³⁰ at least according to this study. The results of the study focus on the importance of access to information in influencing the power of *Twitter* usage.

30 The study investigated the elements that affect the use of *Twitter* in the Kuwaiti society, and adopted an electronic questionnaire to collect information from 436 Kuwaiti users of *Twitter*, using the theory of uses and gratifications and the theory of confidence. For more information, see: ALAJMI, A. M., ALHARBI, H. A., GHULOUM, F. H.: Predicting the Use of Twitter in Developing Countries: Integrating Innovation Attributes, Uses and Gratifications, and Trust Approaches in Informing Science. In *International Journal of an Emerging Transdiscipline*, 2016, Vol. 19, p. 215-237.

Furthermore, the study *Saudi Youth Use of Twitter and Its Impact on the Extent of Their Relation to Traditional Media* also claims that the most important factors that attract young people to *Twitter* are: the ease of use, news, freedom of expression, diversity, social networking and excitement, respectively.³¹

Another study, *The Impact of the Use of Electronic Networks on Social Relationships, Facebook and Twitter as a Model* argues that the most compelling reasons for students to use *Facebook* and *Twitter* are the ease of expressing of their views and intellectual attitudes that cannot be expressed explicitly in the community. The results also indicate that the students turn to these social media to refresh their old friendships, search for new friendships and connect with their spatially distant compatriots. It also shows that the use of *Facebook* and *Twitter* has many positive effects; most importantly, intellectual openness and cultural exchanges, while lack of family interaction is the one of their most negative effects.³²

The study *College Students' Use of Social Media. Site Preferences Uses and Gratifications Theory Revisited* confirms that the respondents use social networking sites, including *Twitter*, for several reasons: to communicate with friends, to exchange photos, to contact family and for entertainment. The factors influencing students' preferences for *Twitter* are determined by the fact that it is easy to navigate and use, it is the most popular social medium among their friends and family, it provides a greater opportunity for interaction, it has a global reputation in the coverage of international news, it includes many tasks including the ability to upload information or videos and chat with friends.³³

The Doctoral thesis on *Habits of Using Social Media in UAE* argues that adult individuals are the most involved with *Twitter* and that the biggest motivation to use it is communication and social interaction, then to access information, for self-realisation and finally, for entertainment.³⁴

The *Social Media Report* reveals that more than half of the respondents (55%) in the Arab World use social networks to make initial connections with people. Access to information, watching videos, listening to music and sharing photos are other important reasons for using social media (12%). Activists see social media as an exciting tool to interact and stay in touch with friends and family, and as an amazing tool to reunite friends who have lost contact with each other for a long time (such as former classmates).³⁵

All these findings also confirm the statement by the site's founders, Jack Dorsey and Evan Williams, that "*the user's attraction to this medium is due to its ease of use and immediate access*",³⁶ as reflected on through our first hypothesis.

Are the reasons why many of our respondents prefer using *Twitter* influenced by their gender, age, educational level and country of origin? It seems that in case of our research the reasons for preferring *Twitter* were indeed influenced by gender (Chi square = 22.485, P Value = 0.013), age (Chi square = 50.708, P Value = 0.000), educational level (Chi square = 72.020, P Value = 0.005) and country of origin (Chi square = 111.274, P Value = 0.000).

31 AL SWEID, M.: *Saudi Youth Use of Twitter and Its Impact on the Extent of Their Relation to Traditional Media, A Field Study on a Sample of Public and Private University Students in Riyadh*. Paper presented at the international scientific conference Social Media Applications and Problematic Methodology. College of Media and Communication, Mohammed Bin Saud Islamic University, presented on the 11th of March 2015.

32 AL SHEHRI, H: *The Effects of Using Electronic Social Networks on Social Relationships, "Facebook and Twitter as Example"*, [MA Thesis]. JADDAH(KSA): King Abdul Aziz University, Department of Social Science, 2014, P.60, 61.

33 EZUMAH, B.: College Students' Use of Social Media. Site Preferences Uses and Gratifications Theory Revisited. In *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 2013, Vol. 4, No. 5, p. 27-34.

34 AL MANSOUR, A.: *Habits of Using Social Media in UAE*. [Doctoral Thesis]. Al Ain : University of UAE, Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social and Humanitarian Sciences, 2012, p. 13.

35 ARAB SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS SUMMIT: *Social Media Report*. Dubai : ASMR, 2015, p. 20.

36 MERTHY, D.: *Twitter: Social Communication in the Era of Twitter*. Cairo : Dar Al Fajr Press, 2014, p. 15.

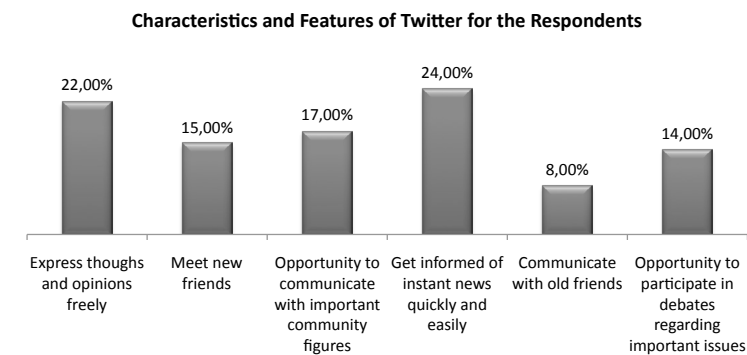


Figure 20: The importance and advantages of *Twitter* for the respondents

Source: own processing

The following advantages of *Twitter* are based on the respondents' answers:

- 24% – timely and easy news coverage,
- 22% – free expression of ideas and opinions,
- 17% – the possibility of communicating with important figures in the community,
- 15% – meeting new friends,
- 14% – the opportunity to participate in the debates on the most crucial societal issues,
- 8% – communication with old friends and other acquaintances.

These trends are indicative of the characteristics and features of *Twitter* for the respondents. They sensitively perceive the transformation of *Twitter* from a mere source of entertainment into a communication tool that is really influential in political, religious, social and government activities, in addition to business, media and many other areas of interest.

Our data shows that the importance and advantages of *Twitter* for the respondents were affected by gender (Chi square = 18.094, P Value = 0.006), age (Chi square = 22.427, P Value = 0.033), educational level (Chi square = 45.645, P Value = 0.005) and country of origin (Chi square = 65.540, P Value = 0.000).

5 Conclusion

The popularity of *Twitter* has grown rapidly since its launch in 2006, bringing the number of active users living all around the world to 319 million (the end of April 2017). The success of *Twitter* is based on the fact that it complements the fastest growing Internet sector in the world, i.e. social networks led by *Facebook*; but without competing with the major players. *Twitter*'s innovation is unique in allowing its users to share text messages, including images or video links, instantly and with millions of other users, via the Internet and portable Internet-connected devices, through which they have access to their social media applications. In addition, *Twitter* is a social media platform used by celebrities and the general public to inform their followers about the latest developments.

Twitter has been slow to start in the Arab World, and most of its users (mostly the young people) focus on soft news on stars and celebrities. However, the increase in the number of users and the frequency of use of the site in the region have shown new trends in the usefulness and necessity of *Twitter* in helping during national crises as well as its benefits in influencing the public opinion and driving social change.

The figures and percentages related to the presented research data lead us to a set of quite interesting conclusions. Reflecting on the first hypotheses that the Arab youth prefer *Twitter* because it is easy to use and it gives them more room to explain opinions and thoughts freely, the results show that this hypothesis is verified. This leads to our second hypothesis about the reasons behind the Arab youth's preferences for *Twitter*. The respondents mentioned that there are several reasons why they prefer *Twitter*.

- 17% indicated that it was easy to use; which is in accordance with the belief of the founders of *Twitter*, Jack Dorsey and Evan Williams, who state that *Twitter* users are attracted to it because of its ease of use and instant access.³⁷
- 15% claimed that for them it was the freedom of expressing one's opinion, which is in line with the given hypothesis.
- The speed of access to information and the spread of ideas and opinions was the option selected by 31% of the respondents.
- *Twitter* as the best method of expressing opinions and ideas ('the best words are the shortest') was the answer of 28% of the research sample.
- It made them feel freer to express their thoughts and ideas through; that was the answer indicated by 25% of the research participants.

As far as the activities conducted by the respondents on *Twitter* were concerned, surfing and reading only was relevant to 28% of them, re-tweeting to 16% of them, tweeting to 15% of them, liking to 13% of them and replying and commenting to 12% of them. Regarding the most important topics which the respondents reacted to, 27% of them indicated social topics, 16% entertainment and fun, 15% political topics, 12% sports and 12% religious matters. About half of the respondents preferred to use classical Arabic in tweeting (46%), then the dialect of their own country (40%), a foreign language, i.e. English or French (10%) or Franco-Arab (4%). Testing the second hypothesis, there are statistically significant differences in the use of *Twitter* and the reasons for its preference among the Arab youth attributed to gender, age, educational level and country of origin. The results show that the hypothesis is verified, also answering our second research question about whether there is a difference in the use of *Twitter* among the Arab youth attributed to age, gender, educational level and country of origin. The research shows that there were statistically significant differences between males and females in terms of the extent of owning a *Twitter* account (Mann-Whitney U = 111321.000, P Value = 0.000). The extent of female ownership of a *Twitter* account was found to be statistically higher than in case of males. The female mean was 528.30 and the male mean was 477.38. In terms of the extent of owning a *Twitter* account attributed to country of origin (Kruskal-Wallis = 63.626, P Value = 0.000), it was found that the extent of ownership of the respondents from North African countries was statistically the most significant by a mean value of 544.08.

There were statistically significant differences among the respondents on the different educational levels in terms of the date of opening a *Twitter* account (Kruskal-Wallis = 10.324, P Value = 0.035). It was found that the respondents with GSSC were statistically significant with a high mean value of 386.58 as well as among the different Arab countries in terms of the date of opening a *Twitter* account (Kruskal-Wallis = 41.154, P Value = 0.000). It was also recored that the respondents from the Gulf countries were significant, with a high mean value of 407.24.

Furthermore, we recorded statistically significant differences between the respondents on the different educational levels in terms of visiting their *Twitter* accounts (Kruskal-Wallis = 17.281, P Value = 0.02). It was found that the respondents with other educational levels were significant with a mean of 556.83. Among the Arab countries, and in terms of visiting *Twitter* accounts (Kruskal-Wallis = 84.931, P Value = 0.000), it seemed that the North African respondents showed the highest significance with a mean of 462.41.

According to the statistics, there were significant differences among the respondents on the different educational levels in terms of the device used to access *Twitter* (Kruskal-Wallis = 41.821, P Value = 0.000). It was found that the participants who held a PhD were significant, with a mean of 379.72. As for the age groups in terms of the device used to access *Twitter* (Kruskal-Wallis = 6.561, P Value = 0.038), it was found that the respondents aged 18 to 25 were statistically significant at 368.74, depending on their country of origin in terms of the device used to access *Twitter* (Kruskal-Wallis = 30.631, P Value = 0.000). The respondents from GCC countries were statistically significant with the highest mean value of 376.60.

Statistically, there were significant differences among the respondents on the different educational levels in terms of the amount of time spent using *Twitter* (Kruskal-Wallis = 19.084, P Value = 0.001). It was found that the respondents with a PhD were significant with a mean of 395.48. Depending on the country of origin in terms of the amount of time spent using *Twitter* (Kruskal-Wallis = 79.616, P Value = 0.000), it was found that the results relating to the respondents from the Gulf countries were significant with a mean value of 420.16.

There were statistically significant differences between males and females in terms of preferred language in tweeting or hashtagging (Mann-Whitney U = 48236.000, P Value = 0.000). The females were found to be statistically significant at 407.68. There were also significant differences, statistically, among the respondents from different age groups in terms of the preferred language in tweeting or hashtagging (Kruskal-Wallis = 68.385, P Value = 0.001). The respondents aged 18-25 were found to be statistically significant with a means value of 417.78. It was found that the respondents with other educational levels were significant, statistically, with a mean value of 423.25. Depending on the country of origin in terms of preferred language in tweeting or hashtagging (Kruskal-Wallis = 10.808, P Value = 0.004), the North African respondents were the most statistically significant, with a means of 385.23.

The ranking of *Twitter* among other social networking sites was influenced by age (Chi square = 26.011, P Value = 0.000), educational level (Chi square = 39.908, P Value = 0.000), and country of origin (Chi square = 106.524, P Value = 0.000). What the respondents did while being on *Twitter* was influenced by gender (Chi square = 68.390, P Value = 0.000), age (Chi square = 46.383, P Value = 0.000), educational level (Chi square = 58.027, P Value = 0.003) and country of origin (Chi square = 151.341, P Value = 0.000). In addition, it was found that the selection of hashtag topics that the respondents shared on *Twitter* was influenced by their gender (Chi square = 105.828, P Value = 0.000), age (Chi square = 111.407, P Value = 0.000), educational level (Chi square = 71.436, P Value = 0.000) and country of origin as well (Chi square = 72.706, P Value = 0.000).

The reasons for preferring the use of *Twitter* were influenced by gender (Chi square = 22.485, P Value = 0.013), age (Chi square = 50.708, P Value = 0.000), educational level (Chi square = 72.020, P Value = 0.005) and country of origin (Chi square = 111.274, P Value = 0.000). And finally, what/who the respondents followed on *Twitter* was affected by their gender (Chi square = 104.233, P Value = 0.000), age (Chi square = 96.234, P Value = 0.000), educational level (Chi square = 61.220, P Value = 0.000) and country of origin (Chi square = 53.637, P Value = 0.000).

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