

The Intensity and the Factors Affecting the Use of Social Network Sites Among the Students of Jordanian Universities

Andraws Swidan¹, Hasan Al-Shalabi², Mustafa Jwaifell³, Arafat Awajan⁴ and Adnan Alrabea⁵

¹ Computer engineering department, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, University of Jordan, Jordan

² Faculty of Engineering, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, Jordan

³ Department of Curriculum and Teaching, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, Jordan

⁴ Computer Science Department, Princess Sumaya University for Technology, Jordan

⁵ Faculty of Information Technology, Al Balqa Applied University, Jordan

Abstract

The present paper examines social network sites (SNSs) usage among university students of four Jordanian universities distributed in different regions of the Kingdom. Seven hundred and twenty seven students were sampled and they completed a questionnaire based on the technology acceptance model. In addition, 16 participants, four from each university, were interviewed. The variance in the extent of SNSs usage in relation to university, faculty, gender, age, study level and socioeconomic background was investigated. This study employed a mixed-method model as interviews and questionnaires were employed. The data were qualitatively and quantitatively collected, sorted, analyzed and reported. The results of the qualitative analyses and the quantitative descriptive results suggested that the extent of SNS usage is high among the university students in Jordan. Chi-Square tests used to determine whether the equality use of social networks among Jordanian university according to various parameters for the top four social networks were done. The researchers' recommendations are to make better use of those Social Networks by integrating them in universities' learning management systems.

Keywords: *Social Networks Sites (SNS), Higher Education, University students, Jordanian Universities.*

1. Introduction

Jordanian young adults, as their peers in the world, are using intensively social networks sites. The aim and intensity of such usage is the subject of several research papers Ahmad, Suleiman Alhaji. (2011), Kwon Ohbyung and Wen Yixing. (2009), Leng Goh Say, Likoh Jonathan,

Japang Minah, Andrias Ryan Macdonell., and Amboala Tamrin. (2010). It is almost impossible to underestimate the role and effect of using SNS in our daily life. The impact of SNS on the Arab spring movements is still to be studied and investigated. Social, economic and academic effects of SNS were studied by several researchers Boyd Dana and Ellison Nicole. (2007, October), Ellison Nicole B., Steinfield Charles., and Lampe Cliff. (2007), Hewitt Anne and Forte Andrea. (2006), Pemppek Tiffany A., Yermolayeva Yevdokiya A., and Clavert, Sandra L. (2009), Valenzuela Sebastian., Park Namsu., and Kee Kerk F. (2008). College and university students are the main SNS users. Certain SNS are more frequently used than others. What are the most commonly used SNS among Jordanian students and what are the factors influencing these phenomena is the subject of this study. Social, economic factors, type of study, gender of the students and level of study were investigated. The two technology acceptance measures: Perceived usefulness (PU) and Perceived ease-of-use (PEOU) were estimated for the most commonly used SNS. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an information systems theory that models how users come to accept and use a technology. The model suggests that when users are presented with a new technology, a number of factors influence their decision about how and when they will use it. The reverse of this statement is assumed true. If new technologies are adopted then the intensity of their use indicates their PU and PEOU.

2. Background of the study

SNSs can be described as online community that gathers people with in same interests. Kwon and Wen (2009) defined SNSs Sites as an individual web page which

enables online, human-relationship building by collecting useful information and sharing it with specific or unspecific people. While Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined SNSs Sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public within a bounded system. Facebook can be considered one of the most SNSs that influenced online communications between people, even this relationship shifted to a specific enrollment of relationship. Hewitt and Forte (2006) described the results from ongoing investigation of student/faculty relationships in the online community Facebook to understand how contact on Facebook was influencing student perceptions of faculty, where the result of this survey point to one third of the students they surveyed did not believe that faculty should be present on the Facebook at all. Those finding are very interesting while the Arab universities students are insists to have faculty member e-mail to interact with him as we noticed all the time in our experience.

The students' experiences and uses of SNSs can be differing according to their needs, which may differ from country to another. Pemppek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2009) investigated experiences of 92 undergraduates students reporting daily time use and responding to an activities checklist to assess their use of the popular Social Network site Facebook, where they concluded that students spend approximately 30 minutes throughout the day as a part of their daily routine, beside this result, the use of Facebook in a style of one-to-many communication tool.

The uses of SNSs can be one-to-one or one-to-many as a part of group uses. This study is trying to survey Jordanian Universities' students to gain a full picture about the intensity of use of different SNSs and how this use depends upon the gender, type of study, social economic situation, level of study and type of faculty. The result of this research can open the doors for Academics and Policy Makers to take advantages of the most common SNSs among the students of Jordanian universities.

Valenzuela, Park, and Kee (2008) found that SNSs and in specific Facebook effect college students. They found positive relationships between intensity of Facebook use and students' life satisfaction, social trust, civic participants and political engagement.

With regard to intensity, Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007) investigated the benefits of Facebook "Friends:" social capital and college students' use of online SNSs; they examined the relationship between use of Facebook and the formation and maintenance of social capital. The study surveyed 286 undergraduate students. The findings of their study showed a strong association between use of Facebook and the three types of social capital, with the strongest relationship being to bridging social capital. SNSs are playing a great roll in the lives of university students as Leng, Likoh, Japang, Andrias, and Amoala

(2010) pointed out. They reach this point of view through a descriptive study conducted to investigate SNS usage among university students in Labuan. The study concluded that the mass adoption of SNS points to evolution in human social interaction regardless of age, culture background, occupations and general demographic profile. Thus it was obvious to them that university students will eventually use the SNS as a main medium of communication to maintain their relationships with friends and family members as well as expanding their niche community.

It is obvious that SNSs became as a demand of interaction between academics and their students whereas SNS are part of university student daily life all over the world. Ahmad (2011) studied the SNSs' usage and students' attitudes towards social behaviors and academic adjustment in Northern Nigerian Universities. His findings revealed that the extent SNS usage depends upon students ethnicity and religion.

3. Problem statement of the study

The population of Jordan consists almost of 65% of youths and most of them are enrolled in universities. Academics and policy makers are committed to make use of Social Networks for the benefits of teaching and learning and integrating SNSs within Learning management systems or even giving educators attention to exploit relative advantages of SNSs academically and implement new innovations of methodologies such as Mobile learning or interact with students through Internets' technologies. This study aims at providing the decision makers and educators to maximize the benefit of use of SNS

4. Questions of the study

To maximize the benefit of SNS the study explores the intensity of SNSs use among university students in Jordan analyzing that use in relation to geographical location which indirectly reflects the socioeconomic atatus, the faculties type, the gender type and the study level iof students. The research questions were:

Q1: what are the most popular SNSs Sites among the students of Jordanian Universities?

Q2: what is the intensity of SNSs use among the students of Jordanian Universities?

5. Method and Measures

The study was conducted as a part of a project of investigating the SNSs uses among students of Jordanian

Universities, while the items of the questionnaire is part of the project conducted by the authors.

To answer the research questions, the researchers set a questionnaire consisted of 9 questions related to the study variables. The questionnaire was distributed to four universities: the University of Jordan in the capital, Princess Sumaya University for Technology, Jordan in the capital denoted as Sumaya, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University Jordan in the south denoted as Hussein and Al Balqa Applied University, Jordan denoted as Balqa. Data collected and analyzed in a descriptive quantitative research.

6. Sample of the study

The sample of the study consisted of (727) students drawn randomly out of four above mentioned Jordanian universities. The study variables are: 1) university, 2) faculty, 3) gender, 4) year level and 5) social level.

7. Results and discussion

Table 1 shows the cross tabulation profile of the participants.

Table 1 Cross tabulation profile of the participants

		Frequency	Percent
University	University of Jordan	280	38.5
	Hussein	155	21.3
	Balqa	135	18.6
	Sumaya	157	21.6
Total		727	100
Faculty	Science	531	73
	Arts	196	27
Total		727	100
Gender	Male	319	43.9
	Female	408	56.1
Total		727	100
Level	First Year	163	22.4
	Second Year	154	21.2
	Third Year	177	24.3
	Fourth Year	233	32.0
Total		727	100

Analysis of the participants profile is shown in figures 1,2,3,4,5,6.

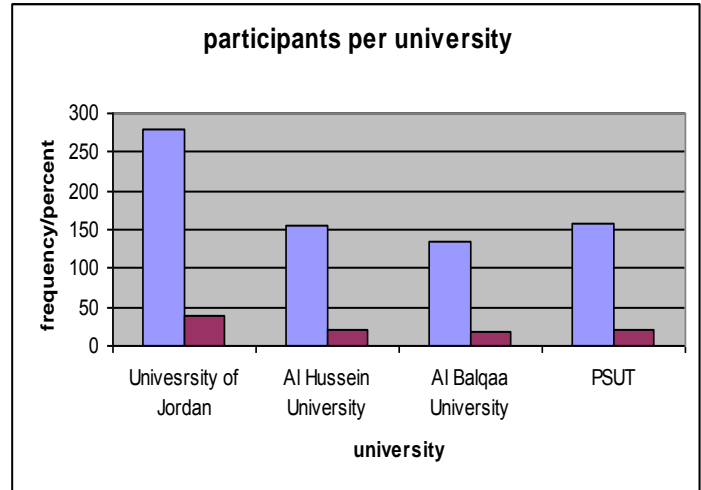


Figure 1. the number of students and their percentage among participants per university

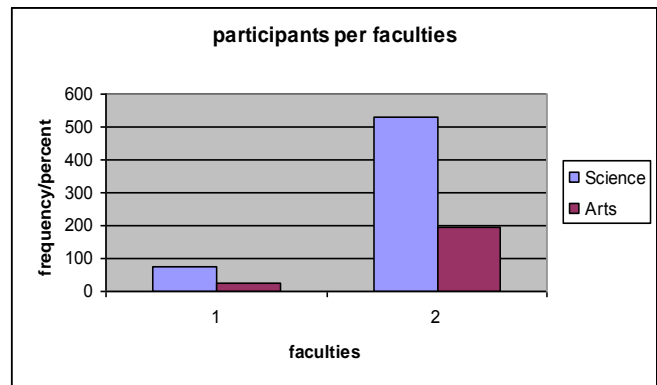


Figure 2. the number of students and their percentage among participants per faculties

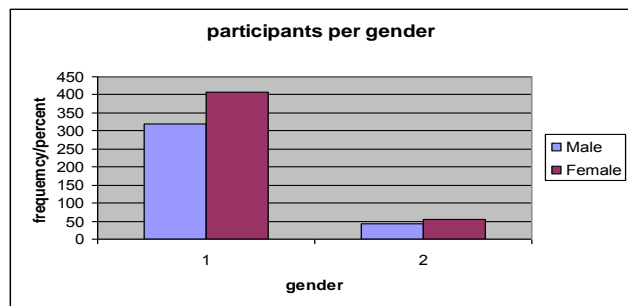


Figure 3. the number of students and their percentage among participants per gender

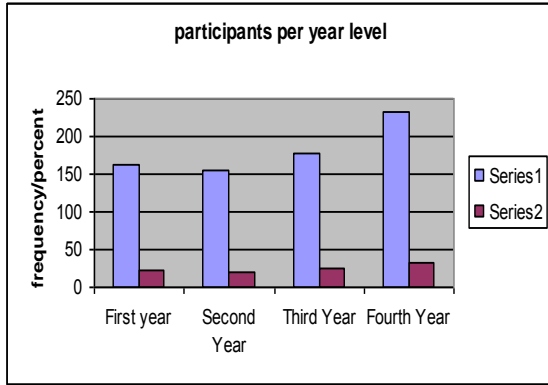


Figure 4. the number of students and their percentage among participants per year level

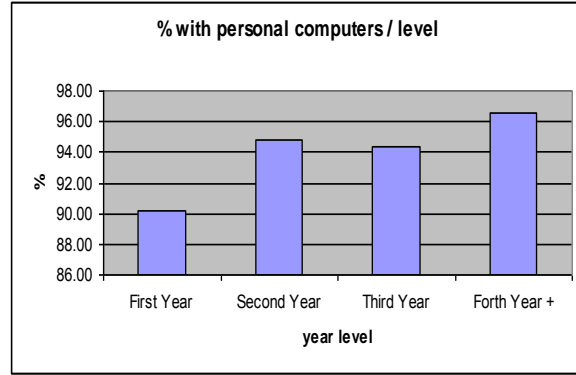


Figure 7. the number of students with personal computers per year level

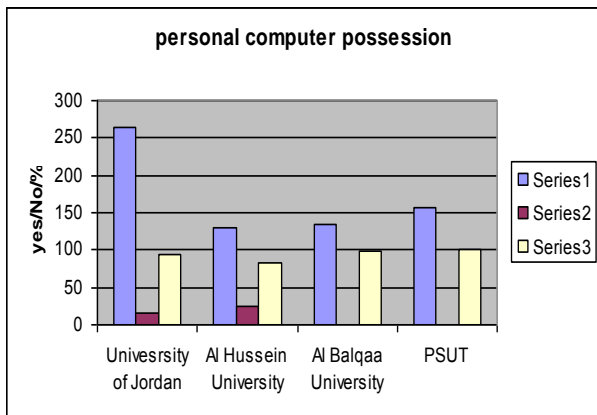


Figure 5. the number of students with personal computers and their percentage among participants

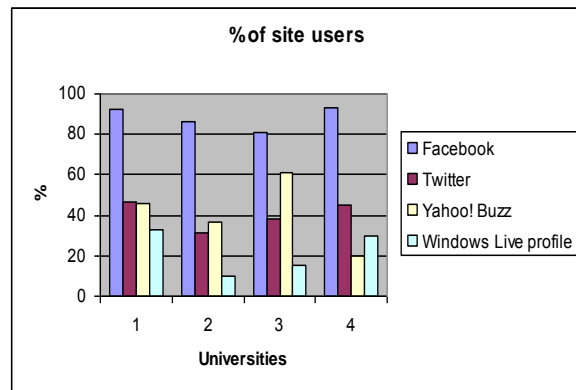


Figure 8. the number of students using most commonly used SNS per university

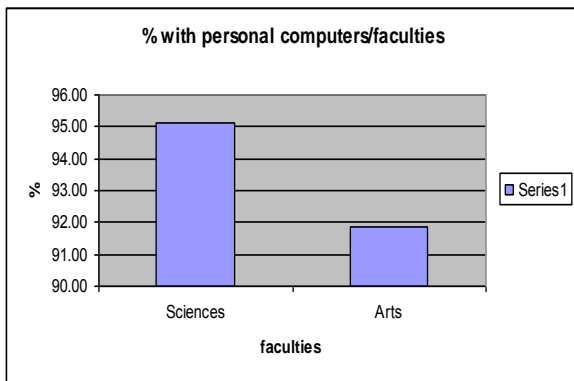


Figure 6. the % of students with personal computers per faculties

Table 2 shows the results of the students answer on the availability of personal computers

Variables		Computer		Total
		Yes	No	
University	Univ. of Jordan	264	16	280
	Hussein	130	25	155
	Balqa	134	1	135
	Sumaya	157	0	157
Faculty	Sciences	505	26	531
	Arts	180	16	196
Gender	Male	298	21	319
	Female	387	21	408
Level	First Year	147	16	163
	Second Year	146	8	154
	Third Year	167	10	177
	Forth Year +	225	8	233

A summary of the results of students answers on the type of Social Networks According to Universities (who answered Yes) can be provided as follows:

The top four common social networks used among Jordanian Universities Students are:

1. FaceBook
2. Twitter
3. Yahoo! Buzz
4. Windows Live Profiles

The least four common social networks used among Jordanian Universities Students are:

1. Gaiga Online
2. SodaHead.com
3. BlackPlanet.com
4. Plaxo

Chi-Square tests used to determine whether the equality use of social networks among Jordanian university for the top four social networks are shown in table 3.

Table 3 Chi-Square tests for the top four SNS among universities

University	Social Network	Yes	No	Expected Value	Chi-Square	Sig
Univ. of Jordan	FaceBook	258	22	14.86	15.812	0.001
Hussein		134	21			
Balqa		109	26			
Sumaya		146	11			
Univ. of Jordan	Twitter	131	149	56.08	11.691	0.009
Hussein		48	107			
Balqa		52	83			
Sumaya		71	86			
Univ. of Jordan	Yahoo! Buzz	128	152	55.34	54.79	0.000
Hussein		57	98			
Balqa		82	53			
Sumaya		31	126			
Univ. of Jordan	Windows Live profile	93	187	32.87	36.832	0.000
Hussein		16	139			
Balqa		21	114			
Sumaya		47	110			

All are significant

Chi-Square tests used to determine whether the equality use of social networks among Jordanian university according to faculty for the top four social networks are shown in table 4.

Table 4 Chi-Square tests for the top four SNS among faculties

Faculty	Social Network	Yes	No	Expected Value	Chi-Square	Sig
Sciences	FaceBook	492	39	21	26.933	0.000
Arts		155	41			
Sciences	Twitter	246	285	81	18.586	0.000
Arts		56	140			
Sciences	Yahoo! Buzz	197	334	80	12.325	0.000
Arts		101	95			
Sciences	Windows Live profile	159	372	47	33.496	0.000
Arts		18	178			

All are significant

Chi-Square tests used to determine whether the equality use of social networks among Jordanian university according to gender, for the top four social networks are shown in table 5.

Table 5 Chi-Square tests for the top four SNS among genders

Faculty	Social Network	Yes	No	Expected Value	Chi-Square	Sig
Male	FaceBook	286	33	35	.252	0.615
Female		361	47			
Male	Twitter	139	180	132.51	.968	0.325
Female		163	245			
Male	Yahoo! Buzz	120	199	130.76	2.673	0.102
Female		178	230			
Male	Windows Live profile	69	250	77	2.277	0.131
Female		108	300			

All are not significant. The males and females having equal responses, though, there is no significant differences in using social networks according to gender.

Chi-Square tests used to determine whether the equality use of social networks among Jordanian university according to their level (year of study) for the top four social networks are shown in table 6.

Table 7 Chi-Square tests for the top four SNS among year of study level

Level	Social Network	Yes	No	Expected Value	Chi-Square	Sig
Year1	FaceBook	139	14	16.95	3.467	0.325
Year2		141	13			
Year3		158	19			
Year4 +		209	24			
Year1	Twitter	57	106	63.97	6.093	0.107
Year2		62	92			
Year3		73	104			
Year4 +		110	123			
Year1	Yahoo! Buzz	55	108	63.13	5.279	0.152
Year2		63	91			
Year3		75	102			
Year4 +		105	128			
Year1	Windows Live profile	29	134	37.49	10.777	0.013
Year2		37	117			
Year3		38	139			
Year4 +		73	160			

All are not significant at $\alpha \geq 0.05$ except the social network Windows Live Profile, where Widows Live Profile is less common among both Year1 and Year2 students.

8. Conclusion

The study revealed that students of Jordanian Universities intensively use SNSs. which can be as an academic tool for communication and interacting with/between educators

and students alike. Analysis show that the most commonly used SNSs are FaceBook, Twitter, Yahoo! Buzz and Windows Live Profiles. Chi-Square tests used to determine whether the equality use of social networks among Jordanian university for the top four social networks are significant. Chi-Square tests used to determine whether the equality use of social networks among Jordanian university according to faculty for the top four social networks are significant as well. Chi-Square tests used to determine whether the equality use of social networks among Jordanian university according to gender are not significant. Academics and policy makers can take advantages of SNSs and integrating them into learning management systems.

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