



CIC
CANADIAN
INTERNATIONAL
COLLEGE

THE FUTURE IS YOURS

المعهد الكندي العالي لتكنولوجيا الإعلام الحديث CIC

The Influence of Facebook Public Pages on Youth's Attitudes towards the Religious Issues

Prepared by

**Dr .Yasmeen Aliy Eldeen
Mohamed El Mahdy**

Associate Professor Canadian
International College

**Dr. Donia Tarek Abdel
wahab**

Assistant Professor Canadian
International College

**Soheila Khaled
Mahran**

Researcher

Abstract:

This study investigates the influence of Facebook public pages on youth's attitudes toward religious issues. It aims to identify how these platforms affect awareness, interpretation, and behavioral orientations related to religion among young users. The research employs a descriptive analytical method and a survey tool applied to a sample of university students. The results indicate that public Facebook pages play a significant role in shaping religious understanding and values, and sometimes contribute to the formation of polarized opinions or misinformation. The study emphasizes the need for media literacy and religious awareness programs targeting youth to enhance critical evaluation skills in digital environments.

Keywords: Facebook, youth, religious issues, public pages, media influence, digital awareness.

تأثير الصفحات العامة على موقع فيسبوك في اتجاهات الشباب نحو القضايا الدينية

مستخلص الدراسة:

تتناول هذه الدراسة تأثير الصفحات العامة على موقع فيسبوك في تشكيل اتجاهات الشباب نحو القضايا الدينية، وتهدف إلى التعرف على كيفية تأثير هذه المنصات على وعي الشباب وتفسيرهم وسلوكهم المتعلق بالدين. استخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، وأداة الاستبيان المطبقة على عينة من طلاب الجامعات. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن الصفحات العامة على فيسبوك تؤدي دوراً مؤثراً في تشكيل الفهم الديني والقيم الدينية لدى الشباب، وفي بعض الأحيان تسهم في تشكيل آراء متطرفة أو نقل معلومات دينية مغلوطة. وتوصي الدراسة بضرورة تصميم برامج للتربية الإعلامية والتوعية الدينية تستهدف الشباب بهدف تعزيز مهارات التقييم النقدي في البيئة الرقمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: فيسبوك، الشباب، القضايا الدينية، الصفحات العامة، التأثير الإعلامي، الوعي الرقمي.

Introduction:

Social media is one of the most important types of digital media as it has gained vast popularity among all people around the world and especially among the youth and the new generations.

Social media presents a variety of societal issues dealing with numerous topics both inside and outside our country. The topics presented vary between the social, educational, entertainment and religious issues. All these topics are represented in different ways and on different pages on social media, some of these pages are specialized in their topics and others are general pages that deal with all kinds of ideas and topics within an interactive spaces.

One of the Most Popular social Media public networks is "Facebook" which is accessed by millions and millions of people, as New public pages , groups and influencers are appearing every day and each one of those pages have their niche followers with their own reasons for following these pages.

One of the topics that appeared recently on Facebook public pages are the "Religious attitudes and religious issues", and such issues are very controversial in any society especially in Egypt.

And through many governmental attempts to renew the religious discourse especially in the traditional media, a new religious discourse appeared on social media but it's not depending on the traditional religious scholars and imams or preachers, rather it depends on the youth themselves who are trying to present some of the religious issues aiming to spread some religious attitudes by their own simple way that might attract many of the young generations. They are not specialists in this field but they are trying to present tolerant and non-fanatic religious discourse.

So, this paper is trying to shed the light on these Facebook religious public pages and groups to stand on, the patterns of using social networking religious pages and groups and why do youth access these page?, and what are the most preferred topics that are accessed the most by the youth? And to analyze the topics presented and the way of presenting?

Research Problem:

Facebook public pages and social media influencers could be one of the most effective ways of reaching the youth and affecting their ideas and attitudes So, this research "Is Analyzing the attitude of the youth toward the Religious Facebook public pages in order to discover their opinions on the ideas presented through those pages and to know how they affect the youth's religious opinions & perspectives. Moreover, it aims at discovering the relationship between the youth and social media religious discourse.

Research Objectives:

This research aims to:

- 1) To analyze the effects of the social networking sites on the youth's attitude towards the religious ideas.
- 2) To analyze the opinions of the youth toward the religious issues presented on Facebook public pages.
- 3) To discover the patterns of accessing the social networking religious pages among the youth.
- 4) To focus on the opinion of the media academics and practitioners towards the differences between the social media religious discourse and the traditional religious discourse.
- 5) To analyze the most preferred Religious Facebook pages to stand on what is presented, how it is presented, the timing, and the publishing patterns.
- 6) To present suggestions of improvement for the religious discourse on both social media and traditional media.

Research Significance:

On the Theoretical Level:

Lots of research has been done on social media, but few research has been done on the religious discourse through social media pages and influencers. And through this research we depend on two mass media theories and tested them with two methodologies.

On the Practical level:

Nowadays our Society is doing many attempts to renew the religious discourse through the Traditional Media, so this research will raise awareness about new ways to renew the religious discourse using digital media and all of the social media tools.

Review of Literature:

Recent works on social media and religion have paid particular attention to the role of social media in the development of religious values, and opinion by using various methodologies:

The **relationship between religion and social media** has been discussed most recently as, Facebook has emerged as one of the digital devices with the capacity to mediate religious behaviors, interactions and discourses as this study also examined the ways in which the world is perceived through the lens of Facebook posts, reviews and comments also , the results of this study mentioned that It is then important to consider **how religion presents itself in**

cyberspace. According religion manifests itself on the internet in two different forms: **religion online** and **online religion**. Religion online is based upon a traditional religious hierarchical structure where the internet is a tool of the top-down communication structure and is simply a tool for communication. On the other hand, online religion represents a new development of religious with new forms of communication (Faimau & Behrens, 2016).

Another research related to the relationship of religion and media examines that it's clear that religious communication will not only reduce the religious faithfulness but also creates kind of religious awareness (Hossienzaedeh, 2011).

Another study aimed to identify the role of Social Networks towards the social and **religious values** of The World Islamic Sciences & Education University students, The study applied the survey and descriptive Approach. The population of the study represents all BA students who enrolled in the first academic semester for the year 2014-2015 and the results showed apparent differences between the respondents' of the role of Social Networks in the religious and social values according to the gender variable this result means that the role of Social Networks in the social and religious values increases in the females compared to the males (Al-Mosa, 2015).

Another study examines how religiousness influences social network site (SNS) membership and frequency of use for emerging adults between 18 and 23 years old and the findings highlighted the differences in influence between **social and private behavior on SNS membership** and use among emerging adults. Social behavior, such as being in school and participating in more non-religious organizations, is positively linked to becoming a SNS member. By contrast, more private behaviors—such as Bible reading, donating money, and helping the needy—are related to less SNS participation (Miller et al., 2013).

Concerning **the uses of Facebook in the religion** a study comes to explores why Christians use Facebook for religious purposes and the needs engaging with religious content on Facebook gratifies, the results revealed those who frequently use Facebook for posting, liking, commenting, and sharing faith-based content and who are more religious are more likely to minister to others. Frequent use also predicted seeking religious information, obtaining spiritual guidance and for accessing religious resources (Jo & Michel, 2017).

Another study was done on the effects of **social networking sites on the religious beliefs** of the adults the study found that emerging adults who use SNS are more likely to think it is acceptable to pick and choose their religious beliefs, and practice multiple religions independent of what their religious tradition teaches, but they are not more likely to believe all religions are true. These findings suggest that exposure to broader networks through social media leads to increased acceptance of beliefs and practices (McClure, 2016).

Other studies were related to **the Islamic preachers on social media** as a study entitled the social media engagement of imams illustrates the complex

intersection of religious transformation and digital life. Digital life, particularly as it is manifested on social media such as Facebook, has transformed the way people learn about their religion, choose which religious authority to follow, and how they express their religiosity to others. It also exemplifies the crucial development in the fortunes of Islamic figures in Indonesia, since today religious authority has been significantly fused with online fame. Utilizing various forms of media, including social media, a preacher is able to expand his audience and religious influence far beyond his traditional network (Halim, 2018).

The other study was related to the recruitment of preachers on social media as Social networking sites are among the most visited sites in the past five years by all segments of the society. This is because of the tremendous technical potential of these sites to create links and relationships between different individuals. Based on this a research done by seeks to develop a perception about the recruitment of preachers for the new media or what is called "social networks". Objectives of this study include: 1) Highlighting the recruitment of imams and preachers of the new media in spreading the culture of moderation and Methods of moderation among all members of society. 2) Revealing the role of modern communication technology in adapting to the service of advocacy. 3) Identifying the most important social networking sites used by preachers to spread the concepts of true religion. 4) Cutting the road to the people of falsehood, by exposing their idols, and stripping them through these means. 5) Identifying the mechanisms of employing social networking sites to overcome extremism and extravagance. This study is based on the Survey Method. The researcher used the following: • Surveying the scientific heritage associated with the concept of new media and extremist thought, which is the most widely used expression at the moment. • The use of preachers (sample study) for social networks, in order to know how to use them, and how to recruit advocates of these methods in the face of extremist thoughts, and respond to false suspicions. The most important conclusions are: 1) The study sample uses social networks (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Yahoo, Google), as they become fast ways to communicate with others across their networks. 2) The call of the preachers (the sample of the study) for the social networks was high, with 74.8%, indicating the keen interest of preachers to be exposed to these networks. 3) Facebook publishes the social networks followed by respondents in the field of advocacy, where the arithmetic average reached 2.7680. 4) The vast majority of the sample of the study employs social media in the field of advocacy work (Hossny, 2017).

The Theoretical Frame Work:

Information manipulation theory (IMT) deals with the way a sender might assemble information packages (in the form of messages) to a receiver in order to give an impression that is false from the perspective of the sender. The sender chooses certain facts in the message from an available amount of information—but omits, alters, or falsifies others. The act of trying to get someone to believe something untrue is *deceit*. The type of communication created by such deceitful intent is called a deceptive message.

One way of thinking about how deceptive messages are generated is in terms of how the information that interactants possess is manipulated within the messages that they produce. Information Manipulation Theory suggests that deceptive messages function deceptively because they covertly violate the principles that govern conversational exchanges. Given that conversational interactants possess assumptions regarding the quantity, quality, manner, and relevance of information that should be presented, it is possible for speakers to exploit any or all of these assumptions by manipulating the information that they possess so as to mislead listeners. By examining various message examples, it is demonstrated that IMT helps to reconcile previous disagreement about the properties of deceptive messages. This theory involves a persuasive person deliberately breaking one of the four conversational maxims. These are the four:

- ★ **Quantity:** Information is complete and full.
- ★ **Quality:** Information is truthful and accurate.
- ★ **Relation:** Information is relevant to the conversation.
- ★ **Manner:** Information is expressed in an easy-to-understand way and non-verbal actions support the tone of the statement.

If the four maxims are not followed then messages are said to be deceptive and the conscious attempt to create or perpetuate false impressions among others is called deception (Mittal & Randhawa, 2015).

The Information Manipulation Classification Theory offers a systematic approach to understanding the differences and similarities among various types of information manipulation (such as falsification, exaggeration, concealment, misinformation or hoax). We distinguish twelve salient factors that manipulation varieties differ by (such as intentionality to deceive, accuracy, and social acceptability) to provide an abstract framework and conceptualize various permutations. Each variety then is represented as a set of features in the twelve-dimensional space (Rubin & Chen, 2012).

**Table No. (1) Two-dimensional Information Manipulation Space
Example: Intentionality to Deceive x Information Accuracy.**

		Information Accuracy	
		Accurate	Not Accurate
Intentionality to Deceive	Indented	Truth (statements matching speaker's beliefs)	deception varieties (falsification, concealment, equivocations)
	Not Indented	unintentional reveal (slip of the tongue)	misinformation (erroneous statements)

Social Impact theory:

Social Influence Theory is an appropriate approach for understanding social media interaction.

Social Impact Theory (SIT) was developed by Bibb Latané in 1981 as a Framework for understanding the general rules that guide the formation of communities and relationships. Social impact refers to, as Latané notes, "the great Variety of changes in physiological states and subjective feelings, motives and emotions, cognitions and beliefs, values and behavior, that occur in an individual... as a result of the real, implied, or imagined presence or actions of other individuals," (Gonzalez, 2016).

Social impact theory states, "When other people are the source of impact and the Individual is the target; impact should be a multiplicative function of the strength, Immediacy and number of other people" (Mir & Zaheer, 2012).

The strength of social impact is best described as the importance of the social group to the individual being influenced. The social strength of an influencer will be determined by their "status, age, socio-economic status, and prior relationship with, or future power over, the target".

The immediacy of social impact is determined by how close the social influence is to the individual in time and space; the closer the influencer is to the person being influenced in physical proximity, and the more urgent the influence, the more impact will be experienced by the person being influenced. The number simply refers to how many people are in the group, with greater numbers exerting greater impact, though this force begins to level as numbers grow higher. In essence, a large group of individuals important to the target in close proximity to the target exert a high level of social impact.

Social Impact in Online Networks: Recent research has sought to identify the presence of social impact forces within online networks, where relational strength is mediated and immediacy may be poorly represented by temporal and/or physical proximity. Despite being incongruent with a traditional understanding of social impact forces, these investigations of social impact

focused on computer-mediated networks have suggested social impact plays a role in online personal influence (Tefertiller, 2018).

Applying the theory in our Research:

We depended on the 1st theory which is **Information manipulation theory** as It deals with four main characteristics of a persuasive messages as we applied those points while designing the research survey and questions as they are all related to how the information Is complete, credible and understandable.

Also we depended on the 2nd theory which is **Social Impact theory** as our main aim is to figure out the role of the influencers who are now presenting the religious issues through their pages and groups, so as the theory mentioned that the closer the influencer is to the person being influenced in physical proximity, and the more urgent the influence, the more impact will be experienced by the person being influenced this helped us in formulating the hypothesis of our study

Research Methodology:

- ★ **Method of data collection:** The research depends on both quantitative and qualitative methods by applying a survey, content analysis, and in-depth interviews.
 - 1) **Survey:** The researchers conducted a survey on a purposive sample consisting of **110 Facebook Users** which are exposed and follow Facebook Religious Public Pages and groups.
 - 2) **In-depth interviews:** With 10 of the media practitioners and mass media academics to know their opinion towards religious Facebook pages and their effectiveness.
 - 3) **Content analysis :** The research analyzes the most preferred religious Facebook pages and groups for two consequent weeks as follows:
 - a) A Facebook Group which is surviving Hijab.
 - b) A Facebook preacher page which is Mustafa Hosny Official Facebook Page.
- ★ **Sampling:** The sample of the survey was selected purposively and applied on 100 respondents who access the religious pages and groups by sending an online survey to them on Facebook.

Table No. (2) Sample characteristics Gender

Gender	R	%
Female	61	56.5%
Male	47	43.5%
Total	108	100%

Table No. (3) Sample characteristics
Educational level

Educational level	R	%
Student	24	22.2%
Graduate	39	36.1%
Master holder	27	25%
PhD holder	18	16.7%
Total	108	100%

★ **Operational Definitions:**

- 1) **Facebook Public Pages:** Refers to the different types of pages whether Facebook groups or influencer's pages or the official preacher pages that are directed to all Facebook users.
- 2) **Religious Issues:** Refers to Religious topics or material or speeches related to the religious behaviors, values or beliefs or Hijab and religious tips or religious consulting and any other religious contents related to Muslims.

Research Questions:

- 1) What are the main religious topics discussed on religious social media pages?
- 2) What are the main differences between religious influencers on social media and religious presenters in traditional media?
- 3) What are the reasons beyond following religious pages and religious influencers on social media?
- 4) What are the followers' attitudes towards the religious content in social media pages compared to religious content in traditional media?
- 5) What is the level of credibility towards the religious content on social media pages according to their followers compared to religious content displayed on traditional media?
- 6) What are the suggestions to improve the traditional religious discourse and on the other side what are suggestions that could make the social networking religious discourse much more effective?

Hypothesis:

- 1) There is a relationship between the patterns of using social media religious pages and the level of credibility towards the religious content presented among the users of the SNS.
- 2) There is a relationship between the gender and the patterns of using social media religious.

- 3) There is a relationship between the level of participation of the religious pages and groups and the reasons of accessing.
- 4) The patterns of watching are directly affected by the educational background of the users of the religious SNS.
- 5) There is a relationship between the patterns of using the SNS Religious pages and the most preferred formats of presenting the religious issues.

Results:

A- The survey results:

1- How often do the sample respondent access the religious pages on Facebook?

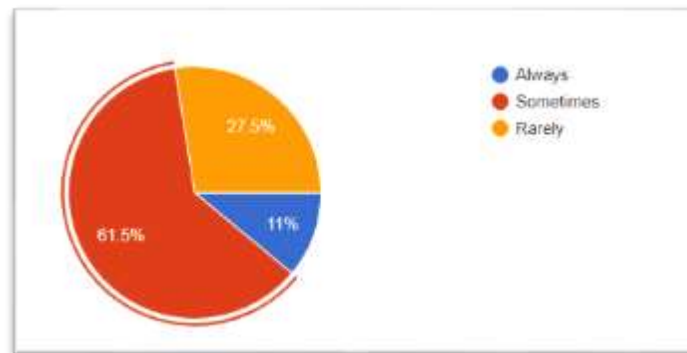


Chart No. (1) the accessing of the sample to religious pages on Facebook

Concerning the accessing of the sample to religious pages on Facebook, 61.5% of the sample said that they sometimes access these page, while 11% of the sample always follow and access religious pages on Facebook. Finally 27.5% of the sample rarely access these pages. This indicates that the total weight of sample who access religious pages on Facebook is 72.5% which give us aside note that only $\frac{1}{4}$ the sample do not access those religious pages.

2- What do the sample respondent prefer the most?

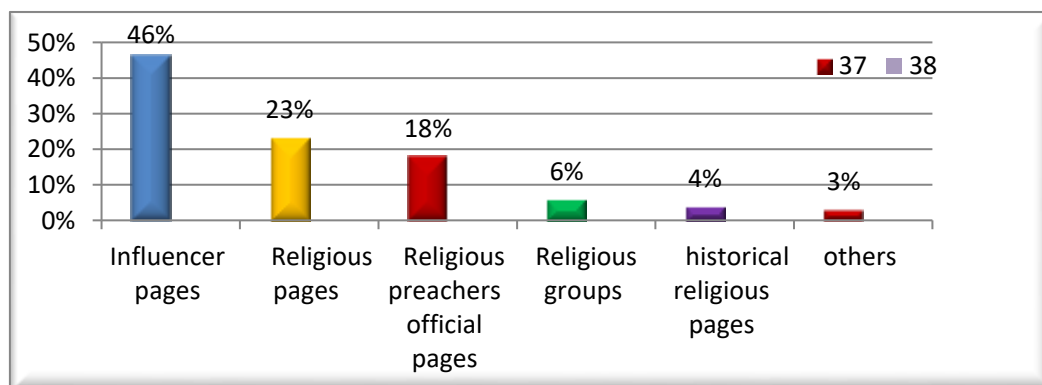


Chart No. (2) the influencer's page is at the top of the preferences of the youth

It clearly observed from this chart that the influencer's page is at the top of the preferences of the youth by 46.3% then comes the Religious Pages by 23.2% and then the Religious preacher's pages by 17.9% this indicates that the youth's religious pages have a great influence and an impact on the youth and also it is a point of agreement with the opinion of the experts towards the importance to expand the role of the youth and the preachers through the social media , and also the accessing of Facebook groups and pages indicates that the interactive ways are one of the best ways in presenting the religious ideas.

3- What are the most preferred pages on Facebook? "The respondents can choose more than one answer":

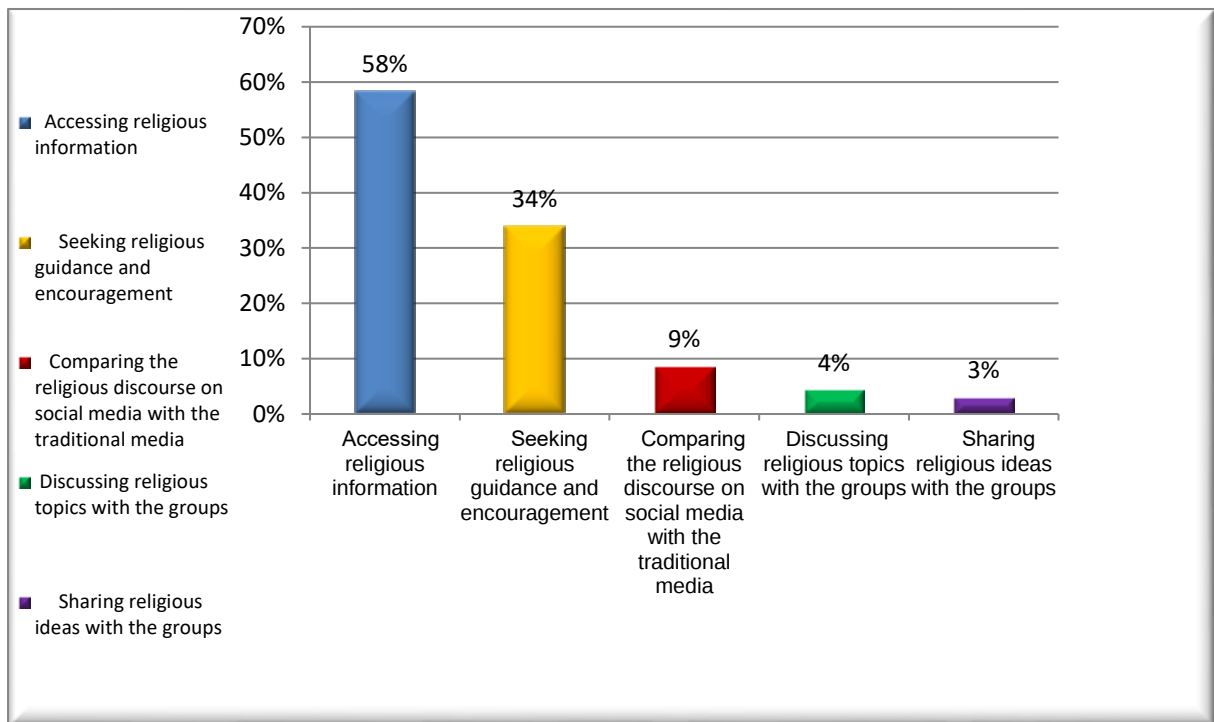


Chart No. (3) The most preferred pages on Facebook

Answers varied when asking our sample to identify their most favorable religious pages on Facebook. However, three names were dominantly repeated and had the highest rates. In the first rank there was “Ahmed Elshoukery” as 41% of the sample prefer to access his religious page. And on the second rank came “Moustafa Hosny” with 37% of the sample. Maybe being TV stars who already have religious programs on traditional media (TV) was the reason behind giving them the first two rankings among our sample as they present the religious discourse in a newly simplified way. On the third place came “Surviving hijab” page with 26% of our sample. Some other pages were mentioned like:

4-How many hours do the sample respondents spend on Facebook per day?

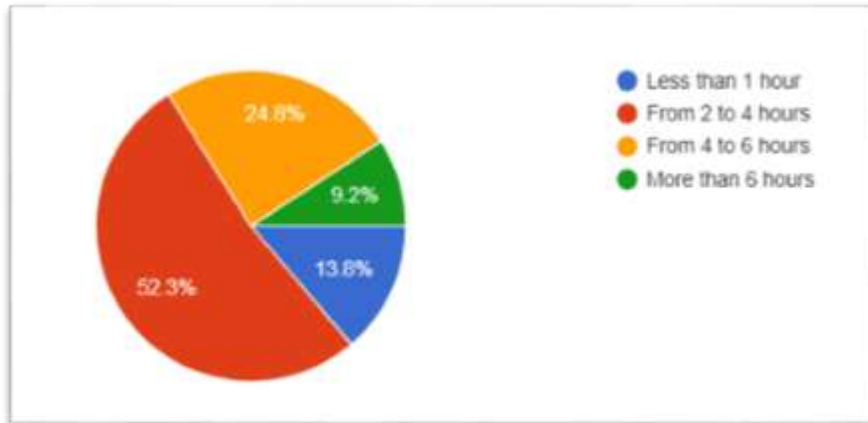


Chart No. (4) the sample respondents spend on Facebook per day

Through this chart we can observe that the majority of the sample access the Facebook pages in general from 2 to 4 hours per day by 55.2% while the least is less than 1 hour which indicates that the youth in general spend many hours on the Facebook pages and this means that the role of social media in presenting the religious issues might expand as the youth are accessing the pages in general for Many reasons.

5- How many hours do the sample respondent spend on the religious pages or groups on Facebook per day?

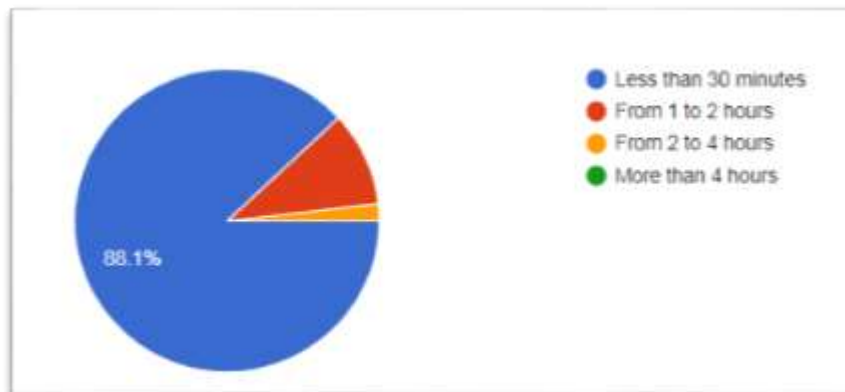


Chart No. (5) spend on the religious pages or groups on Facebook per day

Through observing the previous chart we can mention that most of sample access the religious pages on Facebook less than 30 min per day. and we can relate this result with chart (4) which mean that however the percentage of accessing the religious pages is limited in comparison to accessing the Facebook pages, but this means that the accessing the religious pages is considered one of the interests that youth might access daily, and we can explain this by the varieties

of topic and contents available on the social media pages, so despite these varieties, the users access the religious pages on daily bases.

6- How often do the sample respondents participate within the religious social networking groups?

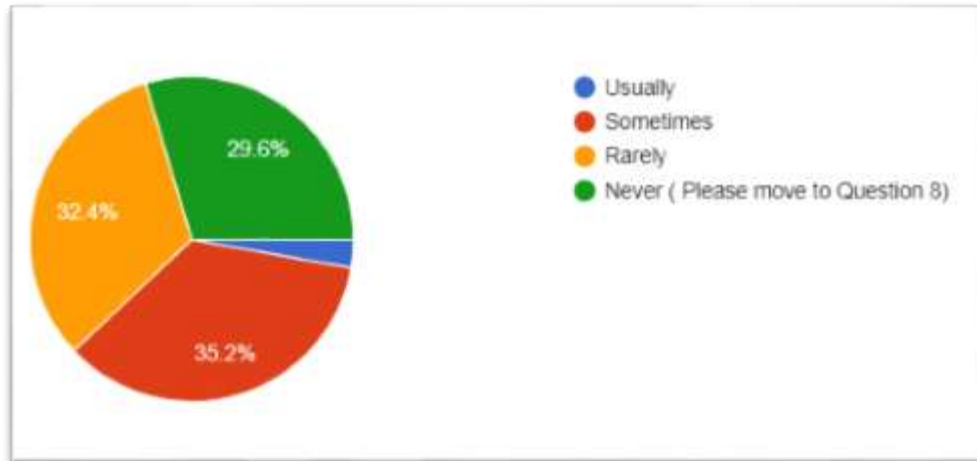


Chart No. (6) the religious social networking groups

Concerning the participation of youth within the Religious pages on Facebook, we can conclude that youth are not active users within the social media religious content, as the Majority of the sample results indicates that the user are passive by 62% in case of adding the percentage of Never and rarely together and only 37.7% of the sample are participating sometimes within the religious pages and this chart is matching chart (5) concerning the accessing time of the youth on the social media religious pages as it is only 30 min in comparison to their spent time on Facebook pages per day.

7- How do the sample respondents participate within the religious social networking groups?

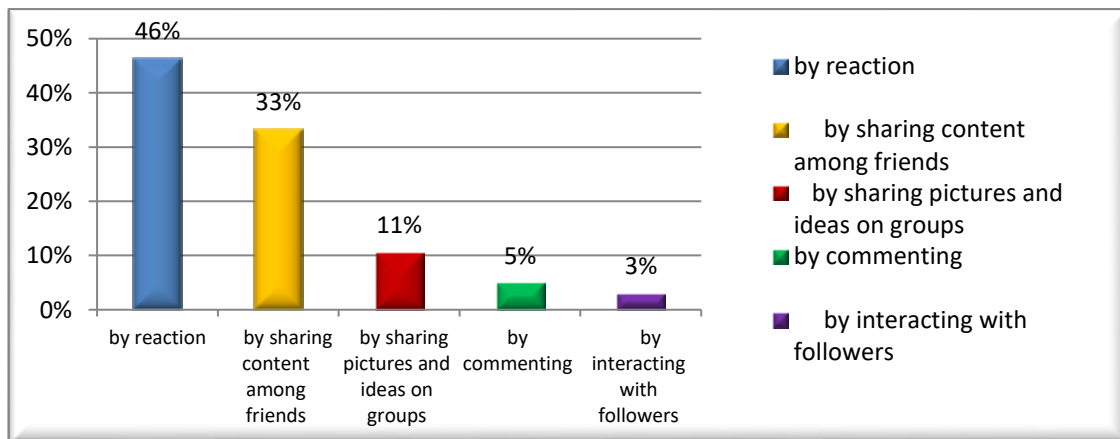


Chart No. (7) the religious social networking groups

When we asked the respondents in our sample to identify the participation type within the religious pages and contents, the results indicates that 45.8% participate only with reactions to indicate their feelings towards the posts whether they like or dislike. On the second rank come sharing the religious content among their friends and followers. Few of the sample participate by sharing pictures and ideas among the group which means that there is a kind of interactivity on social media which indicates the facilities and advantages of the social media in comparison with the traditional media.

8- Why the sample respondents are accessing the religious pages on Facebook? (The respondent can choose more than one answer)

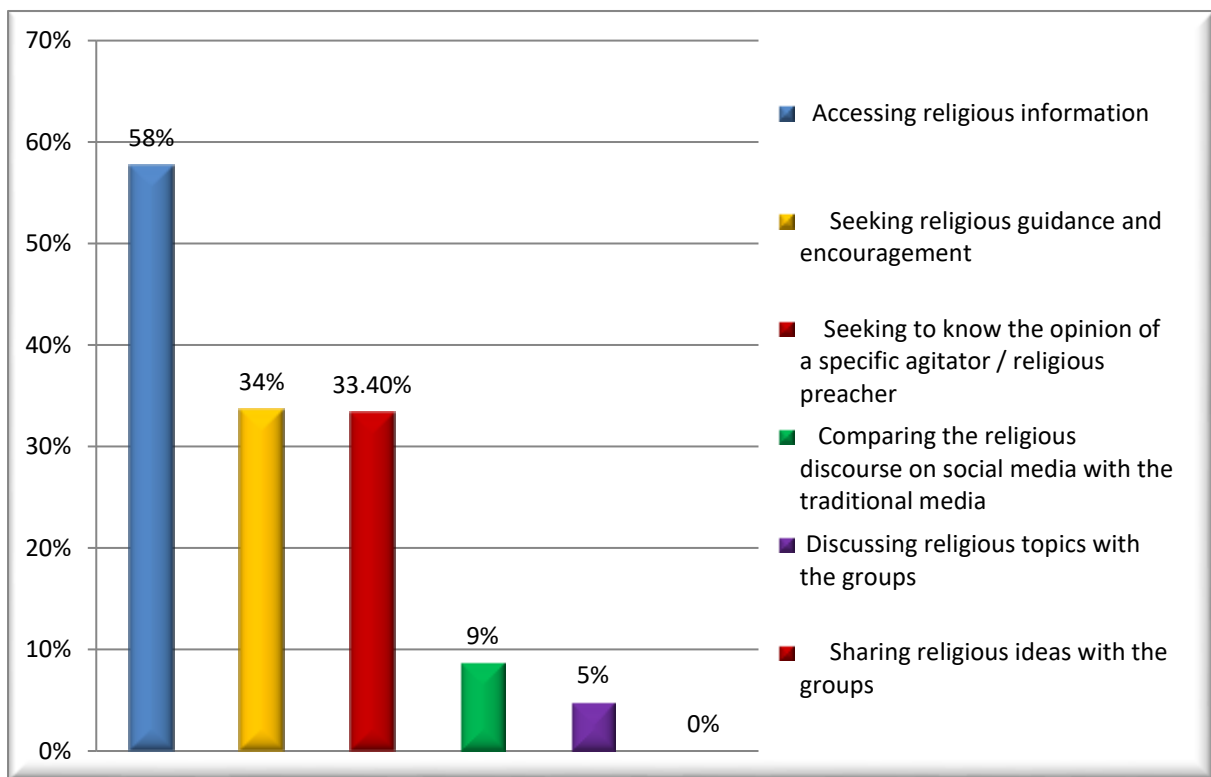


Chart No. (8) the reasons of accessing the religious pages by the youth

Concerning the reasons of accessing the religious pages by the youth the results came to clarify that the Main reason is to access the religious information by 58.3% and this results is matching the results of the previous studies (Brubaker & Haigh, 2017) that mentioned that discussed the frequent use and also predicted seeking religious information, obtaining spiritual guidance and for accessing religious resources And the results were almost equal concerning the reasons of using the social media for Both Comparing the traditional discourse with the social media discourse by 34% and the use of it as a reminder for the existing religious information by 33%.

9- What are the most preferred topics the sample respondent's access on the social networking pages and groups? (They can choose more than one answer)

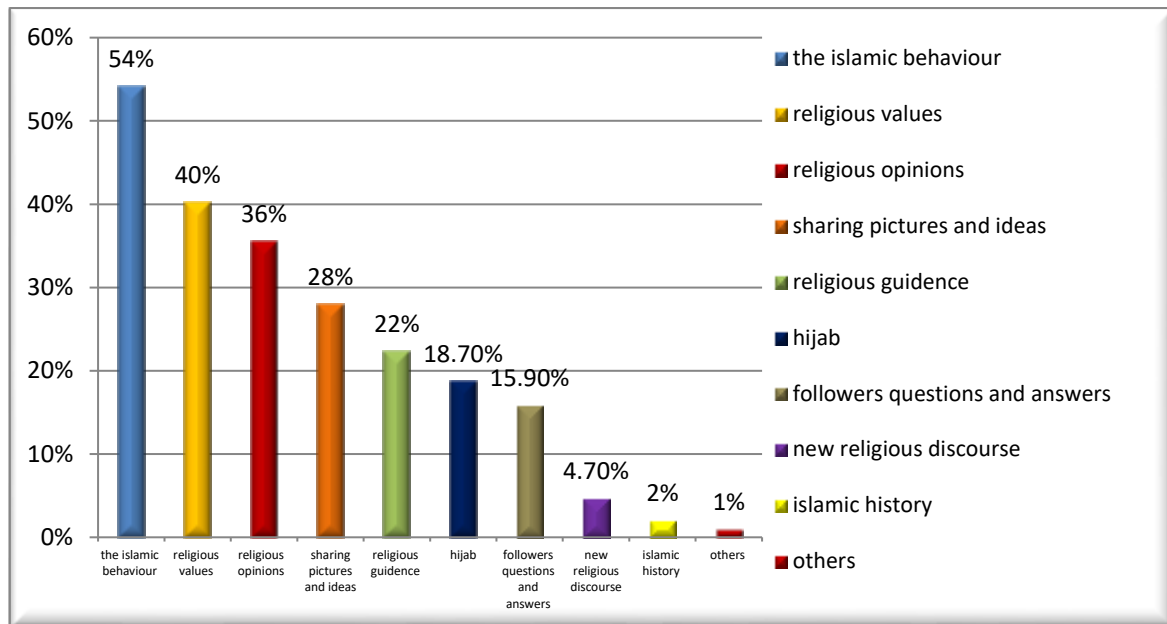


Chart No. (9) the most preferred topics on the social networking pages and groups

By observing the previous chart we can conclude that the topics preferred by the youth's on social media is the Islamic behavior by 54.2% then comes the religious values by 40.2% and the religious opinions by 35.5 % and the religious and this results is competing the results of chart (8) about the reasons of why they are accessing the religious contents and the answer was to gain religious information and that means that the gaining information is about the religious beliefs, values and behaviors and the New religious discourse is at the least of their preferences by 4.7% and that what the experts and the previous studies agreed on that to religion manifests itself on the internet in two different forms: religion online and online religion. Religion online is based upon a traditional religious hierarchical structure where the internet is a tool of the top-down communication structure and is simply a tool for communication (Faimau & Behrens, 2016).

10- How useful are the religious networking pages and groups from the point of view of the sample respondents

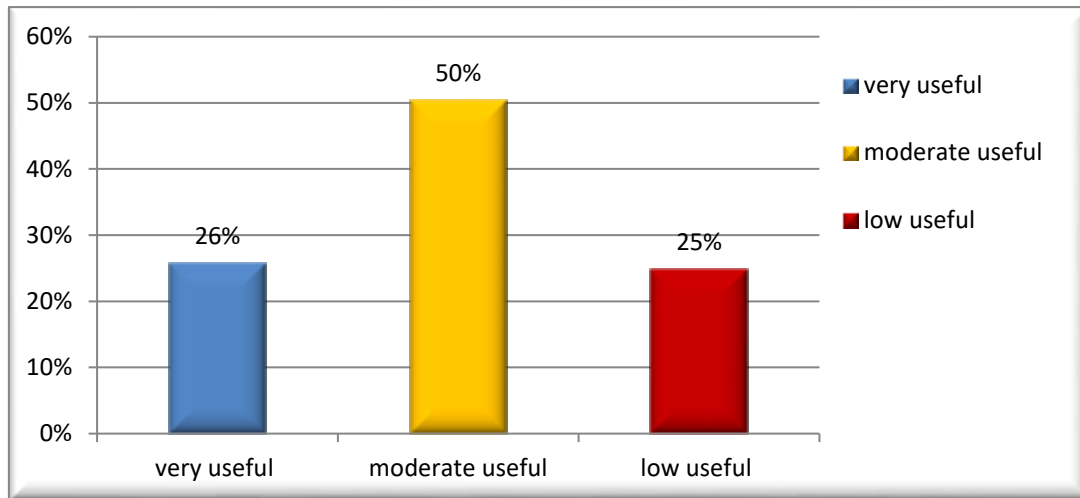


Chart No. (10) Useful are the religious networking pages and groups

When we asked our sample to identify whether the religious content\discourse available on social media in general and on Facebook specifically was useful or useless to them, we used a semantic scale in which number 1 indicated useful and number 10 indicated not useful. Most of the sample gave neutral (rating 5) answers as for some people it's useful and for others it is not in equal percentages.

11- How biased are the religious networking pages and groups from the sample respondent's opinion?

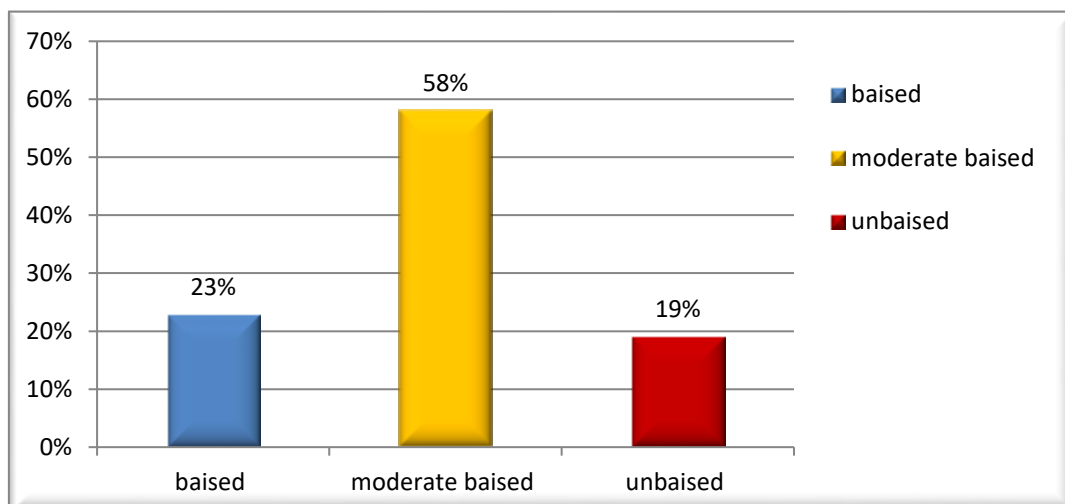


Chart No. (11) the religious networking pages and groups

Concerning the youth's opinion in evaluating the content of the religious pages on Facebook in terms of following media ethics and standards, we also used semantic scale in which number 1 indicated biased and number 10 indicated

unbiased or objective. About 1/4 the sample said that these pages are a mix between being objective and being biased depending on the topics presented and the context in which these topics are presented.

12- Do the sample prefer the religious discourse on social media rather than the traditional media?

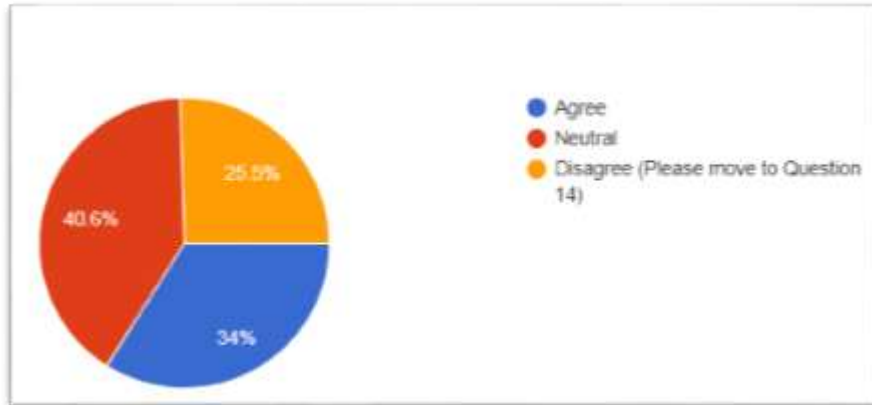


Chart No. (12) the sample prefer the religious discourse on social media rather than the traditional media

Only 25.5% of the sample prefer to access religious discourse on traditional media channels like television, radio, and newspapers. While the majority of the youth 74.6% which is the total answers of Agree and neutral which means that those people prefer to access religious discourse on social media whether as an independent source of religious information or as an extra channel side by side with traditional ones.

13- Why do the sample prefer the religious discourse on social media rather than the traditional media?

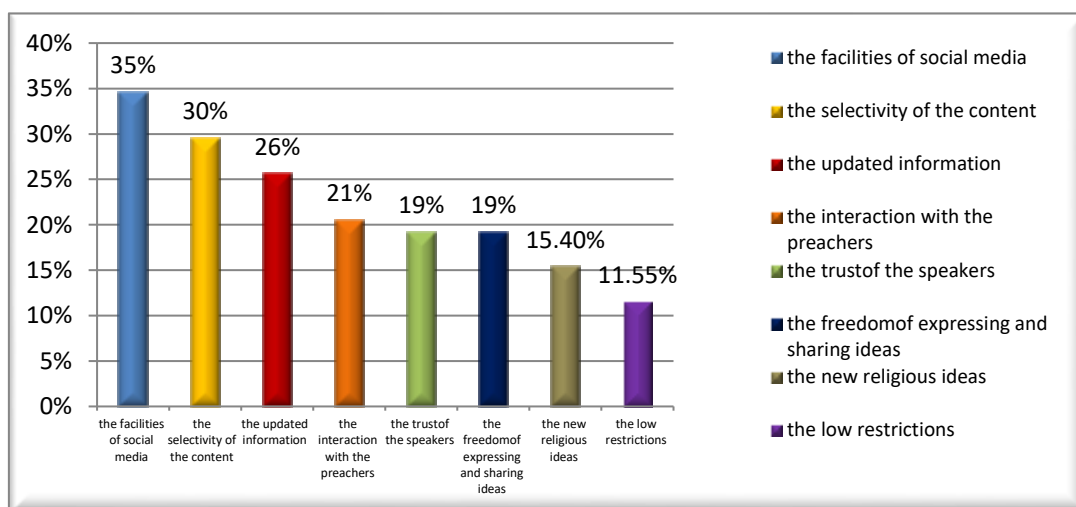


Chart No. (13) the sample prefer the religious discourse on social media rather than the traditional media

Based on the last question the 74.6% of our sample who prefer or are likely to access religious information on social media, there were many reasons behind this interest. The most common reason with 35.1% was the facilities that all of the social media give to its users and especially Facebook, these facilities are the main characteristics and advantages of using Facebook and it varies between the free timings available to viewers to watch content depending on their preferences or the archive options available to them.

The second main reason was the selectivity of the content, as traditional media do not offer this advantage in presenting religious topics. While the social media gave the users the chance to access specific programs and specific parts of those programs depending on their needs.

Also on the third rank there was interaction with preachers itself which is not always available in traditional media and could be somehow limited. On social media you can simply contact the preacher himself and send his private messages asking for religious guidance.

Some other reasons were mentioned like seeing Facebook as a credible source of religious information as 16.9% of the sample said so. Also 15.6% of the youth see that Facebook present new religious topics or ideas rather than the traditional and repeated topics on the traditional mediums.

14- The opinion of the sample the below statements concerning the advantages and disadvantages of the social networking pages

Table No. (4) The opinion of the sample the below statements concerning the advantages and disadvantages of the social networking pages

Topic	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
The Information presented is up-to-date	52	40	8
The way of presenting is modern and up-to-date	65	30	5
I find guidance among these pages	39	50	11
I can share any kind of religious ideas and issues	51	17	32
The content presented is balanced	29	50	21
It is using simple language and simple clarifications	66	30	4
It changes my attitudes and behaviors	35	46	19
It affects my beliefs	30	39	31
It gives me a huge amount of religious knowledge	47	37	16

Topic	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
The information presented is misleading	18	44	38
There is no freedom of speech in expressing the religious issues	24	32	43
People do not accept the differences	49	35	16
It presents some prejudiced opinions	32	58	10
It raise violence between followers	32	33	35

We gave the respondents variety of statements that explain advantages and disadvantages of access religious information through Facebook and we asked them to identify their opinions concerning these statements. Most of the sample see that the information presented on Facebook regarding religious content is new and updated regularly.

Also the majority see that the way of presenting the topics is up to date in terms of using videos and images to clarify their topics. People were neutral to the statement that says that they can find guidance and help among those pages which indicates that it could not always be helpful to them.

The majority of the sample see that they can share any kind of religious ideas among Facebook pages without the fear of being banned or getting too restrictions. Which emphasis the main characteristics of all the social platforms that it offer free medium to express ideas.

People were varying between agree and disagree and neutral when asked if they feel that the content available on those pages is balanced, which indicates that social media still could be biased somehow to a certain part according to the background, values and beliefs of the sender.

Majority of the sample agreed that religious discourse available through the social media is using simple language and avoided using complex and difficult expressions, which of course leads to better understanding.

Youth were neutral to that Facebook religious pages can change their attitudes and behaviors towards different topics. And answers varied equally between agree, neutral and disagree that these pages and the content available on it can change their beliefs.

The majority of our sample see that religious pages on Facebook give them huge amount of religious information and increase their knowledge in that field. We asked them if they see that information presented on those religious pages are misleading or not and the majority said that information presented is objective and accurate and not misleading.

However, the majority of the youth see that people still do not accept differences on social media whether different opinions, beliefs, or way of thinking and this result contradicts with one of the previous studies that mentioned that these findings suggest that exposure to broader networks through social media leads to increased acceptance of beliefs and practices (McClure, 2016). Also youth were neutral to that Facebook religious pages present prejudice opinions and that it could raise violence between followers.

Hypothesis Results:

- ★ **There is a relationship between the patterns of using social media religious pages and the level of credibility towards the religious content presented among the users of the SNS (Q 1 + Q10)**

Table No (5) Relationship between the patterns of using social media religious pages and the level of credibility towards the religious content Presented among the users of the SNS

R	Sig.
0.219**	0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The result of H₁ hypothesis referred to the significance of relationship between the patterns of using social media religious pages and the level of credibility towards the religious content presented among the users of the SNS, the r value equal 0.219 and significant at the 0.01 level

- ★ **There is a statistically significant differences according to gender in the patterns of using social media religious (Gender + Q 1)**

Table No (6) Significance of statistical differences according to gender in the patterns of using social media religious

Groups	N	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig.
female	51	1.75	.627	-1.176	107	0.242
male	58	1.88	.564			

The result of H₂ hypothesis referred to the no significance of statistical differences according to gender in the patterns of using social media religious, the t test value equal -1.176 ($p > 0.05$).

★ There is a relationship between the level of participation of the religious pages and groups and the reasons of accessing(Q6 + Q8)

Table No (7) Relationship between the level of participation of the religious pages and groups and the reasons of accessing

Q8 \ Q6		Never	Rarely	Some times	Usually	Total
Accessing religious information	F	14	19	27	2	62
	%	12.8%	17.4%	24.8%	1.8%	56.9%
Seeking religious guidance and encouragement	F	3	6	5	1	15
	%	2.8%	5.5%	4.6%	0.9%	13.8%
Comparing the religious discourse on social media with the traditional media	F	2	3	-	-	5
	%	1.8%	2.8%	-	-	4.6%
Discussing religious topics with the groups	F	1	-	2	-	3
	%	0.9%	-	1.8%	-	2.8%
Sharing religious ideas with the groups	F	2	-	1	-	3
	%	1.8%	-	0.9%	-	2.8%
Seeking to know the opinion of a specific agitator/ religious preacher	F	2	6	2	-	10
	%	1.8%	5.5%	1.8%	-	9.2%
Others	F	7	3	1	-	11
	%	6.4%	2.8%	0.9%	-	10.1%
Total	F	31	37	38	3	109
	%	28.4%	33.9%	34.9%	2.8%	100%

(chi square=21.972, df=18, sig.=0.233)

The result of H₃ hypothesis referred to the no significance of relationship between the level of participation of the religious pages and groups and the reasons of accessing, as chi square value equal 21.972 which is not significant at the 0.05 level.

★ The patterns of watching are directly affected by the educational background of the users of the religious SNS (Q1+ Concentration)

Table No (8) Significance of statistical differences according the educational background of the users of the religious SNS in The patterns of watching

Groups	N	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig.
Applied	30	1.97	.556	1.634	107	105
Theoretical	79	1.76	.604			

The result of H_4 hypothesis referred to the no significance of statistical differences according the educational background of the users of the religious SNS in The patterns of watching, the t test value equal 1.634 ($p>0.05$).

★ There is a relationship between the patterns of using the SNS Religious pages and the most preferred formats of presenting the religious issues (Q1+Q2)

Table No (9) relationship between the patterns of using the SNS Religious pages and the most preferred formats of presenting the religious issues

Q2 \ Q1		Rarely	Some times	Always	Total
Influencer's pages	F	16	25	5	46
	%	14.7%	22.9%	4.6%	42.2%
Religious pages	F	4	20	4	28
	%	3.7%	18.3%	3.7%	25.7%
Religious preacher's official pages	F	5	11	2	18
	%	4.6%	10.1%	1.8%	16.5%
Others	F	6	11	-	17
	%	5.5%	10.1%	-	15.6%
Total	F	31	67	11	109
	%	28.4%	61.5%	10.1%	100%

(chi square=6.017, df=6, sig.=0.421)

The result of H_5 hypothesis referred to the no significance of relationship between the patterns of using the SNS Religious pages and the most preferred formats of presenting the religious issues, as chi square value equal 6.017 which is not significant at the 0.05 level.

B- The content analysis Results:

Based on the survey results of the top Facebook religious pages and groups that people prefer to access, we tried to have a representative sample. Thus, we choose the following:

- ★ Facebook Religious group: Surviving Hijab.
- ★ Facebook religious page: Moustafa Hosny.
- ★ We made an analysis for these two for Two Weeks period from 5/10/2019 till 19/10/2019.

1) Facebook Religious group: Surviving Hijab:

Table No (10) Facebook Religious group: Surviving Hijab

Topics Presented	All the topics in surviving hijab group focused on encouraging women to wear hijab. And sharing hijab experiences among others. What was special in Surviving Hijab that it does not have a single admin who is responsible for posting Hijab motivation ideas and all different content, Instead of that they rely mainly on members of the group to share their experiences freely. Also the group is a closed one mainly for Females only, so it is considered a free space for women to share experiences and ask religious questions.
Frequency of Posting	Posts are published in Surviving hijab group is based on a daily basis.
Format in which content is presented	Surviving hijab group uses Text and pictures side by side to deliver their content. Whether writing text only by group members to ask for hijab guidance and motivation, or to post pictures with and without wearing hijab to encourage each other's to stay veiled.
Members involved in the group	680 Thousand Members

2) Facebook Religious Page: Moustafa Hosny:

Moustafa Hosny's Religious page on Facebook posted **217 posts** during the period from 5/10/2019 till 19/10/2019.

Table No (11) Topics Presented in Moustafa Hosny's Facebook page

Topic	Number	Percentage
Prayers	80	36.8%
Religious Tips	63	29.03%
Religious Consulting (Q & A)	22	10.13%
General Life Tips	19	8.7%
Introducing charity organizations	15	6.9%
Advertisements for Moustafa Hosny's TV program	18	8.29%

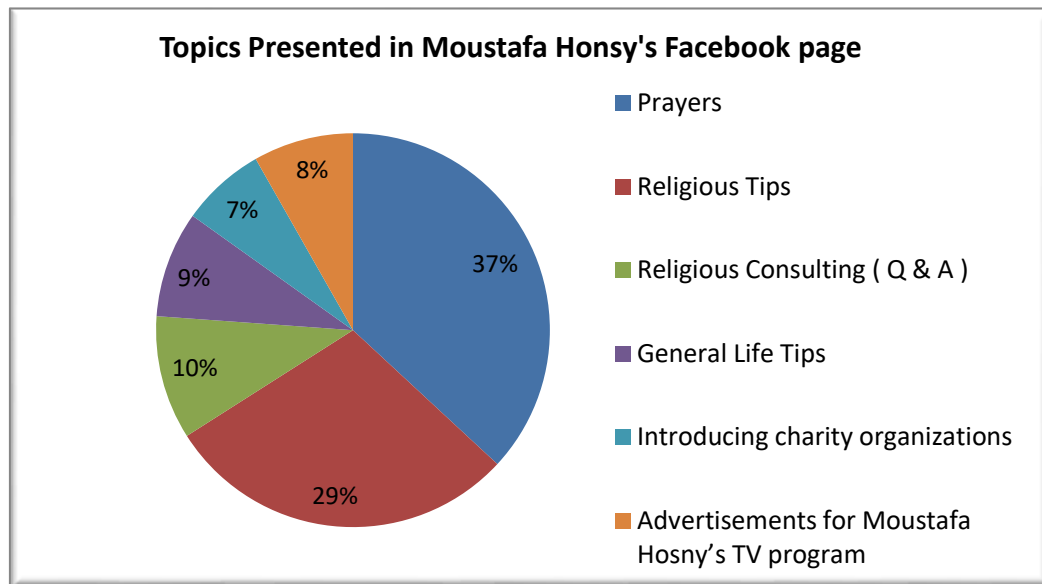


Chart No. (14) Topics Presented in Moustafa Hosny's Facebook page

The Main dominant topics that were commonly presented on Moustafa Hosny's Facebook religious page were prayers with 36.8% of the total posts being analyzed. The prayers differed between morning and evening prayers or prayers for everyday situations. On the second place came providing religious tips with 29% of the total sample that included religious guidance on correct Quran reading and tips for right prayers and how to change every day religious practices. On the third place came Religious Consulting by posting some of the followers' religious questions and moustafa hosny's answers to these questions. Also the page did not focus only on Religious topics, but it was extended to life and every day tips for a better life with 8.7% of the posts. General life tips included how to accept others, maintaining good manners in the society, and getting rid of bad habits. Also the page contained some posts to introduce charity organizations, their services and

how to support them whether financially or psychically. There was a clear focus on the charitable organization “Omar El-Ard”. Advertisements for Moustafa Hosny’s TV program were also presented in the Facebook page by 8.2% of the total posts on the page in the analysis period.

Table No. (12) Format in which content and topics are presented in Moustafa Hosny’s Facebook Page

Format	Number	Percentage
Video	95	43.77%
Text	56	25.8%
Picture	50	23.04%
Links	16	7.37%

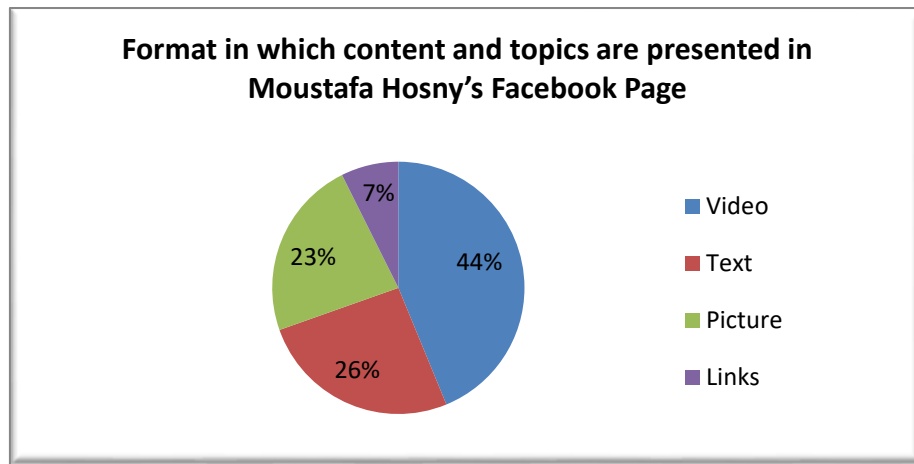


Chart No. (15) Format in which content and topics are presented in Moustafa Hosny’s Facebook Page

Concerning the format in which Moustafa hosny’s Facebook pages used to deliver their content, Videos was the main commonly format used by 44% of the total sample. The videos were characterized with short period of time with no more 5 minutes in order to keep audience attraction to the topics presented. Also most of the videos are presented in Informal way that is different from traditional Religious programs. For example, some videos were showing moustafa hosny in his home or in his car with casual wear presenting religious information. On the second rank came the text format with 26% which is suitable for posting prayers, tips and answers to follower’s religious questions. And on the third place came using picture format with 23.04% of the total posts that was suitable to some topics in presenting pictures including morning and evening prayers and Duaa. On the last rank came the link format, as the page used this format to provide a link to Moustafa hosny’s channel and audible tracks on sound cloud. Finally it is important to note that Moustafa hosny’s page tries to present the topics in

different formats in different posts as a trial to simplify more and more the religious content.

Frequency of Posting in Mostafa Hosny's page: Moustafa hosny's religious page on Facebook is always up to date as posts are renewed every half an hour.

C-The in-depth interview results:

1) Concerning the question related to the ability to renew the religious discourse on social media, the answers of the experts varies as below:

Most of the experts agreed on the need to differentiate between renewing the religious discourse through the social media and presenting the religious issues in a new way through social media, as they all agreed that we cannot renew the religious issues but we can use the social media as a tool to present the religious issues in an up-to-date way and through modernizing the ideas without changing the concepts of the religion.

Some of the experts agreed on the ability to use the social media in renewing the religious discourse as, the social media nowadays has many facilities that we can take its advantages in order to grape the attention of the youth and to publish the existing religious material through many ways, also some of them mentioned that the interactivity is one of the advantages that could match the youth's interests.

On the other hand some of them refused the idea of renewing the religious discourse by using social media as those religious concepts are fixed and the chance is only to be interpreted in a correct way and with more and more clarifications and the religious discourse could not be renewed by sharing and publishing religious posts as the main role of this stands for the churches and mosques and also the social media religious discourse will face the misrepresentations of many of the religious issues

2) Concerning the ways of renewing the religious discourse through the traditional Media the suggestions comes as below:

- ✱ This role Could be done through the educational organizations
- ✱ Also could be done through the direct communication with the youth
- ✱ Simplifying the religious issues by some trusted preachers through social media channels
- ✱ The creation of some official religious pages on social media
- ✱ Also we could change the forms of presenting the religious issues, as the traditional media could depend on the dramatically.
- ✱ Formats to present and analysis the ideas.

- ★ Also the use of the focus group discussion on the traditional media.
- ★ Also the traditional media needs to look more for ways of interactivity.

As we need to go beyond the traditional way of presenting the religious ideas and to be fare of the direct way

Concerning renewing the religious issues through the social media there are also some suggestions related to:

★ **The sender:**

- 1) The youth role should expand to present the religious issues and values shortly and to the point and its already exist but it needs more expansion
- 2) The controversial issues should be simplified and presented
- 3) Researchers must be done about the trusted preachers that could be used to present the religious contents

★ **The content:**

- 1) The content must be brief and attractive
- 2) Timing is a matter
- 3) The content must varies between direct speeches and questions-answers formats
- 4) The content must be presented in an interactive and creative way
- 5) The credibility of the content and they have to refer to the source
- 6) The topics should be chosen carefully and we need to give a great concern to the culture tolerance and the renounce of violence among the new generations

So the social media religious discourse could work effectively beside the traditional media discourse but with a new updates as the messages will be simple and presented from the new generations to the new generation by some control from the official organizations and preachers.

Conclusion:

As popular as social media are, using them for religious purposes is not very common. Although Facebook users spend hours on social media they only spend minutes browsing religious pages. Most of the religious pages users tend to follow on Facebook are the official accounts of known preachers and they mostly access these pages seeking information. Facebook users tend to limit their interactions on such pages to liking and sharing posts passively with minimal engagement in religious discussions with other followers. On the other hand, experts find that it's key to differentiate between renewing the religious discourse and renewing the method of presenting religious issues. They stress on the fact

that religious discourse is timeless meaning it is the same and fixed at any given time. However, the way of presenting religious values needs to be renewed and developed. This is where social media come in with new technology to simplify religious information and present religious values in an appealing manner.

Limitations:

- ✱ Lack of previous studies related to the social media discourse.
- ✱ Due to this lack it was difficult to connect the results with the review of literature.
- ✱ The differentiation between what we mean by social media religious discourse in our research was a controversial issue among the experts.

References:

- Al-Mosa, N. A. (2015). Role of social networks in developing religious and social values of the students of the World Islamic Sciences & Education University. *International Education Studies*, 8(9), 134–143. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Role-of-Social-Networks-in-Developing-Religious-and-Al-Mosa/b618b1e1e8bf455a2ef8e589f3566ab99db0b93b>.
- Brubaker, P. J., & Haigh, M. M. (2017). The Religious Facebook Experience: Uses and gratifications of Faith-Based content. *Social Media + Society*, 3(2), 205630511770372. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117703723>.
- Faimau, G., & Behrens, C. (2016). Face-booking religion and the technologization of the religious discourse. *Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet*, 11, 26–54. <https://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de/journals/index.php/religions/article/view/23628/17353>.
- Gonzalez, C. A. (2016). *Online community membership and social impact theory: How does distance influence persuasion, cooperation, and perception?* [Master's thesis, University of Gothenburg]. University of Gothenburg Repository.
- Halim, W. (2018). Young Islamic preachers on Facebook: Pesantren As'adiyah and its engagement with social media. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 46(134), 44–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1416750>.
- Hossienzaedeh, A. (2011). *The role of social media in religion* [Unpublished master's thesis]. https://www.academia.edu/14382725/The_Role_of_Social_Media_in_Religion_Dialogues_or_conversations.
- Hossny, M. M. (2017). The recruitment of preachers of the new media in the face of extremist thought: Field study. *Journal of Public Relations Research Middle East*, (16), 7–77.
- Jo, P., & Michel, M. (2017). The religious Facebook experience: Uses and gratifications of faith-based content. *Social Media + Society*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117703723>.
- McClure, P. K. (2016). The effects of social networking sites on the religious beliefs of emerging adults. *Sociology of Religion*, 77(4), 389–414. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srw002>.
- Miller, B. J., Munday, P., & Hill, J. P. (2013). Faith in the Age of Facebook: Exploring the links between religion and social network site membership and use. *Sociology of Religion*, 74(2), 227–253. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srs073>.
- Mir, I., & Zaheer, A. (2012). Verification of Social Impact Theory Claims in Social Media Context. *The Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce*,

- 17(1), 1–15. <https://www.icommercecentral.com/open-access/verification-of-social-impact-theory-claims-in-social-media-context.pdf>.
- Mittal, R., & Randhawa, V. (2015). Information manipulation theory as a way of capturing information exchange. *Annals of Agri Bio Research*, 20(1), 134–138. <https://www.cabdirect.org/abstracts/20153193608.html>.
 - Rubin, V. L., & Chen, Y. (2012). Information manipulation classification theory for LIS and NLP. *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 49(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1002/meet.14504901353>.
 - Tefertiller, A. (2018). *Your friends like our brand: social impact, capital, and connections in social media advertising*. https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/1794/23100/1/Tefertiller_oregon_0171A_11975.pdf.

Participants in in-depth interviews:

- Prof Amal El Ghazawy Dean of faculty of Mass communication CIC.
- Prof Amany Fahmy Dean of faculty of Mass communication MSA University.
- Prof Dalia Abdallah faculty staff of Mass communication Cairo University.
- Dr Mahetab El Rafey faculty staff of Mass communication CIC.
- Dr Nagwa El Gazzar vice Dean of mass communication MIU.
- Dr Nihal Abdelrahman faculty staff of Mass communication MIU.
- Dr Noha Atef faculty staff of Mass communication.
- Dr Safaa Emara faculty staff of at the Academy of Arts.
- Heba Galal TV Presenter at DMC.
- Mr Ahmed shalaby journalist at EL Akhbar Newspaper.
- Mr.Mohy Abdelghafar Journalist at EL Akhbar Newspaper.