Connecting and communicating on facebook A field study on the uses of Arab youth in Egyptian Universities.

Dr.Amany Albert

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Abstract

This paper seeks to understand how youth are using Facebook as well as their attitudes to this form of communication. It also tries to collect some data about their Profile features, the number of their contacts and stranger contacts, the time spent on facebook, the types of friends, the number of photos and videos, applications and groups they joined, if the profile is visible and if they have read the privacy policy before creating a profile, and their attitudes about facebook.

The next section outlines the methodological approach and research questions. We then present results; the study found that Arab youth spend a moderate time on facebook. Two third of the sample visited their profile daily. More than third spent a long time varied from 1 to 5 hours. Almost the entire sample made their profile visible. The majority added their own photo. Half of the sample hasn't read the term of using facebook or the privacy policy before creating a profile. The majority added a little number of Applications, groups and pages. Sport and student

groups were the highest groups joined. Half of the sample use facebook when they feel empty or depressed or lonely. They also had positive attitudes towards facebook. The paper closes with a conclusion to our findings, discussing the study limitations.

Introduction

A social network service focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. Most social network services are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging services. (Wikipedia)

Social networks are designed to be a meeting platform for people with similar interests whether it be friendship, music, or business. Social networks are also a place for people to express their views and opinions on virtually any subject (Venturelli, 2006).

They cite the versatility of these sites as one of the reasons for success as users are not only able to communicate and find friends, but they are able to publicize their music, their books, and even their films and at the same time receive valuable feedback (Cieslak, 2006).

In this research we have purposely focused on facebook as it is the most famous SNS among Arab youth.

What is Facebook?

Facebook is a social networking website like many other Websites such as Myspace, Friendster and Xanga that allow users to upload photos of themselves, create their own profiles, and then invite other users to be their "friend" – a part of their online social network. (Rob, 2007)

Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook while still a student at Harvard University. Website membership was initially limited to Harvard students, but was expanded to other colleges in the Ivy League. It later expanded further to include **any university student**, then high school students, and, finally, to **anyone** aged 13 and over. Peter Thiel was the first person to fund the company, with an initial investment of US$500,000. (Wikipedia).

From 2004 to October of 2006 Facebook was available only to users with a **university email address**. In October of 2006, this restriction to universities was lifted. Users are part of networks, which can be schools, companies, or physical locations. (Amy, 2006)

Since launched, on February 4, 2004, it has expanded to **over nine million** registered users to become the seventh most trafficked site on the web (Wikipedia). It tallies **250 million hits** every **day** (MICHAEL, 2006) The web traffic data for Facebook shows **15 million** unique US visitors a month (QuantCast, 2007).

According to Alexa rankings of top websites, in 2009 Facebook.com was ranked as the third most visited website on

the Internet in Egypt after Google and Yahoo. (Alexa, 2009). According to comScore Inc.'s rankings of top websites, in 2008 Facebook.com was ranked as the 16th most visited website on the Internet in the U.S. (comScore, 2008a), with 34 million unique visitors by January 2008, and as the 13th most popular website worldwide (comScore, 2008b), with 98 million unique visitors by December 2007.

More than 250 million active users. More than 120 million users log on to Facebook at least once each day. More than two-thirds of Facebook users are outside of college. The fastest growing demographic is those 35 years old and older. Average user has 120 friends on the site. More than 5 billion minutes are spent on Facebook each day (worldwide). More than 30 million users update their statuses at least once each day. More than 8 million users become fans of Pages each day. More than 1 billion photos uploaded to the site each month. More than 10 million videos uploaded each month. More than 1 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photos, etc.) shared each week. More than 2.5 million events created each month. More than 45 million active user groups exist on the site (Facebook, 2009).

When people join facebook, they begin by creating a profile, then make connections to existing friends as well as those they meet through the site. A **profile** is a list of **identifying information**. It can include your **real name**, or a pseudonym. It

also can include **photographs, birthday, hometown, religion, ethnicity, and personal interest**. Members connect to others by sending a "friend" **message**, which must be accepted by the other party in order to establish a link. "Friending" another member gives them **access to your profile**, adds them to your social network, and vice versa. (Catherine, 2007)

Users can **upload pictures** and **identify** themselves and other people who appear in the pictures; these **pictures** are then accessible via the profile of the person that was tagged. According to Wikipedia, users upload over **2.3 million photos daily**, making it the number one site for photo sharing. Recently, Facebook added a **News Feed** feature which was intended to help users keep track of what is happening with their friends. The idea was that as friends added new friends, joined different Facebook groups, uploaded photographs, etc., these changes would be broadcast to other Facebook friends. (Amy, 2006).

Members use these sites for a number of purposes. The root motivation is communication and **maintaining relationships**. Popular activities include updating others on activities and whereabouts, sharing photos and archiving events, getting updates on activities by friends, displaying a large social network, presenting an idealized persona, sending messages privately, and posting public testimonials. (Catherine, 2007)

Facebook has three methods of producing revenue. local text ads (from the college and local businesses), running at $15-

20 per day, traditional banner ads, sold on a national basis and sponsored groups - examples included Apple, EA, etc. (Arrington, 2005)

Facebook has met with some controversy over the past few years. It has been **blocked in several countries** including Syria and Iran. Privacy has also been an issue, and it has been compromised several times. It is also facing several lawsuits from a number of Zuckerberg's former classmates, who claim that Facebook had stolen their source code and other intellectual property. (Wikipedia).

Although some educational institutions raise their voices **against Facebook,** claiming that students may be **addicted** to the site and spend too **much time** there, there is little research on **who the site's users are,** what **brings people to Facebook,** and what the **outcome** of their social networking is. What are **motives** for using the Facebook, how do individual **differences** (age, gender, education) relate to motives for Facebook use, and to what extent can motives and individual differences predict attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of Facebook use are the purposes of conducting this study. (Pavica, 2007)

Sixty percent of Facebook users logon daily; for some it has "become an obsession". Facebook has gained **recent attention in the media** for its use in aiding **criminal investigations** and college disciplinary hearings. It has also been used by companies to **screen job applicants** and by campus

police to monitor the college party scene. But despite its prevalence in the popular media and the potentially enormous implications that have come with its startling growth, **no formal** investigations of impressions based on Facebook have been published (Samuel, 2007)

Literature Review

Because the internet social networking phenomenon is new, some studies have addressed it. Studies that have done so have looked at general issues concerning uses and reasons that students use social networking tools.

A study were conducted by NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION comprised of three surveys: an online survey of 1,277 nine- to 17-year-old students, an online survey of 1,039 parents and telephone interviews with 250 school district leaders who make decisions on Internet policy.

Nine- to 17-year-olds report spending almost as much time using social networking services and Web sites as they spend watching television. Among teens, that amounts to about 9 hours a week on social networking activities, compared to about 10 hours a week watching TV. Overall, an astonishing 96 percent of students with online access report that they have ever used any social networking technologies, such as chatting, text messaging, blogging and visiting online communities, such as Facebook,

MySpace and services designed specifically for younger children,

Their Popular Social Networking Activities were Posting messages then downloading music, then Downloading videos, then Uploading music, then Updating personal Web sites or online profiles, then Posting photos. then Blogging, then Creating and sharing virtual objects, then Creating new characters, then Participating in collaborative projects, then Sending suggestions or ideas to Web sites, then Submitting articles to Web sites Creating polls, quizzes or surveys.(National School Boards Association, 2007)

Amanda Lenhart, conducted a telephone survey among a random national sample of 935 youths ages 12 to 17, asked about the ways that teenagers use these sites and their reasons for doing so. She found that more than half (55%) of all online American youths ages 12-17 use online social networking sites.

The survey also finds that older teens, particularly girls, are more likely to use these sites. For girls, social networking sites are primarily places to reinforce pre-existing friendships; for boys, the networks also provide opportunities for flirting and making new friends. (Amanda, 2007)

A study in UK tried to investigate behaviors, attitudes and barriers to the use of social networking sites. The study included children and adults, users and non-users, and covered each of the four nations of the UK. The research shows that just over one

fifth of adult internet users aged 16+ and almost half of children aged 8-17 who use the internet have set up their own profile on a social networking site. Most users check their profile at least every other day, Two-thirds of parents claim to set rules on their child's use of social networking sites, although only 53% of children said that their parents set such rules. Users share personal information with a wide range of 'friends' 17 % of adults used their profile to communicate with people they do not know. This increases among younger adults. (ofcom, 2008)

In his study, Frederic Stutzman tried to develop quantitative metrics on SNC participation on a college campus, to investigate and comparatively analyze population attitudes about participation in SNC's, and population attitudes about online identity sharing in general. Applied on 38 students he discovered that under graduates use SNC's more commonly than G/P students. Additionally, the percentage of undergraduates utilizing the particular SNC the Facebook is significant. A large number of students share particularly personal information online like photo, political views, sexual orientation) in SNC's. (Frederic, 2006)

Russell and Jonathan Melhuish asked 148 of his Facebook friends to participate about their online relationships and how they consumed the media that their friends produce.

Almost half (45%) of respondents reported logging into Facebook several times a day. Only 5% of respondents logged

into Facebook less often than "every few days". A large majority of respondents (86%) logged in for half an hour or less per session. The average reported session duration was 23 minutes, with a median of 15 minutes.

The most important reason cited for using Facebook was to keep up to date with their current friends' lives. Respondents were widely agreed that Facebook was not a place for making new friends.

There was a wide variance in the number of friends that respondents reported having on Facebook, from just 2 to 883. 91% of respondents had over 50 friends; the number of responses trails off quickly after 350, with only 10% of respondents reporting having over 350 friends. The average was 212 and the median was 168. The author was interest in the aggregated view of all news about the user's friends (the "News Feed") was very low. (Jonathan, 2007)

Pavica Sheldon conducted a survey with 172 students at a large southern research university to see what students' motives are for using the Facebook.

Students in this sample reported that on an average they spent 47 minutes a day on Facebook. 81% logged into Facebook on a daily basis. The majority of students (50%) changed their profile every few months. 19% changed their profile every day. The majority of students had between 200 and 350 Facebook friends.

They go to Facebook to **fulfill needs** traditionally fulfilled by other media but for their interpersonal communication needs first (relationship maintenance). Women were more likely to go to Facebook to maintain existing relationships, pass time and be entertained. On the other hand, men were more likely to go to Facebook to develop new relationships or meet new people. (Pavica, 2007)

Adam N. Joinson investigates the uses of Facebook, and the **gratifications users** derive from those uses. The majority of participants visited the site either daily or more than once a day. **'keep in touch'** received the largest number of mentions, with the use of the site to make new contacts receiving a small number of mentions. Factor analysis identified seven unique uses and gratifications: **social connection, shared identities, content, social investigation, social network surfing and status updating.** The highest rated in each factor were, Maintaining relationships with people you may not get to see very often, Communication with likeminded people, Viewing photos, see friends have added them, Virtual people watching, Browsing your friends' friends, Updating your own status (Adam, 2008)

Trying to measure the role and uses of facebook, Nicole and others filled 286 questionnaires by email at Michigan University. Most of them reported spending between 10 and 30 minutes on average using Facebook each day, having between

150 and 200 friends on the system. They are significantly more likely to use Facebook for fun and killing time than for gathering information. They also reported significantly more Facebook use involving people with whom there is some offline connection - either an existing friend, a classmate, someone living near them, or someone they met at a party - than for meeting new people. (Nicole, 2006)

Zeynep Tufekci explored the rapid adoption of online social network sites by students on a US college campus. Using a diverse sample of 713 college students she tried to compare SNS users and non-users.

She found that non-users display an attitude towards social grooming (gossip, small-talk and generalized, non-functional people-curiosity) that ranges from incredulous to hostile. Contrary to expectations, non-users do not report a smaller number of close friends compared with users, but they do keep in touch with fewer people. (Zeynep, 2008).

In their study cliff Lampe and others draw a distinction between the use of Facebook for 'social searching' –finding out information about offline contacts, and 'social browsing' – the use of the site to develop new connections, sometimes with the aim of offline interaction.

A survey of over 2,000 students, found evidence that the primary use of Facebook was for 'social searching' – that is,

using Facebook to find out more about people who they have met offline, or who they attend class or share a dormitory with.

The use of Facebook for 'social browsing', for instance, to meet someone via the site with the intention of a later offline meeting, or to attend an event organized online, scored relatively low amongst their sample. (Cliff, 2006).

The study of *Frederic Stutzman*, had a primary goal of which was to investigate and comparatively analyze population attitudes about participation in SNC's, and population attitudes about online identity sharing in general. **It found that** 71% of all respondents indicated participation in a SNC, The most popular SNC was The Facebook.

It found that relationship status, location information, and political views are just a few of the many identity information elements that are disclosed in SNC's. The Average level of student agreement to selected statements about identity information disclosure ranges from strong agreement statement like I am OK with friends accessing my SNC profile then It is important to me to protect my identity information then I am OK with family accessing my SNC profile then I am OK with classmates accessing my SNC profile then I am OK with strangers accessing my SNC profile then I believe my identity information is well-protected online. (*Frederic Stutzman*,)

Another study of Cliff Lampe tried to explore the relationship between **profile structure and number of friends.**

Undergraduate members have more friends than any other group in the network. Females have slightly more friends than do males. The older the account, the more friends of each type a user will have as well.

The act of populating profile fields is strongly associated with the number of friendship links a user will have. They found that populating profile fields on Facebook is positively related to the number of friends a user will have listed. The amount of information posted in open-ended fields does not affect the number of friends when added to the indices of the presence of information in the profile fields. (Cliff Lampe, 2006)

Rob Nyland administered an internet survey to a convenience sample of 184 individuals through message boards and social networking messages. Respondents were asked questions about individual religiosity as well as how they use social networking. No relationship was found between religiosity and overall exposure. Results indicate that more religious individuals are more likely to use social networking to maintain already existing relationships. (Rob, 2007)

Samuel et al, questions how accurate are the impressions we take from SNS's? Do we portray ourselves accurately or do we attempt to present ourselves in a positive light? And do we have any idea how we are viewed by others?

They examined impressions based on 133 Facebook profiles, comparing them with how the targets see themselves and are seen by close acquaintances.

Participants were run in groups of five friends. Showing five personality dimensions (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness to Experience)

The findings presented here show: that Facebook-based personality impressions show some consensus for all Big Five dimensions, with particularly strong consensus for Extraversion; the impressions show some accuracy, with the exception of Emotional Stability; that observers are aware only of how they are seen in terms of Extraversion; and profile authors did engage in some self-enhancement for the Big Five domains of Emotional Stability and Openness to Experience. (Samuel, 2007)

Anton performed a framing analysis of student and mainline newspapers in order to reveal college students' and **adults attitudes toward social networking**. By using concept mapping, they found that student newspapers tended to focus on the more utilitarian aspects of Facebook usage. The most common topics were sex & games, and relationships. Mainline newspapers, on the other hand, concentrated on the history and business of Facebook, as well as issues with online security. Both student and mainline newspapers equally discussed using Facebook, and stalking although each of these issues may have been framed differently, depending upon the audience. (Anton, 2006)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Based on this brief review of the online social network literature, our empirical analysis of one Facebook community is guided by seven research questions:

RQ1: Who are using Facebook? Are there differences, such as by gender, age, year in school, Nationality, Faculty or weekly income between those who join?

RQ2: How are students using Facebook? Is there a difference in students' use of profile features, in the time spent on Facebook, in their motivations for using Facebook?

RQ3: Does the relationship between intensity of Facebook use vary according to gender, age, year in school, Nationality, Faculty or weekly income?

RQ4: Does the relationship between the number and the kind of contacts vary according to gender, age, year in school, Nationality, Faculty or weekly income?

RQ5: Does the relationship between the types of people they have vary according to gender, age, year in school, Nationality, Faculty or weekly income?

RQ6: Is their a relation between the visibility of the account and reading the terms of use, number and kind of contacts?

RQ7: Is their a relation between the intensity of Facebook use and the groups they joined, types of people they have, and attitudes twords facebook?

Method

Sample and procedure

The data reported here were collected between April 1 to may 15 2009, Out of approximately 600 invitations sent out for the survey over, only 436 surveys were completed, resulting in a total of 400 usable respondents.

To address these questions, a survey with 400 students was conducted from 6 October University and Cairo University 50% (N=200) each. Of those who had an account, 50% (N = 200) were male and 50% (N = 200) were female. Demographics of users are shown in table (1) below.

Age	N	%
Freshman Sophomore (16	33	8.3%
Under Graduate (18 – 20)	132	33%
Graduates (20 – 22)	149	37.3%
post Graduate (22 – 24)	86	21.5%
Nationality	N	%
Egyptian	264	66%
Arabs	136	34%
Income	N	%
Less than 50	30	7.5%
From 50 to 100	102	25.5%
From 100 to 150	77	19.3%
From 150 to 200	37	9.3%

From 200 to 250	30	7.5%
Above 250	124	31%
Field of study	N	%
Scientific	224	56%
Non-Scientific	176	44%

Table 1: Demographics of facebook Users

Arabs included 13.5% (N = 54) Kuwaitis, 6.8% (N =27) Saudis, 5.3% (N =21) Palestinian, 2.3% (N =9) Jordanian, 2.3% (N =9) Omani, .8% (N =3) Syrian, .8% (N =3) Yamane, 1.3 %(N=5) Morocco, .8% (N =3) Lebanese, .5% (N=2) Sudanese.

The sample for the survey consisted of students enrolled in 18 faculty, each faculty were given 25 questionnaire paper in both universities. Some faculties didn't cooperate so we added them to the other faculties.

Majors varied from %56(N=224) scientific fields including faculties of (medicine (14), engineering (30), Dentistry (37), Pharmacy (20), physical therapy (31), Nursing (22), Management (21), Commerce (34), computer science (15) to 44% (N=176) Non-Scientific faculties including (mass communication (35), Languages (28), Lawyer (18), Tourism (17), Education (35), Fine arts (13), social science (30).

The margin of error associated with this sample is plus or minus 4.54% with a 95% confidence level. This margin of error is reported as 4.5% for simplicity. With a relatively low margin of error, the results of this survey can be generalized to the

broader student population at the 6 October University and Cairo University.

Measurement

The survey asked participants to complete the questionnaire on their Facebook usage. Participation was voluntary. Overall, they spent approximately seven to ten minutes on the survey.

Facebook preference was measured with Likert measurement. Response options ranged from 1 to 5, as 1 reflects a level of strong disagreement with the statement, and 5 reflects a level of strong agreement with the statement.

Study scales:

First scale: Intensity of facebook use

This scale consists of 2 questions and 14 sentences. It measures the intensity of facebook use, how often do they visit their profile on facebook and on average, approximately how long do they spend on Facebook per visit?

The highest point was given to the highest time spent and the highest number of visits. For example (8 points) were given to those who spend more than 5 hours on facebook; (7 points) were given to those who spend from 4-5 hours and so on till (1 point) to those who spend less than 15 minutes. For the number of visits, (6 points) to those who visited there account several times a day. (5 points) to those who visited there account once a day, and so on till (1 point) to those who visited there account less often.

This scale consists of 14 points, and divided into three levels:

- From 2 to 5 refers to low intensity.
- From 6 to 10 refers to middle intensity.
- From 11 to 14 refers to high intensity.

The second scale: Attitudes towards facebook

Consist of nine sentences describes the attitude towards facebook, the highest point (5) were given to the most positive attitude. The lowest was given (1) for most negative attitude. Combining all the items in this scale gives us a range from 45 points (the highest) and 9 (the lowest).

This scale was divided into three levels:

- As from 9 to 20 points describes a negative attitude.
- As from 21 to 33 points describes a neutral attitude.
- As from 34 to 45 points describes a positive attitude.

Demographic Variables

Respondents also answered questions regarding several traditional demographic variables, which could be used as controls in the analysis. These include: Gender, Age, Education, nationality, weekly income and their field of study.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire contained questions about who are having a facebook account. And why? They were asked if their

profile currently visible or not? How often do they visit their profile? How long do they spend on Facebook per visit?

They were asked also about their profile features, like the number of contacts and strangers' contacts, types of friends, times of making changes in the profile, number of photos, videos, applications and groups they joined, if the profile is visible and if they have read the privacy policy before creating a profile. And their attitudes about facebook.

Results

Of the sample surveyed, 65.3% (N=261) of students had a Facebook account and 34.8% (N=139) did not have.

Comparing these results with multiple studies at non Arab world show that somewhere between 80 and 90 % of all college students have a profile on an SNS (Gross et al. 2005; Lampe et al. 2006; Stutzman 2006) this means that the percentage of Arab youth is still lower than the non Arabs maybe due to many reasons like not being interested on facebook 30.9% (N=43) or getting board 11.5% (N=16). And being interested in traditional ways as 2% (N=8) prefer to rely on face-to-face and other forms of communications.

One other reason is privacy as (10.8%) are worried of using facebook, 4.3% (N=6) are concerned about safety and being stalked by other users and 6.5% (N=9) think there is a negative side of using SNS. While 2.9% (N=4) don't want to 'jump on board' the social networking craze.

Another reason is having difficulty to deal with the new technology as 8.6% (N=12) don't know how to create account. Or having no time as 22.3% (N=31) said I am a very busy person. Finally all of the above 7.2% (N=10).

No significant differences were found in having a facebook account or not between all demographic variables.

Almost half knew facebook from friends

Facebook have a big popularity between the users from Arab youth as almost half knew it from a friends' invitation 46% (N=120). Or because everybody talks about it 42.1% (N=110). While 10.7% (N=28) said I read about it. And 1.1% (N=3) said other (they heard about it from media).

The majority invited Friends to join Facebook 74.3%(N=194) which means they are interested in facebook and like it.

The ways of adding friends varied from sending an invitation 37.2%(N=97) or searching through Facebook 36% (N=94). Or through a friend suggestion 11.9%(N=31). Or from Facebook homepage suggestion "People You May Know" 11.5%(N=30). Other 9%(N=3.4)

Almost the entire sample made their profile visible.

Only 5.4% (N=14) of the sample made their profiles invisible. while Half of the sample 50.6% (N=132) left their profile visible only to friends, and more than one third of the sample 36.4% (N=95) left their profile visible to anyone. 7.7%

(N=20) Don't know to whom it's visible. This refers that almost all of the sample don't take care about their privacy and profile safety.

Two third of facebook users visit their profile daily.

We found a heavy use for facebook among users, as two third of the sample visit their profile on a daily basis 67% (N=175) (once or Several times). This is the same percentage found by (Adam, 2008).

(40.6%) of the sample spend a long time varied from 1 to 5 hours. While (42.2%) spend from 15 to 60 minutes. And only (17.2%) spend less than 15 minutes.

How often	N	%	How long	N	%
Several a day	105	40.2	Less than 15 minutes.	45	17.2
Once a day	70	26.8	From 15 -30 minutes.	54	20.7
3 to 5 a week	31	11.9	From 31-60 minutes.	56	21.5
1 to 2 a week	25	9.6	From 1-2 hours.	54	20.7
Every few weeks	18	6.9	From 2-3 hours.	25	9.6
Less often	12	4.6	From 3-4 hours.	9	3.4
Total	261	100	From 4-5 hours.	10	3.8
			More than 5 hours	8	3.1

Table 2: time spent on facebook

According to the intensity scale of facebook use about two third of the sample 69.7%(N=182) spent a moderate time on facebook, while 16.1%(N=42) spend a little time, and 14.2%(N=37) spent a long time. *No significant differences were found in the* intensity *scale between all demographic variables.*

Quarter of the sample think they are addicted to facebook

Although the majority of the sample spend a long or moderate time on facebook only 25.3% (N=66) from the sample think that they are addicted to facebook, while 74.7% (N=195) see that they are not addicted.

Profile features

The majority make changes in their profile

Although two third of the sample visit their profile on a daily basis only 6.9% (N=18) change their profile daily, 22.6% (N=59) weekly, 8.4% (N=22) monthly, 14.9% (N=39) don't know. About half of the sample 47.1% (N=123) change it once and while.

The majority have well known contacts and little strangers' contacts

Two third of the sample had less than 100 well known friend in their profile. Another quarter had from 100 to 200 and only 7.7% (N=20) had more than 300.

While three quarter of the sample didn't have strangers' contacts or had less than 20. Only 5.4% (N=14) had more than 100.

Contacts	N	%	Stranger contacts	N	%
Less than 50	100	38.3	None	105	40.2
From 50 - 100	71	27.2	Less than 20	90	34.5
From 100 -200	41	15.7	From 20 - 40	25	9.6
From 200 - 300	29	11.1	From 40 - 60	12	4.6
More than 300	20	7.7	60 to than 100	29	11.1

Table 3: Number of contacts and Stranger contacts.

Freshman or sophomore students were significantly less likely than the others in adding contacts. Females were significantly more likely than males in adding no stranger contact.

Post graduates students were significantly more likely than the others in adding no stranger contacts. Egyptians were significantly more likely than Arabs in adding no stranger contact.

Those incomes from 50 to 100 were significantly more likely than the others in adding no stranger contacts. While those with incomes, above 250, were significantly more likely than the others in adding some stranger contacts. No significant differences were found between the fields of study or the universities and the number of stranger contacts they have.

	Variable	Chi-Square value	phi value or Contingency Coefficient	Df	sig
Contacts	Ages	24.269	--	12	.019
	Gender	14.315	.234	3	.003
Stranger Contacts	Age	29.189	.317	9	.001
	Nationality	20.220	.278	3	.000
	Incomes	27.201	.307	15	.027

Table (4) Significance shown from the relation between contacts and demographic variables.

The relation between visibility of account and the number of contacts:

Those who added a high number of contacts and stranger contacts had a visible account to others. While those with invisible accounts added small number of contacts. But no significant relation was found between the visibility of profile and the number of Stranger contacts added.

Contacts	Visible everyone	Visible friends	Don't know	Not	Stranger contacts	visible	Visible friends	Don't know	Not
Less than 50	43.2%	31.8%	50.0%	50.0%	None	31.6%	47.7%	30.0%	42.9%
50 - 100	18.9%	32.6%	40.0%	14.3%	Less 20	35.8%	32.6%	40.0%	35.7%
100 -200	15.8%	16.7%	5.0%	21.4%	20 - 60	16.8%	11.4%	25.0%	7.1%

200 - 300	11.6%	12.1%	5.0%	7.1%	*60 & more*	15.8%	8.3%	5.0%	14.3%
More than 300	10.5%	6.8%	0	7.1%					

Table (5) the relation between visibility of profile and the number of contacts.

<u>**Well known people to the users came in the first place in their contacts**</u>

Participants were asked to order the types of friends from the 1 to 5 [*], old friends who are not seen regularly came in the first place with weight (951) then Close friend seen regularly (949),

Then new friend, seen regularly (817), then someone don't know well (701), at last family (497). This is the same result t of (Nicole, 2006) as more Facebook use involving people like an existing friend, a classmate, someone living near them, or someone they met at a party - than for meeting new people.

There is a correlation between demographic variables and the types of people added to the contacts.

Men were significantly more likely than women in having close friends. Women were significantly more likely than Men in having new friends and in adding family.

On the contrary (Pavica Sheldon) results suggested that women are more likely than men to go to Facebook to maintain

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[*] 1= first place and 5= last place. The lowest mean means highest importance

existing relationships. On the other hand, men are more likely than women to go to Facebook to develop new relationships or meet new people. Younger respondents are more likely than older respondents to go on Facebook to maintain existing relationships also to meet new people.(Pavica, 2007)

Post graduates were significantly more likely than freshman and sophomore students in having old friends. Arabs were significantly more likely than Egyptians in having close friends and in adding family members. Those with incomes from 50 to 100 were significantly more likely than those in above 250 in having close friends. Those with incomes above 250 Egyptian pounds were significantly more likely than those in from 50 to 100 EP in having old friends. 6 October University students were significantly more likely than Cairo University in having Someone Don't know.

		Close Friends	Old Friends	New Friends	Don't Know	Family
Gender	Mann-Whitney	7373.5	7442.5	6913.0	7744.5	6891.5
	Sig.	.040*	.068	.006	.189	.003*
Age	Chi-Square	6.599	12.226	.634	1.929	.623
	Sig.	.086	.007*	.889	.587	.891
Nationality	Mann-Whitney	6034.5	6895.0	7718.0	6954.5	6720.0

	Sig.	.001*	.134	.976	.162	.049*
Income	*Chi-Square*	12.139	14.802	10.099	9.667	3.503
	Sig.	.033*	.011*	.072	.085	.623
Field of study	*Mann-Whitney*	8362.5	7342.5	8251.0	7768.5	8190.0
	Sig.	.976	.075	.825	.294	.725
University	*Mann-Whitney*	7692.5	8235.5	8208.5	7240.0	7700.0
	Sig.	.141	.641	.606	.030*	.135

Table (6) the relation between demographic variables and the types of contacts.

The majority added their own photo

The majority 59.4% (N=155) revealed who they really are by adding their own photo in the profile, while one fifth 20.7% (N=54) added a photo they like (nature, animations), then 12.3% (N=32) added a photo belongs for someone they don't know. Only 7.7% (N=20) said I don't add any photos.

Those who added their own photo had the highest number of contacts and stranger contacts. On the contrary to those who didn't add any photo had the lowest number of stranger contacts. But no significant relation (.090) was found between the photo added to the profile and the number of Stranger contacts.

Participants added photos more than videos

Those who added more than 50 pictures on their profiles were 28.4%(N=74) while 8.4%(N=22) for videos. 15.3% (N=40) had no picture in their account and 59%(N=154) had no videos in their account

Number of pictures and videos	Pictures		Videos	
	N	%	N	%
1 More than 50	74	28.4	22	8.4
2 From 50 to 20	44	16.9	15	5.7
3 Less than 20	103	39.5	70	26.8
4 None	40	15.3	154	59.0
Total	261	100.0	261	100.0

Table (7) Number of pictures and videos

Terms of using facebook

Half of the sample haven't read the term of using facebook or the privacy policy before creating a profile 50.2% (N=131)

Freshman and sophomore students were significantly more likely than post graduates in reading the terms of privacy. Arabs were significantly more likely than Egyptians in reading the terms of privacy. Those with high income from 200 to above 250

were significantly more likely than those with low income in reading the terms of privacy.

Variable	Chi-Square value	phi value or Contingency Coefficient	Df	sig
Ages	11.588	.206	3	.009
Nationality	7.689	-.172	1	.006
Incomes	17.540	.251	5	.004

Table (8) Significance shown from the relation between reading the terms of privacy and demographic variables.

Those with the visible profile to friends were the highest in reading the terms of privacy. While those who don't know if their profile visible or not were the highest in not reading the terms of privacy. There was no significant difference between these variables (.132)

The majority added a little number of Applications, groups and pages

The majority added a little number of Applications 54.4% (N=142), groups 48.7% (N=127) and pages 52.1(N=136).

	Applications		Groups		Pages	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	11	4.2	4	1.5	24	9.2
Less than 20	142	54.4	127	48.7	136	52.1
From 20 to 40	46	17.6	47	18.0	37	14.2
From 40 to 60.	19	7.3	48	18.4	22	8.4
From 60 to 80	13	5.0	8	3.1	8	3.1
From 80 to 100	11	4.2	11	4.2	16	6.1
Much More	19	7.3	16	6.1	18	6.9

Table (9) the number of Applications, groups and pages

Sport and student groups were the highest groups joined

They joined different kinds of groups, some groups like Sports (89), Student groups (81), Music (82), Entertainment and art (68), Common interests (67) Celebrities (67), and Religious groups (67) had a high rank, followed by other groups like Organizations (49), Gaming (49), Internet & technology (43), Current Events (42) Geography (places, countries and cities) (30).

Intensity and the group joined

Group	High	Middle	Low	Sig	Value X^2
Religious	7	49	11	.595	1.040
Sports	12	69	8	5.457	.065
Student groups	11	51	19	.093	4.760
Current Events	9	30	3	.113	4.369
Organizations	13	29	7	.023*	7.580
Music	16	50	16	.101	4.585
Places	9	21	0	--	--
Celebrities	14	45	8	.141	3.921
Internet	4	29	10	.280	2.543
Entertainment	14	40	14	.067	5.391
Games	10	37	2	.025*	7.349
Common interests	13	48	6	.098	4.637

Table (10) the relation between intensity and the group joined

The relation between the intensity of facebook use and the kind of groups showed that those who spent a **medium time** on facebook were more likely to join games and organizations groups. The significance between those who joined **organization groups** was (.023) and (.025) for those who joined **games groups**.

Activities in group

The users' main activities in group were just read what is written or watch photos and videos. 32.2% (N=84), then write and Reply to the discussion board or wall 23.8% (N=62) then invite others to join a group 20.7%(N=54) then Send messages to all members as an officer or admin 11.9% (N=31) and finally doing nothing 11.5%(N=30)

Writing in English came in the first place for Arab youth

46.4% (N=121) wrote in English, 29.9% (N=78) used Arabic, 20.7%(N=54) used Arabic in English letters, 3.1%(N=8) wrote with English in Arabic letters.

Almost all of the participants don't prefer to chat on facebook

55.6% (N=145) prefers chatting on hotmail messenger, 27.6% (N=72) prefers chatting on yahoo messenger, 14.9% (N=39) prefers chatting on facebook, 1.5% (4) Google, (1) other.

Half of the sample use facebook when they feel empty or depressed or lonely

56.7% (N=148) used facebook when they felt empty or depressed or lonely, a quarter 25.3% (N=66) when feeling normal, Only 13%(N=34) when Happy with high morale.

feelings	Low		Middle		High		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N.	%
Happy , high morale	3	7.1%	22	12.1%	9	24.3%	34	13.0%
Depressed	2	4.8%	10	5.5%	0	.0%	12	4.6%
Lonely	8	19.0%	18	9.9%	3	8.1%	29	11.1%
Normal	9	21.4%	44	24.2%	13	35.1%	66	25.3%
Empty	19	45.2%	78	42.9%	10	27.0%	107	41.0%
Other	1	2.4%	10	5.5%	2	5.4%	13	5.0%
Total	42	100%	182	100%	37	100%	261	100%

Table (11) the relation between feeling when using facebook and intensity scale

All participants who spent any amount of time on facebook were more likely to use facebook when they felt empty, maybe

to find something that fills their needs. *No significant differences were found in their feelings while using facebook between all demographic variables.*

Uses:

According to the results of "ofcom social networking survey" the researcher based a question about the different types of people from the way they interact with others on facebook.

Their were five types of people,

1-   **Alpha Socializes**:

They consisted of regular users who went on social networking sites often, but for short bursts of time. They searched through the profiles of people they didn't know (usually those of the opposite sex), commented on their pictures in flirtatious ways and added them as friends. For Alpha Socializes, 'friends' on social networking sites were anybody they had added to their friends' list.

2-   **Attention Seekers**:

Most of these users had posted photos of themselves and friends. This type of user was keen to customize their profile. They regularly updated their 'skins' (the style, colors, and design of their site home pages) to reflect an inspirational image

3-   **Followers**:

Users in this group tended look like their friends online – it gave them access to the 'in crowd'. Users in this group were

much less likely than Alpha Socializes or Attention Seekers to contact or meet people who they did not know.

4-   **Faithful:**

These social networking site users had high self-esteem, tended to be settled in their lives and social worlds. Their most regular use of social networking sites consisted of finding old friends rather than making new ones, as they saw social networking sites as an efficient way of keeping in touch with friends and maintaining diverse networks.

5-   **Functional:**

This last group was single-minded in their use of social networking sites. They logged on for a purpose, such as looking for music and bands, rather than conducting small talk, flirting or looking at others' pictures [†]

Most of the sample members said that the best sentence described them on facebook as Followers 47.9%(N=125). Then Faithful 24.5%(N=64). Then Alpha Socializes 14.6%(N=38) and finally, Attention Seekers 8.4 %(N=22), and Functional 4.6%(N=12).

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†

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/socialne tworking/report.pdf. p28-30

Types of interaction	N	%	Gender	Age	Income	Nationality	University	Number
Alpha Socializes	38	14.6	Males	Under grad	Less than 50	Arabs	Governmental	Some
Attention Seekers	22	8.4	Males	Under - post grad	From 200 - 250	Arabs	Private	Some
Followers	125	47.9	Both	Graduates	From 150 - 200	Egyptians	Private	Majority
Faithful	64	24.5	Females	Graduates	From 50 - 100	Egyptians	Governmental	Many
Functional	12	4.6	Females	Freshman post grad	From 50 - 100	Arabs	Private	Minority

Table (12) The types of interaction with others on facebook.

Females were significantly more likely than *males* in *finding old many friends and Logging on for a purpose.* A significant difference (.007) was found between males and females in the types of interacting, as Pearson Chi-Square value (14.006) at a degree of freedom (4) which means a correlation was found between these variables.

Non scientific majors were significantly more likely than *scientific* in *Finding old many friends and Keeping up with many friends.* A significant difference (.017) was found between scientific and non scientific majors in the types of interacting, as Pearson Chi-Square value (12.011) at a degree of freedom (4) which means a correlation was found between these variables. *No significant differences were found between the time spent scale on facebook and the types of people.*

Activities on Facebook

Their typical activities on Facebook varied from Finding out what old friends are doing now (116) Finding people you haven't seen for a while or away from home. (72) Receiving a friend request (67) Joining groups (57) Quizzes.(56) Viewing, tagging or posting photos. (53) Playing games.(42) Looking at the profiles of people you don't know.(42) Meeting new people (36) Seeing what people have put as their status (33) Write on the wall (33) Applications within Facebook. (31) Organizing or joining events (28) Communication with likeminded people (21) Looking at the news feed.(20) Discovering apps because you see friends have added them.(18) Browsing friends of friends. (13) Updating your own status. (13) Using advanced search to look for specific types of people (6) write a biography about yourself (6).

Attitudes towards facebook

Students were asked to react to a number of statements regarding their attitudes towards facebook. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 reflecting a level of strong disagreement, and 5 reflecting a level of strong agreement with the statement, the responses are presented in Table No 10.

The majority of the sample had a natural attitude towards facebook 73.8%(N=193), while 16.9%(N=44) had a negative attitude, and only 9.2%(N=24) had a positive attitude.

Attitudes towards facebook	mean	Std. Deviation
I prefer to send messages by FB more than other networks.	3.43	1.133
Communicating on FB is better than communicating face to face.	2.16	1.151
I pay attention to the ads on Facebook.	2.94	1.185
I set Facebook as my homepage.	2.69	1.300
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	2.99	1.180
Facebook has become part of my daily routine.	2.95	1.255

I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto FB for a while	2.51	1.294
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	3.25	1.340
The new Facebook is much better than the old one.	3.02	1.407

Table No 13 : student attitudes towards facebook

Income differences emerged from the analysis for their attitudes towards facebook: Less than 50 (mean =25.05), From 50 to 100 (mean=25.32) From 100 to 150 (28.37), From 150 to 200 (25.16) From 200 to 250 (27.13) Above 250 (25.02)

Using one way ANOVAs Test, there was a significant between different incomes and their attitudes as F value (2.544) at a degree of freedom (5) with significance (.029) this means there is a correlation between these variables. Those with incomes from 100 to 150 had more positive attitude towards facebook than the others.

Their was a significance (.000) between the intensity of facebook use and their **attitudes**, this means the more the **positive attitude** they have towards facebook the more time **they spend on** it. The relation strength is **medium** as Pearson Correlation value (=.363).

The motives for using facebook were to keep in touch with people I've met online received the largest number of mentions

(153) then To meet new people (109). And to occupy my time (107).

This refers to the deep need for communicating with others. Through sending messages, chatting, or writing on the wall. Facebook succeeded to burn the spare time they have.

Some themes received a medium number of mentions like to entertain myself (75), To share ideas and opinions. (73), Know my friends' Birthdays (56), to send and watch pictures. (39), To find others who have the same interests. (36).

Other themes received a small number of mentions, like to communicate with people who I am interested in romantically (26) to learn and publicize about social events. (21) To help others (15) to communicate with my teachers or to give them the researches and assignments. (13) To watch uploaded videos (12).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore how Arab youth are using Facebook. Using survey data collected at two different campuses, we found that almost third of the sample don't have a facebook account. We think that this percent will grow bigger in the next few months.

The results show that the majority of Arab youth are interested on facebook and spend a long time using it. But they are denying of being addicted to it.

Almost the entire sample is not concerned about privacy issue, as they left their profile visible and added their own photo.

Half of the sample hasn't read the term of using facebook or the privacy policy before creating a profile. There were significant differences in reading the term privacy between different ages, Females and males, different nationalities, and different incomes.

The majority added a little number of Applications, groups and pages. Sport and student groups were the highest groups joined. Half of the sample use facebook when they feel empty or depressed or lonely. But no significant differences were found in their feelings while using facebook between all demographic variables. There was significance between the intensity of facebook use and positive attitudes towards facebook.

Limitations and Directions for Further Study

This study is not without limitations, it tried to understand how Arab youth are using Facebook as well as their attitudes to this form of communication.

For Further Study, Scholars can focus on some issues like privacy, how users see privacy? What kind of information they share about themselves? How do they make new connections?

We can analyze how users use specific features like news feed. We can also examine the role of facebook in making different kinds of relationships. Like the relation between males and females, teachers and students, strangers.

Examining these issues will give us a better understanding for facebook network and its effect on the Arab users.

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