An Investigation of Facebook Usage by University Students in Saudi Arabia

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By

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Abstract

Compared with face-to-face communication, Facebook use may provide opportunities for greater interaction in a relatively uncensored environment. This research aimed to critically investigate how Saudi university students are using these opportunities. It employs a theoretical framework drawn from uses and gratifications theory, social penetration theory, and social role theory.

A mixed methods approach was used over three sequential phases. The research began with a quantitative questionnaire completed by 372 Saudi university students to investigate the gratifications they obtained from using Facebook and to identify a typology of Facebook users. This was followed by thematic and quantitative content analyses of profiles of a sub-sample of 50 students to explore the status updates they generated and the types of information they disclosed. To investigate in greater depth the themes that emerged from the previous phases, a final qualitative interview was conducted with 20 of the students.

The results revealed that, Saudi students used Facebook as a virtual space within which they engaged in several activities. It allowed for cross-cultural and cross-gender communication. Facebook also enabled them to be citizen journalists, sharing, discussing, and analysing current affairs. They as well used Facebook to defend their religious beliefs and advocate Islamic values. Saudi university students showed that they are willing to jeopardise the privacy of their personal information to maximise the rewards they obtain from using Facebook as long as these rewards outweigh the expected costs from such disclosure. Despite belonging to a gender-segregated society, analysis of gender differences conducted across all three research phases revealed that the gap between genders in their Facebook usage is narrower than in offline settings.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Compared with face-to-face communication, social media use may provide opportunities for greater interaction in a relatively uncensored platform. Social media is one of the most popular types of applications to emerge through the technological revolution of Web 2.0 (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010), which enables users to create and exchange content, broadcast ideas, share pictures or videos, express beliefs, establish relationships, and build virtual communities centred on common interests. It has also facilitated communication and resource sharing among individuals, organisations, and communities (Leung 2014). According to Lovink (2013: 58), "Whether or not we are in the midst of yet another internet bubble, we can all agree that social media dominates the use of the internet." The ubiquity and pervasiveness with which social media platforms have been adopted worldwide and the significant part they play in individuals' lives have attracted the attention of media and communication research.

Western and East Asian media and communication scholars interested in understanding why users have adopted and utilised social media have indicated that social media provide users with new platforms through which they can engage in a wider range of activities than they perform offline. They have also highlighted that the patterns of usage of social media platforms may differ depending on the cultural context (Kim, Sohn, and Choi 2011). Individuals in Arab societies have more limited opportunities to engage in offline activities when compared to Westerners and East Asians. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the attraction of social media for Arab users who belong to conservative,

non-Western cultures and the extent to which these platforms may be utilised differently in these cultural contexts.

Among Arab countries, Saudi Arabia is considered to have the most Islamic culture, in which cultural norms and religious values are so intertwined that it is difficult to distinguish between the cultural and religious (Al-Lily 2011). It is the birthplace of Islam: within its borders lie the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and millions of Muslims direct their daily prayers towards its location. Besides its religious centrality in the Islamic world, Saudi Arabia is located in the heart of the Arabic region. These factors have resulted in Saudi society holding norms and values stemming from both Islamic religion and Arabic culture (Yamani 2010). This mixture has shaped Saudis' identities, beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and behaviours (Madini 2012).

While maintaining censorship of Web 1.0 websites (Kraidy 2006), Web 2.0 content and particularly the content generated on social media platforms in Saudi Arabia has remained relatively uncensored (Al-Ibrahim 2012). Of these social media platforms, Facebook is among the most widely adopted by Saudis. Statistics indicate that out of 18 million Saudi Internet users, 8 million are Facebook users, and 70% of these are of university age (CITC 2014; The Social Clinic 2014). Nevertheless, little research has been undertaken to understand the reasons behind Facebook's popularity or the ways in which it is being used. Thus, the current research seeks to fill this gap in knowledge through investigating how Saudi university students are using the opportunities offered by Facebook.

1.2. Research Rationale

'Why' is the fundamental question to ask when investigating the usage of any media or communication tool (Stafford, Stafford, and Schkade 2004). Unlike previous theories that focused on the impact of media tools, uses and gratifications theory has been credited for

shifting the focus of media and communication studies from the media tool itself to the reasons behind its usage in order to provide an answer to this question (Rubin 2009). This theory discards the simplistic notion that users who engage with media content are passive consumers and are monolithically affected by that content. Instead, it argues that they are active, constantly interpreting, discussing, adding to, or even modifying content (Ruggiero 2000). Given that it assumes that users are motivated, purposive, and goal-oriented when using a media tool, this theory has been used to investigate the reasons behind Facebook's popularity (e.g., Bumgarner 2007; Urista, Dong, and Day 2009; Kim, Sohn, and Choi 2011; Whiting and Williams 2013). Although such studies have identified the gratifications obtained from using Facebook, the diverse opportunities offered by its platform highlight a need to construct more nuanced accounts of how users vary in their usage and gratifications.

Brandtzæg and Heim (2011) emphasized that little is known about the characteristics of those who use social media platforms, why they use them, and how they differ from each other in their usage. This is particularly the case with non-Western users. A step towards addressing this shortcoming is to construct a typology of the different ways individuals use Facebook across the range of their obtained gratifications. According to Barnes et al. (2007: 72), "the goal of a typology is to classify diverse behaviour into meaningful categories". Thus, to gain a better understanding of Facebook users, this research analyses the extent to which Saudi university students vary in their usage of Facebook. Such a typology contributes to knowledge about the diversity and inequality of usage patterns of the same media tool across different sub-groups of users from a seemingly homogenous group and what this media tool provides to each sub-group.

One of the main features that Facebook provides is the ability to generate content in a semi-public sphere (Leung 2013). 'User-generated content' expresses this central feature of Facebook, which enables users to actively post, edit, and interact about a range of topics

(Agichtein et al. 2008). Investigating these topics provides a further understanding regarding the reasons for using Facebook. However, reviewing the literature associated with 'user-generated content' reveals only a few, rather limited studies (e.g. Carr, Schrock, and Dauterman 2012; Lin and Qiu 2012; Parkins 2012; Beullens and Schepers 2013). The current research, by contrast, argues that using an inductive, bottom-up approach to investigate status update themes produces a more comprehensive classification of the posts on Facebook profiles.

In order to participate on Facebook, users are required to construct personal profiles within which they are expected to disclose a considerable amount of personal information (Grimmelmann 2009). As Jia, Zhao, and Lin (2010: 529) claim, "the benefits of [Facebook] cannot be completely achieved if [its] users do not disclose enough personal information". Chen and Sharma (2013) echo that information disclosure and sharing are fundamental to the success of social media platforms. Such information can vary from limited disclosure of a personal name to extensive disclosure of private information. Although social media platforms encourage high levels of self-disclosure (Pike, Bateman, and Butler 2009), such behaviour may result in negative consequences for users due to risks that result from exposure of certain types of personal information, including cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking, and identity theft (Stutzman, Gross, and Acquisti 2013).

According to social penetration theory, individuals assess the personal rewards they gain and costs they pay when disclosing personal information while interacting with others (Altman and Taylor 1973). This theory argues that the amount of personal information disclosed is determined by an individual's rational assessment of the potential rewards and costs from engaging in such behaviour (Salleh et al. 2012). By synthesising uses and gratifications theory and social penetration theory, this research investigates whether users view disclosing personal information on Facebook profiles as causing potential costs, and if

they perceive gratifications obtained from using the platform as rewards. Through capturing both sides of the equation, Saudi users' reasons for using Facebook can be comprehensively explored.

As Saudi Facebook users belong to a gender-segregated society, an investigation was made of gender differences in obtained gratifications and levels of self-disclosure. Although users can act online in a way that conforms or contrasts with their offline gendered social roles, few gender studies of Facebook usage have been conducted (e.g., Joinson 2008; Park, Kee, and Valenzuela 2009; Parkins 2012). Of these studies, most have been conducted on users from more open societies. This research contributes to knowledge by investigating whether Saudi university students use the platform in ways that support, lessen, or eliminate gender differences in comparison with their offline social roles.

1.3. Research Aim and Objectives

As Facebook provides opportunities for greater freedom in terms of interaction with others, this research aims to critically investigate how Saudi university students are using these opportunities. The specific research objectives are as follows:

1. To contribute to uses and gratifications research by exploring the gratifications Saudi university students obtain from using Facebook.
2. To strengthen the media and communication literature about the diversification of media-usage patterns across users by constructing a typology of Saudi university student Facebook users.
3. To expand the understanding of user-generated content within social media platforms by identifying the themes of the status updates that Saudi university students generate and share on their Facebook profiles.

4. To add to the field of self-disclosure research by testing the hypothesis that the themes of status updates on Saudi Facebook profiles are correlated with users' levels of personal information disclosure.
5. To consider the impact of offline gendered social roles on users' online behaviours by investigating gender differences in Facebook uses and gratifications among Saudi university students and in their levels of disclosing personal information.

A theoretical framework, combining uses and gratifications, social penetration, and social role theories has been created to address these objectives, and provide a comprehensive and useful approach to interpreting why Saudi university students use Facebook. A three phase, sequential mixed methods approach incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches was followed; phase one was a quantitative research phase, using a questionnaire to investigate how and why Saudi university students use Facebook and to identify a typology of users. This was followed by thematic and quantitative content analysis of users' profiles to explore the status updates they generated and the types of personal information they disclosed. Finally, a qualitative interview was used to further investigate these issues. Adopting this approach enabled the research objectives to be comprehensively addressed. The findings of this research contribute to the body of theoretical, methodological and practical knowledge. Figure 1.1. provides an overview of the research.

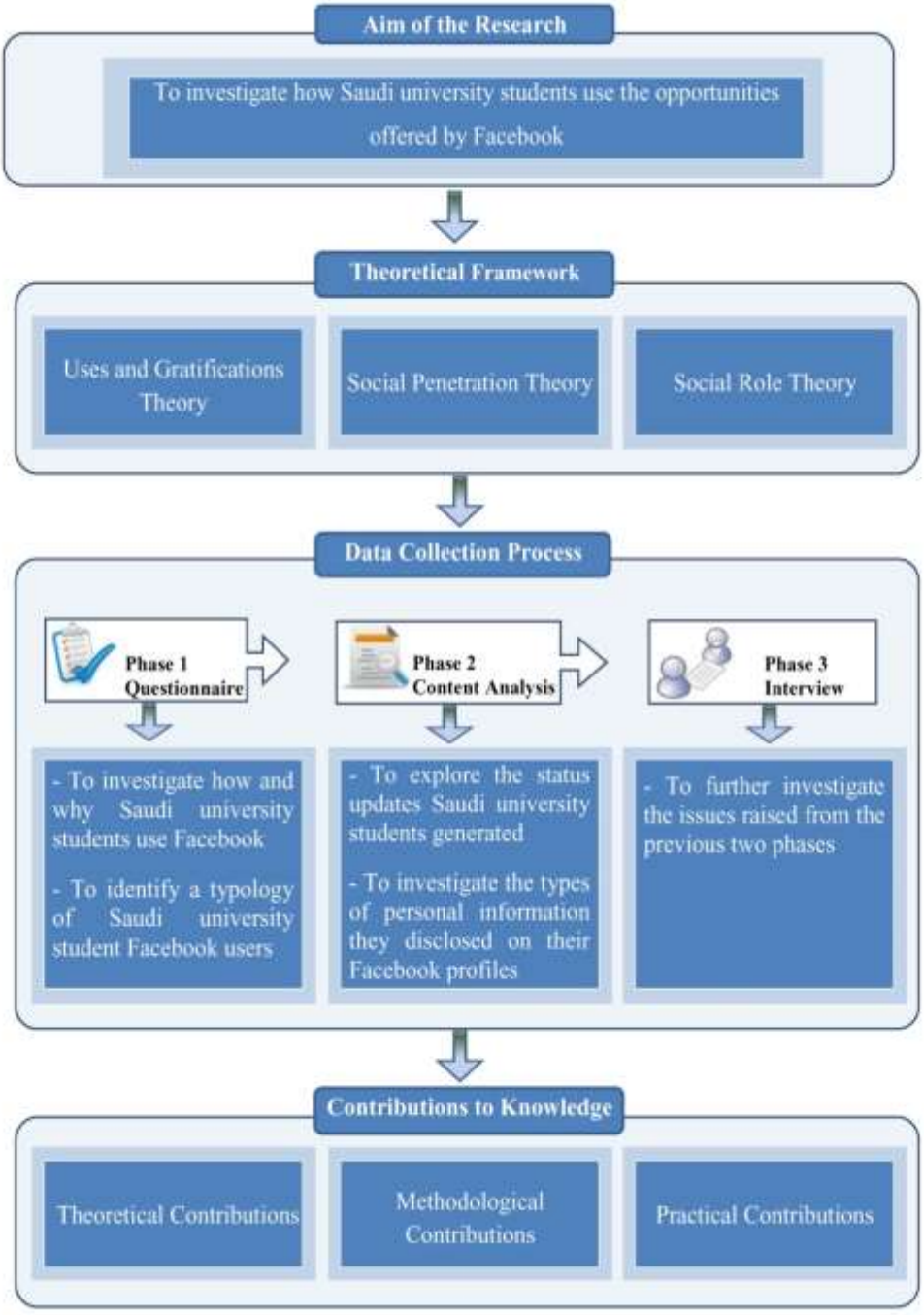

Figure 1. 1 Overview of the Research

1.4. Thesis Outline

The research is presented in seven chapters. The first chapter is the Introduction, which provides an overview of the research - its rationale, aims, objectives, and phases. It closes with an outline of the thesis.

Chapter Two is the literature review which discusses the theoretical framework and provides a review of existing studies on social media in relation to the objectives of this research.

Chapter Three describes the research methodology and fieldwork approaches. It provides details about the research design, paradigm, and population. It discusses cultural, linguistic, and ethical considerations as well as the research phases.

Chapter Four presents the results and discussion of the questionnaires from phase one. It starts by reviewing the demographic and usage variables of the research sample before examining the gratifications Saudi university students obtain from using Facebook and outlining the derived typology of Saudi Facebook users.

Chapter Five presents the phase two results and discussion: an analysis of the status updates generated by Saudi university students on their profiles along with their levels of disclosure. It also presents the relationship between status updates and levels of disclosure of personal information, and the extent to which the status updates reflect reported gratifications.

Chapter Six presents the results and discussion of the interviews from phase three, including findings concerning Saudi university students' opinions about the compatibility of Facebook with Saudi culture. It also examines their reasoning and privacy concerns when disclosing personal information online, and reports their perceptions about discussing social and political issues on Facebook.

Chapter Seven is the concluding chapter. It provides a summary of the main findings and examines them against the research aims and objectives. It also presents the contributions and limitations of the research and recommendations for future research.

1.5. Concluding Summary

This chapter presents the introduction of the research and its rationale in order to reveal the gap in the knowledge. It also indicates the aim, objectives, and phases of the research and ends with an outline of the thesis.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This research aims to investigate how Saudi university students use the opportunities offered by Facebook, synthesising the assumptions from the following theories to form a comprehensive theoretical framework:

- uses and gratifications theory
- social penetration theory
- social role theory.

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework, and provides a review of existing studies on Facebook in relation to the research objectives, followed by a concluding summary.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Uses and Gratifications Theory

In the 1930s and 1940s, the predominant view of the relationship between audiences and media was that media consumption directly and identically affected all audiences, who were generally viewed as naïve, inactive, and powerless to resist the intended effects of such media. This view is reflected in theories such as the 'Magic Bullet Theory' or 'Hypodermic Needle Theory' (Kumar and Thapa 2014). This perspective has been criticised for asserting that media passively injects information into an audience, which then has a minimal role in interpreting its content (Quan-Haase 2012). Uses and gratifications theory offered a counter-

perspective to this, shifting the focus from what media does *to* individuals to what individuals can do *with* media. Blumler and Katz (1940) are often cited as the originators of the theory providing scholars with a means of considering *why* audiences became involved in various forms of media behaviour, such as listening to radio programs and reading newspapers (Rubin 1994). In this early stage, uses and gratifications research was simple and descriptive, attempting only to group participants' statements regarding their expected gratifications into themes, but not identifying possible variables affecting audiences' gratifications (McQuail 1998).

To overcome this limitation, in the 1950s and 1960s, the second stage of the uses and gratifications theory was developed in order to identify potential variables that might cause individuals seek different gratifications from media, such as social class or cultural background (Ruggiero 2000). This development was articulated by Katz (1959) who indicated that even the most effective media content has no significant impact on individuals who have no use for it. He also posited that individuals have the ability to select what they see and hear according to their desires and needs, and that their values, interests, associations, and social roles play a significant part in shaping these. Nevertheless, during its second stage, the theory was limited to concentrating on the needs individuals sought to gratify from utilising the media, ignoring actual outcomes or obtained gratifications (Wimmer and Dominick 2011).

Reflecting this gap, the third stage of the theory's development in the 1970s saw researchers focused on obtained gratifications and the impact of these on strengthening or weakening the connection with self, family, or society (Rubin 1994). Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974: 515-517) outlined five fundamental assumptions which emerged in the theory's development which strengthened the theoretical frame: (1) audiences are active; (2) much of the initiative in linking need gratification and media choice lies with the audience

member; (3) audiences have diverse needs that can be satisfied in different ways and media tools compete to be the source of this satisfaction; (4) audiences are aware of their needs and self-reporting methods provide accurate data about media use and (5) value judgments about the cultural significance of mass communication should be postponed in this early stage. At this stage, it was thus believed that the focus should be exclusively on determining the value of media content and that studying the cultural implications of that content should be postponed until a solid understanding of gratifications had been formed.

In refining the theory in the 1980s, scholars made systematic attempts to replicate or expand upon previous research, improve methodology, conduct meta-analyses (Rubin 1983, Wimmer and Dominick 2011) and re-evaluate long-held assumptions, such as the notion that audiences are active (Ruggiero 2000). For instance, Rubin (1984) argued that audiences' agency should not be taken for granted and the level of activity should be viewed as varying on a continuum from passivity to activity. Thus, audience activity is based on rational decision making and assessment of content (Rubin 2009).

In what is seen as the fourth stage of the theory during the 1990s, Rubin (1994: 428) revised Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch's (1974) five assumptions (outlined above) to provide a contemporary view of uses and gratifications theory summarised in five new points. He echoed earlier assumptions that audiences are active and purposive in selecting and using media tools to their advantage but additionally argued that (1) individuals' communicational behaviour, including the selection and use of media, is goal-directed and purposive; (2) individuals initiate the selection and use of communication and media tools to satisfy their felt needs or desires; (3) several factors guide, filter or mediate media and communication behaviour (4); the media compete with other forms of media, or functional alternatives such as interpersonal interaction, for selection, attention, and use, to aid individuals in gratifying their needs or wants and (5) individuals are usually more influential than the media.

Rubin (1994) also pointed out that while self-report scales were seen as consistent and accurate in the 1970s, uses and gratifications researchers used experimental, ethnographic and diary/narrative methods to develop and extend conceptual, focused, and systematic lines of uses and gratifications inquiry. He further indicated that given the clearer understanding of gratifications (see point 2 above), it was time to include questions relating to cultural issues. Following this recommendation, media and communication research in general and uses and gratifications research in particular started to combine media and cultural studies, highlighting the role of the cultural context in influencing individuals' interactions with the media.

The fifth and current phase of uses and gratifications theory began in the late 1990s with an increased interest in internet studies. Ruggiero (2000) argues that the Internet possesses at least three characteristics that make it ideally suitable for study using uses and gratifications theory. These [new] characteristics are 1) interactivity - providing new means of communication and opportunities to engage in a range of online activities, 2) de-massifying –enabling users to select from a wide range of media content and alter content according to their needs, and 3) asynchroneity –enabling users to send, receive, save, or retrieve messages on their own time schedule. Ruggiero (2000) indicates that these features, although non-traditional, are in line with uses and gratifications theory's fundamental assumption that media audiences are active in initiating and using a media tool, and with the proposition that they influence the content of the media they use more than they are affected by the media.

In this current phase, researchers also emphasise the need to modify uses and gratifications theory's concepts of the active audience in order for this to be more accurate and applicable to Internet studies. It is argued that in the case of Internet usage, all users are active but have different levels of activity (Dicken-Garcia 1998). For instance, some Internet users are highly active and goal-directed in their usage, while others may only use it out of

curiosity or for entertainment. Uses and gratifications scholars also indicate that the concept of the audience should be altered to encompass individuals' interactive roles. In addition, as Internet technology includes text, audio, and video services that converge into one medium that may gratify multiple needs, scholars have started to replace the term audience with users (Wimmer and Dominick 2011).

Thus Ruggiero (2000) asserts that uses and gratifications theory can provide a cutting-edge theoretical approach in the early stages of all new media whether this is visual, text or audio based, considering social media one of the newest media tools. Scholars have increasingly adopted uses and gratifications theory when investigating social media platforms in general and Facebook in particular (e.g., Bumgarner 2007; Urista, Dong, and Day 2009; Kim, Sohn, and Choi 2011; Whiting and Williams 2013).

Although this theory appears to provide a suitable theoretical framework and methodological approach from which to investigate users' gratifications on social media platforms (Quan-Haase 2012), it has not been immune to criticism such as the reliance on self-reported data and the lack of clarity of its central concepts. According to Rubin (2009), the current criticisms are merely a repetition of arguments levelled against the earlier iterations of the theory (e.g., Elliott 1974; Lometti, Reeves and Bybee 1977; Swanson 1977).

However, to address these criticisms, researchers have attempted to prove the validity of self-reporting methods by measuring the test-retest reliability of their scales. They have also used ethnographic and diary/narrative methods to measure gratifications (Rubin 2009). The lack of clarity resulting from the interchangeable use of key concepts such as 'uses', 'gratifications', 'needs', and 'motivations' has been reduced by providing a definition of adopted concepts (Ruggiero 2000). To further strengthen and widen the theoretical framework of uses and gratifications theory, McQuail (1998) recommended using the theory in combination with other theories from the social science disciplines.

The current research systematically adopted and maintained the usage of the 'gratification' concept throughout, which is defined in this research as the fulfilment of a need gained from utilising a media tool. The questionnaire used in the first phase of this research was analysed for its test–retest reliability and results were compared to findings from the content analysis phase. Rather than ignoring individual differences, the research sought to investigate and explain the ways in which a fairly homogenous group of Saudi university students varied in their usage of Facebook according to their demographic characteristics, usage patterns, and obtained gratifications.

Although uses and gratification theory provided an understanding of the gratifications obtained from using Facebook, it did not help in investigating other important issues related to Facebook usage, such as the evaluation of the costs in terms of personal information disclosure, or gender differences in Facebook usage. A richer picture of Facebook usage can be provided through synthesising the assumptions of the social penetration theory of self-disclosure and the social role theory of gender differences with uses and gratifications theory's assumptions to construct the theoretical framework for this research.

2.2.2. Social Penetration Theory of Self-Disclosure

In the 1970s, researchers were becoming interested in understanding the processes involved in self-disclosure. This was reflected in Cozby's (1973) classic definition of self-disclosure as any personal information that someone verbally communicates to someone else. Cozby presented self-disclosure as a process and suggested that this process impinges on both the person who reveals and the person who receives the information.

Around the same time, Altman and Taylor (1973) developed social penetration theory, following the social exchange perspective of Thibaut and Kelley (1959). Altman and Taylor were interested in investigating individuals' levels of disclosed personal information and the role of costs and rewards in determining such disclosure within a definite setting.

Their theory assumed that individuals were rational beings, constantly trying to maximise rewards and minimise costs.

Disclosure within social penetration theory is considered as having two dimensions: breadth and depth. Breadth refers to the amount of information individuals reveal about themselves or the number of topics they disclose, while depth refers to the degree of sensitivity of the disclosed information. The theory posits that there is a linear increase in both the breadth and depth of self-disclosure when individuals expect favourable outcomes from the disclosure. The 'onion analogy' is used to explain such an increase: individuals start with the outer layers, disclosing basic information about themselves, and when they experience rewards that outweigh any cost, they reveal more sensitive inner layers of their personal information (Altman and Taylor 1973). Individuals do not reveal sensitive information about themselves and shed these layers all at once. Instead, they tend to maintain protective outer layers around a central core that signifies their inner selves until they obtain rewards that lead them to take the risk of revealing more about themselves.

Since its articulation, several attempts have been made to examine the assumptions of social penetration theory in offline one-to-one communication as well as in one-to-many interactions (e.g., Morton 1978; Hays 1985; Hammer and Gudykunst 1987; Labianca and Brass 2006). Nevertheless, the theory has been criticised for its proposition that individuals are rational beings in their one-to-one interactions. Critics argue that individuals are not always rational in evaluating the rewards and costs they experience from disclosing personal information when it comes to intimate interactions (Strom 2002; Kim and Yun 2007). As these criticisms are directed towards the applicability of social penetration theory within one-to-one interactions, it is worth investigating whether individuals tend to be rational in their self-disclosure behaviour in one-to-many communicational settings.

With the development of internet technologies in general and the diffusion of social

media in particular, the applicability of this classic offline theory to online settings has been tested (Wang et al. 2012) scholars arguing that it provides a suitable framework for studying self-disclosure in social media contexts. Several studies have confirmed the assumptions of the theory in online social media contexts, both in one-to-one interaction (e.g. Cho 2010; McEwan 2011; Kim et al. 2012; Chen and Sharma 2013; Limperos et al. 2014) and one-to-many communications (e.g., Thotho 2010; Tang and Wang 2012; Jin 2013; Olson 2013).

While users of social media platforms are not required to disclose a specific amount of personal information, this research investigates whether the gratifications (or 'rewards' in the terminology of social penetration theory) they obtain from initial disclosure encourage them to disclose increasingly deeper layers of personal information. Several costs have been identified as the result of disclosing such information Gross and Acquisti (2005) identify three such costs, involving the hosting site, the user's friends, or third parties. The hosting site, in this case social media service providers, can easily access users' information and collect data about them. Members of the user's network can misuse disclosed information, which could lead to online stalking, bullying, stigmatisation, identity fraud, criminal charges, and sexual predation. Third parties, from hackers to governmental agencies, can access a user's information for their own purposes with or without the hosting site's direct agreement. Further, according to Christofides, Muise, and Desmarais (2009), making the choice between the concealment and disclosure of personal information and determining the depth and breadth of disclosure is a balancing act between costs and rewards for the individuals involved.

Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) developed a classification of disclosed personal information specific to Facebook which is compatible with social penetration theory. They divided personal information into three broad levels according to its sensitivity: basic personal identifying information, sensitive personal information, and potentially stigmatising

personal information. This research investigates whether users are aware of the potentially negative consequences of disclosing personal information and the extent to which they are concerned about the privacy of their disclosed information, in order to reveal the extent to which such concerns might deter them from sharing their personal information online. It also utilises Nosko et al's, taxonomy to empirically explore the depth and breadth of personal information disclosed on the Facebook profiles of Saudi university students.

Therefore, adopting social penetration theory aids in investigating the extent to which Saudi university students reveal information about their personal lives on Facebook and their ways of maintaining the balance between rewards and costs in this virtual setting. However, like uses and gratifications theory, this theory does not consider gender differences in users' disclosure behaviour, and therefore the social role theory of gender differences has been included in the theoretical framework to address this issue.

2.2.3. Social Role Theory of Gender Differences

From the late eighteenth century until the 1980s, gender studies have evolved from investigating gender differences in intelligence to looking at gender as a social construct (Ashmore and Sewell 1998). Scholars of gender differences in 1980s started to argue that gender-related beliefs and behaviour are rooted in society's categorisation of individuals as male or female, and were interested in the many cultural, organisational, and interpersonal systems associated with this categorisation. Thus, gender difference should be understood in terms of the person in a social context (Ashmore and Sewell 1998). The essential argument of Eagly's (1987) social role theory is that gender differences are mainly due to the adoption of gender roles that determine suitable qualities and behaviours for males and females in a given society. It assumes that each society has stereotypical gender roles, defined as the shared expectations of male and female qualities and behaviours, which are adopted, maintained, and dominated by social norms (Eagly 1987).

These social roles can be explained through two sets of social norms: descriptive norms, which define the understandings of the characteristics and behaviours that are stereotypically adopted according to social roles, and injunctive norms, which define the understandings of the qualities and behaviours that are stereotypically accepted or criticised. Thus, while descriptive norms lead individuals to look to the characteristics and behaviours of those of their own gender to decide the suitable way to behave in a specific situation, injunctive norms serve as guidelines to which qualities and behaviours elicit approval or disapproval from others (Cialdini, Kallgren, and Reno 1991). Together, descriptive and injunctive norms assist in assuring males' and females' compliance to their traditional social roles, since deviations would result in unfavourable social outcomes (Luhaorg and Zivian 1995).

Social role theory indicates that most societies have historically categorised males as responsible for labour-intensive tasks, which has led them to possess the qualities and behaviours associated with this social role. By contrast, females are socially categorised for supportive, interpersonal tasks, such as child-rearing, which also affect their characteristics and behaviours (Eagly, Wood, and Diekman 2000). As a result of this division, males tend to have agentic qualities and be assertive, controlling, independent, rational, individual, autonomous, closed, expressionless, and unemotional. Females, on the other hand, hold more communal qualities, and their behaviours tend to be more concerned with the welfare of others; they tend to be interpersonally sensitive, emotionally expressive, open, empathetic, revealing, dependent, and vulnerable (Eagly and Karau 2002). As modern societies differ in the expected roles assigned to each gender, it is expected that the differences in the qualities and behaviours of females and males are determined by the extent to which there is a division between their social roles (Eagly and Wood 1999).

Archer and Lloyd (2002) indicated that social role theory, in its early days, was

criticised by some scholars who argued that social roles alone cannot account for gender differences, and pointed to the importance of biological characteristics. To address this criticism and support the assumptions of social role theory, Eagly and Wood (1999) reanalysed the data and the results of a classic biology-based study conducted by Buss et al. (1990) on a sample of 37 cultures regarding gender differences in mate selection. The results revealed that in societies where the division of social roles between genders is not significant, females and males tend to have similar qualities and behaviours, which confirms that social roles are the driving force in gender differences. Using a United Nations database that indexes gender inequality for participating nations, Eagly and Wood (1999) also confirmed these findings.

With the development of Internet technologies and the rising popularity of social media platforms, a significant new area of research has emerged to explore the nature of gendered differences (Kimbrough et al. 2013). As it may be hypothesised that gendered social roles could be reflected in users' online behaviours, scholars have started to apply social role theory to social media, finding it a suitable approach for understanding gender differences (e.g., Chesley and Fox 2012; Chakraborty, Vishik, and Rao 2013; Fawzi and Szymkowiak 2014). Haferkamp et al. (2012) point out that it is plausible to assume that some gender differences identified in face-to-face settings are likely to be replicated on social media and that further investigation is required to identify these differences. Thus, it is argued that social role theory provides a suitable framework to understand the extent to which Saudi university students, who belong to a gender-segregated society, may continue to behave online according to their offline social roles.

2.2.4. Synthesising Uses and Gratifications Theory, Social Penetration Theory, and Social Role Theory

Durham and Kellner (2009) indicate that adopting multiple theories within a single media research project assists in grasping varied dimensions of the investigated phenomenon, providing comprehensive understanding of the topic. It is liberating to understand that there is no single, correct theory that can explain every aspect of the phenomenon under investigation. Instead, there are multiple theories, grounded in different assumptions about this phenomenon, each with its own strengths and weaknesses (Bruce 2010). This research argues that synthesising uses and gratifications theory, social penetration theory, and social role theory provides a better understanding of how Saudi university students use the opportunities offered by Facebook. These three theories share roots in social psychology and have been widely applied to media and communication research.

In terms of this research, uses and gratifications theory's main assumption that users are purposive, goal-oriented, and motivated when selecting and using a media tool assists in identifying the gratifications Saudi university students obtain from using Facebook. The theory also assumes that the active role of users in utilising and generating Facebook content is more influential than the platform itself. Social penetration theory assists in capturing the depth and breadth of personal information that needs to be disclosed in order to maximise obtained gratifications from engaging with Facebook's platform. Since both theories fundamentally assume that users are purposive in their behaviour and rational in the amount of information they disclose, combining them enables an investigation to be made of both the gratifications Saudi university students obtain from using Facebook as constituting rewards and their disclosed personal information as causing potential costs, and the extent to which these factors influence their intention to continue using Facebook. Adding social role theory provides insight into whether Saudi males and females obtain the same rewards and perceive

similar potential costs when using Facebook, as well as whether their online behaviours mirror their expected offline roles.

2.3. Previous Studies on Facebook

This section provides a review of existing studies on Facebook in relation to the objectives of this research. It reviews the studies that investigate Facebook-obtained gratifications, status updates, self-disclosure and gender differences in these variables. This section ends by presenting the studies that have been conducted among Saudi Facebook users in particular.

2.3.1. Facebook-Obtained Gratifications

As Facebook becomes more integrated into individuals' everyday lives (Lin, Fan, and Chau 2014), scholars from different cultures (e.g. the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Turkey, South Africa, Somalia, China, Korean, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, India, and Iran) have adopted uses and gratifications theory to investigate the gratifications obtained from its use. The current section focuses on studies most relevant to this research and its sample of university students as presented in table 2.1. See Appendix A for a comprehensive overview of studies of Facebook-obtained gratifications.

Authors	Year	Obtained Gratifications
Bumgarner	2007	diversion; personal expression; connection; directory; voyeurism; social utility; popularity; initiating relationships
Foregger	2008	pass time; connection; sexual attraction; utilities and upkeeps; establish/maintain old ties; accumulation; social comparison; channel use and networking
Joinson	2008	connection; shared identities; photographs; content; social investigation; social network surfing; status updating
Raacke and Bonds-Raacke	2008	keep in touch with old friends; keep in touch with current friends; post/look at pictures; make new friends; locate old friends; learn about events; post social functions; feel connected; share information about oneself; academic purposes; dating
Sheldon	2008	relationship maintenance; pass time; virtual community; entertainment; coolness; companionship
Urista, Dong and Day	2009	efficient communication; convenient communication; curiosity about others; popularity; relationship formation reinforcement
Bonds-Raacke and Raacke	2010	Information; friendship connection
Gülnar, Balcı and Çakır	2010	narcissism and self-expression; view and share photos; pass time; information seeking; personal status; relationship maintenance; entertainment
Quan-Haase and Young	2010	pass time; affection; fashion; share problems; sociability; social information
Cheung, Chiu and Lee	2011	social identify; purpose value; self-discovery; maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity; social enhancement; entertainment; social presence
Kim, Sohn and Choi	2011	seeking friends; social support; entertainment; information; convenience
Zhang, Tang and Leung	2011	surveillance; entertainment; recognition; emotional support; networking; relationship maintenance
Alhabash et al.	2012	social connection; shared identities; photographs; contents; social investigation; social network surfing; status updates
Gadekar, Krishnatray and Gaur	2012	relationship maintenance; user-friendliness; relaxation; connecting with old friends; social interaction
Hew and Cheung	2012	keeping in touch with friends; entertainment; broadening the social network; expressing emotions; following the trend/crowd; for fun/for the sake of having a Facebook account
Hunt, Atkin and Krishnan	2012	interpersonal utility; self-expression; entertainment; pass time
Tosun	2012	maintain relationships; entertainment; photo-related activities; organizing social activities; establishing new friendships; initiating and/or terminating romantic relationships
Wang, Tchernev and Solloway	2012	emotional needs; cognitive needs; social needs; habitual needs
Xu et al.	2012	coordination; disclosure; escape; immediate access; leisure; stylishness
Alemdar and Köker	2013	social surveillance; recognition; emotional support; social connectivity; entertainment; narcissism; ease of use; freedom; adaptation to new challenges
Balakrishnan and Shamim	2013	networking; psychological benefits; entertainment, self-presentation; skill enhancement
Chigona	2013	keeping in touch with friends; diversion, entertainment and pass time; find friends from past relationships; voyeurism; self-expression; social utility
Dhaha and Igale	2013	virtual companionship and escape; interpersonal entertainment; self-description of own country; self-expression; information seeking; pass time
Ku, Chen and Zhang	2013	information; entertainment; fashion; sociability; relationship maintenance
Kwon, D'Angelo and McLeod	2013	information seeking; entertainment; communication; social relations; escape; Facebook applications
Jackson and Wang	2013	keeping in touch with parents and other family members; keeping in touch with friends; connecting with people known but rarely seen; meeting new people; obtaining information
Pai and Arnott	2013	belonging; hedonism; self-esteem; reciprocity
Patra, Gadekar, and Krishnatray	2013	relationship maintenance; user-friendliness; relaxation; connecting with old friends
Whiting and Williams	2013	social interaction; information seeking; pass time; entertainment; communication; convenience; expression of opinion; information sharing; surveillance
Yang and Brown	2013	relationship formation; relationship maintenance
Alhabash, Chiang, and Huang	2014	information sharing; self-documentation; social interaction; entertainment; passing time; self-expression; medium appeal
Karimi et al.	2014	interpersonal utility; pass time; entertainment; information seeking; convenience

Table 2. 1Facebook-obtained Gratifications Studies

Reviewing the studies reveals that studies of gratifications obtained from Facebook emerged three years after its launch in 2004 and continue to the present day. The studies have been carried out in many countries, with the majority conducted in the United States, followed by Asia, Turkey, and Africa. Cross-cultural studies have mainly compared American and Asian samples, with the exception of a study by Karimi et al. (2014) conducted among Iranian, Malaysian, British, and South African students. The studies used quantitative or qualitative methods, or a combination of the two. The sample sizes ranged from 28 participants to 4348 participants. However, although studies of Facebook-obtained gratifications involving university students have been taking place for almost a decade, no known study has been conducted on an Arabic sample.

Most studies have been conducted in order to understand why users have become so highly engaged with Facebook. Besides revealing the obtained gratifications, some scholars have considered the effects of gratifications on users' intensity of Facebook use and their intentions to continue using its platform (i.e., Alhabash et al. 2012; Chigona 2013; Ku, Chen, and Zhang 2013; Alhabash, Chiang, and Huang 2014), while others have investigated obtained gratifications in order to measure the impact on psychological or sociological variables such as social adjustment (i.e., Sheldon 2008; Zhang, Tang, and Leung 2011; Hunt, Atkin and Krishnan 2012; Tosun 2012; Balakrishnan and Shamim 2013; Kwon, D'Angelo, and McLeod 2013; Patra, Gadekar, and Krishnatray 2013; Yang and Brown 2013).

The current research matches the first group of obtained gratifications studies in that it attempts to reveal the gratifications obtained from using Facebook. However, it differs from previous studies in that it considers the extent to which users who belong to an Islamic conservative culture differ in their Facebook usage. This research is also in line with the second set of studies, as it investigates the role of these obtained gratifications in users' decisions to continue using Facebook. The present research also considers individuals'

evaluation of the expected costs and rewards as a potential factor affecting their decision. It matches the third group of studies in that it examines the relationship between the obtained gratifications and several background and usage variables.

Ruggiero (2000) recommends the use of questionnaires in uses and gratifications research because they allow the quantification and rank ordering of gratifications. The majority of studies have utilised a questionnaire (online or offline), either alone or in combination with more qualitative methods. The number of participants has ranged from 8 to 50, as such it is difficult to generalise the results of some studies beyond the sample population and/or their time and context because of the rapid expansion and diversification of Facebook usage. In addition, some of the reviewed studies display a gender bias either towards females (i.e., Foregger 2008; Joinson 2008; Bonds-Raacke and Raacke 2010; Quan-Haase and Young 2010; Cheung, Chiu, and Lee 2011; Alhabash et al. 2012; Hew and Cheung 2012; Tosun 2012; Kwon, D'Angelo and McLeod 2013) or males (i.e., Dhaha and Igale 2013), which some of these studies acknowledge as a limitation.

The findings from cross-cultural studies show that while samples tend to obtain similar gratifications from using Facebook, cultural factors play a role in altering the value of these gratifications. For instance, Ku, Chen, and Zhang's (2013) study reveals that the main gratification American users obtained from Facebook is relationship maintenance whereas Taiwanese users' most commonly obtained gratification is entertainment. It is worth noting that there are no major differences among the findings of studies that have been conducted within the same culture over time, such as studies with American samples (i.e., Raacke and Bonds-Raacke 2008; Urista, Dong and Day 2009; Hunt, Atkin and Krishnan 2012; Kwon, D'Angelo, and McLeod 2013). Their findings reveal similar gratifications, varying by two or three gratifications within each study.

All of the above studies have focused on the empirical aspects of uses and gratification theory. They did not attempt to contribute to the conceptual foundations of the theory by reviewing or suggesting further modifications to its assumptions. Focusing on the revealed gratifications obtained from Facebook, it appears that in some cases researchers have used different terms to convey similar meanings. For example, Joinson (2008) and Alhabash et al. (2012) used the term 'social investigation' in their findings to indicate that Facebook has been used to satisfy the need to gather information about others. Zhang, Tang and Leung (2011) and Alemdar and Köker (2013) used the term 'social surveillance', while Urista, Dong and Day (2009) used 'curiosity about others' and Bumgarner (2007) used the term 'voyeurism' to convey the same meaning. While these findings show that uses and gratifications researchers have been flexible in assigning terms that are considered suitable to the revealed gratifications, critics have considered such diversity a limitation that makes it difficult to compare results.

A further criticism directed at some studies is the use of a pre-prepared list of gratifications from which to choose (i.e., Bumgarner 2007; Raacke and Bonds-Raacke 2008; Sheldon 2008; Bonds-Raacke and Raacke 2010; Quan-Haase and Young 2010; Alhabash et al. 2012; Jackson and Wang 2013). Although clearly this helps to cut down the inclusion of non-appropriate items, it may also lead to bias as participants are not free to explain why they use Facebook. A recommended approach to avoid this limitation, adopted by this research, is to build the research questionnaire using both items developed in previous studies and information from preliminary focus group sessions with participants from the same population.

Reviewing uses and gratifications studies assisted in guiding the research to avoid known limitations of uses and gratification studies. Rubin (1994) recommended that future uses and gratifications studies give more attention to cultural significance. The review has

shown a continued lack of and need for studies from Islamic or even conservative cultures. This research attempts to fill this gap by investigating the gratifications Saudi university students obtain from using Facebook. Previous studies have also failed to analyse how participants vary in their involvement with Facebook by looking at patterns of the obtained gratifications to show if, for example, identifiably different groups use Facebook to gratify different needs. Thus, this research attempts to take a step forward in uses and gratifications research by constructing a typology of users based on the different ways Saudi university students use Facebook across a range of obtained gratifications. The findings from such an analysis contribute not only to the uses and gratifications field but also to the body of knowledge about media usage patterns across users.

2.3.2. Status Updates on Facebook

Generating and sharing content, particularly the ability to share status updates on Facebook, has challenged traditional media sources by enabling individuals to express views and opinions formerly marginalised by corporate media (Leung 2009). Despite the fact that the status update feature is being widely utilised by Facebook users (Dang et al. 2014), few scholars have analysed the content generated by Facebook users in the form of these updates.

Some of the existing studies analyse the linguistic units of the status updates, either by investigating the applicability of speech act theory to users' statuses or analysing semantic patterns (e.g. Carr, Schrock, and Dauterman 2012; Ilyas and Khushi 2012; Lin and Qiu 2013; Tomlinson, Hinote, and Bracewell 2013). Others have examined the emotional words mentioned in the status updates, either by using linguistics software to compute the frequency of positive and negative emotional words in participants' status updates or by manually categorising these words as being negative, neutral, or positive (e.g. Lin and Qiu 2012; Parkins 2012; Galioto, Hughes, and Zuo 2014; Wang et al. 2014).

Other scholars have focussed on a specific theme of status updates, such as political or alcohol-related references. For example, several scholars from the political perspective were mainly interested in studying Facebook statuses regarding the 2008 US presidential election to understand users' voting behaviour and political engagement (e.g., Fernandes et al. 2010; Carlisle and Patton 2013). Similarly, Beullens and Schepers (2013) focused on how alcohol use is depicted in status updates and photos on Facebook and how Facebook friends respond to alcohol-related status updates.

A few studies have widened their scope to identifying and analysing the topics shared in users' Facebook status updates (e.g. Denti et al. 2012; Wang, Burke, and Kraut 2013; Winter et al. 2014). As the current research will investigate the various themes of status updates Saudi university students generate and share on their Facebook profiles, these studies are the most relevant to its scope.

Utilising self-reported questionnaires, Denti et al. (2012) surveyed 1011 Swedish Facebook users to examine which activities they consider important; how they express their personalities through sharing status updates, including status themes and reasons for updating statuses; and the relationship between Facebook usage to both self-esteem and well-being. The results reveal that a large majority of respondents indicated that their status updates are typically about both major and positive events in their lives. It was less common to generate updates about private or negative events, relationships, or negative feelings. While the results of this study provided a number of topics of users' status updates, its major limitation is that it based its results on data collected via a self-reported, quantitative questionnaire, which may not reflect the actual diversity of status update topics generated by the sample.

In a content analysis study, Wang, Burke, and Kraut (2013) utilised Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) - a statistical generative method that looks for clusters of co-occurring words to discover hidden topics - in order to classify topics from about half a million

Facebook status updates and to define which topics receive more feedback from other users. Twenty-five status update themes emerged from this analysis: "sleep, food, clothing, home, work, weather/travel, family fun, girlfriend/boyfriend, birthday, Father's Day, sports, politics, love, thankfulness, anticipation, asking for support/prayers, medical, memorial, negativity about people, complaining, thoughts, Christianity, religious imagery, and slang and swearing" (Wang, Burke, and Kraut 2013: 32). A major drawback of this study is that LDA generates topics from the frequently co-occurred words automatically, which may not provide as deep an understanding of these topics as human judges manually annotating a smaller corpus. LDA also does not differentiate between topic style and substance.

Combining questionnaire and content analysis, Winter et al. (2014) related some of users' self-reported personality traits (i.e., extraversion, narcissism, self-efficacy, need to belong, need for popularity) to their use of Facebook status updates. They administered an online questionnaire to 173 European participants assessing personality variables and Facebook use. Participants were asked to post their last three original status updates (as textual messages) in text fields and each status update was categorised according to the following scheme: depth of self-disclosure, self-promoting content, appropriate content, disclosure of emotions, and topics. To assess the topical dimension of status updates, the authors developed a coding scheme comprised of eight categories: leisure time activities, social life/interpersonal relationships, entertainment, societal issues, work/school/university, congratulations, personal issues, and miscellaneous. The most frequent topics among the analysed status updates were personal issues, followed in order by social life/interpersonal relationships, entertainment, congratulations, leisure time activities, work/school/university, miscellaneous, and societal issues. A major limitation of this study is that participants were asked to post only their last three status updates in the questionnaire. This copy-and paste-procedure may have allowed participants to pre-select their status updates. In addition, using

only three statuses for analysis may not adequately reflect the diversity of users' status update themes over time.

The above review indicates that these three studies (Denti et al. 2012: self-reported questionnaires; Wang, Burke, and Kraut 2013: content analysis; and Winter et al. 2014: questionnaire and content analysis) either investigated a considerable number of status updates utilising a statistical generative method, or investigated a very limited number of status updates manually. Although a statistical generative method such as LDA may enable the researcher to analyse a large amount of data, saving time and effort, such methods still have a number of limitations. For instance, the processes performed by such methods are mechanical and fail to provide an in-depth analysis of the meaning of the collected data. In terms of the current research, they also do not support linguistic analysis of Arabic effectively due to the complexity of the morphological structure of Arabic (Arabic words are formed by a process of agglutination). To avoid these limitations, this research utilises a thematic content analysis method and inductive bottom-up approach in investigating the themes of status updates Saudi university students generate and share on their Facebook profiles in order to expand the understanding of user-generated content within social media platforms.

2.3.3. Self-Disclosure on Facebook

Several studies have investigated the self-disclosure behaviour of university students on Facebook. Some of these have attempted to investigate one or both dimensions of self-disclosure (breadth and depth) while others have focused on the relationship between privacy and disclosure. A review of these studies is provided below.

Focusing mainly on the breadth of self-disclosure, Kolek and Saunders (2008) used quantitative content analysis to examine the disclosure behaviour of 50 identifiable information items among a random sample of American university students' Facebook profiles (n = 464). The results revealed that students disclosed a substantial proportion of

their identifiable information, including contact residence information, course schedules, positive mentions of their university, and images of students drinking alcohol. The study also showed that a leak of the disclosed information to unknown viewers could lead to positive or negative consequences but it did not investigate how participants regarded the potential impacts of such disclosure behaviour or how they would modify their behaviour in light of such consequences.

Using social penetration theory, Thotho (2010) conducted a cross-cultural content analysis of 500 Kenyans' and Americans' Facebook profiles to compare the breadth of information they disclosed online. The results revealed that users from both cultures tended to disclose their demographic variables, but that Kenyans were more likely to use a self-portrait on their profiles and disclosed more information about their religious and political views. On the other hand, a much higher percentage of Americans revealed their full date of birth and information about their college education, such as college name and year of enrolment. Users from both cultures showed low levels of disclosure of their contact information. This study highlighted the role of culture in revealing religious and political affiliations by comparing self-disclosure behaviour between a relatively conservative culture (Kenyan) and a more liberal one (American). While she indicated that her study aimed to adopt the assumptions of social penetration theory, Thotho (2010) did not analyse the disclosed information according to its breadth and depth.

Day (2013) also conducted a cross-cultural study to compare how willing Facebook users are to disclose personal information among a sample from Canada, India, Portugal, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (n = 27). Although the majority indicated that they disclosed information about their daily lives, the results showed that they did not share problems relating to personal relationships, health, work, family matters, or religious beliefs. While this study did not classify the disclosed information according to its sensitivity, the

findings demonstrated that users avoided disclosing information related to their problems, which may indicate that they are rational in their decisions about sharing some information and avoiding the disclosure of other information.

Olson (2013) adopted social penetration theory and utilised both questionnaire and focus group methods with American participants to investigate the reasons why users disclose personal information on Facebook and how this affects their self-esteem. Eighty-one participants responded to the survey and reported that they disclose their positive qualities on Facebook because this makes them feel good. The 15 focus group participants also indicated that such disclosure on Facebook had a positive effect on their self-esteem. This study confirms the assumption of social penetration theory that individuals tend to disclose more when they expect positive outcomes. Although it demonstrated the relationship between the potential reward users may obtain from Facebook and the breadth of their self-disclosure behaviour, Olson's (2013) study did not determine the depth of self-disclosure or the degree of the sensitivity of the information. Determining the relationship between the rewards and the depth of self-disclosure would show the extent to which these rewards are evaluated by users.

The above studies mainly focused on counting the frequency of some types of personal information disclosure, while neglecting others. Additionally they did not investigate the depth of the disclosed information. Such limitations were addressed by Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010), who analysed the breadth and depth of information disclosure on Facebook. Using factor analysis, they divided disclosed information into three broad levels according to its sensitivity: basic personal identifying information, sensitive personal information, and potentially stigmatising personal information. Applying this classification to the disclosed information of 400 randomly selected Canadian Facebook profiles, they found that their sample disclosed 48.2% of their basic personal identifying information, 69.8% of

their sensitive personal information, and 45.2% of their potentially stigmatising personal information.

Ntlatywa, Botha, and Haskins (2012) applied this classification system to their analysis of self-reported information disclosure comparing this with observed information disclosure on Facebook. Their study of 131 South African university students showed that observed information disclosure was in fact 30% greater than self-reported information disclosure, with the exception of their friends list, which was the only Facebook information item where the observed information disclosure scored lower than self-reported information disclosure. This indicates that users may not accurately report the information they disclose.

Applying Nosko, Wood, and Molema's (2010) classification to the current research contributes to the understanding of the actual levels of disclosure by Saudi university students. It also facilitates the comparison between the disclosure behaviour of Saudis, Canadians, and South Africans. Besides providing a comprehensive picture regarding the breadth and depth of the information that Saudi university students disclose, applying this classification also helps in understanding the cultural biases in the research instrument.

Researchers interested in examining the relationship between users' privacy concerns and their level of disclosure of personal information on Facebook have mainly utilised self-report methods and conducted their research with university students. These studies have yielded conflicting results. Some have revealed that students' privacy concerns and information disclosure are negatively correlated. For instance, studies conducted with 210 German university students (Krasnova et al. 2009); 122 American university students (Stutzman, Capra, and Thompson 2011); 450 American university students (Tufekci 2012), and 77 Canadian university students (Young and Quan-Haase 2009) all indicated that students with the greatest privacy concerns disclosed the least information. Studies conducted with Islamic samples also revealed similar results. For instance, studies conducted by Osman

and Ab.Rahim (2012) with 30 Malaysian university students and by Mohamed (2011) with 325 Emirati and Egyptian users revealed a negative relationship between online privacy concerns and disclosure of personal information online.

Other studies have noted a privacy paradox—a term proposed by Barnes (2006) to refer to users who claim to be concerned about their online privacy but who still disclose a considerable amount of personal information on their profiles. For instance, studies conducted with 50 American university students (Govani and Pashley 2005), 13 American university students (Strater and Richter 2007), and 343 Canadian university students (Christofides, Muise, and Desmarais 2009) revealed that while participants reported awareness of some of the privacy concerns associated with Facebook, they disclosed a high level of personal information on their Facebook profiles.

A noticeable drawback of studies that revealed a negative correlation between self-disclosure and privacy concerns online and of the studies that demonstrated a privacy paradox among their samples is that they all depended on self-reporting methods to collect their data. According to Ntlatywa, Botha, and Haskins (2012), one of the shortcomings of studies that utilise self-reporting methods in investigating self-disclosure is that participants may not accurately recall the exact amount of their disclosed personal information, which may lead them to evaluate it in a way that does not match their actual behaviour. Such an outcome has been clearly shown in Ntlatywa, Botha, and Haskins's (2012) study, discussed above. In order to avoid this limitation, the current research employs both content analysis methods to analyse the actual data disclosed on Saudi university students' Facebook profiles and interviews with these students about their privacy concerns regarding information disclosure on Facebook.

2.3.4. Gender Differences in Using Facebook

With the popularity of Facebook, there has been a growing number of studies

exploring gender differences in its usage. This section reviews the gender differences that have emerged regarding obtained gratifications, status updates, and self-disclosure behaviour.

Reviewing the literature about gratifications obtained from Facebook and status updates reveals that while the majority of previous studies did not reveal any gender differences (e.g., Quan-Haase and Young 2010; Zhang, Tang and Leung 2011; Beullens and Schepers 2013; Carlisle and Patton 2013; Dhaha and Igale 2013; Ku, Chen and Zhang 2013; Yang and Brown 2013; Galioto, Hughes, and Zuo 2014; Wang et al. 2014), a few have shown some gender differences. Details of the additional gratifications obtained by only males or females are shown in Table 2.2.

Authors	Year	Nation	Methods	Participants	Males' Gratifications/ Status Updates	Females' Gratifications/ Status Updates
Joinson	2008	Online sample	Online questionnaire	241 (80 males, 161 female)	-	Social connection
Raacke and Bonds-Raacke	2008	USA	Questionnaire	116 (53 males, 63 females)	Dating needs and learning about events	-
Park, Kee, and Valenzuela	2009	USA	Online questionnaire	1715*	-	Obtaining information
Gülnar, Balcı, and Çakır	2010	Turkey	Questionnaire	500 (282 males, 218 females)	Narcissism and self-expression	Relationship maintenance, Seeking information
Haferkamp et al.	2012	Germany	Online questionnaire	106 (54 males, 52 females)	Looking at others' profiles to find friends	Searching for information and Comparing
Denti et al	2012	Sweden	Questionnaire	1011 (335 males, 676 females)	-	Relationship maintenance, keeping in touch with family and friends, and writing about feelings and relationships
Parkins	2012	Australia	Content analysis	50 (25 males, 25 females)	-	Emotional expression
Wang, Burke, and Kraut	2013	USA	Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA),	28 (11 males, 17 females)	Sharing statuses about public issues such as sports and politics	Sharing statuses about relationships and personal details
Jackson and Wang	2013	China and USA	Questionnaire	491 USA (152 males, 339 females) 401 China (108 males and 293 females)	-	Keeping in touch with parents, family members, friends and people known but rarely seen
Winter et al	2014	Germany	Online questionnaire	173 (71 males, 102 females)	Sharing status updates about entertainment	Sharing status updates about personal issues, and congratulations

* does not indicate numbers by genders

Table 2. 2 Studies Investigating Gender Differences in the Facebook-obtained Gratifications and Status Updates

From Table 2.2, it can be seen that female Facebook users are more likely to obtain gratifications and share status updates related to maintaining relationships, seeking information, comparing themselves with others and expressing feelings. In contrast, males use Facebook more for dating purposes, self-expression, investigating others, discussing public issues, and entertaining. However, the findings regarding gender differences revealed from a study conducted at a certain time in a certain society may not be similar to those conducted on another society or at a different time. According to Eagly and Wood (1999), societies today differ in the expected roles assigned to each gender and, thus, it is expected that the differences in the qualities and behaviours of females and males are determined by the extent to which there is a division between their social roles.

Regarding gender differences in online self-disclosure, previous studies conducted among Canadian samples revealed no significant gender differences in the self-disclosure behaviour of Facebook users (e.g., Christofides, Muise, and Desmarais 2009; Young and Quan-Haase 2009; Nosko, Wood, and Molema 2010). On the other hand, American studies have shown that male and female Facebook users differ in their self-disclosure behaviour (e.g., Bond 2009; Sheldon 2013). Regarding self-disclosure among Islamic samples, the only known Islamic study was conducted by Mohamed (2011) among Emirati and Egyptian samples. In line with the expected gendered social roles of Arabs, its findings indicated that female users had more privacy concerns, tended to protect their privacy more, and disclosed less information than males.

From the findings of the studies above, it appears that there is a scarcity in the literature regarding gender differences among Arab samples in general and Saudi samples in particular. The current research attempts to fill this gap by contributing to the scholarly understanding of the differences between Saudi males and females in an online context.

2.3.5. Facebook Usage by Saudis

Social media - especially Facebook - has been increasingly adopted by Saudis. In 2009, there were two million Saudi Facebook users, and this number increased to eight million by the beginning of 2014, 70% of whom were of university age (CITC 2014; The Social Clinic 2014). Nevertheless, Facebook usage by Saudis has attracted little research and this has been limited to investigating its utilisation in specific cases.

For instance, a study conducted by Al-Saggaf (2012) focused on the use of Facebook, YouTube, an online forum, and the Al Arabiya news channel website to comment on the 2009 Jeddah flood disaster. Analysis of 40 posts on these websites showed Saudis' negative reactions towards those responsible for the disaster. The findings of this study indicated that the main demand made by the Saudis through Facebook was for an investigation of the causes of the Jeddah flood incident and the identification of those responsible. Upon receiving these requests, King Abdullah ordered the formation of a committee to investigate the causes of this disaster. While this study reflects the potential of Facebook to express public feelings and opinions, it is limited in scope, focusing on a certain event and analysing a small portion of the posts generated about it.

While social media platforms provide a relatively unregulated space for individuals to post, share, and discuss current affairs in a way that challenges traditional media, there is evidence that Saudis who cross the freedom of expression set by the law and the Islamic religion on these platforms could be at risk. For instance, a Saudi citizen, Hamza Kashgari, posted tweets about the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) on his Twitter account in 2012 that garnered approximately 30,000 negative responses from Saudis. In addition, more than 13,000 users joined a Facebook page titled "The Saudis are demanding the punishment of Kashgari" and he was arrested (Al-Ibrahim 2012; Aljabre 2011).

Social media platforms have also been used by the Shiite minority to call for protests in Saudi Arabia, and by Saudi female activists to demand the ability to drive cars. An article by Samin (2012) reviews the case of the Shiite minority group in the eastern region of the Saudi state that utilised social media platforms to call for protests. Just after the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, the Shiite minority group created a Facebook page that called for the removal of the Saudi regime. They urged Saudis to attend a demonstration on March 11, 2011, which they named the 'day of rage'. On the day of the demonstration there was no demonstration. The anonymous call for a demonstration via Facebook showed the potential of social media as a threat to law and order; however, the empty streets speak to the greater authority of the fundamentalist dynamics in Saudi Arabia and the weakness of social media platforms when not combined with offline participation.

The campaign for the right of women to drive cars in Saudi Arabia began on social media platforms after Manal Al-Sharif, a Saudi activist, shared a YouTube video of herself driving in Al-Khobar, a city in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia, in May 2011. The video was accompanied by a Facebook page entitled "I want to drive my car by myself", which called on Saudi women to drive down the street on a selected day. The page gained 10,000 followers. As a result, Saudi authorities issued a statement to reassert that women are banned from driving in Saudi Arabia. On the selected day of protest, the number of Saudi women who actually drove did not exceed a dozen. A series of calls then appeared by Saudi female activists to demand this right (Oct26driving 2013). According to Samin (2012), while these events demonstrated Saudi female activists' freedom of expression through social media platforms, their failure to yield any results must be noted. In both this case and that of the Shiite protest, the utilisation of Facebook to call for change did not provoke a severe response from the ordinary online users. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these articles highlighting the usage of Facebook by Saudi activists are not based on empirical

investigations. Moreover, they have not examined the perceptions of ordinary Saudi citizens regarding using Facebook to discuss social and political issues. To address this gap, this research investigates ordinary Saudi university students' usage of Facebook to discuss social and political concerns.

2.4. Concluding Summary

This chapter has focused on the theoretical approach of this research, outlining the reasons behind combining three particular theories: uses and gratifications theory, social penetration theory and social role theory.

While earlier theories of media and communication treated the media tool under investigation as having the same effect on all users, and perceived users as relatively passive recipients of media messages, uses and gratifications theory represented a shift towards a more audience-centred analytical framework in which users are seen as active participants. This theory has been used to examine and explain the gratifications obtained from diverse media tools, from radio shows to social media. Since social media users have an interactive role, this theory provides a particularly suitable framework for understanding the gratifications obtained from using Facebook.

As active participants, social media users are expected to disclose personal information when constructing profiles and utilising the platform. Social penetration theory, originally applied to offline settings, argues that the depth and breadth of disclosed personal information is associated with the success of interactions between individuals. With the increase in popularity of social media platforms, there has been increased interest among scholars in testing the applicability of social penetration theory in this virtual setting. Existing research indicates the suitability of applying social penetration theory to social media settings, particularly Facebook.

Scholars have also been attracted to investigating gender differences in the use of social media platforms. Social role theory argues that gender differences in offline behaviour emerge from individuals' social roles in society. The utilisation of this theory as part of the theoretical framework of this research assists in explaining any differences between male and female online behaviour on Facebook.

This chapter also reviews studies that have investigated Facebook-obtained gratifications, status updates, self-disclosure, and gender differences in these variables. Firstly, this chapter outlined how an increasing number of scholars have adopted uses and gratifications theory to examine and explain Facebook-obtained gratifications. These studies generated data based on self-reported methods, such as questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. They were conducted among users from different countries – mainly Western and East Asian countries – and some involved cross-cultural comparisons. The results obtained from these cross-cultural studies revealed that cultural factors play a role in altering the value of the gratifications obtained from Facebook. Given that Saudis belong to an Islamic culture, the review of these studies indicated that there is a gap in literature regarding the gratifications obtained from Facebook by users who belong to this culture.

Secondly, reviewing the literature regarding user generated content reveals that studies investigating Facebook status updates are limited. Previous studies on this topic have either focused on linguistic units, use of emotional words in status updates, or specific status themes. A few studies analyse a wide range of users' Facebook status update themes, either utilising a statistical generative method to analyse a considerable number of status updates automatically, or analysing a very limited number of users' status updates manually. These studies are mainly based on a deductive top-down approach, which may have caused them to miss some themes that might be revealed through utilising an inductive bottom-up approach.

Thirdly, research on self-disclosure has focused on the depth and/or breadth of self-disclosure on Facebook or has examined the relationship between users' levels of disclosure and their privacy concerns. While the results of these studies provide valuable information regarding users' disclosure behaviour on Facebook, a major shortcoming is that they utilise self-reporting methods. As participants may not accurately recall their levels of self-disclosure, this may lead them to evaluate these levels in a way that does not match their actual behaviour. Thus, content analysis based on Nosko, Wood, and Molema's (2010) classification of the three levels of information disclosed on users' Facebook profiles is utilised in this research to accurately investigate Saudi university students' levels of disclosure on Facebook.

Finally, studies on gender differences online reveal that differences are less on Facebook than in offline contexts. The majority of these studies were conducted among Western and East Asian samples and very few studies have been done in Islamic Arab societies and particularly in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this research aims to investigate how Saudi university students from an Islamic and Arabic culture use the opportunities offered by Facebook.

Thus, this research adopts uses and gratifications theory, social penetration theory, and social role theory as a theoretical framework in order to address its main aim: to critically investigate how Saudi university students are using the opportunities for greater interaction provided by Facebook.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an outline to the overall approach adopted in the research and a discussion of the rationale for its methodology and the procedures used:

Section 3.2 describes the research paradigm

Section 3.3 outlines the research design and population

Section 3.4 discusses cultural, linguistic, and ethical considerations

Section 3.5 provides an overview of the three research phases, in terms of methods, samples, data collection procedures

Section 3.6 presents a concluding summary in section.

3.2. Research Paradigm and Design

This research has adopted a pragmatist paradigm as a useful philosophical and methodological intermediate position between positivism and social constructivism. This is a suitable paradigm for selecting mixed methodological approaches to assist in answering research questions (Johnson, Onweugbuzie, and Turner 2007). The pragmatist paradigm emerges from trying to understand how both quantitative and qualitative methodologies can be more effectively combined into a mixed methods approach to understand social phenomena (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007).

The mixed methods approach combines the use of quantitative methods, favouring the collection and analysis of data that varies in quantity or level, and qualitative methods, favouring the collection and analysis of data that describes, but does not quantify, the

perceptions of a phenomenon (Fraenkel and Wallen 2010). Such a combination offers a more comprehensive understanding of research phenomena than just one approach (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007, Andrew and Halcomb 2009, Smith 2012). Thus, the current research utilises the mixed methods approach, in particular, a sequential mixed methods design, enabling the integration of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis (Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib and Rupert 2007). The research phases are discussed in section 3.5.

3.3. Research Population

The population targeted for this research comprised Saudi undergraduate students. The setting of the research in Saudi Arabia has unique characteristics that justify the study of university students, rather than other sectors of the population. According to the Saudi Arabia Census (2011), young people (15–24 years) represent 60% of the population in Saudi Arabia. UNICEF statistics (2012) state that this population accounts for 70% of Saudi Internet users and 70% of total Facebook users (Arab Social Media Report 2011). This generation is making use of this new, more open, medium which was not available to previous generations and is still not widely used by older people within the Saudi population. Thus, this research aims to provide a representative picture of Saudi university students' Facebook use.

Hinton (1995) indicates that when it is not possible to study the whole population, a selected, representative sample can be considered as a subset of the population in question. Thus, the sample used in this research was drawn from the undergraduate population of one of the largest and oldest Saudi universities located in Jeddah, the second largest city in the Kingdom as a representative sample of Saudi students.

3.4. Cultural, Linguistic, and Ethical Considerations

The Islamic Saudi culture has distinct features, some of which could potentially act as constraints to collecting data for this research. This section discusses the cultural, linguistic, and ethical issues that were taken into account during the study.

3.4.1. Cultural Considerations

The most pertinent cultural dimension of Saudi society that needs to be considered relates to gender segregation. The Policy of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1969) mandated gender segregation at all stages of education. Given the gender segregation in universities, it was not possible for the researcher to conduct mixed-gender focus groups or face-to-face interviews with male undergraduates, or administer questionnaires to male students. Therefore, a male colleague who was a specialist in the same field of study helped in the collection of the data from male undergraduates. The colleague is a Ph.D. student in media and communication studies at a British university, and is experienced in mixed method approaches, including questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews.

To ensure consistency, the researcher requested that her colleague follow the same process in administering the questionnaire, focus group design, and interview questions, (including the stimulus questions in the absence of an answer), and the systematic recording of data. In addition, the focus group and interview responses were electronically recorded and transcribed verbatim, thereby reducing any biases that may have been attributable to interpretation by the colleague.

3.4.2. Linguistic Considerations

The research was conducted in Arabic and the results were translated into English. Translating Arabic into English is challenging due to (1) the ambiguities associated with the use of colloquialisms, jargon and idiomatic expressions that reflect the cultural background of

Arabs in general, and Saudis in particular, and (2) the different patterns of thought and linguistic devices used to express humour, irony, metaphor, and symbolism that cannot easily be transferred between the two languages (Shiyab 2006).

To avoid the limitations of the single translation approach, a back translation procedure was adopted. Back translation is commonly used in social science research to reduce translation errors and increase equivalence across two languages (Liamputtong 2010), and can also strengthen reliability of the data (Van Widenfelt et al. 2005). Thus, the research was conducted in the original language (Arabic), and then the findings were translated into English and then back to Arabic as described below. The back translation was also underpinned by conceptual equivalence, placing the focus on the similarity of ideas at the sentence level and not the literal translation of the linguistic units, within which it may not have been possible to adequately address all linguistic features (Hilton and Skrutkowski 2002).

Consistent with the goal of conceptual equivalence, comparisons between the back-translated Arabic transcripts and the original transcripts resulted in high levels of correspondence (96.9% for the focus group discussions, 98.0% for the questionnaire items, 99.6% for the Facebook status updates, and 97.2% for the interviews). Comparisons between the back-translated cards used in the interviews of phase three and the original ones were done at the word level and also yielded a high level of correspondence (97.5%). The back translation helped in minimising any problems arising from interpreting and translating Arabic colloquialisms, jargon, idiomatic expressions, patterns of thought, and linguistic devices into English.

3.4.3. Ethical Considerations

The British Psychological Association and the ethical guidelines of Coventry University were followed throughout the research. Prior to each phase, ethical approval was gained from the Coventry University Ethics Board following the submission of research questions, instruments, consent forms, and participant information sheets (Appendix B). It was acknowledged that some research questions might be sensitive to some of the participants, such as asking about discussing political issues and self-disclosure on Facebook. Therefore, potential participants were informed prior to each phase about the nature of the research, its objectives, and its expected outcomes (Appendix C) and were asked to sign the informed consent forms (Appendix D). Participants were assured that their identity would remain anonymous, that the results of the research would only be used for academic purposes, and that they were free to withdraw from the research at any time

Despite working as a lecturer at the university, the researcher had not had any prior teaching contact with the participants, so there was no inappropriate power relationship in any phase of the research. Participation was voluntary and unpaid. All data gathering occurred in an informal setting in a private hall on campus, away from the class buildings. The data was anonymised and saved on a password-protected external hard disk stored with hard copies in a protected closet. These files will be destroyed after the completion of this research. When analysing and reporting the findings, pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants.

3.5. Research Phases

As this research aims to investigate how Saudi university students are using the opportunities offered by Facebook, a sequential mixed methods approach incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches was followed:

- Phase 1 quantitative research:
    - focus groups to gather information to inform the questionnaire (20 students)
    - pilot questionnaire (60 students)
    - main quantitative questionnaire (372 students).
- Phase 2 content analysis of users' Facebook profiles:
    - thematic and quantitative content analysis (50 students from the original 372 in phase 1).
- Phase 3 qualitative interviews:
    - pilot interviews (10 students)
    - main qualitative interviews (20 students from the original 50 in phase 2).

The following sections provide an overview of the rationale, sample, data collection, and data analysis of each phase of the research.

3.5.1. Phase One: Quantitative Questionnaire Phase

The quantitative questionnaire is a recommended method for uses and gratifications studies since it allows the researcher to place the gratifications obtained on a scale and measure the rate of each gratification obtained (Ruggiero 2000). McDaniel and Gates (1998 define a questionnaire as a set of questions designed to gather data from respondents in order to address research objectives It enables the systematic collection and quantification of data from a large-scale sample. According to Hing et al. this method differs from others in that it aims to obtain "a pre-defined, quantitative set of data from a specifically pre-defined

population, using a robust method of sampling" (2011:210). The standardised responses enable comparisons to be made between possible subgroups to determine, in this case, a typology of users (Sukamolson 2005). A questionnaire also provides participants with the flexibility to answer at their own pace, anonymously and without influence from the researcher (Fraenkel and Wallen 2010).

A major limitation of a questionnaire study is that there is no control over how the participants interpret questions, and thus it is difficult to ensure that they perceive the questions in the same way. Another limitation is the typically low response rate. This may be influenced by factors such as the phenomenon under investigation, the participants' interest in it, the length of the questionnaire, and its presentation (Parajuli 2004). To ensure that participants understood the focus of the research and its importance, detailed information and instructions were provided beforehand. A pilot study was also used to improve the clarity of the questions and the suitability of length and presentation. As generating results exclusively through a quantitative self-report instrument would minimise the scope of its generalisability (Brannen 2005), this quantitative phase was followed by qualitative phases to ensure that in-depth data was acquired.

The following section (3.5.1.1) illustrates how the questionnaire was constructed using material derived from focus groups. Section 3.5.1.2 describes the sections of the questionnaire. Section 3.5.1.3 reviews the results of a pilot study conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and section 3.5.1.4 shows how the questionnaire was distributed to the main sample.

3.5.1.1. Informing the Questionnaire Construction

Focus groups have been used in social science research as an exploratory technique for developing questionnaire items (Lindlof and Taylor 2010). Morgan (1996) defines the focus group as a research method that obtains data from the interactions of a group on issues

specified by the researcher. Focus group sessions differ from individual interview sessions in that the participants in the focus group sessions may be encouraged by others to state their opinions. Another advantage of this method is that it provides a wide range of qualitative data in a short-term and cost-effective way (Ratnapalan and Hilliard 2002). However, interpretation of focus group data may be time-intensive (Villard 2003). Dominant personalities within a focus group may control the themes emerging in the discussion (Doherty 2012), but this can be minimized through good moderation.

Although the questionnaire of this research was based on the existing literature, exploratory focus groups were conducted to provide culturally-specific information for the quantitative stage. The themes addressed in the focus groups related to (1) gratifications obtained from using Facebook, (2) usage characteristics (e.g. access issues, friendship on its platform, time, and overall experiences), and (3) disclosure of personal information. Participants were recruited by the researcher and her male colleague from the mandatory basic communication course classes during the autumn semester of 2011-2012. Twenty students volunteered to participate during their lunch breaks; no incentives were provided.

Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009) indicated that the accepted optimal size of the sample of a focus group study is between 6 and 12 participants to ensure the diversity of the information provided. Thus, to ensure the generation of a variety of responses, two focus group sessions were held with 10 male and 10 female students aged between 18 and 22 (Mean = 19.75 years, SD = 1.33). The participant information sheets and informed consent forms were sent to the participants via email so that they could read, sign, and deliver them prior to the session. Each focus group session lasted about an hour. Both sessions were recorded and transcribed verbatim, thereby avoiding any bias which may have arisen through individual note-taking.

Prior to conducting the focus groups, the researcher discussed with her colleague the procedural issues so that both male and female focus group sessions would be conducted in a

similar manner. Key questions and prompts were agreed upon, and steps to deal with disruptive behaviour were established. The researcher also informed her colleague how to deal with disagreements and discussion of sensitive topics so that the focus groups would be moderated in a similar way, and emphasised the importance of providing equal chances for the focus group members to talk. Thus, the researcher and her colleague informed the participants how to interrupt each other politely and how to agree and disagree with other participants without judgement to ensure that they felt comfortable when they spoke. The participants were also given detailed instructions to help them understand how to cooperate and participate in an effective way.

The focus group sessions started with the moderator welcoming the students and explaining the purpose of the discussion, followed by a definition of key terms. Four main strategies were used to ensure continuity of discussion: maintaining eye contact and facial cues to encourage participants to talk; shifting the gaze to other participants when someone started to dominate the discussion;, informing the participants gently that other voices were desired when a participant talked for too long; smiling without laughing when someone made a joke and continuing to encourage participants to talk. It was observed that these strategies had a positive impact on group dynamics.

The responses were manually transcribed and examined, and relevant phrases exported to a spreadsheet. To systematise data analysis, the six-step guidelines for conducting a thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006: 87-93) were followed. These steps are: (a) " getting familiar with the data"; (b) "generating initial codes"; (c) "searching for themes"; (d) "reviewing themes"; (e) "defining and naming themes"; and (f) "producing the report".

The thematic content analysis revealed that participants used Facebook to obtain many gratifications (e.g., communicating with friends and family, sharing recent activities;

discussing current events; buying/selling things; learning languages; playing games and entertainment). It also revealed that Facebook held a prominent place in the daily life of the sample, was accessed on a wide range of devices (e.g., smart phones, tablets, laptops, personal computers, and shared computers) and in a variety of places (at home, in Internet cafes, at the houses of friends/family, and at the university), both indoors and outside (i.e. wherever Internet coverage is available).

While the majority of the results confirmed previous research (see Chapter Two: Section Three), the focus groups helped to ensure that items in the questionnaire were informed by students' language and culture. For example, unlike previous research, Saudi university students emphasised a differentiation between circles of friends (e.g. from high school, their university, and neighbourhood), and that disclosure of personal information, personal names and photos were contentious issues. Female students in particular used made-up names or nicknames rather than their real names, and symbolic rather than real photos in profile pictures. Some females also stated that they use a nickname or disclose only their first name in order to hide the name of their tribe. The analysis also showed the need to consider background variables and not assume that all students accessed the platform in the same way.

The data was merged with categories found in the literature to inform the construction of the questionnaire, providing key categories for its questions. Face validity is defined as an assessment of whether or not the items provide an accurate representation of the variables or constructs that the researcher is attempting to measure (Creswell 2009). The data collected from the focus groups provided information needed to ensure the face validity of the questionnaire.

3.5.1.2. Description of the Questionnaire

Utilising a questionnaire enables a large number of responses to be gathered and provides rich data regarding the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell 2009). The questionnaire was used to mainly address the first two research questions: what are the gratifications Saudi university students obtain from using Facebook? and what is the typology of Saudi university Facebook users? It also assisted in answering the fifth research question considering gender differences in usage. The final version of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix E and was comprised of three sections as described below.

The first section of the questionnaire was used to collect demographic information (gender, major, living status, relationship status, type of residence, parental income, father's education, and mother's education) to establish the extent to which the sample was representative of the wider population of Saudi university students and to provide a basis for constructing the typology of Facebook users.

The second section addressed the usage of this social media platform (e.g., years of experience, time spent on Facebook, network size, preferred device and location for accessing Facebook, profile names and photos). To improve the accuracy of the estimation of time spent on Facebook, students were asked in advance to keep a daily record of time spent on Facebook every day for a week and to calculate their average daily usage

The third section aimed to find out the importance of the gratifications students obtained from using Facebook. Forty gratifications had been raised in the focus groups. Of these, 27 were found in the literature review (e.g., Al-Saggaf, Weckert, and Williamson 2002; Bumgarner 2007; Foregger 2008; Joinson 2008; Raacke and Bonds-Raacke 2008; Sheldon 2008; Urista, Dong, and Day 2009; Bonds-Raacke and Raacke 2010; Gülnar, Balcı, and Çakır 2010; Quan-Haase and Young 2010; Kim, Sohn, and Choi 2011; Simsim 2011; Zhang, Tang, and Leung 2011). The additional 13 gratifications related to gratifying the need of

romance (2 items), sharing of personal updates (3 items), discussion of social issues (6 items), and discussion of political issues (2 items). Thus, 40 gratifications were included in the questionnaire, each rateable on a 5-point scale, with the responses ranging from Never (1) to Always (5).

At the end of questionnaire, the next phase of the research was explained and students were invited to participate by providing their Facebook email addresses.

3.5.1.3. Pilot Study of the Questionnaire

A pilot study is defined as a trial study conducted in preparation for the main research (Polit, Beck and Hungler 2001). Social scientists have attempted to determine a suitable number for the sample size of a pilot study. Isaac and Michael (1995) and Hill (1998) suggest that including 10-30 participants in the pilot study has many practical advantages, giving researchers the ability to test hypotheses with low effort and simple analysis. However, such a small sample size may have low reliability. Mooney and Duval (1993: 21) indicated that the results of a pilot study are perceived as having relatively high reliability "when *n* reaches the range of 30-50". Where the goal of the pilot study is to test preliminary survey or scale development, Johanson and Brooks (2009) indicate that a sample of 30 participants from the relevant population is a sensible minimum number. Thus, the pilot test was conducted in the spring semester with 60 Saudi university students (N = 30 males and N = 30 females) aged between 18 and 22 (Mean = 19.45 years, SD = 1.25) from the student cohort of 2011-2012 attending the basic communication course. The study was conducted in accordance with Coventry University ethical procedures (described in Section 3.4.3).

The pilot study showed students' willingness to cooperate in the research and helped in setting the most suitable time (12.00 PM to 1.00 PM and location for the main study) and. It enabled the researcher and her colleague to familiarise themselves with administrating the questionnaire and the data collection procedures. The analysis helped to uncover errors

in the questionnaire relating to the wording of items (e.g., identification of spelling mistakes, ambiguous words and phrases where additional definitions were needed,), and to evaluate the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. Following the pilot study, some slight modifications were made to questions. The questionnaire was re-administered with the same 60 participants two weeks later to check test-retest reliability. These results are presented in the following section.

5.5.1.3.1. Reliability of the Questionnaire

Reliability is defined as the consistency or stability of a measure. There are three types of reliability: (Cozby 2007):

1. Test-retest reliability considers the extent to which the measurement instrument is completed consistently (or is answered in the same way) over time.
2. Internal consistency refers to how well items relate to one another.
3. Inter-rater reliability refers to the extent to which raters agree in their observations.

Tesst-retest reliability was considered the most appropriate way of evaluating the reliability of the questionnaire. Various measures of association were calculated between the items on each test. Phi was used for binary nominal data, and Cramer's V was used for nominal data with more than two categories. Kendall's tau-b was calculated for ordinal data, and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used for continuous data. The reliability coefficients for each item in the second and third sections of the questionnaire are shown in Table 3.1.

Variable	N	Statistic
Minutes/day spent communicating on Facebook	60	r. =.99
Years of Facebook experience	60	Kendall's tau-b = .86
Number of Facebook friends	60	Kendall's tau-b = .72
Access to Facebook through a shared Computer	60	Phi = .83
Access to Facebook through a personal Computer	60	Phi =.79
Access to Facebook through a personal laptop	60	Phi =.88
Access to Facebook through a smart phone	60	Phi =.86
Access to Facebook through a tablet	60	Phi =.99
Access to Facebook at home	60	Phi =.71
Access to Facebook at the University	60	Phi =.76
Access to Facebook at an Internet café	60	Phi =.76
Access to Facebook at a friend's home	60	Phi =.71
Using the real name or a nickname on the profile	60	Cramer's V = .83
Using a real or a symbolic photo on the profile	60	Cramer's V = .74
Obtained gratifications from Facebook	N	r.
Share my place right now	60	.81
Keep in touch with high school friends	60	.83
Communicate with neighbourhood friends	60	.73
Reconnect with childhood friends	60	.84
Share my achievements	60	.86
Share my celebrations	60	.78
Maintain ongoing relationships with university friends	60	.86
Join academic groups	60	.77
Talk about my emotional problems	60	.81
Sympathise	60	.75
Let my feelings out	60	.81
Ask questions regarding social issues	60	.81
Join a social cause	60	.86
Raise attention regarding a social issue	60	.76
For social criticism	60	.83
Share my attended events	60	.87
Talk about my study	60	.89
Sell things	60	.86
Buy things	60	.82
Enjoy funny apps	60	.83
Plays games	60	.82
Share that I am on vacation	60	.83
Keep in touch with family members	60	.83
Discuss global political events	60	.87
Share romantic experiences	60	.87
Maintain romantic relationship	60	.85
Develop romantic relationship	60	.89
Explore Facebook profiles that are not in my list	60	.83
Find contact information for people I met offline	60	.83
Look at shopping ads	60	.88
Find out more about someone I heard about	60	.83
Find out more about popular figures	60	.82
Find out what someone looks like	60	.85
Reveal my opinions regarding local political events	60	.88
Share what I am doing right now	60	.81
Document social issues	60	.83
Share my recent activities	60	.86
Discuss social issues	60	.81
Interact with my extended family	60	.85
Learn a foreign language	60	.88

Table 3. 1 Reliability of the Items in the Questionnaire

Of the 54 reliability coefficients calculated, two (3.7%) were above 0.90 (excellent range), 40 (74.1%) were between 0.81 and 0.90 (good range), and 12 (22.2%) were between 0.71 and 0.80 (acceptable range). The summarised results of the reliability analysis indicated that the reliability of multiple items in Sections 2 and 3 ranged from acceptable (0.71 to 0.80) to excellent (above 0.90), and thus, following the guidelines of George and Mallery (2003) was deemed appropriate for more widespread use

3.5.1.3.2. Validity of the Questionnaire

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument actually measures what it was designed to measure. There are several types of validity, including 'face validity', 'content validity', 'criterion-related validity', 'concurrent and divergent validity', and 'construct validity' (Dyer 2006). Furthermore, an instrument must provide consistent data (i.e., be reliable) before it is valid. In other words, reliability is an essential (but not sufficient) prerequisite for validity (Cozby 2007). As shown in Section 3.5.1.3.1., the test-retest reliability of the items on the questionnaire developed for this research was within the acceptable range for reliability coefficients.

Face and content validity are concerned with whether or not questionnaire items cover their intended purpose, and are determined by checking whether the content reflects the topics being investigated (Dyer 2006). As indicated earlier (see Section 3.5.1.1.), the use of the focus group responses to develop the questionnaire helped to ensure that it would reflect the appropriate content. It was not possible to examine criterion-related, concurrent, or divergent validity using the data collected in the pilot study. Convergent validity was, however, evaluated by comparing the information reported in the questionnaires regarding the gratifications obtained from Facebook and the data gained from the thematic analysis of Facebook status updates (see Chapter Five: Section Two).

3.5.1.4. Administration of the Questionnaire

Once the test-retest results were complete, a cluster sampling methodology was used to administer the final version of the questionnaire (Appendix E), stratified according to gender. The communication course that the 3000 Saudi university students attended in the spring semester of 2011-2012 was organised into 100 gender-segregated sections, each with 30 students. From this population, 20 sections comprising 600 students were chosen using a random number generator (ten female sections and ten male sections). With the instructors' permission, the researcher visited the classes of female students and asked the students to participate in the main questionnaire phase, and the male colleague visited the male classes. During the class visits, those who indicated their willingness to participate in the research were asked to write down their email addresses so that the participant information sheets and informed consent forms could be sent to them. As revealed in the pilot study, the most appropriate time for the participants was from 12.00 PM to 1.00 PM, which is a free hour during which the students take a break from the classes. Thus, the questionnaire sessions were held every Saturday, Monday, and Wednesday for a month at 12:20 and lasted for 20–25 minutes.

A total of 439 out of the 600 randomly selected students agreed to take part in the study (214 males and 225 females). Of the remaining 161 students, 48 indicated that they were not Facebook users, 37 were absent at the time of recruitment, and the rest (n = 76) were not interested in volunteering. The researcher sent an email to the potential participants as a reminder to increase the response rate. From the initial 439 who had indicated their willingness to participate, 372 students (188 males and 184 females) actually participated. Their ages ranged from 18 to 22 years (mean = 19.32 years, SD = 1.12). Out of the population of 3000 students, with an equal number of participants in each randomly selected cluster, the theoretical minimum sample size was calculated – using the method of Kerry and

Bland (1998) – to be 154 students (i.e., 5.1% of the population) to achieve a 5% margin of error. The actual sample size (n = 372) was over twice the theoretical minimum sample size. Therefore, it can be argued that the sample was representative of the population, because the 95% confidence limits captured the essential population parameters. The results of this phase are presented in Chapter Four.

3.5.2. Phase 2: Content Analysis Phase

Content analysis is considered a suitable method for investigating texts, particularly in media and communications research (Joffe and Yardley 2004) with Creswell (2009) indicating its appropriateness investigating different types of textual communication. Thus, content analysis can focus on either qualitative or quantitative aspects of text. Thematic content analysis focuses on the qualitative description of the content by coding and classifying the emergent themes through a systematic process (Burnard et al. 2008). Quantitative content analysis allows content to be systematically and quantitatively described (Rourke and Anderson 2004).

Because the focus of this phase was investigating the status updates Saudi university students generate on Facebook and their levels of disclosure, thematic content analysis was used to investigate the themes of the generated statuses and quantitative content analysis was used to quantify the amount of the personal information disclosed. The findings provide answers to the third and fourth research questions relating to understanding the range of: themes included in status updates levels of personal information disclosure. These findings also assisted in investigating the fifth research question relating to gender differences in usage. The following subsections provide an overview of the thematic and quantitative content analysis (section 3.5.2.1 and section 3.5.2.2). Section 3.5.2.3 reviews the results of the inter-rater reliability for the content analysis phase and section 3.5.2.4 reviews the process of collecting the data for this phase.

3.5.2.1. Thematic Content Analysis

Thematic content analysis is an in-depth analysis of data that aims to provide insight into the meaning of content. In thematic content analysis, data collection and analysis mutually shape each other, enabling the researcher to continuously and interactively modify the analysis of data to suit new data and add new insights to it (Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas 2013). The bottom-up coding system that emerges during the collection of the data is continuously modified in the course of analysis (Burnard 1991) reduces the likelihood of researcher bias based on prior expectations.

According to Anderson (2007), thematic content analysis is generally utilised when the research phenomenon is unknown or not well understood. As there is a scarcity of research regarding the themes of status updates social media users generate on their accounts, it was appropriate to adopt a thematic content analysis method in this phase of the research. This allowed the researcher to be fully engaged with the texts and permitted themes to emerge during reading, resulting in a more representative interpretation of results (Smith 1992). It also allowed the researcher to rely on inductive reasoning processes to understand and construct the meanings of the generated data, creating a better understanding of the phenomenon (Krippendorff 2012).

3.5.2.2. Quantitative Content Analysis

Quantitative content analysis was used to investigate the level and amount of personal information disclosed by the students on their Facebook accounts, utilising the checklist proposed by Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) (Appendix F). This checklist classifies the possible disclosed personal information items on Facebook accounts into 34 variables coded from the topical content on an individual's Facebook account. According to its creators, the inter-coder reliability of the checklist was very high (99% agreement). From these items,

Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010: 410) developed three levels of disclosed information according to their sensitivity.

(1) First Level. Disclosure of basic personal identifying information. This level refers to the type of information people might disclose in official situations to identify themselves, including eight items: "profile picture, gender, birthday, birth year, email address, address, current city, and postal code".

(2) Second Level. Disclosure of sensitive personal information. This level refers to information that could be used to find or identify an individual. Such information may be misused or perceived negatively by others. Fourteen items were included in this classification: "relationship status, news feed, high school, university, employer, job position, viewable wall, photo albums, self-selected photos, tagged photos, friends list, send a gift, private messages, and poking".

(3) Third Level. Disclosure of potentially stigmatising personal information. This level is defined as sensitive personal information that could lead to condemnation within society. In other words, it is information about a person that a random viewer could find objectionable. Twelve items were included in this category: "gender of interest, activities, political views, religious views, favourite music, favourite books, favourite shows, favourite movies, favourite quotes, interests, personal description, and personal photos".

The Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) checklist was chosen because it provides a systematic, objective, and quantifiable content analysis tool. It is systematic because the disclosed information is selected, coded, and analysed according to explicit and consistently applied sets of rules and procedures thereby reducing the effects of the researcher's personal biased. It also enables comparison to be made with previous studies using the same checklist. It is quantifiable because the main focus of the checklist is on counting occurrences of already defined items on the student's Facebook accounts to capture the levels of breadth and

depth of the disclosed information. The checklist breaks down the disclosed information into three categories to count their frequencies. Thus, this tool indicates the relative prominence and absence of key information in Saudi university students' accounts. However, it should be noted that this checklist was developed for a Canadian sample. While this enables cultural differences to be explored, its cultural specificity might be problematic (see Chapter Seven: Section Three for further reflection on the use of the checklist).

3.5.2.3. Inter-rater Reliability for the Content Analysis

Inter-rater reliability refers to the degree of agreement among two or more reviewers of the same set of data. It provides a score that indicates the reliability of the results. If the reviewers do not agree, then the data may be defective, the raters may need to be re-trained, or the instructions/categories may need better specification (Creswell 2009).

Fleiss's Kappa, an inter-rater reliability statistic for more than two raters, was used to measure the level of agreement between the three coders (the researcher and two of her colleagues with respect to their assignment of different themes to status updates. According to Sim and Wright (2005), a sample size of ten provides adequate power (80%) in qualitative studies to determine if the Kappa statistic is significantly greater than zero, as long as the kappa value is at least 0.80. However, the power is insufficient if kappa is less than 0.80. Kappa can range from -1 to +1, where "0 represents the level of agreement that can be expected by chance and 1 represents perfect agreement". Large values imply better reliability, whereas low values imply poor reliability. Kappa is interpreted as follows: "≤0 indicates no agreement; 0.01–0.20, none to slight agreement; 0.21–0.40, fair agreement; 0.41–0.60, moderate agreement; 0.61–0.80, substantial agreement; and 0.81–1.00, almost perfect agreement". A one-tailed p-value of kappa <0.05 is assumed to indicate significance (Landis and Koch 1977: 165). The kappa and p-values for each thematic category are presented in Table 3.2. The kappa values for these themes ranged from 0.80 to 0.99 and were statistically

greater than zero. The values were at least 0.80 for the 16 thematic content analysis categories. Consequently, there was sufficient power to obtain correct statistical inferences ($p < .001$) for all 16 themes.

Theme	Kappa	P Value
Greetings	0.99	<.001
Friendship Matters	0.95	<.001
Social Issues	0.94	<.001
Shopping	0.91	<.001
Religious Issues	0.90	<.001
Advice	0.90	<.001
Romance	0.87	<.001
Congratulations	0.87	<.001
Political Issues	0.87	<.001
Hobbies	0.86	<.001
Games	0.86	<.001
Emotional Outlet	0.86	<.001
Jokes	0.85	<.001
Academic purposes	0.85	<.001
Family Matters	0.83	<.001
Personal Updates	0.80	<.001

Table 3. 2 Inter-rater Reliability for the 16 Themes of Facebook Status Updates

To check the inter-rater reliability of the disclosed personal information, the three raters coded 30 Facebook accounts using the 34 items on the Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) checklist. According to Sim and Wright (2005), a sample size of 30 in quantitative content analysis provides sufficient power (80%) to determine if kappa is significantly greater than zero, as long as kappa is at least 0.5. However, the power is insufficient if kappa is less than 0.5. The values of kappa and the p-values for each of the 34 checklist categories are presented in Table 3.3.

Category	Kappa	P Value
Favourite books	0.99	<.001
Job position	0.99	<.001
Photo albums	0.98	<.001
Current city	0.96	<.001
Personal description	0.95	<.001
Favourite shows	0.95	<.001
Activities	0.95	<.001
Address	0.95	<.001
Birthday	0.95	<.001
Viewable wall	0.94	<.001
Employer	0.94	<.001
Interests	0.94	<.001
Favourite movies	0.93	<.001
Poking	0.93	<.001
Birth year	0.93	<.001
Postal code	0.93	<.001
Private messages	0.92	<.001
High school	0.91	<.001
Religious views	0.90	<.001
Self-selected Photos	0.89	<.001
University	0.89	<.001
Gender of Interest	0.88	<.001
Favourite music	0.88	<.001
Political views	0.86	<.001
Gender	0.86	<.001
Favourite quotes	0.86	<.001
Email address	0.85	<.001
Friends list	0.85	<.001
Tagged photos	0.81	<.001
News feed	0.78	<.001
Send a gift	0.73	<.001
Relationship status	0.72	<.001
Profile picture	0.71	<.001
Personal photos	0.70	<.001

Table 3. 3 Inter-rater Reliability for the Checklist Categories

The kappa values ranged from 0.70 to 0.99. Thus, the inter-rater agreement between the codes assigned by different raters for the checklist categories was almost perfect (kappa = 0.81 to 1.00) for 29 categories. For five categories (News feed, Send a gift, Relationship status, Profile picture, and Personal photos), the inter-rater agreement was substantial (kappa = 0.61 to 0.80). In summary, the values of kappa were high and consequently the sample had sufficient power to obtain correct statistical inferences ($p < .001$). The results indicated high reliability with regard to the coding of the checklist.

The overall results of the analysis based on Fleiss's kappa indicated that the inter-rater reliability was good, implying that the data derived from Facebook accounts was valid.

Furthermore, the ability of different raters to code the same data was consistent, indicating a robust set of categories and coding procedures.

3.5.2.4. Data Collection in the Content Analysis Phase

To access the participants' Facebook accounts, the researcher created a Facebook account allocated for this purpose and contacted participants who had agreed to participate in this. Out of the 93 participants who indicated their willingness to participate, 50 students (23 male and 27 female students) accepted the researcher's friend request. These participants were aged between 18 and 22 (Mean = 19.44 years, SD = 1.11). Participant information sheets and informed consent forms were then sent to the participants. Each participant's Facebook account was matched to his/her corresponding answers from the first phase. The collection of data in this phase was conducted during the summer semester of 2011-2012.

A potential weakness of the content analysis method in online platforms is that the presence of the researcher as a friend may influence the behaviour of the participants. To avoid this limitation, this phase focused on the status updates generated just before the friend requests were sent (with the consent of the participants). Particularly, it covered each individual status update on the Facebook walls of all 50 participants (n = 7,928) for eleven months, from 12.00 AM on 1 August, 2011, to 11.59 PM on 30 June, 2012. According to Faul et al. (2007), collecting about 200 posts from more than 40 profiles can provide significant statistical power. This type of sampling has proven useful in previous studies analysing Facebook content (e.g. Fernandes et al. 2010; Carr, Schrock, and Dauterman 2012). As the current research examines 7,928 status updates collected from 50 Saudi university students' Facebook profiles, its sample is considered more than sufficient to provide reliable results. Connecting threads among the status updates were categorised, with connections between categories forming themes. As with the focus groups' data gathering and analysis,

the six-step guidelines for conducting a thematic analysis study proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed.

In order to examine the level and amount of disclosed personal information, three screenshots of each of the participants' profiles were taken during the three-month data collection period, at weeks 1, 6, and 12. Nosko, Wood, and Molema's (2010) checklist was used to quantify and classify disclosed personal information. When the screenshots for each participant were compared overtime, no noticeable changes had been made in either the level or the amount of information disclosed. The results of this phase are presented in Chapter Five.

3.5.3. Phase 3: The Interview Phase

Phenomenological interviews are among the most common strategies for collecting qualitative data. According to Creswell (1998), phenomenology is defined as individuals' understandings of the meaning of a phenomenon based on their lived experiences. Sorrell and Redmond (1995) indicate that the purpose of the phenomenological interview is to reveal common meanings among the respondents based on their lived experiences. This method was used to obtain more a more in-depth understanding of the students' use of Facebook. As this is still relatively unexplored for this population, qualitative methods provide a rich description and close analysis of the respondents' experiences to form a clear understanding of how meaning is generated through their embodied perceptions (Starks and Trinidad 2007).

According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), contemporary scholars have categorised interviews into three different types: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured. This research utilises the semi-structured interview form which is defined as a qualitative form of interview in which the interviewees are asked a number of pre-set but open-ended questions (Ayres 2008). Thus, semi-structured interviews consist of predetermined questions that are asked in a constant and systematic way, interpolated with

prompts in order to stimulate rich answers by directing the interview towards the issues and themes the interviewer aims to explore.

A major advantage of the phenomenological semi-structured interview method is that it allows the interviewee to clearly understand and communicate with the interviewer, overcoming potential ambiguities during the interview (Wojnar and Swanson 2007). Besides the flexibility in collecting the data and the depth of data collected, this approach also enables the collection of unanticipated data and an investigation of the research phenomenon from the viewpoint of the research population (Silvermann 1993).

Known limitations of the interview method are that it is time-consuming (Tesch 1990), subjective, dependent on the skills of the interviewer and prone to interviewer bias. In order to address interpretation bias, the interviews were recorded and a verbatim transcription of the data made which was coded using the systematic coding advocated by Creswell (1998). Further, the analysis was independently reviewed in order to verify its accuracy. Conducting a pilot study also assisted in improving the quality of the data gathered by enabling the researcher and her colleague to develop the most effective way of conducting the interviews and identifying potential problems in advance (De Silva 2010).

The following subsection describes the interview questions (section 3.5.3.1). Section 3.5.3.2 provides an overview of the pilot study of the interview phase. Section 3.5.3.3 illustrates how the interview was conducted with main sample and section 3.5.3.4 describes how the interview transcripts have been analysed.

3.5.3.1. Interview Questions

Given the sequential nature of the research, the goal of its final phase was to gain a detailed understanding of Saudi university students' reasons for using Facebook and to explore further any issues raised in the previous phases. Thus, the interviews covered three high-level topic categories (for the full list of interview questions, see Appendix G).

The first set of questions related to the students' perceptions of Facebook's compatibility with their culture. They were asked about whether they had considered deleting or deactivating their Facebook accounts, what they thought about the possibility of developing a Saudi social media platform, whether Facebook is compatible with Saudi culture, and what they perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of Facebook. To elicit rich answers from the participants regarding these aspects, they were provided with a set of 118 cards with 60% positive and 40% negative or neutral words to choose from (Appendix H). These cards were adopted from the Microsoft reaction toolkit developed by Benedek and Miner (2002), which covers a wide range of possible positive and negative aspects of a social media platform. According to Barnum and Palmer (2010), previous literature on the use of the toolkit has revealed that the cards prompt users to state a rich and revealing story about their experiences. The kit also provides opportunities for discussion of the choices based on their experiences. However, it should be noted that these cards were not used in this research to measure Facebook's desirability, as this was not within the scope of the research. The cards were only used to provide further data about the potential rewards and perceived costs of using Facebook. Each participant was asked to look over the cards that were spread out in a random pattern, select up to five cards based on what they liked or disliked about Facebook, and explain what each card meant to them.

The findings from the second phase of the research had revealed that the students tended to disclose a high amount of personal information on Facebook. Therefore, the second set of questions focused on understanding more about their reasons for such disclosure and whether they had privacy concerns.

The results of the first research phase had indicated that discussing political and social issues were important gratifications for the students, with phase two confirming that updates on these topics were amongst the most common content generated and shared by Saudi

university students. Thus, the third part of the interview sought to understand the role of Facebook in enabling such discussions.

3.5.3.2. Pilot Study of the Interviews

A pilot study was conducted with ten volunteer students (five males and five females) aged between 18 and 22 (Mean = 19.80 years, SD = 1.64) to identifying any questions that were ambiguous or could make participants uncomfortable. For example, during the pilot interviews, the researcher found that it was necessary to explain and clarify the interview question: “What do you think about developing a Saudi social media platform?” because it was unclear to the participants whether this related to the establishment of a Saudi social media platform as an alternative to Facebook or in addition to Facebook. The question was reworded as: “Do you think there is a need to develop a Saudi social media platform instead of using Facebook?” The pilot study also assisted in forming operational procedures and solving emergent problems prior to conducting the main study. For example, from the pilot study it became clear that some interview questions needed more prompts to encourage dialogue.

To ensure the reliability of the cards, a retest of the cards was conducted with the same ten students two weeks after conducting the main pilot study. The measure of agreement kappa was used as a statistical method to evaluate the test-retest reliability. The kappa reliability coefficients ranged from 0.81 to 1.00, with most cards having perfect reliability (1.00).

3.5.3.3. Administration of the Interviews

Emails were sent to the 50 students who had participated in the second phase. The students were asked to volunteer to participate in audio-taped interviews regarding their perceptions about the reasons for using Facebook. Participant information sheets and consent forms were sent via email to those who showed interest in participating. A total of 20

volunteers (10 males and 10 females), who were aged between 19 and 23 (Mean = 20.85 years, SD = 1.35), took part during the autumn semester of 2013-2014. According to Green and Thorogood (2009), interviewing 20 participants is considered a sufficient number among qualitative researchers. In particular for phenomenological interview studies, Starks and Trinidad (2007) indicate that typical sample sizes range from 1 to 10 respondents. Thus, the sample size was considered to be adequate.

A suitable time and place was arranged for conducting the interviews. Locations were chosen that were convenient for the participants and typically took place in a private area on campus. All the interviews were recorded. Before beginning of each interview, the researcher (with female participants) and her colleague (with male participants) reviewed the purpose of the interview, provided an overview of the issues that would be covered and reminded the interviewees that they had the right to not answer any of the interview questions if they felt uncomfortable or if they chose not to disclose specific information. All of these points had also been stated in the participant consent form, which the participants were asked to submit. The duration of the interviews was between 40 and 50 minutes, followed by a debriefing session.

3.5.3.4. Analysis of Interview Transcripts

After all the interviews were conducted, a verbatim transcription was completed and copies of these transcripts were sent to the participants to read and confirm that they accurately reflect their responses. Following Creswell's (1998) description of the systematic coding data process of phenomenological research, the responses were grouped together and coded to look for patterns in the data. Codes, categories, and themes emerged through the inductive analysis of this data, allowing the researcher to capture the essence of the subjects' experiences with Facebook. The transcripts were then read twice to search for any further codes, categories, or themes. Rich description was used, involving reporting details of the

interviews through the inclusion of quotations from the participants. The report was independently reviewed by the researcher's colleague to verify the accuracy of the codes, categories, and themes suggested by the researcher's findings. The results of this phase are presented in Chapter Six.

3.6. Concluding Summary

This research adopts a pragmatic paradigm and the sequential mixed methods approach to investigate how Saudi university students are using the opportunities offered by Facebook. It argues that epistemological pragmatism, which calls for the effective application of mixed quantitative and qualitative methods, is a suitable approach to answering the research questions. Such an approach allows for the data collection processes to be rigorously built and the results of each phase to validate and complement each other to provide relevant insights into a significantly under-researched field.

As the first two research questions focus on the obtained gratifications and typology of Facebook users, a quantitative questionnaire was chosen to collect the data to address these questions. This method is considered a powerful measurement tool that enables data to be gathered from a large-scale sample in a systematic manner. Prior to administering the questionnaire, exploratory focus groups were conducted in order to develop the questionnaire items and to ensure that the topics were relevant to Saudi students. The results and discussions of the questionnaire phase are presented in Chapter Four.

Both thematic and quantitative content analysis methods were utilised in phase two to address the third and fourth questions of the research. In particular, thematic content analysis was conducted on Saudi university students' status updates, while the Facebook disclosure checklist developed by Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) was used to quantitatively analyse

the types of information disclosed on their profiles. The results and discussion of this second phase are reported in Chapter Five.

The phenomenological interview in phase three was a suitable approach to further understanding how Saudi university students use Facebook. Phenomenological semi-structured interviewing is considered a rich tool designed to help participants reveal their own feelings, thoughts, and perceptions about phenomena they have experienced. The results and discussions of this final phase are presented in Chapter Six.

Chapter Four

Phase One: Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the results from phase one of the research: the quantitative questionnaire completed by 372 Saudi undergraduate students. The chapter begins by discussing sample demographics, characterising the sample and the extent to which it is representative of the total population of Saudi university students. The following sections explore Facebook usage and obtained gratifications before presenting a typology of Saudi university student Facebook users. The final section presents the concluding summary of this phase of the research.

4.2. Demographic Background of the Sample

Reviewing the uses and gratifications literature indicates that gender, academic major, and economic status are the principal factors that influence the gratifications that users obtain from using Facebook (e.g., Joinson 2008; Park, Kee, and Valenzuela 2009; Zhang, Tang, and Leung 2011; Mishra et al. 2012). As previous studies have shown that these factors were relevant to Facebook usage, the expectation is that they will also influence Saudi students. Figure 4.1 summarises the participants' demographic variables.

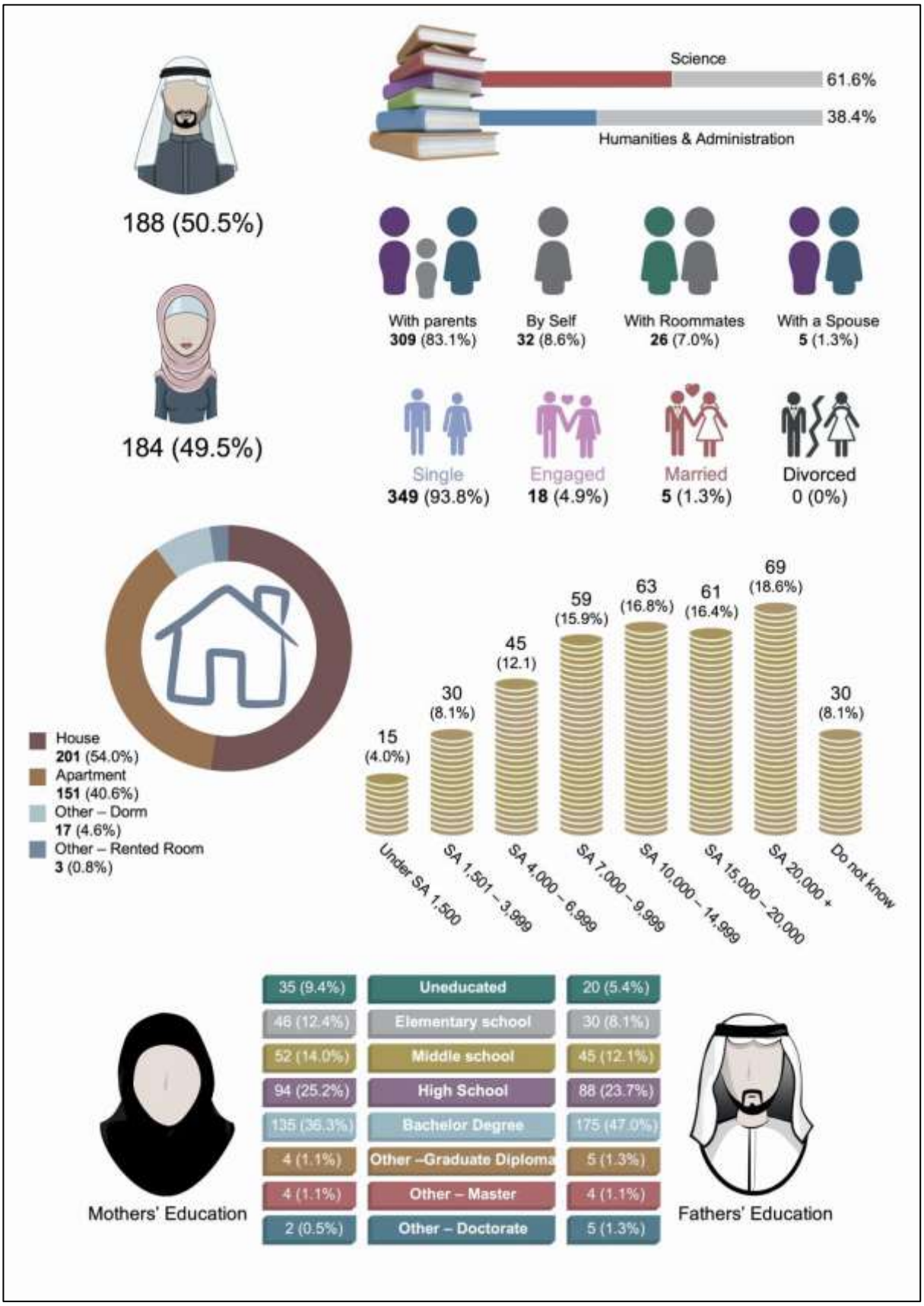

Figure 4. 1 Demographic Variables of the Participants

From Figure 4.1, it can be seen that of the 372 respondents, the gender makeup of the sample was roughly equal. This is in line with Saudi educational policy introduced in 1978 that emphasises providing equal educational opportunities to both genders (Ministry of Higher Education 2013). According to AlMunajjed (2008), education is a field in which females have experienced noticeable advancement in Saudi Arabia, with the Saudi state investing significant resources to improve females' access to education. A recent Ministry of Higher Education statistical report indicates that in 2011 (the year this phase of the research was conducted), the students enrolled at Saudi universities were 55% male and 45% female (Ministry of Higher Education 2013). This percentage roughly matches that of the current sample, as both genders were approximately equally represented. However, it should be noted that the Ministry of Higher Education report does not indicate whether this equality extends to the majors they were pursuing.

Overall, a breakdown of the respondents by academic discipline revealed that 229 respondents (61.6%) were majoring in science, and the remaining 143 (38.4%) were majoring in the humanities or administration. This breakdown corresponded with the sections of the respondents who were taking a basic communication course: there were 63 course sections for science students and 37 sections for humanities/administration students with no significant gender differences. The higher number of science students is consistent with Saudi Arabia's five-year plan to promote enrolment in science majors in order to provide students with the qualifications the labour market requires (Baki 2004).

In relation to residence, it is the Saudi norm for individuals to live with their families until they are married. According to recent statistics, the average age at which Saudis leave home and marry is 30 for males and 24 for females (Salam 2013). In accordance with these norms, the majority of participants in the current sample lived with their parents (n = 309, 83.1%).

Although Saudi university students receive monthly grants from their universities, the majority of Saudis continue to depend on their families until they become employed or, in the case of women, get married (Al-Khateeb 1998). The answers to the question about parental income were relatively normally distributed, ranging from 15 respondents (4.0%) with incomes of SA 1,500 or less to 69 respondents (18.6%) with incomes of SA 20,000 or more. This result illustrates that parental incomes ranged from relatively low to relatively high levels and thus the normal distribution of the sample regarding the economic status.

From Figure 4.1, it can also be seen that the educational attainment of both parents was similar, as the frequency in each category increased with each successive educational level until the university level. However, fathers had proportionally higher levels of education than mothers. This is consistent with recent statistics indicating that, although progress has been made towards educational gender parity in Saudi Arabia, there is still an educational gap among older generations that favours males (UNESCO 2011).

Therefore it can be concluded that the sample was representative of the population of Saudi university students. The data obtained from this section assists in forming a typology of Facebook users through investigating the relationships between the demographic variables and Saudi university students' obtained gratifications (see Section 4.5).

4.3. Facebook Usage

This section considers the sample's usage patterns, such as whether the students were early or late adopters of Facebook and their level of usage. It also assesses the size of their online friendship networks, their preferred locations and devices for accessing Facebook, and disclosure of personal names and photos on their profiles. Examining these usage variables helps in determining whether Saudi university students differ in the gratifications they obtain

from Facebook according to their usage patterns, in order to provide a comprehensive typology of Facebook users (see Section 4.5).

4.3.1. Years of Experience and Time Spent on Facebook

The Millennial Generation, also known as Generation Y, Generation Next, the Net Generation, Digital Natives, or Generation Me, is defined as those born between 1981 and 2000 (Pew Internet and American Life Project 2010). This generation is characterised as having grown up with technology; they are the main consumers of the Internet and often the first to embrace technological innovations (McCorkindale, DiStaso, and Sisco 2013). While the Millennial Generation has been the focus of most of the recent Western studies in the field of social media and particularly Facebook, little attention has been given to this generation in the Arab world in general and in Saudi Arabia in particular (see Chapter Two: Section Two).Social media usage is one of the most prominent characteristics of the Millennial Generation (Phillips 2010). As 70% of the population in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia belong to this group (UNICEF 2012), the current research focuses on this generation, and on university students in particular. This section presents the results and a discussion of the responses regarding Saudi university students' years of experience and time spent on Facebook. The descriptive results of these two variables are shown in Figure 4.2 and 4.3.

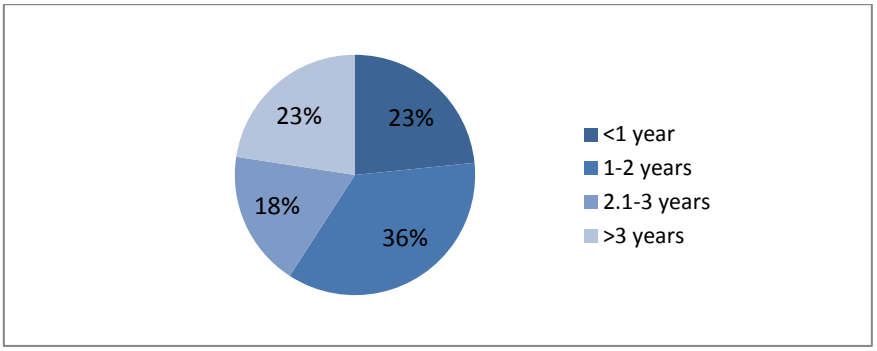

Figure 4. 2 Years of Experience of Using Facebook

From Figure 4.2 it can be seen that 23% of the respondents have used Facebook for more than three years, 18% from two to three years, 36% from one to two years, and 23% for

less than a year. Given that the sample comprised university students who were freshmen at the time of the questionnaire phase (i.e., 2011), this would indicate that about 40% of the respondents began using Facebook during high school, while the majority started using it after 2009 (the year that the Arabic Facebook interface launched) and could be classed as early adopters. This is consistent with previous literature that argues that interest in using Facebook in the Arab world increased after the unveiling of the Arabic interface (Arab Social Media Report 2011).

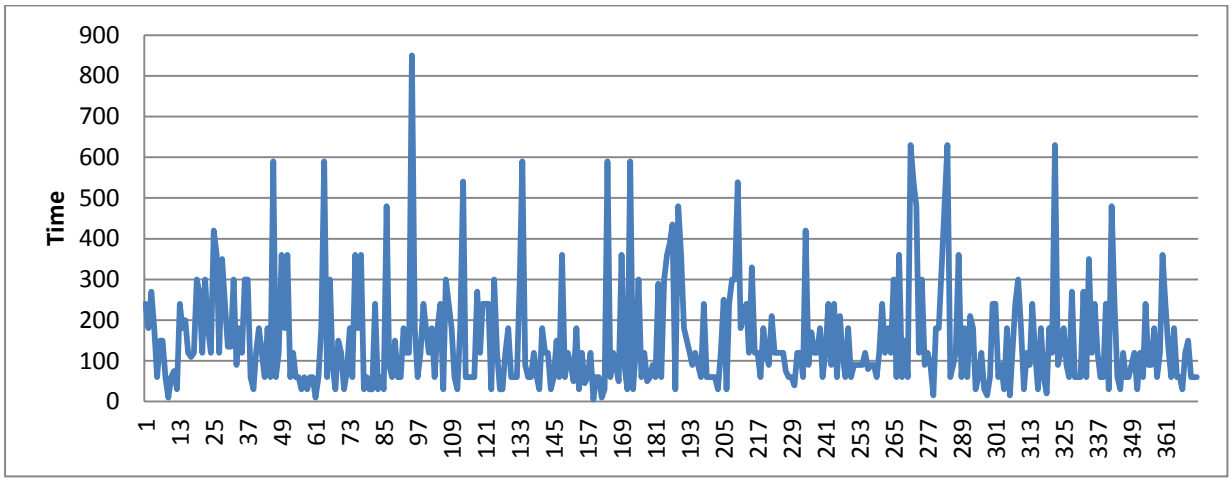

Figure 4. 3 Time Spent on Facebook

Respondents were also asked to report how much time they spent on Facebook in order to evaluate the degree of their engagement with it. To help improve the accuracy of the data, students were encouraged to keep track of the time they spent on Facebook for a week before completing the questionnaire and to calculate the average. The result in Figure 4.3 showed a great deal of variation in usage, from 5 minutes to about 14 hours per day (i.e., 850 minutes), with a mean of about two and a half hours (152 minutes) per day spent on Facebook.

Given that the students were asked about the 'active time' they spent on Facebook and not the time they were simply logged on, some students spent a significant portion of their time accessing Facebook. The figures reported are higher than those reported by American

university students, as revealed by Bonds-Raacke and Raacke (2010) (two hours per day), Chou and Edge (2012) (about an hour per day), and Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2009) (half an hour per day). This result is significant because it would seem that, for some students, Facebook usage takes up a large proportion of their time and that they are highly active on it. This emphasises the importance of understanding the gratifications students gain from using its platform and their online usage behaviours.

Table 4.1 presents gender differences in years of experience and time spent on Facebook. Using the chi-square test of independence, the results showed that males and females did not differ in their years of Facebook experience. A Mann-Whitney U test was then used to determine differences in time spent on Facebook according to gender. Due to the skewed nature of the time variables, the Mann-Whitney U provides the non-parametric version of the t-test and is the most suitable alternative when examining ordinal variables between group differences. No gender different was found on the amount of time spent per day on Facebook. Although previous research indicates that Saudi parents are more cautious about letting their daughters use the Internet in general and Facebook in particular (Oshan 2007; Khannous 2011), it seems from these findings that this caution did not affect the current sample's usage time.

Years of Experience	**Males**		**Females**		**Statistic**
	N (%)		*N (%)*		*Chi-square*
Less than 1 year	42 (22.3%)		45 (24.5%)		χ^2 (3) = 3.002, p = .391
1 to 2 years	74 (39.4%)		59 (32.1%)		
2.1 to 3 years	35 (18.6%)		33 (17.9%)		
More than 3 years	37 (19.7%)		47 (25.5%)		
Time Spent on Facebook (min. per day)	**Males**		**Females**		**Statistic**
	Mean (SD)	*Mean Rank*	*Mean (SD)*	*Mean Rank*	*Mann-Whitney U*
	154.00 (126.31)	191.92	150.65 (136.75)	180.96	*U* = 16277.5, p = .321

Table 4. 1 Gender Differences in Years of Experience and Time Spent on Facebook

4.3.2. Facebook Network Size

Facebook provides the opportunity to expand individuals' social networks through a process called 'friending', in which Facebook users can construct online profiles and gather friends on a reciprocal basis (Lewis and West 2009). According to Condella (2012), the popularity of the Facebook friendship phenomenon is evidenced by the introduction of the word 'friending' into the English language. Offline, McCarty (2002) argues that individuals have approximately six types of network clusters: family, neighbours, work colleagues, previous work colleagues, school friends, and contacts via a third person; while on Facebook these groups are flattened into one single cluster of 'friends' (Boyd 2007). The results relating to network sizes are presented in Figure 4.4 with variance by gender using the chi-square test presented in Table 4.2.

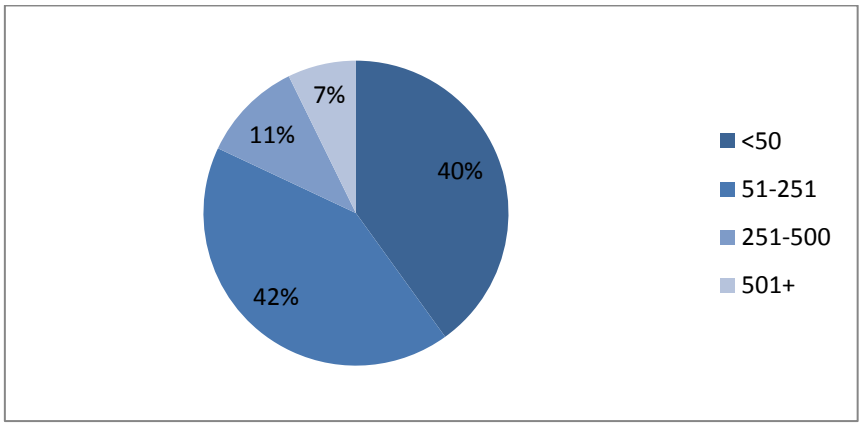

Figure 4. 4Facebook Network Size

From Figure 4.4 it can be seen that the majority of the respondents (82%) reported having up to 250 Facebook friends, and 18% had more than that number. The average size of these networks is in line with findings derived from Western university students. Previous studies have presented averages of between 151 and 272 friends: 272 (Boogart 2006), 151-200 and 201-250 (Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2007), 246 (Walther et al. 2008) and 224 (Ross et al. 2009).

Differences in Network Size	Males N (%)	Females N (%)	Chi-square test
50 or fewer	69 (36.7%)	80 (43.5%)	$\chi^2 = 10.23$ (1), p = .017
51 to 250	75 (39.9%)	81 (44.0%)	
251 to 500	23 (12.2%)	17 (9.2%)	
More than 500	21 (11.2%)	6 (3.3%)	

Table 4. 2 Gender Differences in Facebook Network Size

In terms of gender differences in Facebook network size, analysis of responses reveals that there are significantly more males (n = 21) than females (n = 6) with over 500 Facebook friends. This result contradicts a study among American students (Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert 2009) that reported that females had significantly more friends than males. Such a difference could be explained in light of the gender roles of Saudi males and females. As Saudi families exert more restrictions on the friendships of females, it is not surprising that Saudi males tend to have larger online networks. In the focus group, female participants also revealed that their brothers asked them about their online friendships and were concerned about the potential negative impacts that these new friends, who are unknown to the family, might have on their sisters which could be linked to their social.

4.3.3. Facebook Accessibility

In addition to personal computers, digital mobile devices play a powerful role in the lives of many individuals today. Such diffusion allows for social media platforms to be accessed by users via their laptops, smart phones, and tablets, which provide on-demand, direct, flexible, and effective methods of engagement and communication (Khaddage and Reed 2013). Participants' responses to the questions about the locations and devices through which they accessed Facebook were analysed using descriptive statistics and chi-square test to identify any gender based differences. The results are shown in Tables 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6.

Variable	N	Percent of Cases*
Personal laptop	304	81.7%
Smart Phone	162	43.5%
Personal Computer	63	16.9%
Shared Computer	30	8.1%
Tablet	0	0%

***** Respondents were allowed to tick more than one box

Table 4. 3Facebook Access Devices

As shown in Table 4.3, Facebook was accessed from multiple devices; the majority (81.7%) used a laptop and just over (40%) used smart phones. Few respondents used a personal desktop computer (16.9%) or a shared desktop computer (8.1%). None of the respondents accessed Facebook from a tablet. While there were no significant gender differences in Facebook access via laptops or smart phones (Table 4.4), males were significantly more likely than females to access Facebook through personal or shared computers (26.6% and 13.8% for males versus 7.1% and 2.2% for females) which shows how liberating this has been for females.

Variable	Male	Female	Statistic
	N (%)	N (%)	FET p-value (2-sided)
Personal Laptop	157 (83.5)	147 (79.9)	$\chi^2(1) = .815$, $p = .367$
Smart Phone	83 (44.1)	79 (42.9)	$\chi^2(1) = .056$, $p = .813$
Personal Computer	50 (26.6)	13 (7.1)	$\chi^2(1) = 25.214$, $p < 0.001$
Shared Computer	26 (13.8)	4 (2.2)	$\chi^2(1) = 17.040$, $p < 0.001$

Table 4. 4 Differences between Males and Females in Facebook Access Devices

The analysis indicates a high level of mobile technological engagement, enabling Facebook to be accessed anywhere and at any time. The focus groups revealed more detailed usage patterns, with smart phones used to view updates and other devices used to share content, due to the limited features available on the mobile version of Facebook. In general, Saudi students' access of Facebook is similar to that of Western students. For example an earlier study by Barkhuus and Tashiro (2010) found that 89% of their sample of American students accessed Facebook through a laptop and 44% of students accessed it through their phones. This pattern was confirmed by a more recent US-based study (Gomes, Matos, and

Duarte 2014), which indicated that students are most likely to access Facebook through their laptops, followed by smart phones, desktop computers, and finally, tablets.

From Table 4.5, it appears that almost all respondents prefer to access Facebook from home (95.4%). A few respondents accessed their accounts from the university (17.5%), Internet cafés (14.5%), and friends' homes (12.9%). For those who answered 'other', they reported that they log into their accounts whenever they have free Internet access. These results are consistent with Barkhuus and Tashiro's (2010) study of American university students, who mainly prefer to access Facebook at home followed by other places such as the university campus, coffee shops, or libraries.

Variable	Responses	Percent of Cases*
Home	355	95.4%
University	65	17.5%
Internet Café	54	14.5%
Friend's home	48	12.9%
Other	9	2.4%

* Respondents were allowed to tick more than one box

Table 4. 5 Preferred Locations to Access Facebook

Regarding gender differences in the locations used to access Facebook, the results in shown in Table 4.6 reveal that males were more likely than females to access Facebook from Internet cafés (25.0% compared to 3.8%, respectively), and from a friend's home (17.6% compared to 8.2%, respectively). This may reflect Saudi norms, as females generally have more restricted access to Internet cafés and friends' homes than males. In line with Saudi culture, Saudi males have the freedom to access the Internet outside the home, whereas females are more restricted to the home Internet (Madini 2012).

Variable	Male	Female	Statistic
	N (%)	N (%)	Chi-square
Home	181 (96.3)	174 (94.6)	$\chi^2(1) = 0.625$, $p = .429$
University	37 (19.7)	28 (15.2)	$\chi^2(1) = 1.285$, $p = .257$
Internet Café	47 (25.0)	7 (3.8)	$\chi^2(1) = 33.666$, $p < .001$
Friend's Home	33 (17.6)	15 (8.2)	$\chi^2(1) = 7.313$, $p = .007$
Other	3 (1.6)	6 (3.3)	$\chi^2(1) = 1.092$, $p = .333$*

* 2 cells (50%) with expected cell count < 5. Exact significance reported.

Table 4. 6 Gender differences in preferred location to access Facebook

4.3.4. Facebook Profile Names and Photos

The practice of sharing an individual's name is rooted in rituals of relationship development. Stating one's name is considered an introductory sign to indicate politeness and openness (Boyd 2012). While individuals' names in Western contexts often provide little additional social information beyond what the individual's presence already conveys, names in the Arab world signal socioeconomic positions and link their holders to the values and traditions of their family origins (Samin 2008). Despite this link to identifying individuals' positions in society, there is a gap in the literature regarding the usage of real names by Arabs, especially in the online context.

This difference is reflected in previous studies on disclosure of real names on Facebook which suggest that individuals from many different cultures tend to share their real names on their profiles. For instance, Taraszow et al. (2008) found that their entire Cypriot sample (n = 131) used their real names on Facebook. In studies of American university students, Debatin et al. (2009) (n = 119) and Tufekci (2012) (n = 450) report that about 91% of American university students use their real names on their Facebook profiles. A cross-cultural study comparing American and Northwest African cultures by Veltri and Elgarah (2009) reported that all the respondents in their American sample (n = 15) and 93% of the Moroccan sample (n = 30) indicated that they provided their real names (first and last) on Facebook. The remaining 7% of the Moroccan sample provided only their first names. Similarly, another cross-cultural study (Tung and Scott 2012) showed that the majority of Japanese (n = 51) and American (n = 11) university students disclose their real names, with the Japanese youths in the sample being slightly more willing to reveal their names than their American counterparts (90.9% as compared to 80.1%).

However, unlike these previous studies and in line with Saudi cultural norms, in this research about one-third (n = 119, 32%) of the sample concealed their real names in their

profiles. The results are shown in Figure 4.5. This trend does not match Facebook's terms and conditions, which specify that users should not provide any false personal information on Facebook (Breyer and Zuckerberg 2005). However, it should be noted that Facebook has recently agreed to modify this policy to allow users to choose the name they want to display as their Facebook name (Goel 2014).

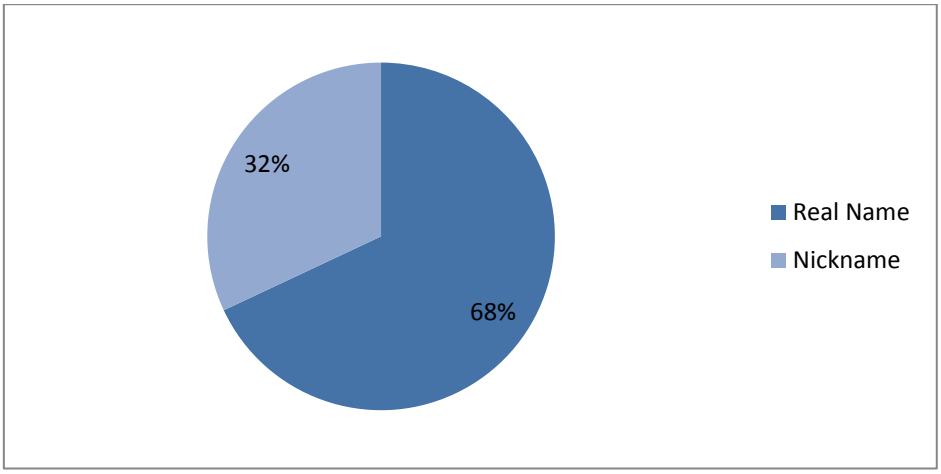

Figure 4. 5 Facebook Profile Names

A chi-square test of associations was used to show whether there were any gender differences in Facebook name usage. As seen in Table 4.7 significant differences were found, with more males (81.9%) using their real name than females (53.8%). This finding could again be interpreted in light of Saudi Islamic culture, as Saudi social norms encourage males to be proud of their names and heritage, while it is sometimes considered inappropriate to mention a female's name in a male gathering – either physical or virtual.

Variable	**Males**	**Females**	**Statistic**
	N (%)	*N (%)*	*Chi-square*
Real name	154 (81.9%)	99 (53.8%)	χ^2 (1) = 33.78, p < .001
Nickname	34 (18.1%)	85 (46.2%)	

Table 4. 7 Differences between Males and Females in their Facebook Names

The profile photo is the default photo that Facebook users select to identify themselves. Hum et al. (2011) considered this to be one of the most informative aspects of self-disclosure or image building. Western studies of Facebook confirm that males and females are equally likely to display their personal photos on their profiles. For instance,

98.7% of both male and female university students in a Canadian study (Young and Quan-Haase 2009) reported that they are likely to post an image of themselves. American studies (Stern and Taylor 2007; Debatin et al 2009; Hum et al. 2011) also indicate that over 74% of the students in their samples reported that their Facebook photos were exact representations of themselves. A Cypriot study by Taraszow et al. (2008) revealed that 97% of the young people in their sample publish their real photos.

In contrast, about two-thirds of the respondents in the current research (Figure 4.6) indicated that they did not post a real photo (67%), while only one-third used a real photo of themselves (33%).

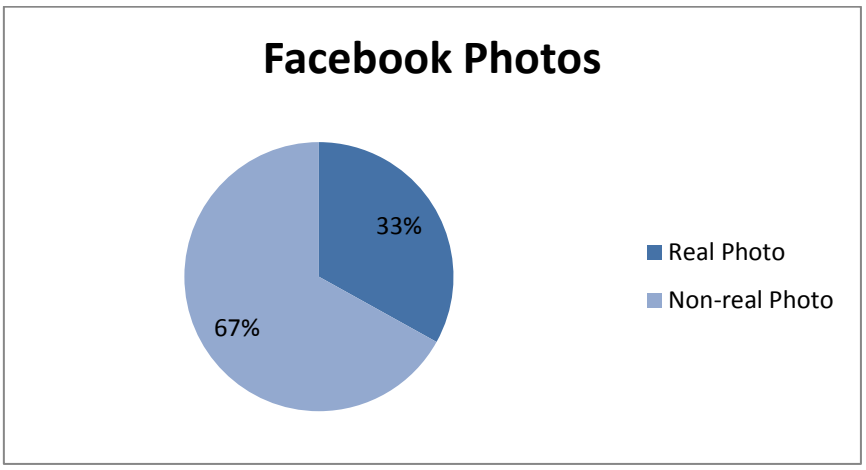

Figure 4. 6 Facebook Profile Photos

Comparing male and female students' choices of profile pictures also indicates significant gender differences (Table 4.8), with more males (60.1%) using their real photo than females (5.4%).

Variable	**Males**	**Females**	**Statistic**
	N (%)	*N (%)*	*Chi-square*
Real photo	113 (60.1%)	10 (5.4%)	χ^2 (1)= 125.59,
Symbolic photos	75 (39.9%)	174 (94.6%)	p < .001

Table 4. 8 Differences between Males and Females in their Facebook Photos

This result mirrors the offline Saudi tradition of *hijab* in which covering one's face is socially and religiously mandatory for Saudi females. A recent cross-cultural study of seven Islamic countries (Moaddel 2013) confirms that some Saudi females use the most

conservative *hijab*, which obligates females to cover their entire faces. This may explain why most Saudi female respondents used symbolic photos. These were further analysed in the second phase of the research (see Chapter Five: Section Three).

4.4. Facebook-Obtained Gratifications

Uses and gratifications theory is based on the premise that media users are purposive and goal-oriented (Rubin 2009). It assumes that users are making a conscious and active choice about what they want to achieve when they access media tools. The following section illustrates and discusses the gratifications that Saudi university students obtain from using Facebook, in order to address the first objective of this research. This section also focuses on gender differences in obtaining these gratifications.

4.4.1. Facebook-Obtained Gratification Factors

Saudi university students were asked to rate the degree of gratification they obtained from using Facebook on a 5-point scale. The mean, median, and standard deviation for each item were calculated. These items are sorted in descending order by mean values in Figure 4.7.

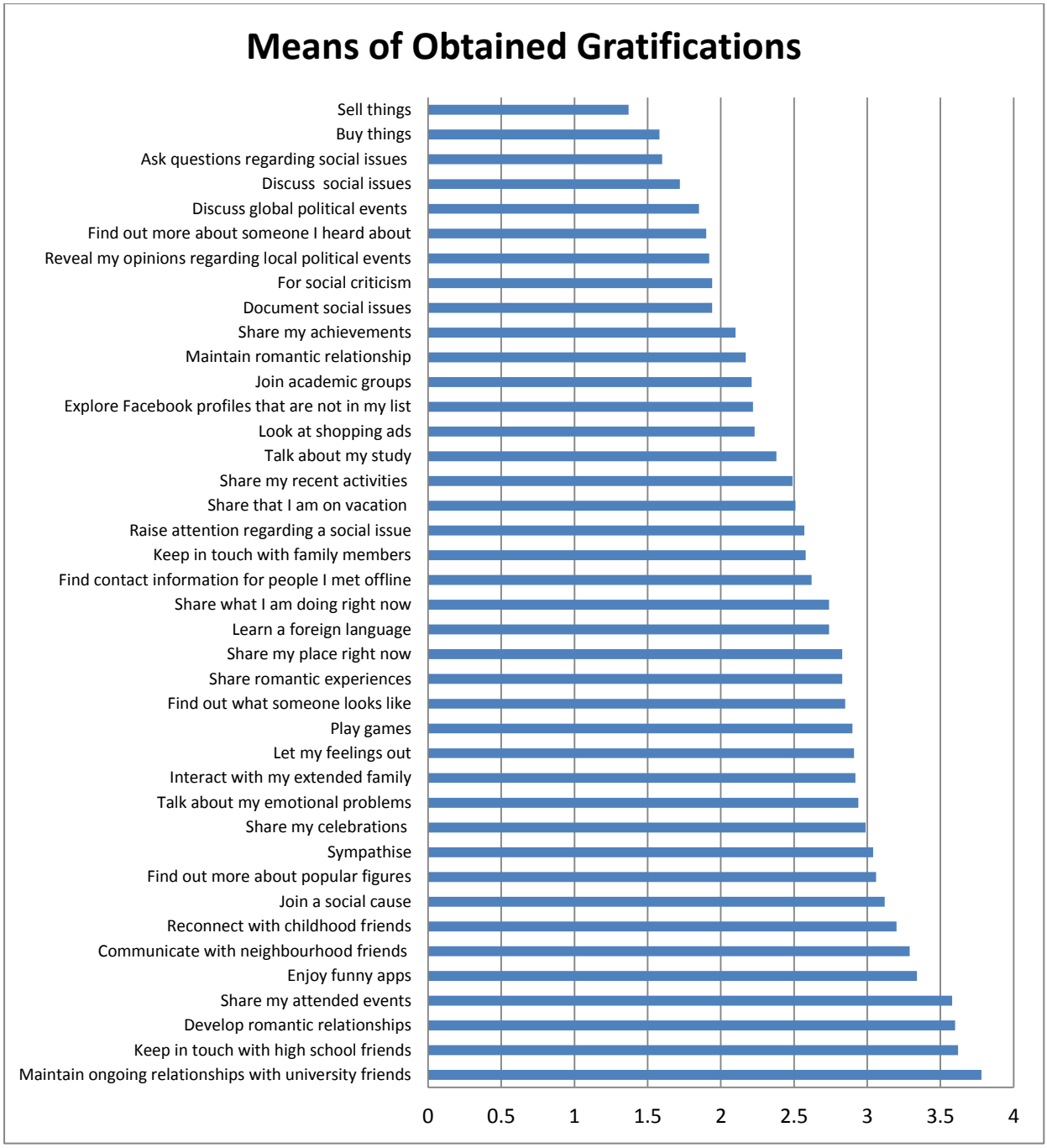

Figure 4. 7 Mean Values of Facebook-Obtained Gratifications

From the 40 ranked gratifications, the highest means were associated with relationship formation and maintenance and the lowest for information seeking and e-commerce (i.e., buying and selling).

The responses were factor analysed to examine whether one broad category or several more specific categories were required to describe the item set. Factor analysis offers a way

of identifying differences among numerous original items using fewer created categories (i.e., factors) and assists in defining the substantive content or meaning of the factors that account for the differences among a large set of items (Fabrigar et al. 1999; Thompson 2004). A Principal Components Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was used to provide maximal separation of factors. The PCA yielded 11 components with eigenvalues over 1.0, which accounted for 61.17% of the total variance. The initial eigenvalues ranged from 6.76 to 1.01. Following rotation, they ranged from 3.36 to 1.41. The percent of variance explained by each factor following rotation ranged from 8.40% to 3.53%. Each factor was then described according to the predominant items that loaded on it. For the most part, factors comprised items that were easily grouped into categories. Factor scores were created by taking the mean of the items that loaded on each factor. Each scale was composed of two to seven items. The item loadings for each factor are shown in Table 6.9.

Facebook-Obtained Gratifications	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Factor 1: Communicating about social issues											
Discuss social issues	.712										
For social criticism	.680										
Document social issues	.654										
Raise attention regarding a social issue	.634										
Join a social cause	.496										
Ask questions regarding social issues	.459										
Factor 2: Communicating with Friends											
Reconnect with childhood friends		.786									
Keep in touch with high school friends		.774									
Communicate with neighborhood friends		.720									
Maintain ongoing relationships with university friends		.489									
Factor 3: Investigating Others											
Explore Facebook profiles that are not in my list			.678								
Find out more about someone I heard about			.650								
Find out what someone looks like			.615								
Find contact information for people I met offline			.548								
Find out more about popular figures			.450								
Factor 4: Sharing personal updates											
Share what I am doing right now				.710							
Share my place right now				.608							
Share my recent activities				.521							
Share my achievements				.494							
Share my celebrations				.446							
Share my attended events				.408							
Share that I am on vacation				.408							

Facebook-Obtained Gratifications	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Factor 5: Communicating about political issues											
Discuss global political events					.869						
Reveal my opinions regarding local political events					.845						
Factor 6: Shopping											
Sell things						.769					
Buy things						.637					
Look at shopping ads						.491					
Factor 7: Emotional outlet											
Talk about my emotional problems							.740				
Let my feelings out							.675				
Sympathise							.632				
Factor 8: Romance											
Share romantic experience								.755			
Develop romantic relationship								.689			
Maintain romantic relationship								.637			
Factor 9: Academic Purposes											
Talk about my study									.695		
Learn a foreign language									.522		
Join academic groups									.411		
Factor 10: Entertainment											
Play games										.729	
Enjoy funny apps										.712	
Factor 11: Communicating with Family											
Keep in touch with family members											.797
Interact with my extended family											.423

Table 4. 9 Rotated Component Loadings Based on PCA with Varimax Rotation of 40 Facebook-Obtained Gratifications

Factor analysis highlights the main gratifications obtained by Saudi university students from using Facebook. Using this procedure, the 40 original items were grouped into 11 major factors that illustrate the Facebook-obtained gratifications. Cronbach's alpha reliabilities were then calculated for each of the factor scores. Cronbach's alpha is calculated from items' average inter-item correlations to indicate internal consistency of factor scores. The factor descriptions, means, and standard deviations of factor scores, along with reliability coefficients, are shown in Table 4.10.

#	% Rotated Variance	Factor description	Items	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's Alpha
1	7.12%	Communicating with Friends	Reconnect with childhood friends, Keep in touch with high school friends, Maintain ongoing relationships with university friends, Communicate with neighbourhood friends	3.48 (0.91)	0.82 (4)
2	4.09%	Entertainment	Play games, Enjoy funny apps	3.12 (1.03)	0.64 (2)
3	5.18%	Emotional outlet	Talk about my emotional problems, Let my feelings out, Sympathise	2.96 (0.93)	0.74 (3)
4	4.75%	Romance	Share romantic experience, Develop romantic relationships, Maintain romantic relationships	2.87 (0.92)	0.72 (3)
5	6.64%	Sharing personal updates	Share what I am doing right now, Share my place right now, Share my recent activities, Share my achievements, Share my celebrations, Share my attended events, Share that I am on vacation	2.75 (0.77)	0.81 (7)
6	3.53%	Communicating with Family	Keep in touch with family members, Interact with my extended family	2.75 (1.16)	0.60 (2)
7	6.80%	Investigating others	Explore Facebook profiles that are not in my list, Find out more about someone I heard about, Find out what someone looks like, Find contact information for people I met offline, Find out more about popular figures	2.53 (0.81)	0.80 (5)
8	4.20%	Academic Purposes	Talk about my study, Learn a foreign language, Join academic groups	2.44 (0.89)	0.67 (3)
9	8.40%	Communicating about social issues	Discuss social issues, Ask questions regarding social issues, Document social issues, Raise attention regarding a social issue, Join a social cause, For social criticism	2.15 (0.81)	0.89 (6)
10	5.28%	Communicating about political issues	Discuss global political events, Reveal my opinions regarding local political events.	1.89 (1.20)	0.95 (2)
11	5.19%	Shopping	Sell things, Buy things, Look at shopping ads	1.73 (0.76)	0.65 (3)

Table 4. 10 Factor Descriptions, Means, and Reliability of Facebook-Obtained Gratifications Factors

It is not surprising to note that the main reason that Saudi university students use Facebook is to communicate with friends. This accords with similar findings from other cultures (e.g., Bonds-Raacke and Raacke 2010; Ezumah 2013; Patra, Gadekar, and Krishnatray 2013), and accords with Facebook's original purpose (to allow Harvard students to communicate with each other), which was later extended first to other university students, then to high school students, and finally, to all people over the age of 13 (Young 2011). Saudi university students use Facebook mainly to connect, reconnect and maintain relationships with different circles of friends.

Entertainment was ranked the second highest gratification and has also been cited in most of the previous uses and gratifications studies on Facebook (e.g., Park, Kee, and Valenzuela 2009; Urista, Dong, and Day 2009; Quan-Haase and Young 2010; Alemdar and Köker 2013; Dhaha and Igale 2013; Ezumah 2013; Ku, Chen, and Zhang 2013). It has also been revealed by studies that examined the usage of Web 1.0 by Saudi samples (e.g., Al-Saggaf, Weckert, and Williamson 2002). This gratification is composed of two elements: game playing and enjoying funny apps. Books (2014) argues that the entertainment aspect, particularly game-playing, is one of the main attractions enticing individuals to use Facebook, and more than half of the users worldwide seek this gratification, with a large percentage playing games on a daily basis. The results from the focus group also confirm this finding, as the majority of the participants indicated that they are frequent players of Facebook games, exchanging virtual items and gifts, sending requests to other Facebook users to join games, and accessing Facebook during the day to check on their status in games.

The third most frequent Facebook-obtained gratification related to emotion. This factor includes three items: talking about emotional problems, letting feelings out, and sympathising with others. According to Morehouse and Crandall (2014), the introduction of Facebook provided a new form of emotional outlet, allowing users to reach out and often

receive solace from others. The analysis of the focus groups' responses in this research shows that Saudis also use Facebook for these purposes. It seems that Saudi students have found Facebook to be a new outlet which allows them to discuss their emotions and show sympathy with a wider circle of people. Ranked as the third obtained gratification factor, this result aligns with Walther, Slovacek, and Tidwell's (2001) argument that people are more likely to let out sensitive feelings and issues behind the protection of a screen than in offline settings. Besides, Facebook provides an easy opportunity that Saudi's did not have before.

Romance was the fourth gratification Saudi university students obtained from using Facebook. Three items were included in this factor: developing and maintaining romantic relationships, and sharing experiences about romantic relationships. During the focus group discussions, the students revealed that they use Facebook as a space in which they can initiate and develop romantic relationships. They even swapped stories and shared romantic quotations from poetry, sayings, and songs that matched their romantic experiences.

The fifth gratification relates to the ability to share personal updates. This includes seven items relating to notifying others about current and recent activities, location, achievements, celebrations and events, and vacation details. Here Facebook provides a new channel for individuals to broadcast and share personal updates about what they are reading, thinking, and experiencing. According to Deng, Bispo, and Zeng (2014), social media users have a great motivation to keep their contacts informed about their activities. This function was also confirmed by the focus group participants, who stated that they utilise this feature in different situations and at various times during the day. The gratification of sharing personal updates has been mentioned in previous studies (e.g., Alemdar and Köker 2013; Dhaha and Igale 2013). It should be noted that in sharing such updates, an individual may reveal additional personal information either consciously or unconsciously. Thus, further

investigation is needed about issues related to online disclosure, which is part of the focus of the second phase of this research (see Chapter Five: Section Three).

Maintaining family relations was ranked sixth among Saudi students' obtained gratifications. This factor included two items: keeping in touch with family members and interacting with one's extended family. According to Long (2005), family is considered the most important social institution in Saudi society. The importance of family ties is based on cultural and Islamic values held by Saudis, which assert that individuals must keep continuous contact with other members of their nuclear and extended families and pursue all possible means of maintaining close ties with them. The data show that young Saudi Facebook users have a positive attitude towards contacting family, and employ Facebook as a new means of keeping in touch with them. However, it should be noted that the current sample consisted of individuals in their early twenties, most of whom still live with their families (83.1%), which might explain why this only ranked midway in the list of gratifications.

Finding out about others was the seventh highest gratification, comprising five elements: 'Explore Facebook profiles that are not in my list', 'Find out more about someone I heard about', 'Find out what someone looks like', 'Find contact information for people I met offline', and 'Find out more about popular figures'. According to Darvell, Walsh, and White (2011), Facebook provides a significant opportunity for people to inspect and investigate other users' activities, enabling access to their photos, personal information, opinions and discussions. Thus, this platform can be used for surveillance, allowing users to track the actions of others and to find information about people outside of their networks (Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield 2006). The focus group participants also argued that Facebook enabled them to monitor and investigate others. A Turkish study confirmed this disposition towards surveillance on social media, arguing that generation Y considers social surveillance, or

attempting to collect information about other users without their knowledge, a significant gratification gained from using Facebook (Alemdar and Köker 2013).

Using Facebook for academic purposes was the eighth-ranked gratification, bringing together three items: 'Talking about studies', 'Learning a foreign language', and 'Joining academic groups'. Previous research has investigated the role of Facebook in students' lives and how it has been utilised to enhance pedagogical outcomes (Duffy 2011). In this research, the students indicated that they use Facebook for a number of academic gratifications. According to Schroeder and Greenbowe (2009), Facebook can be used to improve learning by promoting communication, interaction, collaboration, and resource sharing. Focusing particularly on foreign language-learning, the data obtained from the focus groups revealed that Saudi students believed that chatting with foreigners via Facebook could improve their English language skills. The efficacy of practicing and improving foreign languages through social media has also been confirmed by a study conducted by Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin (2010).

Communicating about social issues was the ninth obtained gratification. The opportunity to discuss social issues in a semi-public sphere is considered a relatively new experience for Saudis. Six items are covered in this category: 'Discussing' and 'Documenting' social issues, 'Asking questions' and 'Raising awareness' of social issues, 'Joining a social cause', and engaging in 'Social criticism'. McGrath (1980) defines social issues as aspects that are connected with the running of society. He proposed three key categories of social issues: (1) Population (e.g., matters related to age, sex, nationality, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and disability), (2) Settings (e.g., matters concerning health, family, culture, and social change), and (3) Processes or behaviours (e.g., matters related to human rights, bias, prejudice, cruelty, fairness, attitude change, social mobility, morals, and the influence of these organisational procedures on the social lives of people). In terms of this

research, this gratification related to the discussion of issues related to individuals' rights, social reform, and social criticism, which matches to some extent McGrath's third category.

The tenth gratification concerned communications about political issues. It consisted of two elements: 'Discussion of global political events' and 'Revealing opinions about local political events'. Saudi university students utilised Facebook to express their opinions and discuss news about current local and global events with others. As this research was conducted during a heated time in the Middle East, the focus groups revealed that Facebook allowed individuals to effortlessly communicate about political issues without geographical constraints. They indicated that Facebook facilitated discussion of events in Arab countries and the sharing of opinions regarding political issues. As communicating about both social and political issues was not covered in the previous uses and gratifications literature, further investigation regarding these issues is conducted in the following phases.

The last Facebook-obtained gratification related to 'e-commerce', including buying, selling, and looking at advertisements. According to a market study by Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan (2012), Facebook enables users to obtain information about a product, including other users' testimonials regarding the quality of products. Its marketing techniques have been used to create and spread persuasive, targeted online messages that aim to stimulate customers to write positively about brands, products, and services (Kirby and Marsden 2006). However, this was not one of the most significant gratifications in this sample.

This research contributes to the body of uses and gratifications research by revealing 11 distinct and independent Facebook-obtained gratification factors that represent a complex and nuanced taxonomy of Facebook gratifications. It models a detailed process that can be followed by other researchers to validate their findings. The use of factor analysis has enabled the construction of 11 summary factors from the list of 40 individual gratifications surveyed in the questionnaire. This methodology illustrates the functional similarity among

these 40 Facebook-obtained gratifications. These factors would not have emerged if the questionnaire had not been long and specific. They represent a significant improvement on the poorly worded, defined and formatted lists produced by some previous research. Although some of the categories appear similar to those revealed in previous studies, they might not be totally equivalent in different cultures. For example, although friendship was described in previous studies, friendship in Saudi culture refers solely to same-sex relationships. On the other hand, social and political issues have been given very little coverage in the uses and gratifications literature. This may be because it is a recent development, or because it was not included in top-down checklists.

4.4.2. Gender Differences in Facebook-Obtained Gratifications

To explore gender differences in participants' obtained gratifications, the scores in Section 4.4.1 were compared using independent sample t-tests. Data were analysed using uncorrected alpha levels (.05) and Bonferroni corrections to the alpha level (.05/11 = .005) to protect against elevated Type I error. The results are shown in Table 4.11.

Factor	**Males (n = 188)**	**Females (n = 184)**	**Statistic**
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*t-test, p-value*
Communicating with Friends	3.51 (0.93)	3.44 (0.88)	t = 0.81, p = .420
Entertainment	3.20 (1.02)	3.04 (1.03)	t = 1.49, p = .137
Emotional Outlet	**2.78 (0.86)**	**3.15 (0.96)**	**t = -3.94, p < .001**
Romance	2.97 (0.93)	2.77 (0.89)	t = 2.09, p = .037
Sharing Personal Updates	2.77 (0.80)	2.72 (0.73)	t = 0.66, p = .511
Communicating with Family	2.85 (1.17)	2.64 (1.13)	t = 1.76, p = .080
Investigating Others	**2.65 (0.77)**	**2.40 (0.83)**	**t = 3.05, p = .002**
Academic Purposes	2.40 (0.88)	2.48 (0.89)	t = -0.85, p = .398
Communicating about Social Issues	**2.30 (0.91)**	**1.99 (0.69**	**t = -3.61, p < .001**
Communicating about Political Issues	**2.06 (1.28)**	**1.71 (1.08)**	**t = 2.89, p = .004**
Shopping	1.73 (.70)	1.72 (0.82)	t = 0.10, p = .922

Table 4. 11 Gender Differences in Facebook Obtained Gratifications

From Table 4.11 it can be seen that significant gender differences were observed in five of the eleven Facebook-obtained gratification factors. This was reduced to four, following Bonferroni correction of the alpha level. Males reported using Facebook significantly more for communicating about social and political issues and investigating

others. On the other hand, females reported using Facebook significantly more as an emotional outlet. Although males reported using Facebook more for romantic purposes, this was not statistically significant following the Bonferroni correction.

That Saudi males tend to use Facebook for investigating others more than females is in line with previous research (Haferkamp et al. 2012). Gender bias in the discussion of social and political issues among Saudis can be explained through social role theory. Saudi males are required to take a dominant role in public life and engage in political issues. Thus, it is expected that they would look for opportunities to gratify and extend these needs in new media outlets. Saudi females are still more likely to stay at home and take responsibility for childrearing and other caring activities and are mainly restricted to the private domain (Long 2005). This stereotype of Saudi females is consistent with females' greater use of Facebook as an emotional outlet. Such a finding is also consistent with previous research. According to Brody and Hall (2010), males are generally less emotionally expressive than females in offline environments and in social media. A study conducted among an American sample by Kivran-Swaine et al. (2012) also found that the highest rates of positive emotional expression in Twitter posts are in female-female interactions.

4.5. Typology of Facebook Users

The second research objective was to contribute to the theoretical and empirical literature on media and communication by producing a typology of Saudi university student Facebook users. In media and communication studies, a typology of users may be defined as "categorisation of users into distinct user types that describes the various ways in which individuals use different media, reflecting a varying amount of activity/content preferences, frequency of use and variety of use" (Brandtzæg 2010: 941). This section presents the results and a discussion of the typology of the current Saudi sample based on their obtained

gratifications, usage variables, and demographic variables. According to the definition presented by Barnes et al. (2007), constructing a typology requires the division of individuals into clusters depending on their distinctive behaviours or characteristics. In other words, the main objective of such a division is to classify the entirety of the individuals into subgroups.

Unlike previous literature, which has treated the users of a media tool as a homogenous community seeking to obtain the same gratifications from their usage, developing a typology of users enables an investigation of how different patterns of media behaviour may be associated with different types of users. Classifying media tool users into distinctive subgroups provides more precision in understanding and identifying users and measuring the heterogeneity of media behaviour. It also reveals the extent to which individuals differ in their digital competence. Given that there is a scarcity in the literature on this subject (Brandtzæg and Heim 2011), investigating the nature of social media users' behaviour and unique user groups is a challenge, and more empirical research is needed to provide a better understanding of this relatively new media platform (Eynon and Malmberg 2011).

The most prominent, and perhaps the only, proposed typology for users of social media platforms is provided by Brandtzæg (2010), who based his classification on a meta-analysis of the studies conducted on media user typologies and then tried to test the applicability of this typology on users of social media platforms (Brandtzæg and Heim 2011; Brandtzæg Heim., and Karahasanović 2011). According to Brandtzæg's (2010) typology, social media users vary based on frequency of use, type of activity, and social capital as follows: (1) sporadics "are low-level users of social media"; (2) lurkers "use social media, but do not contribute or interact"; (3) socialisers "use social media mainly for social interaction with friends and family"; (4) debaters "use social media mainly for discussion", and (5) advanced users "use social media frequently for almost all purposes, such as socializing,

debating, and contributing" (Brandtzæg and Heim 2011: 41-42). While this typology can assist in understanding and categorising the increasingly complex behaviours found on social media platforms, it only focuses on users' degree of involvement on these platforms. The current research, by contrast, aims to also consider the diverse gratifications obtained from the users' degree of involvement and the effects of both their demographic backgrounds and usage differences on such gratifications.

Cluster analysis was employed to search for user types based on the gratification factors identified in Section 4.4.1, with each type having a distinctive pattern of Facebook-obtained gratifications. Two-step cluster analysis was used with the 11 Facebook factors as clustering variables. This statistical method was chosen as a suitable approach for clustering large data sets with combined attributes (Norusis 2003). It depends on a distance measure that allows data with both continuous attributes and categorical attributes to be grouped. According to Hsu, Chen and Su (2007: 4477), "[this] technique is derived from a probabilistic model in which the distance between two clusters is equivalent to the decrease in log-likelihood function as a result of merging".

In order to perform a two-step cluster analysis, initial cases are categorised into pre-clusters that are then substituted in place of the raw data in the hierarchical clustering. According to its similarity to existing pre-clusters, each successive case is added to make a new pre-cluster, utilising a likelihood distance measure as the similarity criterion. Cases are allocated to the pre-cluster that increases a log-likelihood function. They are then clustered utilising the standard agglomerative clustering algorithm, forming a range of solutions. According to Okazaki (2006: 131), Schwarz's Bayesian Inference Criterion (BIC) is considered "one of the most useful and objective selection criteria that essentially avoid the arbitrariness in traditional clustering techniques". It helps in reducing this range of solutions to the best number of clusters. The selected number of clusters is presented in Table 4.12.

Number of Clusters	Schwarz's Bayesian Criterion (BIC)	BIC Change[a]	Ratio of BIC Changes[b]	Ratio of Distance Measures[c]
1	2961.070			
2	2769.487	-191.583	1.000	1.294
3	**2650.958**	**-118.530**	**.619**	**1.809**
4	2643.656	-7.301	.038	1.891
5	2701.159	57.502	-.300	1.032
6	2760.943	59.784	-.312	1.192
7	2832.070	71.127	-.371	1.074
8	2907.284	75.213	-.393	1.109
9	2987.915	80.632	-.421	1.028
10	3069.898	81.983	-.428	1.258
11	3161.766	91.868	-.480	1.129
12	3258.021	96.255	-.502	1.010
13	3354.627	96.606	-.504	1.170
14	3456.116	101.489	-.530	1.027
15	3558.373	102.257	-.534	1.107

a. The changes are from the previous number of clusters in the table.
b. The ratios of changes are relative to the change for the two cluster solution.
c. The ratios of distance measures are based on the current number of clusters against the previous number of clusters.

Table 4. 12 Summary of the Selected Number of Clusters

The BIC is calculated for the potential number of clusters. Smaller values of the BIC mean better models. The BIC for three clusters was 2650.958 and slightly smaller for four clusters at 2643.656. However, the ratio of BIC changes was only .038 between three and four clusters, whereas the ratio change was highest for three clusters .619. Similarly, the ratio of distance measures was highest for three and four clusters. The best solution is one that has a large ratio of BIC changes and a large ratio of distance measures. The improvement in the BIC between three and four clusters was deemed insignificant and not worth the higher level of complexity caused by an additional cluster in the model (SPSS 2012). Thus, three clusters were retained. Cluster 1 included 106 respondents (28.5%), 186 respondents were placed in Cluster 2 (50%) and 80 respondents were assigned to Cluster 3 (21.5%). The means of the three clusters on the 11 factors are shown in Table 4.13.

Obtained Gratifications	Cluster					ANOVA	Post-hoc differences
	1		2	3	All		
Communicating with Friends	Mean	3.09	3.92	2.95	3.47	F = 60.46 (p < .001)	2 > 1,3
	SD	(0.90)	(0.68)	(0.86)	(0.91)		
Entertainment	Mean	2.55	3.35	3.34	3.12	F = 26.28 (p < .001)	2,3 > 1
	SD	(0.90)	(1.02)	(0.92)	(1.03)		
Emotional Outlet	Mean	2.36	3.17	3.26	2.96	F = 36.81 (p < .001)	2,3 > 1
	SD	(0.79)	(0.90)	(0.79)	(0.93)		
Romance	Mean	2.45	3.27	2.48	2.87	F = 45.65 (p < .001)	2 > 1,3
	SD	(0.87)	(0.83)	(0.75)	(0.92)		
Sharing Personal Updates	Mean	2.06	3.17	2.68	2.75	F = 115.25 (p < .001)	2 > 3 > 1
	SD	(0.46)	(0.65)	(0.65)	(0.77)		
Family Matters	Mean	2.15	3.30	2.25	2.75	F = 55.43 (p < .001)	2 > 1,3
	SD	(1.08)	(1.06)	(0.82)	(1.16)		
Investigating others	Mean	2.08	3.00	2.02	2.53	F = 97.45 (p < .001)	2 > 1,3
	SD	(0.54)	(0.66)	(0.79)	(0.81)		
Academic Purposes	Mean	1.83	2.74	2.57	2.44	F = 44.93 (p < .001)	2,3 > 1
	SD	(0.72)	(0.81)	(0.85)	(0.89)		
Communicating about Social Issues	Mean	1.56	2.07	3.11	2.15	F = 155.42 (p < .001)	3 > 2 > 1
	SD	(0.45)	(0.55)	(0.84)	(0.81)		
Communicating about Political Issues	Mean	1.30	1.63	3.27	1.89	F = 113.34 (p < .001)	3 > 2 > 1
	SD	(0.65)	(1.03)	(1.06)	1.20		
Shopping	Mean	1.22	1.82	2.18	1.72	F = 48.15 (p < .001	3 > 2 > 1
	SD	(0.34)	(0.65)	(1.00)	(0.76)		

Note. Post-hoc testing was conducted using Tukey's Least Significant Difference (LSD) test, with a significance level of 0.05. The post-hoc differences column lists the significant differences according to cluster number

Table 4. 13 Means and Differences between Three Clusters on the Obtained Gratifications of Facebook Factors

One-way Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs) were used to evaluate whether there were significant differences in the cluster means on the Facebook-obtained gratification factors. Each of the clusters was significantly different (at $p < .001$), indicating that they each contributed some variance to the separation of the clusters. Post-hoc testing was then used to determine where the differences between clusters existed on each of the factors. Cluster 1 had the lowest means on each of the factors.

Between-cluster and within-cluster predictor importance charts were examined in order to reveal which variables were significant to the differentiation of each cluster. According to SPSS (2012), the null hypothesis for within-cluster importance of a continuous variable is that the mean in a cluster is the same as the overall mean. A variable's t-statistic and associated p-value are used to determine its within-cluster importance. Positive t-

statistics indicate that the value generally takes a larger-than-average value in a particular cluster, whereas negative statistics indicate that the variable takes a smaller-than-average value.

The analysis shows that all the factors in Cluster 1 were lower than average, with each of them contributing significantly to the construction of the cluster. Thus, Cluster 1 participants are characterized as infrequent users of Facebook in terms of their scores on all of the 11 Facebook-obtained gratification factors. In Cluster 2, most of the gratifications took on values that were above average. The exceptions were communicating about social issues and political issues, which were below average but non-significant. On the other hand, communicating about social issues and political issues were the important factors in Cluster 3, with values higher than average. The remaining factors were either significantly below average or not significant contributors to the formation of Cluster 3. Thus, users in Cluster 3 are characterised by using Facebook primarily for discussing social and political issues. Members of each cluster were then compared based on the independent variables presented in Section 4.2 and Section 4.3 to evaluate if these identifiable subgroups differed in their backgrounds or usage variables. The significant results are shown in Table 4.14.

Variable		Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Statistic
Gender	Male	49 (46.2%)	85 (45.7%)	54 (67.5%)	χ^2 (2) = 13.46, p = .001
	Female	57 (53.8%)	101 (54.3%)	26 (32.5%)	
Economic Status	Mean rank	164.46	196.96	159.89	K-W H: χ^2 (2) = 9.49, p = .009
Years of Facebook experience	Mean rank	197.90	184.80	162.24	K-W H: χ^2 (2) = 6.70, p = .035
Time on Facebook	Mean rank	185.02	195.76	154.43	K-W H: χ^2 (2) =9.26, p =.010

Note. Only significant differences at $p < .05$ are reported. Statistics used were the chi-square test of independence for nominal variables (gender, major, residence, marital status, devices and places of accessing Facebook), the Kruskal-Wallis H test for ordinal variables (parental income, father's education, mother's education, years Facebook experience) and for measuring the differences in the time spent on Facebook because the time variable is skewed.

Table 4. 14 Differences in Independent Variables According to Clusters

From Table 4.14, it can be seen that Cluster 3 has the highest percentage of males when compared to the other two clusters. Users in Cluster 2 have the highest economic status

(i.e. upper middle class), followed by Cluster 1, which can be classified as middle class, and then by Cluster 3, which falls into the lower class. Regarding the adoption of Facebook, users in Cluster 1 started to use Facebook earlier than the other two clusters and thus could be viewed as early adopters. Cluster 2 represented mid-range adopters in terms of their experience of using Facebook, and users in the third cluster are considered late adopters of Facebook. In terms of time spent on Facebook, users of Cluster 1 can be considered medium users, Cluster 2 heavy users, and Cluster 3 light users. Based on these findings, the Facebook Saudi users are classified as follows:

4.5.1. Cluster 1: Broad Nominal Users (28.5%)

Users in this cluster are termed Broad Nominal Users because they are infrequent users of Facebook in terms of their scores on all of the 11 Facebook-obtained gratification factors who use Facebook for an average time. Users in this cluster belong to the middle class, who tend to satisfy a range of diverse needs on Facebook without directing their usage towards specific activities. Broad Nominal Users are also characterised as being early adopters, and their years of experience utilising Facebook may explain their use of this platform to satisfy a variety of needs. Being early adopters may also explain why these users spent an average amount of time using Facebook, as they are used to it and consider it an intrinsic part of their daily lives. This result corresponds with the findings of Boyd and Heer (2006), who indicated that while early adopters updated their profiles regularly, they tended to log on less frequently.

4.5.2. Cluster 2: High Selective Users (50%)

High Selective Users formed the largest category, accounting for half of all users. They gratified selective needs when using Facebook: communicating with friends, entertainment, emotional outlet, romance, sharing personal updates, communicating with family, investigating others, academic purposes, and shopping. They spend the largest

amount of time on Facebook, but do not communicate about social or political issues. Thus, they could also be named general social users. Users in this cluster generally had the highest family income which may influence how they use Facebook. Another characteristic of these users is that they adopted Facebook along with the majority of people, i.e. neither early nor late.

4.5.3. Cluster 3: Restricted Users (21.5%)

Users in this cluster are termed 'Restricted Users' because they devote their usage to communicating about social and political issues and ignore Facebook's other affordances. More than two-thirds of this cluster are males, which is in line with the previous findings regarding gender differences in discussing social and political issues (see Section 4.4.2). Devoting their time to communicating about political and social issues, they do not make use of the other aspects of Facebook. This segment of users is also characterised by having the lowest family income and the lowest percentage of users.

Within his cute cat theory, Zuckerman (2014) argues that individuals may benefit from using social media platforms designed mainly for 'cute cat' purposes (a term used for any online activity which is popular but not serious) to generate and interact about political content. Applying this argument to the current categorisation of users, it can be argued that High Selective Users use Facebook for cute cat purposes. They represent half of the users (50%) who joined Facebook to obtain gratifications, such as communicating with friends, entertainment, and shopping. Restricted Users, by contrast, can be classified as non-cute cat users, as they mainly focus their usage of Facebook on gratifying their needs for communicating about social and political issues. They represent the smallest percentage of the entire sample (21.5%) that joined Facebook most recently. Broad Nominal Users seek to obtain both cute cat and non-cute cat gratifications from their usage of Facebook.

Moreover, it seems that there is a relationship between the gratifications, the time users spend on Facebook and their economic status. High Selective Users, who utilise Facebook to gratify a variety of needs (but not the discussion of social and political issues), are heavy users and have the highest economic status. In contrast, Restricted Users, who are light users and have the lowest income, devote their usage mainly to communicating about social and political issues. The characteristics of the typology of Facebook users are presented in Table 4.15 and show the different ways individuals use Facebook across the range of their obtained gratifications, demographic variables and usage variables.

Broad Nominal Users (28.5%)	**High Selective Users (50%)**	**Restricted Users (21.5%)**
Cute cat and non-cute cat gratifications	Wide range of cute cat gratifications	Non-cute cat gratifications
No significant gender differences	No significant gender differences	More males
Middle class	Upper middle class	Low class
Early adopters	Mid-range adopters	Late adopters
Average users	Heavy users	Light users

Table 4. 15 Characteristics of the Typology of Facebook Users

4.6. Concluding Summary

Phase one of this research aimed to develop an understanding of the gratifications Saudi university students obtain from using Facebook and to construct a typology of these Facebook users. Through a quantitative questionnaire, data was collected from a representative sample of Saudi university students regarding their demographic backgrounds, Facebook usage, and obtained gratifications. The questionnaire developed in this phase provides a comprehensive tool based on previous studies and student responses in the focus group. Thus it is argued that this research adds a cultural dimension to applications of uses and gratifications theory in social media studies, as it reveals that conservative Saudi users from an Islamic society utilise Facebook in a distinct way. Besides using Facebook to obtain a diverse range of gratifications, including personal, recreational, and academic, the findings

reveal that Facebook provides an opportunity for Saudi university students to communicate about social and political issues. It is noteworthy that these gratifications have not been revealed in previous studies.

Although previous studies of social media usage have generated lists of obtained gratifications, they have not shown how users within the same sample differ in these gratifications. This research contributes a typology of Facebook users based on their obtained gratifications, demographic characteristics, and usage differences which can be used to explain the diversity and inequality of usage patterns across different sub-groups of users. Three clusters of Facebook users emerged: Broad Nominal Users, who utilise Facebook to meet a wide range of gratifications; High Selective Users, who use the platform mainly for cute-cat gratifications without engaging in social and political issues, and Restricted Users, who use it to discuss current affairs. Such finding shows the diverse gratifications obtained from the users' degree of involvement and the effects of both their demographic backgrounds and usage differences on such gratifications.

A common predisposition among uses and gratifications theory and cute cat theory is that both theories assume that social media users have different purposes for using a social media platform. A fundamental principle of cute cat theory is to differentiate social media users according to their social and political interests. The results revealed in this phase support this idea, showing that the main differences between Restricted Users and High Selective Users is their level of interest in using Facebook to gratify their need to discuss social and political issues. This link between the two theories adds a new dimension to the applications of uses and gratification theory to user-generated content media platforms.

Applying uses and gratifications theory at this phase of the research has assisted in providing an answer to the main research question: 'How are Saudi university students using the opportunities that are offered by Facebook'. Nevertheless, this quantitative data phase

needs to be complemented by qualitative research in order to provide further understanding and validate the results of the first phase. Thus, a content analysis phase was conducted in order to investigate the themes of users' status updates on Facebook and their levels of online disclosure. The following chapter presents the results and discussion of this next phase of the research.

Chapter Five

Phase Two: Results and Discussions

5.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the Phase 2 which investigated participants' status updates and levels of disclosure, and the relationship between these two variables, using data gathered from fifty volunteers who indicated their willingness to volunteer in this phase through writing their email addresses in the questionnaire.

Thematic and quantitative content analysis methods were utilised in this phase to gather rich data and form a more complete picture of how Saudi university students use the opportunities offered by Facebook. In particular, these two methods have been used to address the third and fourth research objectives: to expand the understanding of the user-generated content within social media platforms by identifying what themes of Facebook status updates Saudi students generate and to add to the field of self-disclosure by testing the hypothesis that these themes correlate with Saudi students' levels of personal information disclosure. Their results are presented in section two and three of this chapter. The final section of this chapter presents the concluding summary of this phase of the research.

There were no noticeable differences in the demographic variables between this sub-sample and the wider sample in Phase 1. The gender breakdown was roughly equivalent (46% males for the sub-sample vs. 50.5% males for the main sample) and the majority of them lived in a house (50% for the sub-sample vs. 54% for the main sample). As with the main sample, the sub-sample contained more science than humanities majors (72% for the sub-sample vs. 61.6% for the main sample), were more likely to be living with their parents (92% for the sub-sample vs. 83.1% for the main sample), and to be single (100% for the sub-

sample vs. 93.8% for the main sample). Both parents were more likely to have a bachelor's degree (48% for the sub-sample vs. 47% for the main sample for their fathers' education; 44% for the sub-sample vs. 36.3% for the main sample for their mothers' education). Dividing this sub-sample into the typological categories obtained from the main sample in phase one reveals that 16 participants were Broad Nominal Users, 16 were High Selective Users, and 18 were Restricted Users.

5.2. Status Updates on Facebook Profiles

According to Bhagwat and Goutam (2013), individuals use status updates to share "what is on their minds", to tell others what they are doing, and to gather feedback from friends. Thus, through Facebook status updates, individuals reveal snapshots of their lives via text accompanied by photos, videos, or URL links (Joinson 2008). The continued availability of these statuses offers a historical written record complemented by images and video, creating a detailed timeline of events (Taprial and Kanwar 2012).

Status updates from 50 participants from Phase 1 were analysed for an eleven-month period between August, 2011 and June, 2012. A total of 7,928 status updates were generated by the participants during that time. Five categories were used to classify this material based on the kind of media they contained: text only, text and a photo, text and a video, text and a URL link, or a photo only. Figure 5.1 represents the distribution of the status updates according to these categories.

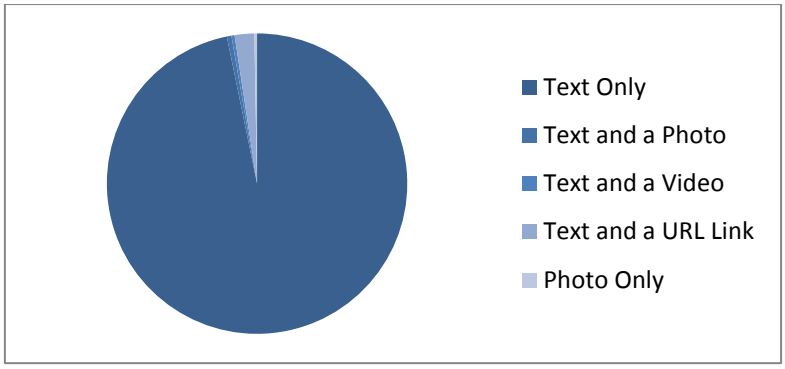

Figure 5. 1 Distribution of the Status Updates According to their Types

From Figure 5.1, it can be seen that the majority of the status updates were at least partially textual, with photo-only posts accounting for 0.3% of the posts. This last category included photos of landscapes (n = 9), babies (n = 8), and followers (n = 6). The photo-only category is excluded from analysis due to its low percentage and the difficulty of determining what the users intended to convey, leaving a total of 7,905 posts to be analysed. This section analyses the themes of the status updates (5.2.1); gender differences (5.2.2); and the relationship between Facebook status updates and the gratifications participants reported obtaining from using Facebook in phase one (5.2.3). See Chapter Four: Section Four for the analysis of Facebook-obtained gratifications derived from the questionnaire data.

5.2.1. Themes of Facebook Status Updates

The phenomenal growth of social media has led to a significant increase in the amount of user-generated content across its platforms. Such content contains information about individuals' attitudes, perceptions, and opinions about various issues and topics (Dang et al. 2014). However, few scholars have investigated the content generated by Facebook users and their studies have either been limited in scope or have used a deductive top-down approach with predetermined themes (see Chapter Two: Section Three). This research, in contrast, investigated the content of a set of Facebook status updates during a lengthy time period utilising an inductive bottom-up qualitative approach. Sixteen themes emerged from

the thematic content analysis of the 7,905 Facebook status updates. Figure 5.2 summarises the themes and is followed by a further description of them.

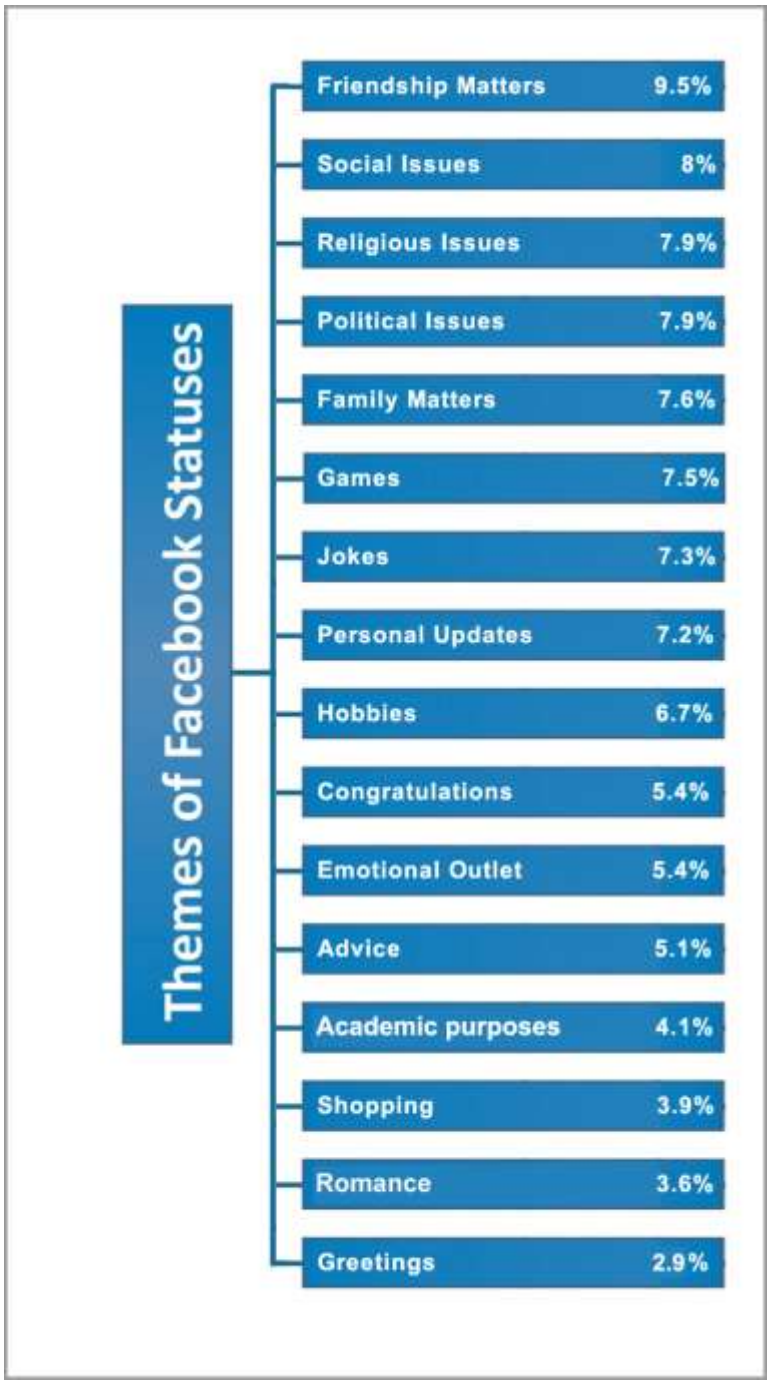

Figure 5. 2 Themes of Saudi University Students' Facebook Status Updates

1. Friendship Matters (n = 751)

Status updates regarding friendship ranked first among the themes and accounted for 9.5% of the total number of status updates. Because the Saudi state applies gender

segregation in all sectors of life (Le Renard 2008), friendship between individuals of the same sex is considered the norm in Saudi life. It seems that this offline prevalence of same-sex friendships is reflected in the virtual world, as a majority of Facebook status updates were directed towards users' friends of the same sex. The status updates posted within this theme fall into four main categories: celebrating with friends, apologising for an interruption in contact, providing or requesting contact information, and keeping in touch.

As the current research sample comprises university students, the celebrations included end-of-year parties, engagements, and birthdays. The locations where these events were celebrated demonstrate gender differences among Saudis: most of the males' status updates indicated that their events took place outside the home - often in restaurants or coffee shops - while females' status updates revealed that they largely celebrated these events in their homes.

Saudi university students seemed to consider Facebook an important venue to maintain their friendships, given that some of the status updates offered apologies for neglecting friends online (e.g., "My friends, forgive me for ignoring your private messages. I am now back and we can continue our activities"). Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2006) indicate that Facebook use supports students' formation of 'bridging capital', social ties that support their integration into life. In addition, Boyd (2007) argues that these friendship-driven online practices are ways in which young people have taken advantage of opportunities to 'hang out' with friends on new social media platforms. Thus, young people are able to engage in more activities of peer socialisation and identity formation than they would do offline.

Some of the status updates also showed that the students used Facebook to share contact information with their friends. This may indicate that the students considered Facebook a standard method of communication where they can guarantee that their messages

will reach their friends. For instance, some announced their new email addresses (e.g., "Hey friends! Please write down my email so no one will say "I sent you an email and you did not reply""), while others posted their BlackBerry Messenger PIN and asked their friends to add them (e.g., "This is my Blackberry PIN guys: XXXXX. Add me"). This was also demonstrated when they asked after friends they had not seen in a while (e.g., "X, how are you? I have not seen you in a long time"). Others asked how they could reach their friends directly (e.g., "…you have not even used Messenger for a while. Are you alive or dead?").

2. Social Issues (n = 634)

The status updates within this theme comprise 8% of the total number of posts. Status updates on social issues covered a wide range of topics, from criticising some social norms to criticising government officials. Saudi university students' discussions surrounding social issues usually began as interactions about daily topics, regarding a Facebook page, a hashtag, a shared YouTube video, or even an article from a traditional newspaper. Their communication regarding such material ranged from discussing it once to communicating about it for a month. These status updates covered the issues either by reflecting individual attitudes (supporting or opposing), or by documenting the news in a neutral fashion and waiting for others' responses. The students also acted as citizen journalists, offering their own coverage or commentary on the news regarding perceived governmental service shortcomings, or publishing eyewitness news accounts. According to Goode (2009), citizen journalists within social media platforms are defined as ordinary users who actively play a role in gathering, evaluating, and spreading news and information. He stated that the main aims of such contributions were the autonomous, trustworthy, accurate, extensive, and relevant information that a democracy needs. Citizen journalism can bring attention to a story in a semi-public sphere. For instance, one participant took a photo of a blind student who fell into a hall and documented his story. This accident was then taken up by the traditional press.

Harlow (2012) confirms that, for users who post citizen journalism comments, Facebook provides a means to bypass traditional news gatekeepers, allowing participants to publish their own information and publicise content that mainstream media might deem 'un-newsworthy'.

Gerhards and Rucht (1992) identified three collective action frames for discussing social issues within online communities: diagnostic framing, which defines a problem or assigns blame; prognostic framing, which details possible solutions; and motivational framing, which incites individuals to act or mobilise. Vegh (2003) also classified online posts aimed at discussing social issues, and provided a useful framework with which to analyse such posts by identifying three distinct dimensions: awareness/advocacy (the generation of sympathetic information), organisation/mobilisation (planning and deliberation as a result of sympathetic information), and action/reaction (the result of such planning and deliberation). There is no evidence from this sample that content fell into the more active levels described by Gerhards and Rucht (1992) or Vegh (2003). This was seen as warranting further investigation in follow-up interviews (see Chapter Six: Section Four).

3. Religious Issues (n = 626)

The status updates within this theme comprise 7.9% of the total number of posts. According to Mishra and Semaan (2010), little research has been carried out on online religious writing on the Internet, and even less on the Islamic religion. Campbell and Lövheim (2011) suggest that religious writings online reflect users' personal missions: they provide a prophetic voice, define their faith, introduce others to the relevance of users' faith, and engage friends and strangers in a religious discussion. A study conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2012) revealed that up to 69% of Middle Eastern citizens indicate that religion is very important to them. That religious issues ranked third in the Saudi university students' status updates reflects the significance of religion in their lives. The

status updates within this theme affirm, defend and confirm their beliefs. They covered issues such as defence of the Prophet Mohamed, Quran verses and Prophet Mohamed quotes, references to life after death, prayers, and religious rituals.

Regarding the defence of the Prophet Mohamed, the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohamed (peace be upon him) in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* on 5 February, 2006, resulted in Muslims and non-Muslims holding yearly offline protests and online campaigns to spread the Prophet's inspiring life story and sharing positive portrayals of his life (Ammitzbøll and Vidino 2007). Similar examples from the current research include status updates introducing the mission of the Prophet Mohamed, writing about his virtues and high morals, sharing pages about his life, and launching campaigns in several languages to further his missions: for example, "Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, is a symbol of tolerance and advocacy for the preservation of rights. When Christians and Jews were minorities in the Arabian peninsula, he said that if anyone oppresses any of them or asks them to overwork, the Prophet will be his opponent in the doomsday" and "Our prophet was not ever a racist or a hate-monger. On the contrary, he urged Muslims to have a strong faith in Jesus and named his mother Mary, peace be upon them, queen of the ladies".

Saudi university students also posted quotations from the two main Islamic sources - the Quran and the Prophet Mohamed - in their profiles. The topics covered included virtues, obedience to parents, and calls for forgiveness and mercy, such as this quote from the Quran: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful". Selections from Prophet Mohamed's sayings were also popular: "A person said: "Allah's Messenger, who amongst the people is most deserving of my good treatment?" He said: "Your mother, again your mother, again your mother, then your father, then your nearest relatives according to the order [of nearness]"".

Saudi university students also showed their concern about life after death and the need to prepare for Judgment Day by adhering to religious values. They posted statuses about the importance of accounting for mistakes in the sight of others (e.g., "I always remind myself that the judgement day will not be easy"), or prayers asking God to accept their work and not punish them for their wrongdoing (e.g., "Please God, forgive us for all of our mistakes").

It should be noted that the analysis of the status updates covered a considerable time period (eleven months), during which religious occasions such as Ramadan, Hajj (pilgrimage), Eid al-Fitr, and al-Adha occurred, and the students' statuses reflected these occasions. Their posts indicated the religious rituals that could be practiced during these occasions (e.g., "Do not forget to perform Umrah [an Islamic ritual] in Ramadan. It is equivalent to making a pilgrimage").

4. Political Issues (n = 625)

Since 2011, when this research began, there have been several revolutionary movements in the Middle East and North Africa to bring down long-standing regimes, many in close proximity to Saudi Arabia. The role of social media in these uprisings has attracted the attention of scholars, and the terms 'Facebook revolution ', 'Twitter revolution and 'YouTube revolution' have become ubiquitous (Joseph 2012). The analysis of the status updates occurred in the middle of this heated period. This was clearly reflected in students' posts, with 7.9% of the status updates concerning political issues.

Saudi university students posted about the Arab Spring and Arab revolutions in neighbouring countries. Their writings evaluated the Libyan revolutionaries' chances of success (e.g., "since Qatar and United Arab Emirates started to support the protestors in Libya, I expect their chance of success is higher") and analysed the position of the Al-Asad regime and the poorly-equipped Syrian revolutionaries, as well as the destruction that Syria experienced. The sample also discussed the Yemen revolution and the aims of Yemenis in

building a reformed society. Some status updates highlighted the new experience of Egyptians going through a presidential election and the Islamic party's chances of winning it. They also discussed the right of the Bahrain government to stand against the Bahraini revolution and the interference of the Saudi military to stop the protests (e.g., "the so-called revolution in Bahrain is mainly directed by the Iranian agenda and the role of the Saudi military to stop it is a must"). Such an attitude is in line with the Saudi state position towards the Bahraini revolution (Nuruzzaman 2013). According to Erdbrink and Warrick (2011), this revolution was started by Islamic Shiites. Thus, because the majority of Saudis are Islamic Sunni, the revolution did not receive support from the current sample. It might even have been perceived as a threat to their religious beliefs if it had succeeded, due to its proximity to the eastern province of the Saudi kingdom (Mabon 2012).

Saudi university students also posted status updates to discuss Shiites' Facebook campaigns to bring down the regime and to express opposition to such a revolution in Saudi Arabia. This result fits with Sallam and Hunter's (2013) argument that the Arab spring influenced Saudis – especially the young – to seriously think about guarding their society from revolutions. Although social media was used to express disappointment about hopes that Saudi university students had not met, they showed respect for the Saudi king and a solid desire to prevent any protests from occurring within the kingdom. This signalled the need for further investigation in order to understand Saudi university students' perceptions of using social media platforms to discuss political issues (see Chapter Six: Section Four).

5. Family Matters (n = 599)

The family is considered the most important social institution in Saudi society. It is the main source of identity and status for individuals (Long 2005). As part of a collectivist society that highly values both nuclear and extended families, it was expected that the students would devote part of their status updates to sharing family issues. The current

sample allocated 7.6% of their status updates to family matters, including news and updates about family members and family announcements – happy or sad news and occasions that required support, such as births (e.g., "My sister gave birth to a baby girl last night! Her name is X"), operations (e.g., "My mother had surgery today and she is fine now") and deaths (e.g., "My cousin X submitted to the mercy of God today").

6. Games (n = 594)

According to Kirman, Lawson, and Linehan (2009), games on Facebook have become a popular phenomenon. This was reflected in Saudi university students' status updates, as 7.5% of their status updates were about games. Status updates under this theme are broken down into three categories: multiplayer game requests, updates on stages reached, and invitations to play the game, whether on Facebook (e.g., "Please, add me on X game") or external to Facebook (e.g., "This is my ID on PlayStation"). Others requested help in games or with game requirements (e.g., "I need help in X game. I need to feed two cows to complete this level") or mentioned their current progress (e.g., "I've distributed 1,000 gold coins in X game on the occasion of reaching a higher level"). Saudi university students also posted invitations to join a new game (e.g., "Girls, hurry! Join X. It's a very interesting game").

7. Jokes (n = 580)

According to Weaver (2013), joking is a culturally and historically specific activity. It provokes laughter in certain contexts and reveals a sense of humour in communication with others. It may also shed light on distinct aspects of a society in a certain time period (Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, and Booth-Butterfield 1995). The analysis of the current sample's status updates revealed that 7.3% of the total number of posts fell into this category, with the most popular relating to themes local cultural jokes and general jokes.

Local cultural jokes included jokes about Saudi females' behaviour (e.g., "Say 'MMMMMMMMM.' Say 'OOOOOOOO.' Say 'AAAAAAAAA'. A Saudi girl is

putting lipstick on another girl"). Some made jokes about the differences between Saudis and people of other nationalities (e.g., "A 30-year-old Korean has a soft voice, while a 16-year-old Saudi Arabian sounds like a vacuum cleaner"). Other jokes were more general, such as, "A man asked why his son was kicked out of school. They brought him an egg and told him that his son said it was a donkey egg. The man said, "I swear to God he did not learn to cheat from me"". Another student wrote, "If you spill water on the floor or on yourself, leave it. It will dry itself. Do not charge your cell phone battery unless it is empty. If the answer to your question is not in the first suggested website in Google search, then it does not exist. Why make your bed if you will sleep on it again? If you are late, and you will not be able to arrive on time, then do not go. If you drop an ice cube on the floor, then throw it under the fridge".

8. Personal Updates (n = 566)

According to Barash et al. (2010), providing small snapshots of daily activities via status updates has become a popular phenomenon among social media users. This argument has been confirmed by previous studies that revealed that the most frequent status updates on Facebook are about personal issues and events (Denti et al. 2012; Winter et al. 2014). The current Saudi university students allocated 7.2% of their total number of status updates for daily personal updates. The status updates under this theme are divided into two types: sharing the users' own activities in specific places, and what they were currently doing. The status updates referred to specific places such as restaurants/cafés (e.g., "I'm in the coffee shop enjoying jasmine tea"); college (e.g., "I'm on campus now"); gardens (e.g., "I'm at King Fahd Zoo garden") or somewhere inside or outside the country (e.g., "I will pass by X City to have a seafood dinner" or "We stopped at X city to drink Moroccan tea"). Other status updates stated what they were doing at the time of the post without specifying the place (e.g., 'Reading', 'Driving', or 'Lunch time').

9. Hobbies (n = 528)

For Saudis, some hobbies are considered incompatible with cultural and religious norms. The limited available set of offline hobbies was reflected by the status updates (6.7%) addressing this theme. Both male and female students indicated that they liked to read, listen to music, cook, and engage in voluntary work. Other status updates showed gendered differences. For instance, most of the status updates about sports were posted by males, such as those about football, swimming, and riding horses. On the other hand, females posted more about shopping, fashion, cooking, and dancing.

10. Congratulations (n = 429)

A number (5.4%) of Saudi university students' status updates included congratulations which express good wishes on a special occasion and focus on two main areas: sporting victories (e.g., "Congratulations to the fans of my favourite football team X for winning!") and national occasions (e.g., "To all Saudis: Happy National Day!"). It should be noted that celebrating the national day among Saudis was not limited to exchanging Facebook congratulations. According to Muravchik (2013), following Saudi King Abdullah Al-Saud's royal declaration making Saudi National Day a national holiday in 2006, Saudis have started to treat that day as an important occasion to celebrate.

111. Emotional Outlets (n = 424)

According to Myers (2004: 500), emotions are defined as processes encompassing "physiological arousal, expressive behaviours, and conscious experience". Expressing emotions and empathy towards others has become common among Facebook user with users posting both positive and negative feelings in their updates (Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2007). Emotional contagion through Facebook status updates, in which users can transfer both positive and negative emotional states to others through their words, has significantly

attracted scholars' attentions after the publication of Kramer, Guillory, and Hancock's (2014) study.

Kramer, Guillory, and Hancock (2014) published the results of a large-scale research project they conducted on 689,003 Facebook users by modifying the status updates the users viewed on their Facebook accounts to assess the effect on their emotions over the course of one week. The effect of emotional contagion on Facebook was studied by utilising an automated system that altered the emotional content in news feeds (i.e., the latest updates generated by users' Facebook friends). The findings revealed that when positive status updates were decreased, the percentage of positive words users employed in subsequent status updates decreased. Further, when negative status updates were decreased in users' news feeds, the percentage of negative words in their subsequent status updates also decreased. This experiment is the first to suggest that emotions expressed through social media platforms affect other users' moods. For a long time, research on emotional contagion assumed the need for in-person and nonverbal cues.

This study was heavily criticised by media and communication scholars who questioned its ethics. While some studies have used Facebook data to examine emotional contagion, this is the first known study that manipulated algorithms for the purposes of research (LaFrance 2014). The results of the Kramer, Guillory, and Hancock (2014) study are helpful for this research because they indicate that the emotions expressed by users' friends affected their moods and empirically support the claim that individuals' emotions can spread through their networks via contagion. The analysis of the status updates in the current research revealed that 5.4% of Saudi university students' status updates expressed a wide range of emotions. Out of the 424 statutes updates that express emotions, 307 or about 72.4% of these were about positive emotions. Saudi university students often posted statuses that

expressed their emotions in general without disclosing the reason behind them, such as happiness, sadness, or boredom (e.g., “I feel bored”).

12. Advice (n = 404)

Saudi Arabia is considered a collectivist culture, and highly emphasises social interdependence, especially mutual reliance and group responsibility. As a result, the behaviour of an individual in this collectivist culture is likely to affect and be affected by others more than the behaviour of an individual in an individualistic culture (Hofstede 1980). It is, thus, logical to infer that attempts to influence others, especially attempts to induce others to conform to social norms and expectations (including attempts packaged as advice), are common in collectivist cultures (Al-Gahtani, Hubona, and Wang 2007). In Saudi culture, there is no such phrase as “mind your own business”. Instead, Saudis feel an obligation to monitor the behaviour of others and correct it when necessary, and this is considered as a socially acceptable form of surveillance. This tendency was reflected in 5.1% of the updates, which can be classified as advice related. The advice theme in the current research is divided into three main categories: moral advice, social skills advice, and conventional wisdom.

Students posted moral advice to call on others to do good deeds and be honest (e.g., “When you lie, do not swear. Do not be a liar twice”); to practise forgiveness (e.g., “The best behaviour is to forgive people when you can punish them. Be a forgiving person”); or to be kind (e.g., “Be kind to others when you are in a high position because you will eventually meet them when you come back”). Social skills advice was aimed at strengthening relationships (e.g., “Life is so simple that a smile can make anyone very happy. So keep smiling and make people around you happy”). Some users warned others about negativity (e.g., “You can satisfy all people except the envious; they will be satisfied only with the demise of your grace, so treat them carefully”). Some highlighted the importance of communication (e.g., “Many problems will disappear if people learn to talk with each other

instead of talking about each other. Hold your tongue about other people and dialogue with them") and admitting personal mistakes (e.g., "An apology is like fresh food: if not provided on time; it loses its flavour. So be aware of the expiration date"). They also shared known wisdom that contained advice regarding success (e.g., "If you see someone in a high position, do not ask 'Why?' Instead, try to follow his steps to success"), optimism (e.g., "The one who looks behind does not win, so leave the past behind and look ahead"), happiness (e.g., "If you want to reach happiness, follow the tips provided by others"), and enjoying life (e.g., "Life is like a rollercoaster; it has its ups and downs. But it is your choice to scream or enjoy the ride").

13. Academic Purposes (n = 322)

Previous studies regarding the impact of Facebook on students' academic performance have reported conflicting results. While some have argued that it is a time-consuming activity that negatively affects students' academic performance (e.g. Kirschner and Karpinski 2010; Junco and Cotton 2011; Junco 2012; Ogedebe, Emmanuel, and Musa 2012; Lee 2014), a few studies have revealed no significant relationship between Facebook use and academic performance (e.g. Pasek and Hargittai 2009; Lubis et al 2012). Evidence from the current analysis suggests that Facebook is used by students to help in their studies. However, only 4.1% of status updates related to academic issues, and this theme was ranked as one of the five least common statuses posted. This finding is consistent with the results of a study conducted by Grosseck, Bran, and Tiru (2011), which revealed that the majority of students tended to post less for academic purposes on Facebook, even if they discussed or shared information about their academic life.

In this study the academic theme may be broken down into four categories: academic inquiries, academic criticism, academic experience, and study groups. Saudi university students posted a number of inquiries about academic majors (e.g., "I want to ask about the

requirement for specialising in medicine; does anyone know?") and course books, assignments, and topics to be included in exams (e.g., "Do you know what will be included in the CPIT100 exam?"). The students also criticised professors' treatment of students and the difficulty or high standards of the admission requirements of universities (e.g., "Our professors taught me that attendance is more important than understanding"). They also shared academic expertise (e.g., "I learned this English phrase "Use it or lose it"). Some recommended joining groups for specific courses or modules (e.g., "Join us at X academic group to discuss mid-term exams").

14. Shopping (n = 306)

In line with the results from phase one, which revealed that shopping was one of the least frequently obtained gratifications, only 3.9% of the Saudi university students' status updates fell into the shopping theme. This theme consists of two categories: selling and announcing one's purchases. Saudi university students posted about their attempts to sell their belongings (e.g., "I want to sell my laptop. It works well and it has excellent features. Price is negotiable" and "I have X books in good condition. Contact me if you want to buy them"). They also wrote reviews about certain products such as books, electronics, or accessories. In addition, there were status updates that encouraged others to buy a product by comparing it with another one, such as certain types of smart phones and tablet devices, or announcements of discounts on several products (e.g., "X company now has a great offer on Internet service").

15. Romance (n = 284)

There is evidence that Saudi university students use Facebook to initiate and develop romantic relationships; 3.6% of their status updates fell under this theme. Although this is low in comparison with other themes, this could be because participants were using other features on the Facebook platform to communicate with their romantic partners, such as

private messages. Saudi students employed a number of strategies in their status updates regarding this theme before announcing that they were in a relationship. For instance, males tagged their lovers in a picture, an audio file of a song sung by them, or a YouTube link to a love song; after a couple of months, they announced that they were in a relationship. This finding is consistent with the results of a study conducted by Diuk (2014), which revealed that relationships begin with a courtship period on Facebook: messages are exchanged, profiles are visited, and posts are shared on each other's timelines.

16. Greetings (n = 233)

The least frequent theme of the status updates posted by Saudi university students was greeting others. Only 2.9% of their status updates fell under this theme, and thus the frequency of such status updates was not a trend among the sample population. Saudi university students post status updates conveying morning and evening greetings (e.g., "Good morning everyone!"), or bedtime greetings (e.g., "Good night, sweet dreams!").

To sum up, 16 themes emerged from the thematic content analysis of 7,905 status updates from 50 Saudi university students' Facebook profiles over the course of eleven months. It is worth noting that the status update traffic increased during certain events, such as religious occasions, including Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha; during exam time; during periods when trending current affairs emerged in social media, such as women's driving campaigns (pro and anti); and during Arabic political events, such as the death of the former president of Libya, Al-Gaddafi. While Saudi university students tend to post on average one status update every two days, this increased to two status updates during these occasions.

Sorting the frequency of the 16 themes according to the typology of users reveals that the most common status updates among Broad Nominal Users (n = 2611, 33% of the total number of posts) were Friendship Matters (299), followed by Family Matters (260) and

Congratulations (200). The common themes among these types of status updates, in line with the gratifications they obtain from using Facebook, indicate that Broad Nominal Users give heavy weight to improving their relationships and to staying connected with their circles through the Facebook platform. They do not give much attention to Shopping (107), Academic purposes (87), or Advice (77), as these themes occurred with least frequency.

For High Selective Users (n = 2362, 30% of the total number of status updates), the frequencies of status updates are also in line with the gratifications obtained from using Facebook by this category of users. Cute-cat themes were most frequent, including Friendship Matters (264), Personal Updates (242), and Games (223), which reflect the nature of the gratifications they tend to obtain from Facebook. Political Issues (78), Social Issues (74), and Academic purposes (56) were the least frequent among High Selective Users, which also validates the quantitative self-reported data obtained from phase one.

The qualitative data also confirms the quantitative self-report data in phase one regarding Restricted Users, as the common status updates among them (n = 2932, 37% of the total number of status updates) were Social Issues (361), Political Issues (361), and Religious Issues (300). These themes could be classified as 'non-cute-cat' themes using Zuckerman's (2014) perspective. The least popular status updates among Restricted Users were Shopping (120), Romance (78), and Greetings (39). Table 5.1 includes these themes as further characteristics of the typology of Facebook users.

Broad Nominal Users (28.5%)	High Selective Users (50%)	Restricted Users (21.5%)
Cute-cat and non-cute-cat gratifications	Wide range of cute-cat gratifications	Non-cute-cat gratifications
Non-significant gender differences	Non-significant gender differences	More males
Middle class	Upper middle class	Low class
Early adopters	Mid-range adopters	Late adopters
Average users	Heavy users	Light users
Have more family, friends, and congratulation posts	Have more friends, personal updates, and games posts	Have more social, political, and religious posts
Have fewer shopping, academic purposes, and advice posts	Have fewer political, social, and academic purposes posts	Have fewer shopping, romance, and greetings posts

Table 5. 1 Characteristics of the Typology of Facebook Users (Status Updates Added)

5.2.2. Gender Differences in Facebook Status Updates

Correspondence analysis was used to investigate gender differences in status updates. The multi-dimensional information in the cross-tabulated variables was separated into two lower dimensions such that each category could be plotted as a point on two constructed axes (Component 2 versus Component 1) known as a correspondence map. Symmetrical normalization, a form of averaging, was applied so that closely-related points were located in near proximity, whereas unrelated points were located far apart. Table 5.2 represents the themes that showed gender differences.

Males' Status Updates	Females' Status Updates
Social Issues	Congratulations
Political Issues	Family Matters
Jokes	Emotional Outlet

Table 5. 2 Differences between Males and Females on Themes of Status Updates

From table 5.2, it can be seen that males posted more status updates about Social Issues, Political Issues, and Jokes, whereas the female students posted more status updates about Congratulations, Family Matters, and Emotional Outlets. These results confirm and validate the findings of the previous phase (see Chapter Four: Section Four), in that males tend to use Facebook more than females to gratify their need to discuss political and social issues and more females tend to use this online social platform to gratify their need to express their emotions. In addition, a new finding revealed by phase two is that females tend to post more about their family matters and congratulations while males post more jokes on their

Facebook accounts. These findings are in line with previous research that suggests that females tend to post more statuses about emotions (Denti et al. 2012; Parkins 2012), family relations (Denti et al. 2012; Jackson and Wang 2013), and congratulations (Winter et al. 2014), whereas males are more likely to post political status updates (Wang, Burke, and Kraut 2013) and entertaining status updates (Winter et al. 2014).

The gender differences may also be interpreted in light of social role theory, as Saudi social norms place males in charge of public life while females are in charge of the domestic sphere. This may explain why Saudi males discuss political issues on their accounts more than females, whereas females tend to post more statuses about their families and more congratulations. In addition, males are stereotypically viewed as less emotionally expressive (Brody and Hall 2010) and more humorous than females (Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2001).

5.2.3. Relationship between Facebook Status Updates and Obtained Gratifications

The phase two content analysis data was compared with the self-report data from the phase one questionnaire to assess the validity of the results. In phase one, 11 factors were extracted from the questionnaire data representing the frequency of different gratifications obtained from Facebook usage. Based on five-point Likert scales where 1 = Never and 5 = Always, the scores for items in each factor were summed to create composite scores for the cumulative frequency of use of each category. A small factor value correlates to low frequency of use, and a high factor value to high frequency of use.

In phase two, 16 themes were extracted from content analysis of the Facebook status updates. The frequencies of each theme extracted from the content analysis were summed for the 50 students who participated in both questionnaire and content analysis phases. Both sets of data were collected from the same students, and they both measured the frequency of

obtaining different categories of gratifications from Facebook. Because both sets of data measured the same issue, they were used to test the hypothesis of a positive correlation between the summed scores of the factors extracted from the questionnaire and the tallied frequencies for each of the themes extracted from content analysis. Spearman's rho coefficient was used to perform this analysis, rather than Pearson's correlation coefficient, because Spearman's rho operates on ordinal variables and does not entail normally distributed variables measured at the scale/interval level.

The results reveal that 10 out of the 11 obtained gratification factors from phase one were significantly correlated with 11 out of the 16 Facebook status update themes (computed from the results of the content analysis from phase two). As shown in Table 5.3, the strongest correlation was between the 'Communicating with Friends' obtained gratification factor and the 'Friendship Matters' status update theme. The weakest correlation was between the 'Shopping' obtained gratification factor and the 'Shopping' status update theme. All the relationships were approximately linear, as illustrated using scatterplots in Figure 5.3.

Facebook Obtained Gratifications	**Themes of Facebook Status Updates**	**Spearman's rho**	**P**
Communicating with Friends	Friendship Matters	.849	<.001
Emotional Outlet	Emotional Outlet	.835	<.001
Communicating with Family	Family Matters	.832	<.001
Personal Updates	Personal Updates	.751	<.001
Entertainment	Games	.740	<.001
Entertainment	Jokes	.737	<.001
Communicating about Social Issues	Social Issues	.680	<.001
Communicating about Political Issues	Political Issues	.669	<.001
Romance	Romance	.598	<.001
Academic Purposes	Academic Purposes	.420	<.001
Shopping	Shopping	.393	<.001

* Only the significant correlations were included in the table

Table 5. 3 Correlations between the Categories Extracted from the Questionnaire by Factor Analysis and the Themes Extracted by Thematic Content Analysis of the Facebook Status Updates

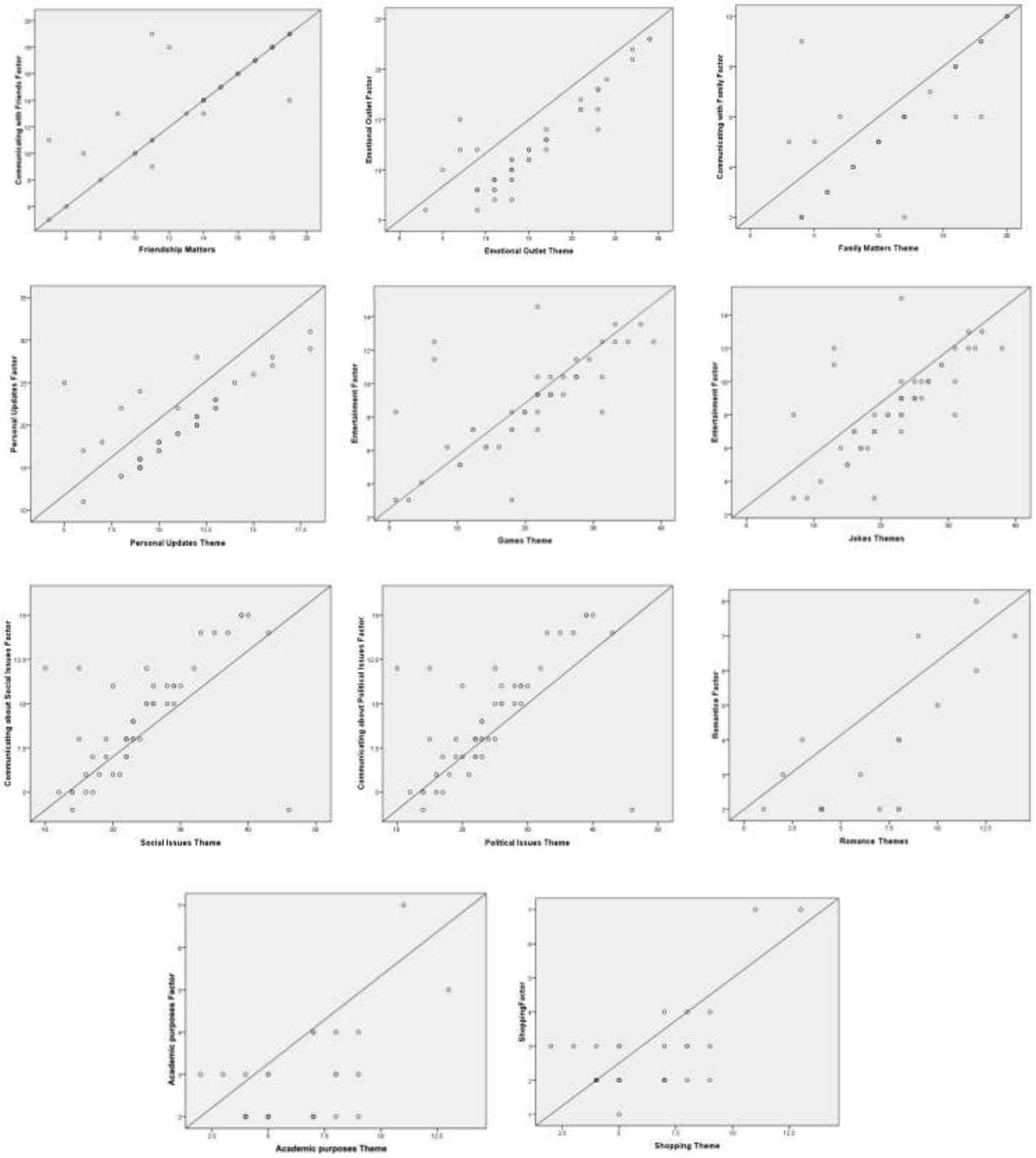

Figure 5. 3 Relationships between Questionnaire Item Scores for the Ten Factors and the Frequency of the 11 Themes

Apart from five themes identified in this phase (i.e., religious issues, hobbies, congratulations, advice, and greeting), a close agreement was found between the scores of

Saudi university students on the phase one questionnaires regarding the gratifications they obtained from using Facebook and the information displayed in their Facebook status updates. These results reflected convergent validity, meaning that the data collected from two separate methods aligned and was not contradictory. Thus, the self-reported gratifications obtained from Facebook in the questionnaire corresponded to and were reflected by the measured themes of Facebook status updates.

In the questionnaire phase, 'Communicating with Friends' had the highest mean of the Facebook obtained gratification factors. This is consistent with the results of the content analysis phase of status updates, where the 'Friendship Matters' theme was the most frequent in status updates. Likewise, 'Shopping' was ranked last in both phases. The themes and their sub-categories in the content analysis phase provide a further explanation of the way Saudi university students utilise Facebook to gratify their stated needs (as identified in in phase one).

Another important outcome of the second phase is that new themes emerged from the status updates: religious issues, hobbies, congratulations, advice, and greeting. These findings may support the argument that investigating the actual data generated by users may validate or even complement the data obtained from a self-report instrument (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007). For instance, the present phase revealed that religion was an important theme, accounting for almost 8% of status messages among Saudi students. Such a result could be a reflection of the Islamic culture and their desire to defend their faith and affirm their religious belonging. The advice theme reflected the collective nature of Saudi culture, showing how the current sample felt responsible for enhancing good manners and behaviour within their social networks. The theme of hobbies reveals how the gender segregation in Saudi society offline is reflected in each gender's hobbies. The importance of national occasions was also revealed in the congratulatory status updates these users posted on their profiles.

Previous social science literature has shown that any two variables measured by the same methodology are typically more highly correlated than two variables measured by different methodologies. For instance, the mean of the eight attitude-behaviour correlations in the Albarracin and Kumkale (2003) study was .50; the mean of the 32 attitude-behaviour correlations reported by Albarracin and McNatt (2002) was .59; and the mean of the nine attitude-behaviour correlations reported by Berger (1999) was .61. All of these three sets of attitude-behaviour correlations were taken from the Glasman and Albarracín (2006) meta-analysis study. In the current research, it is important to stress that the measurement methodologies used are very different. The questionnaire represents a self-reported global judgment about gratifications obtained from Facebook (with no opportunity to examine actual profiles). By contrast, the content analysis requires a coder, first to classify any given status update, and then to sum all the computed status updates. Nevertheless, the numbers obtained in Table 5.3 fall well within the range of attitude-behaviour correlations reported in the literature. Therefore, all of the correlations reported here are more than satisfactory.

5.3. Relationships between Facebook Status Update and Levels of Online Disclosure

Nosko, Wood, and Molema's (2010) Facebook disclosure checklist was used to assist in addressing the fourth research objective, which aims to reveal the relationship between the status updates posted by Saudi university students on their profiles and their levels of disclosure on Facebook. Although a number of previous content analysis studies have investigated levels of disclosure on Facebook (see Chapter Two: Section Three), none of these have examined whether online disclosure levels correlate with the themes of status

updates users posted on their profiles. This section reviews the results and discusses the students' levels of disclosure and their relationship to the status update themes.

5.3.1. Information Disclosed on Facebook

Information disclosed on Facebook has been classified by Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) into three broad categories: (1) basic personal identifying information, (2) sensitive personal information, and (3) potentially stigmatising personal information. Scores in each of the three areas are created by summing the individual constituent items, with each item coded dichotomously (0/1) (see Chapter Three: Section Five).

5.3.1.1. Disclosure of Basic Personal Identifying Information on Facebook

Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) defined the basic personal identifying information category as revealing information about the user's identity, particularly what is deemed default/standard information. This has been explained as the sort of information people might disclose in official situations and which could be used to identify users. Eight of the items in the checklist are used to measure basic personal identifying information: profile picture, gender, birthday, birth year, email address, address, current city, and postal code. The number and percentage of respondents disclosing information on their Facebook profiles for the eight constituent items in this category were tabulated. The descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, SD, and range) for the total category score were computed to provide summary statistics on the distribution of responses for this category of disclosure. The item responses are shown in Figure 5.4.

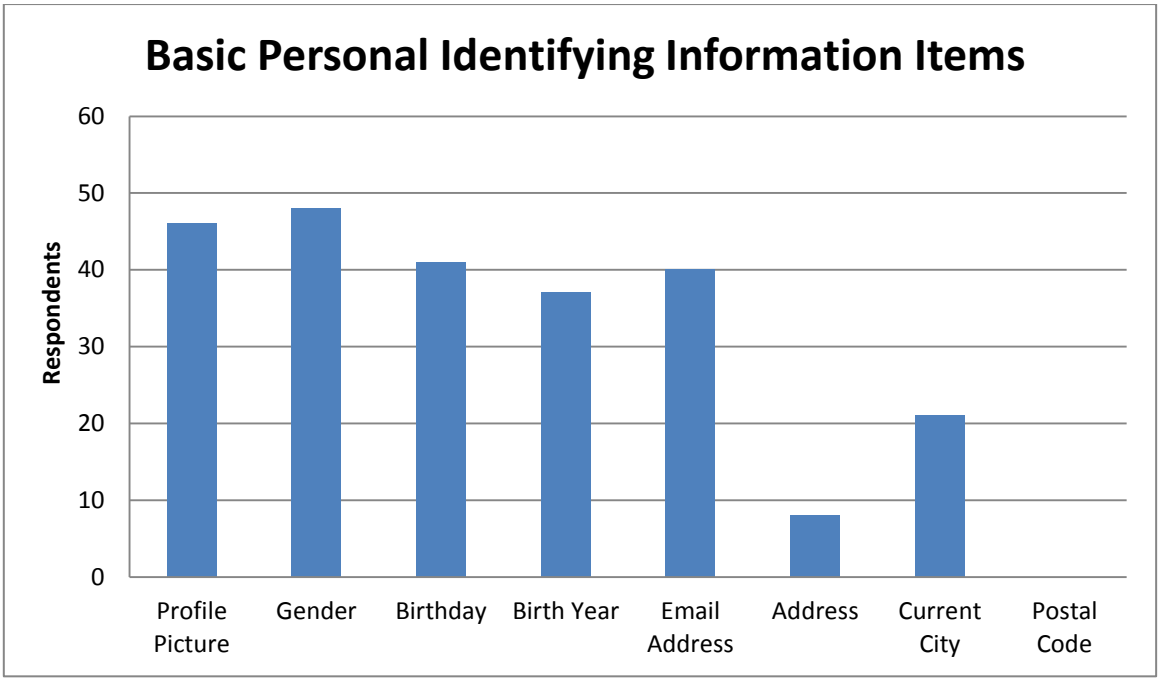

Figure 5. 4. Frequency of Items for Basic Personal Identifying Information

Almost all of the 50 Saudi respondents disclosed their profile pictures (92%) on their profiles. Investigating the types of profile pictures using Nosko, Wood, and Molema's (2010) sub-categories of profile pictures - self, activity, friends, relationship partner, family, work, school, animal, or symbolic picture - reveals that 59% (n= 27) were symbolic pictures, which were presented almost exclusively by females (26 out of the 27 symbolic pictures). This result is in line with the result from the previous questionnaire phase, which revealed that the majority of Saudi female students tended to post a symbolic picture as a profile picture instead of a real picture (see Chapter Six: Section Two). 37% (n= 17) of these profile pictures were personal photos and 4% (n= 2) were photos of their university's main building. As Nosko, Wood, and Molema's (2010) classification does not include further sub-categories of symbolic pictures, the content of these pictures was coded as flowers (n = 9); pictures of Korean actresses (n = 6), which may be due to the widespread broadcasting of Korean dramas on Arabic television channels (Kim 2006); cute babies (n = 4); cartoon characters (n= 3); chocolate desserts (n = 3), and anime characters (n = 2).

This result reflects how Saudi females act according to the gender roles determined by Saudi society. Due to the restrictions of the Islamic religion and Saudi traditions regarding females showing their faces, they mainly use symbolic pictures instead of personal photos. This attitude differs significantly from the Western world. While the results from previous Facebook research regarding disclosure of personal photos among Western samples have not revealed significant gender differences in the frequency of posting personal photos (e.g., Reichart Smith and Cooley 2008; Young and Quan-Haase 2009; Hum et al. 2011), this research reveals a significant gender difference.

This research also reveals that the majority of the current Saudi university students disclosed their birthday and birth year, possibly because they are young and do not feel the need to hide their ages. On the other hand, students were conscious about the sensitivity of disclosing their addresses, with only 16% disclosing this information. Nevertheless, this percentage was higher than that of Nosko, Wood, and Molema's (2010) Canadian sample (3.5%) and Ntlatywa, Botha, and Haskins's (2012) South African sample (2%). None of the Saudi participants displayed their postal codes, as these have only been recently introduced in Saudi Arabia.

The overall score for the sample's level of disclosure of basic personal identifying information was calculated by summing the items, with higher scores indicating more disclosure. Of the eight default items that could be disclosed, respondents on average revealed a mean of 4.82 (SD = 1.35). In comparison with other cultures, this result indicates that the Saudi university students disclosed a relatively higher level of basic personal identifying information (60.3%) than their counterparts in Canada (48.2%) (Nosko, Wood, and Molema 2010) and South Africa (36%) (Ntlatywa, Botha, and Haskins 2012).

5.3.1.2. Disclosure of Sensitive Personal Information on Facebook

Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) define sensitive personal information as details that are more in-depth than basic information and could be misused or perceived negatively by others. Information measured in this category consisted of 14 items: relationship status, news feed, high school, university, employer, job position, viewable wall, photo albums, self-selected photos, tagged photos, friends list, send a gift, private messages, and poking. The frequency and percentage of respondents with statuses classified as sensitive personal information were tabulated and are shown in Figure 5.5.

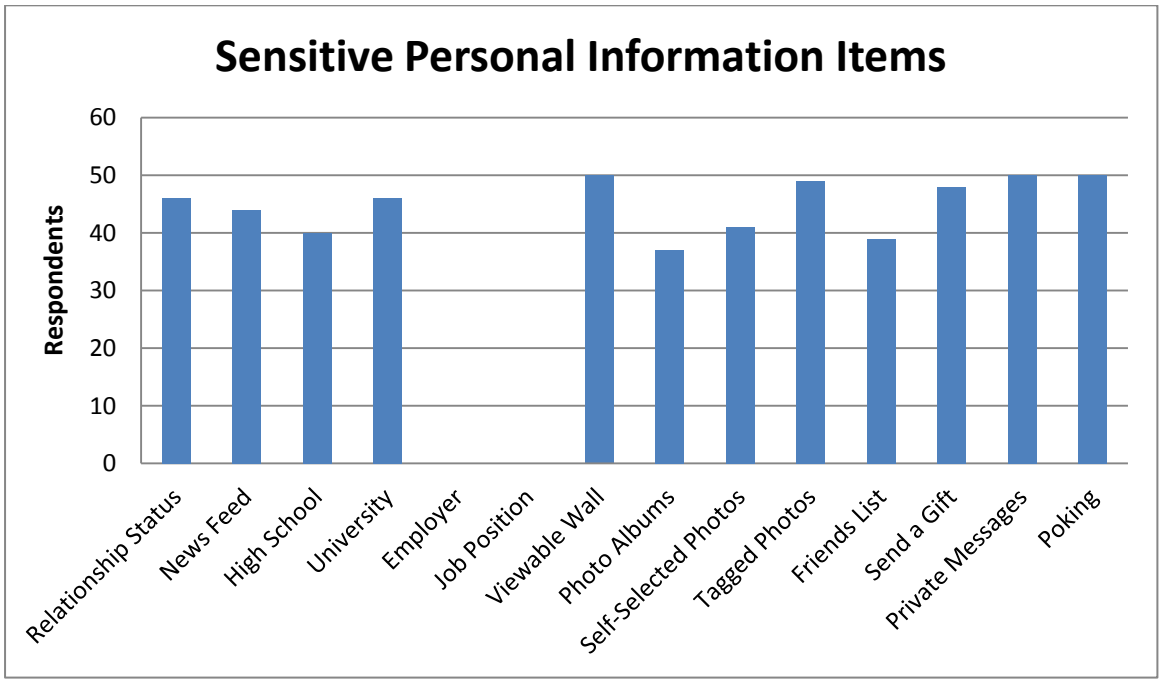

Figure 5. 5Frequency of Items for Sensitive Personal Information

The majority of the sample disclosed their relationship status; with most saying they were single. 8% indicated that they were in a relationship. Another 8% revealed that it is complicated, which implies that they are in a relationship, but the users do not want to say what this is. These two last categories do not align with the conservative Saudi Islamic culture that rejects any kind of romantic relationships outside the realm of marriage. Such a disclosure is worth further investigation, as it could be an indicator of new types of gender relationships in such as segregated society.

A high percentage of Saudi participants left the 'tagged photos' and 'news feed' features of Facebook available for others to view (98% and 88% respectively). According to Rui and Stefanone (2013), the owners of the Facebook accounts are not the only sources of personal information. Facebook friends also provide information about their friends by commenting on their status updates, adding posts on their profiles, and tagging them in photos without their permission. Thus, Facebook friends can provide a fuller picture about the owner of a Facebook profile (Walther et al. 2009). While it is possible for the profile owner to conceal all or some of these interactions from other users, the majority kept these two features public.

Computer-mediated communication scholars consider information regarding an individual added by a third party as validation of the accuracy of the information provided by the individual. For instance, Walther and Parks (2002) refer to this feature as a warranting principle. As Walther et al. (2009: 232) argue, warranting indicates "the capacity to draw a reliable connection between a presented persona online and a corporeally-anchored person in the physical world". This feature improves the detection of deception in profiles. As almost all the current Saudi sample allow others to tag them, it could be argued that the validation of the information disclosed on their profiles is high.

Almost all of the students left their private messages, poking, and virtual gift features available for others to interact with them. Such openness allows others to initiate connections even if they are not in their friends list. The students also tended to disclose their friends list (78%), which allows others to see their family members or friends of the opposite sex included within this list. This is an interesting result given that Saudi males do not generally like others to know about their female family members. Although the friends list may have sensitive information, it was found that such information was often disclosed by the current sample of Saudi university students.

It should be noted that work-related items (i.e., employer and job position) were not present in any of the profiles, perhaps because the participants in this sample were university students. With the exception of these two items, Saudi respondents revealed most of the sensitive information items at high rates. The mean of the summed sensitive personal information scores was 10.80 (SD = 1.31) out of the possible 14 items. Thus, on average, Saudi respondents revealed 77.1% of the items in the sensitive personal information category and this percentage would be even higher if work-related items are excluded. As with basic personal identifying information, Saudi students disclosed more sensitive information than their counterparts in Canada (69.8%) (Nosko, Wood, and Molema 2010) and South Africa (47.1%) (Ntlatywa, Botha, and Haskins 2012).

5.3.1.3. Disclosure of Potentially Stigmatizing Personal Information on Facebook

Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) define potentially stigmatizing personal information as that which could result in condemnation within society. In other words, it is information about a person that a random viewer could conceivably find objectionable. Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) included the following 12 items in this category: gender of interest, activities, political views, religious views, favourite music, favourite books, favourite TV shows, favourite movies, favourite quotes, interests, personal descriptions, and personal photos. The percentages of respondents Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) with statuses classified as potentially stigmatising personal information were tabulated and are shown in Figure 5.6.

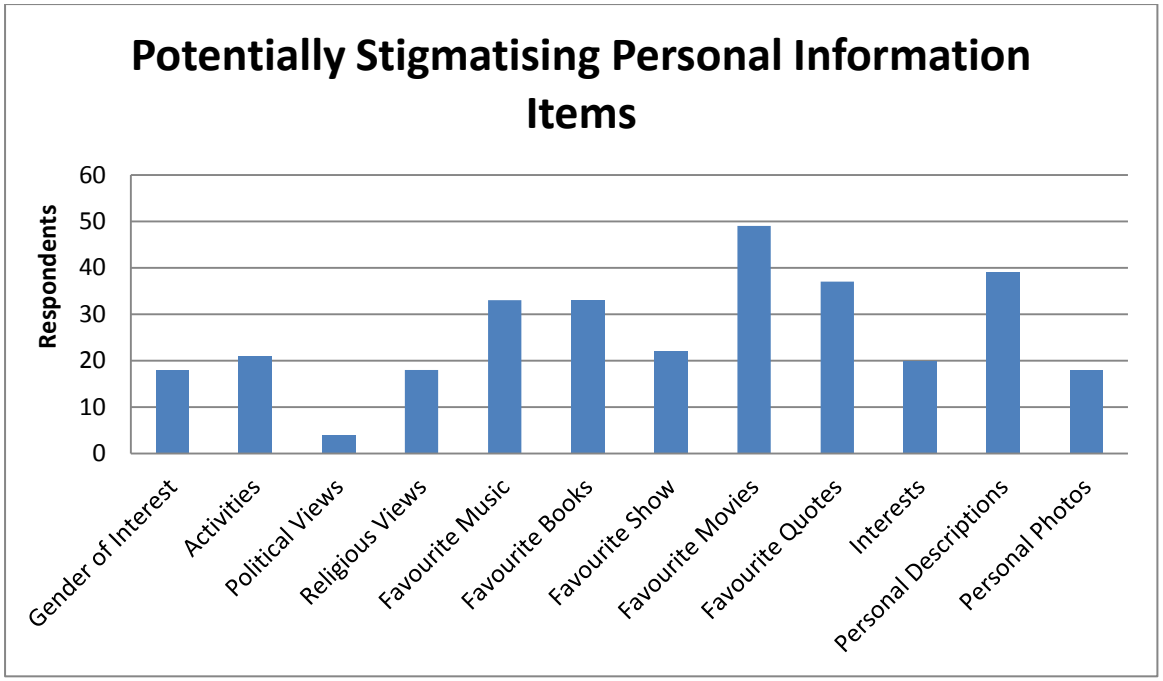

Figure 5. 6 Frequency of Items for Potentially Stigmatising Personal Information

Gender of interest item in Facebook is mainly being used for dating purposes, so in the Western world it could be considered potentially stigmatising when an individual discloses a same-sex gender of interest (Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin 2008). By contrast, Saudis perceived this information as related to 'friending' on Facebook, and thus regarded this information as potentially stigmatising when indicating that they were interested in being friends with members of the opposite sex. More than one-third of Saudi university students in the current sample disclosed this information (36%), and most of those who disclosed it indicated that they were interested in people of the same sex to be their friends on Facebook, which, in this case, does not mean that they are homosexual. However, a few (n= 4) of those users disclosed that they were interested in the opposite sex, either indicating that they are interested in both men and women, to lessen the stigma, or only in men or only in women. Such a difference shows the role of cultural factors in individuals' perceptions and Facebook usage

Only a few students disclosed their political views (8%). Politically, Saudi Arabia is a monarchy and no formal political parties are allowed in the country. Nevertheless, there are

some factions within society, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the jihadist groups, and liberals (Sallam and Hunter 2013). Thus, disclosing such political views by Saudis is considered potentially stigmatising information that they may tend to conceal.

Regarding religious views, more than one-third of Saudi students disclosed this information (36%) and they all indicated that they are Muslims. Of those, a few specified that they are Sunni Muslims (n = 6), and only one female specified that she is a Shiite Muslim. This makes sense given that Saudi society is mostly homogenous in religion. The majority of the population are Sunni Muslims, and only a minority, mostly in the eastern provinces, are Shiite Muslims. While in the early days, after the country was established, Shiites tended to hide their Islamic sect (Kymlicka and Pfostl 2014), Shiite Saudis cautiously began to show their religious affiliation after the Saudi state established in 2003 the centre for national dialogue, which aims to ensure the equality of all citizens and reject discrimination against minorities (Kapiszewski 2006).

This result shows a different attitude toward disclosing religious devotion than the findings of a study conducted by Bobkowski (2008) on American undergraduates. His study revealed that American students wanted to present themselves in their Facebook profiles as being sociable and liberal. They did not want others to have inaccurate impressions of them based on Christian stereotypes and attempted to make their profiles 'likeable'. At the same time, they attempted to make their profiles authentic reflections of their religious commitments. These two objectives, to be perceived as both honest and likeable, led many American religious students to represent themselves as moderate Christians. Unlike Saudis, the undesirability of appearing too religious in the American context resulted in many Facebook users in the sample not mentioning religious affiliations on their profiles.

Although listening to music, watching TV shows and movies, and reading specific types of books (e.g., political, romance or poetry), could be considered potentially

stigmatising information to some Saudis, about half of the respondents disclosed this information. The majority of the students disclosed information about themselves in the personal description section and their favourite quotations (78% and 74% respectively). Such percentages are higher than the Canadian sample in the study by Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010), as only 30% of the Canadian participants disclosed personal description information and 47.3% disclosed their favourite quote; similarly, the study by Ntlatywa, Botha, and Haskins (2012) revealed that 27% of South Africans in their sample disclosed a personal description and 16% disclosed their favourite quotation.

The mean for disclosing potentially stigmatising information among the sample of Saudi university students was 6.60 items (SD = 3.47) out of the possible 12 items. Thus, on average, Saudi university students revealed 52% of potentially stigmatising items. However, the large standard deviation indicates that there was considerable variability in their profiles. As in the lower levels of disclosure, Saudi university students disclosed more potentially stigmatising information than their Canadian (45.2%) (Nosko, Wood, and Molema 2010) and South African (31.5%) counterparts (Ntlatywa, Botha, and Haskins 2012).

In sum, Saudi university students revealed 60.3% of the basic identifying information items, 77.1% of the items in the sensitive personal information category, and 52% of the potentially stigmatising personal information items. Comparing these results with those in Canada and South Africa, it appears that Saudi university students tend to disclose more personal information online. Such a high percentage of disclosure by Saudis requires further investigation to understand the reasons behind it and whether the students hold any related privacy concerns (see Chapter Six: Section Three). It should be noted that although the current data were collected at about the same time as the Ntlatywa, Botha, and Haskins (2012) study, the data for the Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) study were likely gathered at least one year before the publication date of 2010. Two years is considered to be a

significant time period in terms of Internet and Facebook research because of usage increases (Patchin and Hinduja 2010). Thus, some of the differences noted in this phase may be a result of changes in Facebook usage over time rather than cultural factors.

Applying Nosko, Wood, and Molema's (2010) checklist to Saudi university students' profiles revealed that cultural differences may play a role in determining the sensitivity level of information. Five items appeared to be different in their levels of sensitivity in the Saudi sample. While a profile picture is considered basic information, according to this Canadian checklist, a picture of oneself on a public profile is considered potentially stigmatising information for female Saudis. Additionally, revealing a relationship status outside the auspices of marriage (i.e., single, engaged, or married) would also be considered not only sensitive but also potentially stigmatising information by Saudis, as it violates the traditions of their conservative Islamic society. Gender of interest is also perceived by Saudis as potentially stigmatising information, not because Saudis are afraid to be classified as homosexual, but because they could be stigmatised for looking for friends of the opposite sex. Religious views are considered by Saudis potentially stigmatising information when they are not in line with the mainstream religious affiliation of being Muslim. Although postal code could also be classified as basic personal information by Saudis, this item is not shown in the current sample's profiles because most of the houses in Saudi Arabia have not had postal codes until recently. It is recommended that such modifications be applied to the classification of the mentioned items when utilising this checklist to examine Saudis' Facebook profiles in future studies.

5.3.2. Gender Differences in the Information Disclosed on Facebook

The scores in each of the three disclosure categories were evaluated according to gender. The mean scores for males and females were compared using independent-sample t-

tests to determine whether any differences in online disclosure emerged. The results are shown in Table 5.4. The table shows no significant gender differences on any of the disclosure scales.

Disclosure Category	**Males**	**Females**	**Statistics**
	M (SD)	M (SD)	t-value, p-value
Basic Personal Identifying Information	4.91 (1.35)	4.74 (1.38)	t = -0.446, p = .658
Sensitive Personal Information	10.78 (1.24)	10.82 (1.39)	t = 0.086, p = .932
Potentially Stigmatizing personal Information	5.87 (3.38)	7.30 (3.48)	t = 1.464, p = .150

Table 5. 4 Differences between Males and Females in their Levels of Disclosure

Although a high level of privacy surrounds Saudis offline, especially for females, the findings from this research reveal that the conservative attitudes are not fully reflected in their behaviour on Facebook. There is a higher level of disclosure than might be expected on all levels, with the exception of females' profile photos. This continues to be considered sensitive information or even potentially stigmatizing information. It seems that the current Saudi youth have adjusted their norms regarding the privacy issue online and started to accept the need to disclose their personal information in a semi-public platform, regardless of their gender, in exchange for obtaining a diverse range of gratifications from this platform. This assertion will be further explored in the following study.

5.3.3. Relationship between Status Updates and the Levels of Disclosure

This section investigates the relationship between Saudi students' Facebook status updates and their levels of disclosure in order to address the fourth objective of this research. Because the data were frequencies, non-parametric correlation analysis was used. The minimum sample size to achieve adequate power (80%) to determine if there is a significant correlation is 50 (Van Voorhis and Morgan 2007). Thus, the results obtained from the current analysis were sufficient to detect relationships. Table 5.5 presents a matrix of Spearman's rank correlation coefficients (rho) to evaluate the relationships between the frequencies of the

three levels of disclosure of the 50 respondents and the frequencies of the 16 themes of status updates that the same 50 respondents posted on Facebook.

Themes of Posts	Basic Personal Identifying Information	Sensitive Personal Information	Potentially Stigmatising Information
Emotional Outlet	.110	.246	.032
Advice	.166	.096	.012
Friendship Matters	-.006	.100	-.137
Hobbies	.181	-.053	.307*
Personal Updates	.063	.304*	.303*
Romance	.190	.277	-.033
Shopping	-.116	.144	.093
Academic purposes	-.120	.174	.132
Games	.160	-.024	.255
Jokes	.106	-.027	.191
Greetings	-.021	.116	.062
Family Matters	.027	.126	.093
Social Issues	-.176	-.354*	-.338*
Congratulations	-.168	-.013	-.063
Political Issues	-.178	-.325*	-.339*
Religious Issues	-.248	-.095	-.063

* Significant at α = .05

Table 5. 5 Correlations (rho) Between Disclosure Levels and Themes of Status Updates

Table 5.5 shows that there was a significant positive correlation between the frequencies of sensitive disclosures and the theme classified as Personal Updates (rho = .304). This correlation implies that participants, who posted a high number of status updates, also disclosed a high frequency of sensitive information. There were also statistically significant positive correlations between the frequencies of disclosing potentially stigmatising information and the topics classified as (1) Personal Updates (rho = .303); and (2) Hobbies (rho = .307). Because these correlations were positive, they indicated that participants who posted a high frequency of statuses concerned with personal updates and hobbies also tended to disclose a high frequency of potentially stigmatising information. Statistically significant negative correlations were found between the frequencies of disclosing sensitive personal information and potentially stigmatising information and the themes classified as Social Issues (rho = -.354 and -.338) and Political Issues (rho = -.325 and -.339). Because these correlations were negative, they indicated that participants who posted a high frequency of

status updates containing social or political issues also tended to disclose a low frequency of sensitive and stigmatising information.

These findings could be interpreted in light of social penetration theory. It seems that the rewards gained from generating and sharing content about personal updates and hobbies on Facebook encourage Saudi university students to disclose a considerable amount of sensitive personal information, as they evaluated the rewards gained from such disclosure to outweigh the expected costs. However, this is not the case when Facebook users share status updates regarding political and social issues. It seems that disclosing sensitive or potentially stigmatising information when discussing these issues would possibly cost the users highly and put them at risk, which outweighs the rewards they would gain from such disclosure. Such an interpretation could explain why users who engage in discussing social and political issues conceal these types of information.

Relating the levels of disclosure to the typology of users also confirms these findings. The analysis reveals that High Selective Users share a high percentage of their personal information on their Facebook accounts. Users in this category seem to have an open attitude towards disclosing their basic (M = 5.90, SD =0.85), sensitive (M = 11.52, SD =0.93), and potentially stigmatising personal information (M = 9.25, SD = 2.81). As the most common themes of status updates among High Selective Users are related to their cute-cat gratifications, it appears that the rewards these users obtain from disclosing personal information to obtain such gratifications outweigh the costs that they expect to pay from such disclosure. This may explain why these users disclose detailed personal information about themselves, even potentially stigmatising information.

Restricted Users, on the other hand, seem to have the most reserved attitudes among the sample, as they have the lowest mean levels of disclosing their basic information (M = 3.67, SD = 1.14), sensitive information (M = 10.40, SD = 1.41), and potentially stigmatising

information (M = 4.80, SD = 2.10). They are classified as non-cute-cat users and their typical status updates were about social, political, and religious issues. It could be argued that due to the high potential costs expected from disclosing personal information when mainly using Facebook to discuss such issues, these users tend to have the lowest levels of disclosing personal information.

Broad Nominal Users essentially mirrored the overall average in their degree of self-disclosure at all the levels: basic information (M = 5.1, SD = 1.10), sensitive information (M = 10.80, SD = 1.42), and potentially stigmatising information (M = 6.1, SD = 3.90). These users tend to use Facebook to obtain both cute-cat and non-cute-cat gratifications, and their levels of disclosure were lower than those of High Selective Users but higher than Restricted Users. Obtaining both cute-cat gratifications that encourage high levels of disclosure and non-cute-cat gratifications that discourage the disclosure of personal information, it is expected that Broad Nominal Users have intermediate levels of disclosure. Table 5.6 includes the levels of disclosure as further characteristics of the typology of Facebook users.

Broad Nominal Users (28.5%)	**High Selective Users (50%)**	**Restricted Users (21.5%)**
Cute-cat and non-cute-cat gratifications	Wide range of cute-cat gratifications	Non-cute-cat gratifications
Non-significant gender differences	Non-significant gender differences	More males
Middle class	Upper middle class	Low class
Early adopters	Mid-range adopters	Late adopters
Average users	Heavy users	Light users
Have more family, friends and congratulation posts	Have more friends, personal updates and games posts	Have more social, political and religious posts
Have fewer shopping, academic purposes and advice posts	Have fewer political, social and academic purposes posts	Have fewer shopping, romance and greetings posts
Have average levels of disclosing basic, sensitive, and stigmatising information	Have highest levels of disclosing basic, sensitive, and stigmatising information	Have lowest levels of disclosing basic, sensitive, and stigmatising information

Table 5. 6 ***Characteristics of the Typology of Facebook Users (Levels of Disclosure Added)***

5.4. Concluding Summary

The second phase of research utilises both thematic and quantitative content analysis to address the third and fourth research objectives: revealing the themes of Saudi students' Facebook status updates and relating these themes to students' levels of online disclosure. The results of the inductive bottom-up thematic content analysis showed that Saudi university students generated a wide range of status updates that can be classified into 16 themes. Comparing these themes of statuses with the gratifications Saudi university students reported obtaining from Facebook in phase one indicates that these two separate methods validate and complement each other. Besides providing a further understanding of the obtained gratifications revealed in the previous phase, classifying the themes of status updates also helps to explain how Saudi university students are using Facebook. The students' statuses about religious issues, advice, hobbies, and congratulations offer deep insights into the extent to which Saudi society is Islamic, collective, and conservative.

This research also showed that Saudi university students disclose much of their basic, sensitive, and potentially stigmatising information online. It seems that these students have begun to adjust their typical offline norms to match the interactive nature of social media platforms. The results are in line with the assumptions of social penetration theory. The results showed that Saudi university students who mainly discussed personal updates and hobbies tended to disclose more of their sensitive and potentially stigmatising personal information on their Facebook accounts, as the expected rewards from such disclosure exceed the potential costs. On the other hand, Saudi university students who discussed social and political issues were reluctant to disclose such information due to the low level of rewards and high expected costs of such discourse. Such a finding highlights the need for further investigation of Saudi university students' disclosure behaviour (as addressed in the following Phase).

Chapter Six

Phase Three: Results and Discussion

6.1. Introduction

The first phase of the research revealed 11 distinctive gratifications that Saudi university students obtain from using Facebook. The second phase of the research also indicated that they use Facebook to generate and share 16 status updates themes. In order to understand the extent to which the use of Facebook is seen as compatible with Saudi culture, a subsample (20) of respondents, who had taken part in the previous two phases, were interviewed in the third and final phase of this research about their perception of using Facebook. Given that the second phase of the research also revealed higher than expected levels of information disclosure on Facebook, the interviewees were asked about the reasons for such disclosure and their privacy concerns when using Facebook.

The results of the first research phase had indicated that two of the main gratifications Saudi university students obtained from using Facebook were discussing social and political issues. Through an investigation of the content of status updates on their profiles, phase two also showed that status updates on social and political issues are among the most common content generated and shared by these users. Given that using Facebook for these purposes has not been described in the previous uses and gratifications literature (see Chapter Two: Section Three), the third and final part of the interview addressed Saudi university students' use of Facebook to discuss social and political issues and provided an insight into the topics they discussed.

Phenomenological semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to investigate in more detail some of the experiences the sample had had with Facebook. Twenty students

(10 males and 10 females) from Phase 2 of the research indicated their willingness to participate. Matching the participants in this sample with the typology of users revealed in the first phase (see Chapter Four: Section Five) showed that nine participants belonged to the Broad Nominal Users category, six participants were Restricted Users, and five were High Selective Users.

The following sections present Saudi university students' perceptions regarding the compatibility of Facebook with Saudi culture (6.2), their reasons for disclosing personal information on Facebook (6.3), and their perceptions of discussing social and political issues on Facebook (6.4). The chapter ends with the concluding summary of this last phase of the research (6.5).

6.2. Compatibility of Facebook with Saudi Culture

According to Chiang (2013), public perceptions of a given social media platform have the strongest direct effect on users' intention to continue utilising that platform. The current section presents the results of the data analyses and a discussion of interviewees' responses regarding whether they have considered deleting or deactivating their Facebook accounts, their attitudes towards a bespoke Saudi social media platform rather than Facebook, and the extent to which Facebook is compatible with Saudi culture. The respondents were also interviewed about the positive and negative aspects of Facebook to further examine how they perceive and evaluate its potential rewards and costs.

6.2.1. Consideration of Deactivating/Deleting Facebook Accounts

According to Facebook's privacy policy, when users want to stop using their accounts, they can either deactivate or delete them. When a user deactivates a Facebook account, other users will not be able to view it, but all of its information will be saved in the

Facebook database in case the user decides to reactivate the account. In contrast, when a user chooses to delete the account, it is permanently deleted and there is no way to reactivate it (Facebook 2013). This section examines whether the rewards Saudi university students obtain from using Facebook keep them from deactivating or deleting their accounts and what rewards they would miss most if they left the platform.

When the current respondents were interviewed about this issue, they all indicated that they would not delete their Facebook accounts, and they had not deactivated them. They provided two main reasons for maintaining their Facebook accounts: first, they regard them as an effective way to communicate and be updated about others' lives. Second, they perceive the rewards gained from continued as outweighing the disadvantages.

With regard to the first reason, the participants explained that Facebook provides access to a mass audience without the burdens associated with maintaining individual contact information as one-to-many personal communication. This is true regardless of whether their contacts consisted of people drawn from their offline networks or users they had met online and friended. Thus, they consider reaching and having access to a wide audience a valuable reward that will ensure their continued use of Facebook. For example, one of the participants stated, "Facebook is the main way I have to communicate with a considerable number of my friends" (F02). The participants also indicated that Facebook is a very effective tool through which they can inform their social networks about their daily practices. They indicated that deleting their accounts would be counter to this desired gratification. They would also lose the advantage of receiving information about their friends. As one of the interviewees stated, "How can I know others' updates . . . if I deactivate it?" (M07). This reward is an example of what Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) call "maintained bonding social capital", which, in this case, is an individual's capability to continue contacting members from their offline world.

Facebook represents a significant shift in communication from verbal face-to-face communications to digital one-to-many communications, and the respondents regarded this as a significant advantage that ensured maintenance of their accounts echoing Winter et al. (2014) that such a one-to-many form of communication offers them an effective venue for establishing and maintaining numerous social contacts, and Chiou and Lee's (2013) investigation with 102 undergraduate Taiwanese Facebook users in which 92.8% reported that their most frequent method of content distribution was sharing information with their friends. As Facebook combines the features of both mass and personal media, the convergence has resulted in blurred boundaries between one-to-one and one-to-many communication (Jenkins 2006). For example, Facebook's status update function is a tool to broadcast a personal message from one to many. Thus, the possibility of reaching all of one's Facebook friends with a single status update has similarities to traditional broadcasting and is different from personal one-to-one communication tools such as the written letter and the telephone. Facebook users differ from a broadcast audience, however, in the sense that they combine the roles of both the producer and audience of content. They are identified as friends, not audiences, and have their own profiles and online presence. This finding confirms the results obtained from the earlier parts of the research, which revealed that communicating with others, sharing personal updates, and investigating other users are among the most common gratifications obtained from using Facebook.

With regard to the second reason for the continued use of Facebook, users indicated that the advantages in their personal, social, and academic lives are much greater than the disadvantages. Such a principle, in which rewards and costs are determined in order to decide whether to continue using Facebook, is in line with the assumptions of social penetration theory - unless the individuals find the activities they engage in to be profitable, they will not continue to pursue them. Although the respondents felt that using Facebook led them to

disclose a considerable amount of their personal information because it encourages them to engage in multiple activities that require revealing several aspects of their identities, they were aware of the costs and perceived themselves as capable of coping with the potential costs associated with personal information disclosure. This finding is consistent with Altman and Taylor (1973) assumption that indicates that individuals who experiences a 'loss' (i.e. finds an activity more costly than it is rewarding) will have an incentive to withdraw from the interaction.

6.2.2. Saudi Social Media Platform vs. Facebook

As Saudi culture has distinct traditions and customs that shape its citizens' values and attitudes, the participants were asked whether there was a need to create a Saudi social media platform as an alternative to Facebook, as has happened in some other countries, such as Turkey, China, Russia and Malaysia. The majority of participants did not support this idea and justified their position in two ways: first, they believed that Saudis should not cut themselves off from other cultures. Second, they did not believe that such a platform would be as advanced and popular as the global Facebook platform.

With regard to online cross-cultural communication, the interviewees argued that relying on a Saudi social media platform for communication (rather than an international platform) would isolate them, deny them the privilege of interacting with people from different cultures and learning about other cultures, and prevent them from presenting their Islamic culture and its values in a positive fashion. The respondents used phrases like "isolate ourselves from the rest of the world" (F01) and "will then be a closed society" (F10). It is interesting that the findings show that these young and educated people, while belonging to a conservative culture, actively strive for the cross-cultural interaction that is possible in an international virtual space. The majority perceive the idea of a national platform as a step backward from an open, international form of communication to a closed and limited one.

They rejected such an idea, especially after having experienced communication with users from different cultures. In fact, the majority of respondents view cross-cultural communication as a further reason for using Facebook.

According to Enli and Thumim (2012), a key feature of Facebook is the mixture of local, regional, national, and global content, and typical users often express themselves in a mixture of their mother tongue and international languages (mostly English) when interacting on Facebook. Besides, Facebook is available in over 40 different languages and is profoundly global in its structure, unlike national media which tend to be monolingual and culturally specific. Thus, Facebook users may have contacts in their 'friends list' from outside the traditional social and national borders of their home environment. Although the reality of online social worlds varies – some users of Facebook, for instance, develop more international networks and ties than others – the global reach of Facebook seems to be highly emphasised in conservative cultures. Facebook and other social media platforms could be considered their window to the world, and at the same time, a window for the international world to the events in these societies. This advantage offered by international social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, appears to make them preferable over similar, existing national social media platforms, as was seen in recent events in Turkey. It was better for Turkish citizens to inform international organisations of events in Turkey through these relatively uncensored platforms than to share news through their national media outlets (Guillet 2013).

The second reason why most of the respondents did not support the idea of a Saudi social media platform is because they feel that it would be less technologically advanced. They felt that a Saudi-specific social media platform would require a lot of time before it was advanced and attractive enough to compete with Facebook. It would also need to include new and more novel features to attract and build up a large number of users. That Saudi university

students prefer to use Facebook over a national platform is consistent with research conducted by Saw et al. (2013), which showed that, although a sample of international Chinese students had access to a China-based social media platform (Renren), they preferred to use Facebook to communicate with others, including other Chinese. These findings are also in keeping with research on Malaysian users that indicated that a mere 10% of participants made use of the local network platform while 60% possessed accounts on Facebook. According to this study, Malaysians were not aware of the national social media platforms, and the national platforms generally failed to impress consumers (Mustafa and Hamzah 2011).

However, some Saudi university students did perceive value in creating a Saudi social media platform. They believed that such a platform could prevent younger users from being exposed to harmful Western material. This was exemplified by the following comment: "Our generation can easily be exposed to too many harmful actions. So, it is better to create a Saudi social media platform in order to be able to control it" (M01). They believed that creating a Saudi Islamic social media platform would eliminate most of the negative consequences associated with the international platforms. In line with this notion, a Saudi journalist, El-Shenawi, asserted that international social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter should be supervised by the nation's religious police and that the aim should be to get rid of harmful accounts that encourage pornography. She argued that the subject matter contained in on international social media platforms is not easy to control and purify and that it will ultimately damage the youth who are constant users (El-Shenawi 2014). To date, such reservations have not received official support for regulating social media content.

6.2.3. Compatibility of Facebook Usage with Saudi Culture

Older technological innovations such as radio, television, and Web 1.0 faced rejection from some Saudis upon their introduction, as they were perceived as a threat to the society's

conservative culture (Rathmell 1997). In contrast, social media in general and Facebook in particular have been welcomed to the point that Saudi religious clerics have large numbers of friends on Facebook and followers on Twitter (Coleman 2011). According to Schanzer and Miller (2012: 46), "Despite their opposition to the morally hazardous social media, both sanctioned and unsanctioned clerics now take to the internet with zeal. Particularly, the unofficial clerics have leveraged Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and iPhone apps to propel their global influence and reach". Since all of the respondents in this research confirmed the compatibility of Facebook use with the values and culture of Saudi Arabia, they were asked to explain why, and offered two main answers: the privacy settings and Saudis' move towards openness.

Some respondents perceived the privacy settings as the perfect tool to bring Facebook in line with Saudi culture. They explained that, because they could use privacy settings to hide part of their personal profile information that would be inappropriate to disclose in public, their Facebook use does not conflict with their cultural values. It could be assumed that some interviewees perceived the use of Facebook without any adjustments (e.g. configuring the privacy settings to withhold personal facts) as incompatible with their values and traditions. It is only when privacy settings are properly used that usage becomes culturally acceptable and complies with the norms and dictates of Saudi culture. Because the respondents believe that "you can customise it through privacy settings to be in line with our culture" (M10), it could be argued that an individual's use of Facebook determines its cultural compatibility.

Regarding Saudis' increasing openness, the majority of the respondents felt that Facebook was in line with Saudi social norms because contemporary society is more open, modern, and willing to accept the introduction of this social media. These two sets of responses show that users can be equally divided into those who wish to maintain the

conservative traditions of society by utilising the privacy settings and those who want to move towards a more open perspective. This reflects growing diversity in the wider Saudi society with the some Saudis who are willing to embrace modernity and new technology and others adopting a more conservative approach.

6.2.4. Positive and Negative Aspects of Facebook

To gain a further understanding of the costs and rewards of Facebook usage, the 118 cards from the Microsoft toolkit (2002) were used to prompt participants to relate stories about their experience of Facebook. Each card featured a positive or negative adjective. Participants were asked to look over the cards, spread out in a random pattern, then select up to five cards based on what they liked or disliked about Facebook, and explain what each card meant to them. Analysing the results revealed that positive aspects could be grouped under five main headings: attractiveness, ease of use, customisability, helpfulness, and advanced technology. On the other hand, the main negative aspects related to lack of security, impersonality, uncontrollability, distractions, frustration, and annoyance. The use of these terms is discussed below. The adjectives were not always interpreted by participants in a standard way. This reveals additional insights into their perceptions of Facebook and the problems of applying Western material to cross cultural studies.

The students elaborated on their perceptions of Facebook's attractiveness by stating that its perceived benefits had attracted so many Saudis to join its community that it was rare to find someone who did not have an account. Respondents indicated that Facebook could be used to invite support for current affairs, whether social, religious, political, or educational, because users will find a large number of people to hear their voices, engage in their causes, and actively interact in debates. Thus, any topic raised on Facebook will garner the attention of a large number of people. Zuckerman (2014) described this large population of users in terms of a latent capacity. The analysis of the status updates in phase two revealed that Saudi

university students are indeed willing to engage in such discussions (see Chapter Five: Section Two). This positive aspect of Facebook is in line with Gillan, Pickerill, and Webster's (2008) distinction between the manifest function and latent capacity of new technology. While the manifest function of Facebook could be to socially communicate with others about causes, it is the latent capacity that facilitates change.

Facebook was also described as being easy to use because all processes from registering and setting up an account to generating content and sharing information, are very simple and clear. Thus, it could be argued that, regardless of their level of technical competence, the students believed they could effortlessly broadcast their news and messages. This feature was also one of the prominent positive aspects of social media illustrated by Zuckerman (2014). He indicated that, because social media platforms are designed for millions of inexperienced users, such users are able to easily use social media platforms to publish content. Gauntlett (2011: 13) argued that such "easy to use online tools which enable people to learn about, and from each other, and to collaborate and share resources, have made a real difference to what people do with, and can get from, their electronic media".

Customisability was considered to be another positive aspect of Facebook enabling users to tailor the information they access and send to others. Such customisation takes two forms: first, users can select the audience who can view their profile and status updates. Second, the news feed can be customised to display only the content that matches their interests.

Facebook was considered to be helpful because it allowed students to organise cooperative work (such as voluntary missions and awareness campaigns) and spread information to a large number of users through the distribution of articles, sharing of status updates, and creation of informative pages to which others could subscribe. This benefit has been highlighted by Shirky (2011), one of the prominent advocates of the helpfulness of

social media, who indicated that distributing information on social media platforms, even when it is done among groups with weak ties, helps in achieving goals that were previously unattainable. Facebook was considered advanced because it frequently introduces new updates and users upload new content every day. Additionally, it is a stable platform that has rarely gone offline. Such an explanation is in line with the current sample's earlier justification for asserting that creating a Saudi social media platform would require considerable time, money and effort if the platform were to be as advanced as Facebook (see Section 6.2.2).

When asked about its negative aspects, the students declared that lack of security was one of the most negative aspects. They believed that their privacy could be threatened if disclosed personal information was leaked to – and misused by – third parties. However, it seems that this fear did not stop them from disclosing personal information (see Chapter Five: Section Three). Facebook was also perceived as being impersonal. The respondents interpreted this as relating to the loss of ownership of information and their inability to prevent Facebook from giving their information to others. They acknowledged Facebook's position in this, saying that "it is a matter of doing business rather than offering a free space for individuals to interact in" (F04) and were aware that Facebook could view, store and sell information on its users. Such an acknowledgment is consistent with the notion that being a Facebook member is not actually free of charge, because users contribute their information as the price of joining it (e.g., Doyle and Fraser 2012; Scholz 2012).

Saudi university students also perceived uncontrollability to be a negative aspect of Facebook. They commented that they could not control the information they had generated and that information used to raise awareness of issues may subsequently be misused to criticise a cause and show its negative side, leading to virtual anti-campaigns that undermine the cause in question and make users less convinced of its agenda.

This finding shows that the fifth assumption of uses and gratifications theory, which states that people are typically – but not always – more influential than the media (Rubin 1994), could be updated to include the impact of the content generated by different users. As social media platforms depend mainly on ordinary users to contribute their content, this content does not necessarily follow an institutional agenda or go through gatekeepers as in the traditional media. The interactive nature of social media platforms may complicate the typical impact of media content because users are exposed to a wide range of issues and diversity of opinions. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, while the corporate media bias may have been minimised in social media platforms, each user who contributes on Facebook has a position or agenda.

Facebook was also perceived to be distracting and as such inhibited the students' ability to focus on a particular post. Continuous news feed updates meant that respondents were distracted from engaged reading or commenting on debates by potentially more interesting topics. This limitation has also been noted by Zuckerman (2014), who indicates that one of the biggest limitations of social media is that, while social media platforms enable users to generate and share content, they do not guarantee that this content will be viewed and capture the attention of other users.

The first assumption of uses and gratifications theory is that "communication behaviour, including the selection and use of the media, is goal-directed, purposive, and motivated" (Rubin 1994: 428). These results suggest that, in the case of social media usage, this assumption could be developed further. While Facebook users may be goal-directed and motivated to start using Facebook, their usage may become more unplanned or less purposive as they are assaulted by distracting, unsolicited content. Hence, the interactivity and immediacy of the platform may distract them from achieving their main aims. These actions may even lead them away from Facebook to other media tools, such as online newspapers.

Mitchell and Page (2013) confirmed that about 64% of online newspaper readers are being directed to these websites from Facebook.

Students' frustrations with Facebook related to o the poor local technological infrastructure that led to lost connections. Respondents found this very frustrating when they were in the middle of a heated discussion. They indicated that, despite paying high fees for Internet services, they cannot remain continuously online. It should be noted that this limitation is more related to the country's infrastructure than a negative aspect inherent to the Facebook platform.

The participants also described Facebook as being annoying because they felt pressured by its notifications, updates, and messages. Even if they have the choice to switch notifications off, they still feel responsible for replying, commenting, liking, and responding to other users. Such actions may fulfil their friends' needs for attention and also Facebook's goal of winning the competition with other media platforms by compelling users to be on Facebook as often as possible. These findings support the fourth assumption of uses and gratifications theory that "the media compete with other forms of communication, or functional alternatives such as interpersonal interaction, for selection, attention, and use" (Rubin 1994: 428).

The card selection exercise assisted in investigating the applicability of uses and gratification theory's assumptions regarding the usage of a social media platform and provided a rationale for modifications to its assumptions. It also confirmed that although users were purposive and goal-oriented in obtaining expected gratifications, this was undermined by the continual updates. Additionally, the positive and negative aspects of Facebook perceived by the current sample offer a further insight into the key features of this social media platform, which afford students opportunities to obtain diverse gratifications, and the perceived costs that may hinder them from obtaining such gratifications.

6.3. Reasons for Disclosing Personal Information on Facebook and Users' Privacy Concerns

Social media platforms have changed the method of disclosing and sharing personal information with others. Unlike emails, where personal information is mainly shared directly with the recipient of the communication, personal information in social media platforms may be shared with a massive audience with service providers encouraging this behaviour (Kisilevich, Ang, and Last 2012). The second phase of this research revealed that Saudi university students did disclose a large amount of their personal information. Therefore, this section addresses interviewees' explanations for this and their privacy concerns regarding such disclosure.

6.3.1. Reasons for Disclosing Personal Information on Facebook

Phase two revealed that Saudi university students disclosed about 60% of their basic identifiers, 77% of items categorised as sensitive personal information, and 50% of potentially stigmatising personal items on Facebook. Such a finding may indicate that Saudi university students' social norms about personal information disclosure, at least on this platform are shifting and diverging from the stereotypically reserved behaviour expected from them in their offline lives.

When asked about the reasons for such high levels of disclosure, the interviewees explained that they believed that sharing personal information was an essential requirement for being an active user. To benefit from Facebook, they indicated that they had to share personal information, such as their background information, activities, interests, and views. Such disclosure allowed them to actively interact and engage in the diverse activities offered by Facebook, such as establishing and maintaining relationships. Another factor that

influenced them to engage on more information disclosure was the encouragement they received from other users through likes and positive comments when information is disclosed. This finding is consistent with the main assumption of social penetration theory that individuals tend to disclose more personal information when they expect to receive encouragement (rewards) from others as an outcome of such disclosure (Altman and Taylor 1973). Thus, it seems that the more comments and likes users receive, the more likely they are to disclose information about themselves (Forest and Wood 2012).

6.3.2. Privacy Concerns on Facebook

Although privacy has become a much-publicised topic in the field of new media studies, there is no consensus in the literature about its definition (Guo 2010). Newell (1998) states that definitions given for privacy are so diverse and complex that it is impossible to evaluate them in a comprehensible way. However, there is some consensus that privacy relates to personal information, its control, and disclosure (Tufekci 2008). Li et al. (2014) define privacy concerns as an individual's general tendency to worry about the safety of his or her disclosed personal information. In terms of social penetration theory, privacy concerns could be evaluated from individuals' perceptions of the expected costs of using social media platforms.

When interviewed about their privacy concerns, all of the students indicated that they were aware of the potential costs and negative consequences associated with disclosing their personal information. However, they differed in their privacy concerns. A few respondents indicated that they did protect their privacy using the privacy settings on their accounts because they evaluated the potential negative consequences associated with disclosing their personal information as higher than their derived benefits. Their use of the settings ranged from hiding part of their contact information to blocking access to the entire account to non-friends. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents indicated that they were willing to

jeopardise their privacy in order to maintain the rewards they obtained, as long as these rewards outweighed the expected costs from such disclosure. For instance, they indicated that sharing personal information, photos, and videos to keep in touch with friends and developing relationships with others outweighed the negative consequences associated with leaking personal information to undesired audiences. This phenomenon of increased public disclosure – termed 'radical transparency' – led Zuckerberg to argue that privacy is not a social norm anymore (Joinson et al. 2011).

As indicated earlier (see Chapter Two: Section Three), previous studies regarding the relationship between disclosure and privacy online have taken one of two stances. According to one viewpoint, although online users claim to be concerned about their online privacy, observing their actual online behaviour indicates that they disclose a considerable amount of information. Other studies have revealed that the level of disclosure online is negatively associated with privacy concerns. Thus, disclosing a high level of information online is associated with a low level of concern regarding privacy issues. The current findings contribute to this body of knowledge by revealing that although the majority of the current sample was actually aware of the potential costs and negative consequences associated with disclosing personal information, they were highly motivated to continue benefiting from Facebook by disclosing personal information in light of the costs and rewards equation.

6.4. Discussing Social and Political Issues through Facebook

The results of the earlier phases of the research revealed that Saudi university students use Facebook to satisfy their need to raise their concerns and discuss social and political issues, and a considerable portion of their status updates focus on such issues. This

section presents and discusses interviewees' perceptions of the freedom that Facebook offers them to discuss these issues and provides further insights into what they discuss on its platform. When interviewing respondents about the extent to which they freely discuss social and political issues, the students indicated that Facebook expands their opportunities to express their opinions freely regarding issues that were concerned about. However, they stressed that such freedom has its limit, for instance they should not cross the lines drawn by the state or their cultural and Islamic norms.

When interviewing the students about the political issues they discussed, they indicated that these related to global and local news updates. In global affairs, they indicated that they expressed their opinions on topics such as the election of the Islamic party in Egypt, their expectations for the Syrian revolutions, and the consequences of bringing down the regime in Yemen. They also engaged with other Facebook users, either in Saudi Arabia or other Arab countries, in discussing the reasons behind some events during the Arab Spring. Regarding local political issues, as the call for protests by Shiite minorities was the most significant political event in Saudi Arabia, the sample responses focused on this topic. These responses validated the results of phase two and explained the reasons behind their rejection of such calls in their status updates on Facebook. For instance, Saudi university students mentioned the negative consequences in the Arab countries that went through the Arab Spring, such as Egypt, Yamen, Libya, and Syria, and how they suffered destruction in their countries.

Although the social issues raised covered a wide range (see Chapter Five: Section Two), the respondents were not as critical of the state as those in other Arab countries have been. In neighbouring countries, social media has been used more directly to attack government officials and to blame the regimes for corruption (e.g. Alhammash 2012; Marzouki et al. 2012; Mansour 2012; Khamis, Gold, and Vaughn 2012). This finding is

consistent with Boghardt's (2013) argument that the most popular Saudi social media content reveals interest in reforming policies, not in creating revolutionary change or promoting violent activism. The respondents' answers to the question regarding the issues raised, as well as the content analysis of Facebook status updates, indicated that Saudi university students' demands concerned accelerating positive changes in the society.

6.5. Concluding Summary

In the earlier phases of the research, it was shown that Facebook is used to satisfy a wide range of gratifications, ranging from the creation and maintenance of friendships and family relations, education, and the purchase of goods, to discussing social and political issues. A content analysis of status updates revealed that 16 different status themes are posted, ranging from simple greetings to the discussion of social and political issues. The last phase complements this picture by looking in more detail at Facebook usage and its compatibility with Saudi culture, the reasons behind Saudi university students' high levels of information disclosure, and their perceptions regarding the use of Facebook to discuss social and political issues.

The results of this last phase reveal that Saudi university students have a positive attitude toward Facebook, regard it as an integral part of their daily lives, and do not consider deactivating or deleting their accounts. They appreciate the benefits of cross-cultural communication, which leads them to reject the idea of having a closed national social media platform. Because of its privacy settings and/or the increasing openness of Saudi society, Saudi university students indicate that Facebook does not contradict the values of their culture. The findings also reveal that Saudi university students are aware of some of the positive and negative consequences of using Facebook. The positive and negative cards chosen by the sample assist in further investigating uses and gratification theory's

assumptions on the usage of a social media platform.

When asked about the reasons for their high levels of disclosure and whether they hold privacy concerns regarding their disclosed information, the interviewees stated that such disclosure was necessary to be active users and maximise the rewards they obtain from Facebook. Despite acknowledging the potential costs and negative consequences of sharing personal information, the majority of the respondents did not conceal their personal information on their Facebook accounts, as long as the disclosure of such information did not come to cost them too much in comparison to what they were getting from its platform. Focusing on social and political issues, Saudi university students believe that Facebook helps them to voice their opinions and concerns. The issues they discussed covered a wide range of topics, but their demands have not gone beyond asking for accelerating positive changes in the society.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

Given that Facebook potentially provides opportunities for interacting with others in a relatively uncensored environment, this research aimed to investigate how Saudi university students are using these opportunities. This final chapter discusses the major findings and examines them against the main research aim and objectives. It also presents the research's contributions to knowledge, limitations of the research, and recommendations for future studies.

7.2. Research Aim, Objectives, and Main Findings

Figure 7.1 presents a summary of the main findings and how these addressed the research aims and objectives.

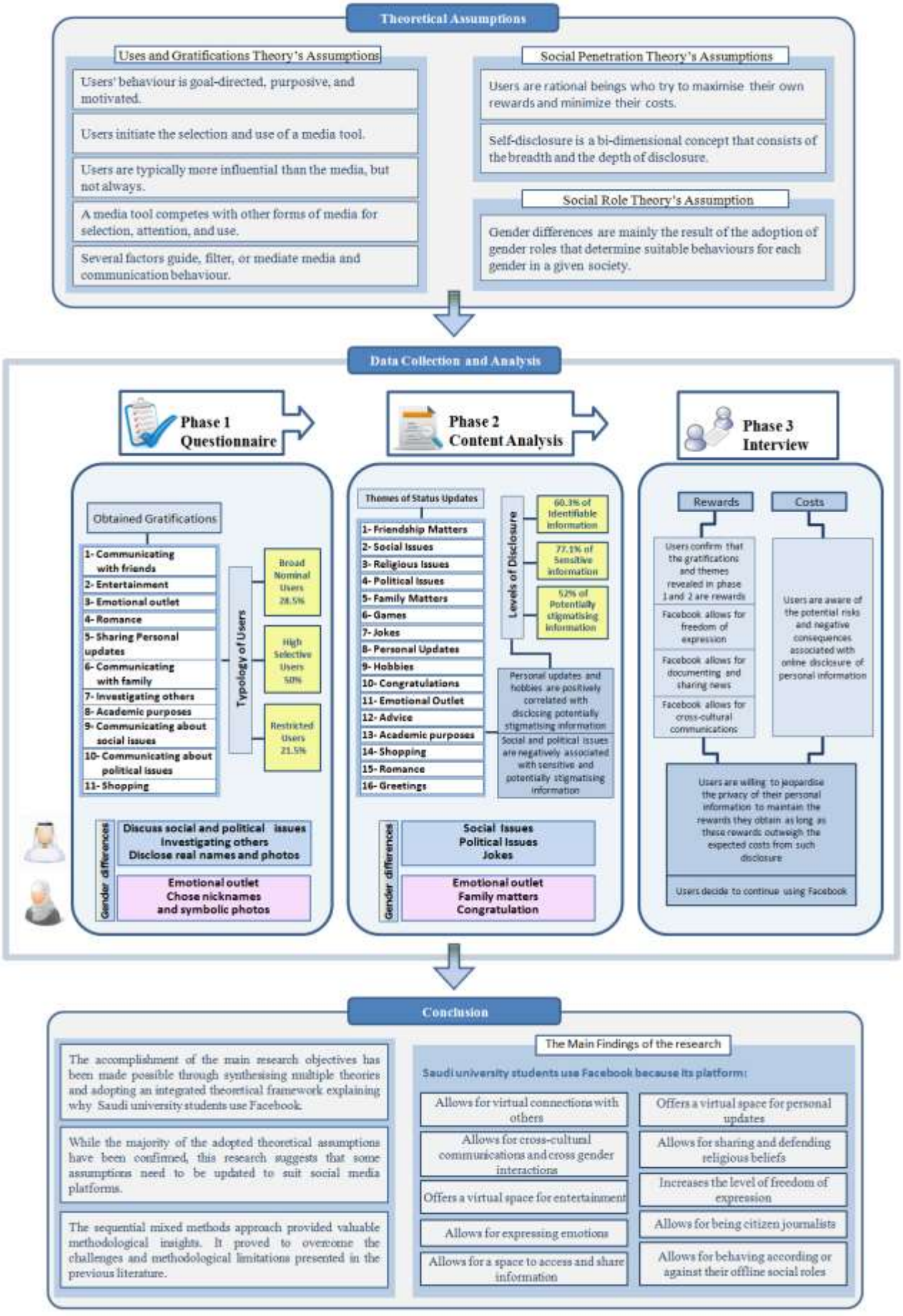

Figure 7. 1 Overview of the Research Findings

Figure 7.1 consists of three main sections: theoretical assumptions, data collection and analysis, and conclusion. The first section demonstrates how the assumptions of uses and gratification theory, social penetration theory and social role theory were synthesised into the theoretical framework that guided this research.

The middle section of the figure illustrates the data collection and analysis carried out in the questionnaire, content analysis and interview phases. The first research objective was to contribute to uses and gratifications research by exploring the gratifications Saudi university students obtain from using Facebook. Eleven gratifications were identified, including communicational, personal, recreational, academic, social, and political gratifications. While some of these have been documented in previous research, particularly those relating to communicational and recreational gratifications, Saudi university students also use Facebook as a place to discuss social and political issues, gratifications that have not been reported in the previous uses and gratifications literature. These findings imply that while Saudi university students utilise this social media platform to obtain similar gratifications to Western users, they also use Facebook to gain new gratifications.

The second research objective related to strengthening the media and communication literature about the diversification of media usage patterns by creating a typology of Saudi Facebook users. The analysis of data from phase one revealed three segments of Facebook users based on their background and usage variables as well as their obtained gratifications. The first segment, referred to as Broad Nominal Users, used Facebook to obtain all 11 gratifications. This group accounted for 28.5% of the sample. They are middle class users who spend an average amount of time on Facebook and have average levels of personal information disclosure. In line with their obtained gratifications, they tend to post more status updates related to family, friends, and congratulations. The second Facebook subgroup, High Selective Users, comprised 50% of the sample. The users in this

subgroup report frequent use of Facebook to obtain all gratifications except discussion of social and political issues. These users spend the most time per day on Facebook, and have the highest levels of economic status and personal disclosure. They tend to generate mainly statuses about friends, personal updates, and games. The third subgroup is Restricted Users, representing 21.5% of the sample. The respondents in this subgroup mainly use Facebook to discuss and post statuses about social and political issues. This sub-group consists of more male users who have the least amount of experience using Facebook and the lowest levels of disclosure. These findings confirmed that, being goal-oriented, selective, and purposive, Saudi university students differ in the gratifications they obtain from the same social media tool.

The third research objective was to enhance understanding of the user-generated content within social media platforms by identifying the themes of status updates Saudi university students generate and share on their Facebook profiles. The findings revealed 16 distinct themes. Results obtained from the first phase revealed that the most common gratification from using Facebook is communicating with friends; the findings of phase two show that Saudi university students tend to post most of their statuses to communicate with their friends, share their celebrations, and show their interest in continuing friendships. In addition, discussing social and political issues occupies a considerable percentage of users' statuses. Interestingly, religion emerged as one of the main themes in the status updates, with Facebook used to present and defend Islamic beliefs and values.

The fourth research objective was to contribute to the field of self-disclosure by testing the hypothesis that the themes of Saudi users' Facebook status updates are correlated with their levels of disclosure of personal information. Students disclosed more than half of their identifying personal information, about three quarters of their sensitive personal information, and about half of their potentially stigmatising personal information on their

profiles. Analysing the relationship between the themes of status updates that Saudi university students post on their accounts and their levels of personal information disclosure revealed a significant positive correlation between the disclosure of sensitive information and the Personal Updates theme of status updates. There were also significant positive correlations between disclosing potentially stigmatising information and the Personal Updates and Hobbies themes of status updates. Significant negative correlations were found between the frequencies of disclosing sensitive and potentially stigmatising information and the themes classified as Social Issues and Political Issues. In line with social penetration theory, these findings indicate that the rewards gained from generating and sharing content about users' personal lives on Facebook lead Saudi university students to disclose a higher level of personal information, in comparison with generating content about social and political issues. Interviewing the students about this finding revealed that students are aware of the potential costs and negative consequences associated with disclosing personal information. Nevertheless, they are willing to jeopardise the privacy of their personal information in order to obtaining rewards as long as these rewards outweigh the expected costs from such disclosure.

To address the fifth research objective, gender differences were analysed across all phases of the research to contribute to the empirical and conceptual debates regarding the impact of offline gendered social roles on online users. The findings from phase one reveal that four out of 11 gratifications showed significant differences along gender lines. Male university students reported using Facebook significantly more than females for communicating about social and political issues and for investigating others, whereas female students used Facebook significantly more as an emotional outlet. Consistent with these findings, the results of phase two reveal that male university students posted more statuses about social and political issues, whereas female students posted more about family matters,

congratulations and emotions. These gender differences can be interpreted in light of social role theory, as Saudi social norms place males in charge of public life while females are in charge of the domestic sphere and they tend to behave online in a way that is consistent with these social roles.

Surprisingly, few gender differences emerged with regard to levels of self-disclosure. Such a finding indicates that Facebook allows Saudi users to use the platform in ways that lessen or eliminate gender differences in comparison with their offline roles. The only significant gender difference in self-disclosure was that male Saudi university students were more likely than females to disclose their real names and photos on Facebook. These two components are highly associated with Saudi cultural and religious beliefs. Although social media platforms promote the shrinking of gender differences in disclosure behaviours, there are still some taboos about revealing females' photos for some Saudis, associated with rules of *hijab*, and females' names, associated with typical Saudi norms, on social media platforms.

In the interviews, when discussing the compatibility of Facebook with Saudi culture it appeared that while Facebook users may be purposive and motivated when they start using Facebook, they may engage in a series of behaviours due to the interactive nature of its platform that may distract them from achieving their main aim. These actions may even lead them to use other media tools, such as online newspapers, to view more details about news that appeared in their Facebook accounts. The findings of this research confirm the third assumption of uses and gratifications theory, which states that people are typically more influential than media tools. As social media platforms depend mainly on ordinary users to contribute to their content, this content does not necessarily follow an institutional agenda or go through gatekeepers as in the traditional media to wield a predetermined influence on the audience. Thus, the interactive nature of social media platforms may complicate the typical impact of media because social media users are exposed to a wide range of issues and

diversity of opinions regarding these issues and can even state their opinions regarding them. All of this would reinforce the idea that people are more influential than media tools.

The findings of this research support the fourth assumption of uses and gratifications theory – that media compete with other media tools for selection, attention, and use. Through continuous comments on others' status updates, Facebook users may fulfil their friends' needs for attention and appreciation. This behaviour also achieves Facebook's competitive goals by compelling users to be on Facebook as often as possible at the expense of other media. Facebook's competitive edge was also evidenced in the interviews by the finding that the majority of Saudi university students did not support the idea of using an alternative Saudi social media platform because such a national site would deny them the benefits of cross-cultural communication. They also felt that such a platform would not be as technically advanced or popular. In addition to using Facebook extensively in the present, they did not think of deleting or deactivating their accounts.

The bottom box of figure 7.1 presents the conclusions of the research. It shows that while the assumptions of the adopted theories are broadly supported by the research findings, some assumptions need to be updated to suit social media platforms, as discussed above. The sequential mixed methods approach addressed the methodological limitations and challenges presented in the previous literature. It can be concluded that Saudi university students use Facebook as a virtual space within which they can obtain several gratifications that cannot be easily fulfilled in their offline lives.

7.3. Contribution of the Research

The contributions of this research include theoretical, methodological, and practical facets. Its findings may be of interest to both academics and professionals working with online communities in general and social media in particular.

7.3.1. Theoretical Contributions

The current research makes theoretical contributions showing:

- The usefulness of synthesizing uses and gratifications theory, social penetration theory, and social role theory within the context of Facebook usage by Saudi university students.
- The application of uses and gratifications theory to the study of Facebook by users from a non-western cultural context, contributes to the understanding of young people from this conservative Islamic culture in a time of change.
- The construction of a typology of Saudi university students who use Facebook provides a contribution to the understanding of diverse media-usage patterns.

7.3.2. Methodological Contributions

- Uses and gratifications studies have been criticised for relying on self-report methods to investigate gratifications. This research responds to such criticism and contributes to methodological knowledge by validating the self-reported data against the qualitative findings to investigate the extent to which self-reported gratifications match the observed themes of Facebook status updates.
- While previous research has mainly utilised deductive top-down approaches in investigating content generated on social media platforms, here, an inductive bottom-up approach was used to analyse status updates. This approach reduces bias and could be applicable to other studies to provide a better understanding of the themes of status updates.
- Previous studies investigating the relationship between users' disclosure behaviours and privacy concerns have utilised self-reporting methods to measure users' levels of disclosure. As participants may not accurately recall their actual levels of self-

disclosure behaviour, this research makes a methodological contribution by introducing content analysis as a means of verifying levels self-disclosure, followed by interviews to investigate attitudes towards self-disclosure.

7.3.3. Practical Contributions

- The methods and findings of this research offer a basis for media and communication scholars to expand studies of usage patterns, obtained gratifications, generated content, and online information disclosure.
- The findings of this research could assist Saudi agencies responsible for youth issues in designing their programs and development plans.
- The research reveals that analysing content generated by social media users provides a record of users' attitudes towards current affairs, thereby facilitating the documentation of cultural and social changes. Thus, regular Internet studies of Saudi online behaviours would provide valuable data for Saudi users, developers, and decision-makers.

7.4. Limitations of the Research

This research aimed to investigate how Saudi university students are using the opportunities offered by Facebook. As with all studies, however, confidence in the findings must be considered in light of the limitations. In particular, the main sample of this research – students in a Saudi university – is both strength and a limitation. The sample's strength is that studies of virtual behaviours through social media to date have been based almost entirely on Western and East Asian samples (see Chapter Two: Section Three). A limitation of this research, however, is that it is restricted to a certain moment in time and to a subsection of the population that may use Facebook in specific ways – different population samples may use it

in other ways. However, the methodology could be followed to understand Facebook usage by other groups.

Conducting the research in Arabic and translating the resulting data into English was a limitation that the researcher addressed by utilising a back-translation process (see Chapter Three: Section Four). While the instruments utilised in this research revealed valuable data, some of them have cultural as well as linguistic limitations. For instance, the Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) checklist was mainly designed for a Canadian sample, although it has been applied to other cultures. It did enable the classification of information items disclosed by Saudi university students based on their sensitivity. However, as it was not originally designed for a Saudi sample, some of the information items classified as basic by Nosko, Wood, and Molema (2010) would be considered sensitive or potentially stigmatising for the Saudi sample and vice versa (see Chapter Five: Section Three). Such a finding indicates that some Western instruments and classifications should be applied with caution when investigating non-Western samples. In addition, while the cards adopted from Microsoft's (2002) reaction toolkit were used to elicit rich answers from the participants about the positive and negative aspects of Facebook platform, they were only utilised to gain further understanding about Saudi university students' perceptions of the rewards gained and costs paid from using Facebook and not to measure the usability of the platform.

While this sample discussed social and political issues, such discussions were not extreme and were not used to incite others to violence. The role of Facebook and other social media platforms in the recruitment and politicisation of young people in the Middle East has become an issue of global importance since this research took place and further studies are needed to determine whether this will affect Saudi students' use of Facebook.

7.5. Recommendations for Future Research

This research found that Facebook provided Saudi university students with new virtual opportunities. A follow up study using the same methodology could be used to determine how this may change, and to investigate the long term impact of on–line behaviour on offline lives. For instance, Saudi students may move from engaging in online political discussions to becoming more politically active offline. A future study could investigate this and also trace the antecedents of potential radicalisation. Facebook facilitates cross-gender communication: in the longer term will it be instrumental in breaking down gender boundaries? Additionally, the study could be expanded to look at how Facebook is used by other Saudi groups with different socio demographic profiles.

The current results reveal that Saudi university students are willing to jeopardise the privacy of their personal information to maintain the rewards they obtain as long as these rewards outweigh the expected costs from such disclosure. Future studies with the same group of participants could investigate whether the attitudes of these young people change as they mature and whether they maintain their readiness to exchange personal information as they become more experienced users. As Internet services proliferate and almost every aspect of individuals' daily lives will be based on them, it will also be interesting to examine whether these individuals will increasingly accept the exchange of their privacy for benefiting from such Internet services or whether they will wish to protect their personal information from 'dataveillance' (surveillance of all the digital records of an individual's activities).

7.6. Concluding Remarks

Given Saudis' mass adoption of social media and the evidence showing that it has become an integral part of their daily lives, this research has examined obtained

gratifications, generated content, disclosed information, usage patterns, and gender differences to investigate how Saudi university students are using the opportunities offered by Facebook. It can be concluded that, in line with previous research, Saudi university students use Facebook for friends and family communications. However, Facebook also offers Saudi users a virtual space within which they can overcome the cultural barriers of the society. Facebook also enables Saudis to engage in such activities through discussing, documenting, and sharing personal opinions regarding local and global affairs in a semi-public sphere. Saudi university students as well found in Facebook an effective tool for sharing and defending their religious beliefs.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Previous Facebook-obtained

Gratifications Studies Table

Authors	Year	Nation	Scope	Methods	Participants	Obtained Gratifications
Bumgarner	2007	USA	The uses and gratifications obtained from Facebook	Online questionnaire	1049*	1. diversion; 2. personal expression; 3. collection and connection; 4. directory; 5. voyeurism; 6. social utility; 7. herd instinct; 8. initiating relationships
Foregger	2008	USA	The gratifications obtained from Facebook	Questionnaire	340 (122 males, 214 females, 4 unknown)	1. pass time; 2. connection; 3. sexual attraction; 4. utilities and upkeeps; 5. establish/maintain old ties; 6. accumulation; 7. social comparison; 8. channel use and networking
Joinson	2008	Online sample	The uses and gratifications obtained from Facebook	Online questionnaire	241 (80 males, 161 female)	1. connection, 2. shared identities, 3. photographs, 4. content, 5. social investigation, 6. social network surfing 7. status updating
Raacke and Bonds-Raacke	2008	USA	The gratifications obtained from Facebook and Myspace	Questionnaire	116 (53 males, 63 females)	1. keep in touch with old friends; 2. keep in touch with current friends; 3. post/look at pictures; 4. make new friends; 5. locate old friends; 6. learn about events; 7. post social functions; 8. feel connected; 8.share information about oneself; 9. for academic purposes; 10. for dating purposes
Sheldon	2008	USA	The influence of unwillingness-to-communicate on gratifications sought and obtained from Facebook	Questionnaire	172 (74 males, 98 females)	1. relationship maintenance; 2.passing time; 3. virtual community; 4.entertainment; 5. coolness; 6. companionship
Urista, Dong and Day	2009	USA	The gratifications	Focus groups	50*	1. efficient communication, 2.

Authors	Year	Nation	Scope	Methods	Participants	Obtained Gratifications
			obtained from Facebook and Myspace			convenient communication, 3. curiosity about others, 4. popularity 5. relationship formation reinforcement
Bonds-Raacke and Raacke	2010	USA	The uses and gratifications obtained from Facebook and Myspace	Questionnaire	201 (63 males, 138 females)	1. information, 2. friendship 3. connection
Gülnar, Balcı and Çakır	2010	Turkey	The gratifications obtained from Facebook, YouTube and other social media platforms	Questionnaire	500 (282 males, 218 females)	1. narcissism and self-expression; 2. media drenching and performance; 3. passing time; 4. information seeking; 5. personal status; 6. relationship maintenance; 7. entertainment
Quan-Haase and Young	2010	Canada	The gratifications obtained from Facebook and instant messaging	Questionnaire and interview	77 for the questionnaire (21 males, 56 females) 21for Interviews (5 males, 16 females)	1. pastime; 2. affection; 3. fashion; 4. share problems; 5. sociability; 6. social information
Cheung, Chiu and Lee	2011	Online Sample	The gratifications obtained from Facebook	Online questionnaire	182 (58 males, 124 females)	1. social identify; 2. purpose value; 3. self-discovery; 4. maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity; 5. social enhancement; 6. entertainment value; 7. social presence
Kim, Sohn and Choi	2011	Korea and USA	The uses and gratifications	Questionnaire	349 from USA (87 males, 262	1. seeking friends; 2. social support; 3. entertainment; 4.

Authors	Year	Nation	Scope	Methods	Participants	Obtained Gratifications
			obtained from Facebook		females) 240 from Korea (131 males, 109 females)	information; 5. convenience
Zhang, Tang and Leung	2011	Hong Kong	The impacts of the gratifications obtained and psychological traits on Facebook use	Focus group and online questionnaire	17 (focus group)* 437 (185 males, 252 females)	1. social surveillance; 2. entertainment; 3. recognition; 4. emotional support; 5. network extension; 6. maintenance
Alhabash et al.	2012	Taiwan	The gratifications obtained from Facebook and how they predict the intensity of Facebook use and content-generation behaviours	Online questionnaire	4346 (1795 males, 2551 females)	1. social connection; 2. shared identities; 3. photographs; 4. contents; 5. social investigation; 6. social network surfing; 7. status updates
Gadekar, Krishnatray and Gaur	2012	India	The uses and gratifications obtained from Facebook	Questionnaire	455 (268 males, 187 females)	1. relationship maintenance; 2. user-friendliness; 3. relaxation; 4. connecting with old friends; 5. social interaction
Hew and Cheung	2012	Singapore	The gratifications obtained from Facebook , the types of friends and privacy	Online questionnaire	83 (23 males and 60 females)	1. keeping in touch with friends; 2. entertainment; 3.broadening the social network; 5. expressing emotions; 6. following the trend/crowd; 7. for fun/for the sake of having a Facebook account
Hunt, Atkin and Krishnan	2012	USA	The influence of CMC apprehension	Online questionnaire	417 (196 males, 221 females)	1. interpersonal utility; 2. self-expression; 3. entertainment; 4.

Authors	Year	Nation	Scope	Methods	Participants	Obtained Gratifications
			on the gratifications obtained from using Facebook			passing time
Tosun	2012	Turkey	The gratifications obtained from Facebook and expressing true self on the Internet	Online questionnaire	143 (37 males, 106 females)	1. maintain long-distance relationships; 2. game-playing/entertainment; 3. active forms of photo-related activities; 4. organizing social activities; 5. passive observations; 6. establishing new friendships; 7. initiating and/or terminating romantic relationships
Wang, Tchernev and Solloway	2012	USA	The uses and gratifications obtained from social media including Facebook	Questionnaire	28 (11 males, 17 females)	1. emotional needs; 2. cognitive needs; 3. social needs; 4. habitual needs
Xu et al.	2012	USA	The uses and gratifications obtained from Facebook	Focus group and questionnaire	148 (questionnaire) (81 males, 67 females)	1. coordination; 2. disclosure; 3. escape; 4. immediate access; 5. leisure; 6. stylishness
Alemdar and Köker	2013	Turkey	The gratifications obtained from Facebook for X and Y generations	Interview	11*	1. social surveillance; 2. recognition; 3. emotional support; 4. social connectivity; 5. entertainment; 6. narcissism and self-expression; 7. ease to use; 8. freedom and courage; 9. adaptation to new challenges
Balakrishnan and	2013	Malaysia	The uses and	Focus group and	12 (focus	1. social networking; 2.

Authors	Year	Nation	Scope	Methods	Participants	Obtained Gratifications
Shamim			gratifications obtained from Facebook, psychological and behavioural factors affecting the users	questionnaire	group)* 707 (questionnaire) (324 males, 383 females)	psychological benefits; 3.entertainment, 4.self-presentation; 5. skill enhancement
Chigona	2013	South Africa	The gratifications sought and obtained from Facebook and the factors influencing continued usage	Interviews	8 (4 males, 4 females)	1. keeping in touch with friends; 2. diversion (escape) and entertainment and pass time; 3. find friends from past relationships by using the friends search function; 4. voyeurism; 5. self-expressing; 5. social utility
Dhaha and Igale	2013	Somalia	The gratifications obtained from Facebook	Online questionnaire	311 (271 males 40 females)	1. virtual companionship and escape; 2. interpersonal entertainment; 3. self-description of own country; 4. self-expression; 5. information seeking; 6. passing time
Ku, Chen and Zhang	2013	USA and Taiwan	The gratifications obtained from Facebook and their effect on the continued use of Facebook	Interview and questionnaire	For the Interview: 10 from USA and 10 from Taiwan* For the questionnaire: 103 from USA (64 males, 39 females) and 122 from Taiwan (53	1. information; 2. entertainment; 3. fashion; 4. sociability; 5. relationship maintenance

Authors	Year	Nation	Scope	Methods	Participants	Obtained Gratifications
					males, 69 females)	
Kwon, D'Angelo and McLeod	2013	USA	The uses and gratifications obtained from Facebook and their link to bridging and bonding social capital	Online questionnaire	152 (47 males, 105 females)	1. information seeking; 2. entertainment; 3. communication; 4. social relations; 5. escape; 6. Facebook applications
Jackson and Wang	2013	China and USA	The uses and gratifications obtained from Facebook	Questionnaire	400 (USA)* 490 (China)*	1. keeping in touch with parents and other family members; 2. keeping in touch with friends; 3. connecting with people known but rarely seen; 4. meeting new people; 5.obtaining information
Pai and Arnott	2013	Taiwan	The gratifications obtained from Facebook	Interview	24 (13 males, 11 females)	1. belonging; 2. hedonism; 3. self-esteem; 4. reciprocity
Patra, Gadekar, and Krishnatray	2013	India	The relationship between uses, gratifications obtained from Facebook, and personality traits	Questionnaire	550*	1. relationship maintenance; 2. user-friendliness; 3. relaxation; 4. connecting with old friends
Whiting and Williams	2013	USA	The gratifications obtained from Facebook	Interview	25 (13 males, 12 females)	1. social interaction; 2. information seeking; 3. pass time; 4. entertainment, relaxation; 5.communicatory utility; 6. convenience utility; 7. expression of opinion; 8. information sharing; 9. surveillance/knowledge about

Authors	Year	Nation	Scope	Methods	Participants	Obtained Gratifications
						others
Yang and Brown	2013	USA	The relationship between uses, gratifications obtained from Facebook, and social adjustment	Questionnaire	193 (89 males, 104 female)	1. relationship formation; 2. relationship maintenance
Alhabash, Chiang, and Huang	2014	Taiwan	The relationship between the gratifications obtained from Facebook and the continuity to use it	Online questionnaire	3172 (1576 males, 1596 females)	1. information sharing; 2. self-documentation; 3.social interaction; 4.entertainment; 5. passing time; 6. self-expression; 7. medium appeal
Karimi et al.	2014	Iranian, Malaysian, British, and South African	The gratifications obtained from Facebook	Online and hand-delivered questionnaires	320 (74 Malaysian, 96 Iranian, 61 UK, 89 South African)*	1. interpersonal utility; 2. pass time; 3. entertainment; 4. information seeking; 5. convenience

* does not indicate numbers by genders

Appendix B

Ethics Approval Forms

Ethics Approval of

Phase One

REGISTRY RESEARCH UNIT

ETHICS REVIEW FEEDBACK FORM

(Review feedback should be completed within 10 working days)

Name of applicant: Shuaa Aljasir .....

Faculty/School/Department: [Art and Design] AD Media and Communication

Research project title: An Exploration of Facebook Uses by Saudi University Students

Comments by the reviewer

1. Evaluation of the ethics of the proposal:
Satisfactory

2. Evaluation of the participant information sheet and consent form:
Satisfactory

3. Recommendation:
(Please indicate as appropriate and advise on any conditions. If there any conditions, the applicant will be required to resubmit his/her application and this will be sent to the same reviewer).

X	Approved - no conditions attached
	Approved with minor conditions (no need to re-submit)
	Conditional upon the following – please use additional sheets if necessary (please re-submit application)
	Rejected for the following reason(s) – please use other side if necessary
	Not required

Name of reviewer: Anonymous .....

Date: 24/11/2011 .....

Ethics Approval of

Phase Two

REGISTRY RESEARCH UNIT

ETHICS REVIEW FEEDBACK FORM

(Review feedback should be completed within 10 working days)

Name of applicant: Shuaa Aljasir .....

Faculty/School/Department: [Art and Design] AD Media and Communication

Research project title: An Exploration of Facebook Uses by Saudi University Students: A Content Analysis Study

Comments by the reviewer

4. Evaluation of the ethics of the proposal:	
5. Evaluation of the participant information sheet and consent form:	
6. Recommendation: (Please indicate as appropriate and advise on any conditions. If there any conditions, the applicant will be required to resubmit his/her application and this will be sent to the same reviewer).	
X	Approved - no conditions attached
	Approved with minor conditions (no need to re-submit)
	Conditional upon the following – please use additional sheets if necessary (please re-submit application)
	Rejected for the following reason(s) – please use other side if necessary
	Not required

Name of reviewer: Anonymous .....

Date: 24/02/2012

Ethics Approval of

Phase Three

REGISTRY RESEARCH UNIT

ETHICS REVIEW FEEDBACK FORM

(Review feedback should be completed within 10 working days)

Name of applicant: Shuaa Aljasir .....

Faculty/School/Department: [School of Art and Design] Communications

Research project title: Facebook Uses by Saudi Students

Comments by the reviewer

7. Evaluation of the ethics of the proposal:	
8. Evaluation of the participant information sheet and consent form:	
9. Recommendation: (Please indicate as appropriate and advise on any conditions. If there any conditions, the applicant will be required to resubmit his/her application and this will be sent to the same reviewer).	
X	Approved - no conditions attached
	Approved with minor conditions (no need to re-submit)
	Conditional upon the following – please use additional sheets if necessary (please re-submit application)
	Rejected for the following reason(s) – please use other side if necessary
	Not required

Name of reviewer: Anonymous .....

Date: 11/06/2013 .....

Appendix C

Participant Information Sheets

(English and Arabic Versions)

Participant Information Sheet

(The Focus Group Sessions)

Introduction: You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is being conducted to fulfil the doctoral degree requirements at Coventry University in the United Kingdom. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether you would like to take part. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. A copy of this form will be given to you.

Purpose: In this study, I aim to measure and provide detailed descriptive information about the reasons why Saudi university students use Facebook. I am seeking to fill a current knowledge gap by explaining why and how Saudi university students use Facebook, the amount of information they disclose on it, and the time they spent on Facebook. In this work, I will also take into account differences that might exist due to gender.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, you will need to take part in a focus group session that will last no longer than one hour. I will audio-record the session with your permission and transcribe the discussion to ensure it is accurate. You will be asked about your uses of Facebook in relation to the above mentioned issues. You may refuse to answer any question that you do not want to discuss during the session. At the end of the research, the record will be destroyed. When constructing the transcript, I may assign you a pseudonym, or you may choose one yourself. I will use neither your real name nor identifying information in preparing the research or in possible subsequent manuscripts prepared for publication in scholarly journals.

Risks of Participation: There are no identified risks associated with this research beyond those ordinarily faced in daily life. Some participants may consider the subject matter to be sensitive.

Benefits: There are no immediate benefits to participating in this research. The results of this research will contribute to a greater understanding and a larger body of research on social media usage.

Confidentiality: Participants' names will not be used within the research study and all data will remain confidential. To protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms will be used. The results may be published in a thesis, journal articles, and/or presentations at professional conferences. Any reporting that arises from this research study will not identify individuals, places, names or specific events.

Contacts: At any time, participants may contact the researcher, Shuaa Aljasir, PhD student, Coventry University.

Participants Rights: As a participant in this research, you are entitled to know about the nature of the research. You are free to decline participation, and you are free to withdraw from the focus group phase or the whole study at any time. Feel free to ask any question at any time about the nature of this research project or the methods I am using. Your suggestions and concerns are important to me.

Signatures: Please indicate your willingness to participate in this research by providing your signature on the Informed Consent Form. Your signature indicates an acknowledgment of the terms described above.

Arabic Version of the Participant Information Sheet

بيانات الموافقة على المشاركة

(مجموعات التركيز)

مقدمة: أدعوك للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية والتي تعد إحدى المتطلبات لنيل درجة الدكتوراة من جامعة كوفنتري في المملكة المتحدة، علماً بأن المعلومات الواردة في هذا النموذج وضعت لمساعدتك على تحديد مدى رغبتك في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، ففي حال الرغبة في المشاركة يتم استكمال نموذج الموافقة والتوقيع عليه وسيتم تقديم نسخة لك من هذا النموذج.

هدف الدراسة: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى قياس وتقديم معلومات وصفية تفصيلية حول استخدامات الفيس بوك من قبل طلاب الجامعات السعودية، والتعرف على أسباب استخدام طلاب الجامعات السعودية للفيس بوك وكيفية استخدامه، ومقدار المعلومات الشخصية التي يتم الإفصاح عنها على الفيس بوك، والوقت الذي يقضونه في استخدامه، مع الأخذ في الاعتبار الاختلافات التي قد توجد بين الجنسين.

إجراءات الدراسة: إذا وافقت على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، فإنني آمل منك المشاركة في مجموعة التركيز والتي تستغرق مدة لا تزيد عن ساعة؛ حيث سيتم تسجيل مجريات اللقاء على شريط صوتي لتحري الدقة في توثيق البيانات والمعلومات حول الاستخدامات الخاصة بك على الفيس بوك ذات العلاقة بالموضوعات المذكورة آنفاً، يمكنك الامتناع عن الإجابة على أي سؤال في أي وقت أثناء هذه المشاركة، علماً بأنه سيتم إتلاف التسجيل الصوتي حين الانتهاء من الدراسة، إضافة إلى أن اسمك أو المعلومات التي قد تشير إليك لن يتم التصريح بها في حال تم نشرها في النشرات أو المجلات العلمية باستخدام اسمك الحقيقي وسيتم ذكر اسم مستعار عند الحاجة إلى ذلك.

مخاطر المشاركة في هذه الدراسة: لا توجد مخاطر ترتبط بهذه الدراسة أكبر من تلك التي تواجهها في الحياة اليومية، مع الإشارة إلى أن المخاطر تقديرية تختلف باختلاف نظرة المشاركين؛ فقد يرى البعض أن مضمون هذه الدراسة ذا طبيعة حساسة.

فوائد المشاركة في هذه الدراسة: لا يوجد أي فوائد فورية للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة، وستسهم نتائج هذه الدراسة في محاولة تقديم فهم أعمق لاستخدامات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

سرية البيانات: ستظل جميع البيانات سرية ولن يتم استخدام أسماء المشاركين في هذه الدراسة وذلك من أجل حماية هوية المشاركين، علماً بأنه سيتم استخدام أسماء مستعارة في حال الحاجة لاستخدامها في رسالة الدكتوراة أو نشرها في المقالات العلمية وتقديم عروض في المؤتمرات، ولن يتم تحديد هوية الأفراد، أو ذكر أسماء أو أحداث معينة.

قنوات الاتصال: يمكن للمشاركين الاتصال بالباحثة شعاع الجاسر، طالبة دكتوراة بجامعة كوفنتري.

حقوق المشاركين في هذه الدراسة: يحق لك أن تعرف طبيعة البحث الحالي ولديك الحرية في رفض المشاركة أو الانسحاب من مجموعة التركيز أو من كامل الدراسة في أي وقت، آمل منك ألا تتردد في طرح أي سؤال في أي وقت عن طبيعة هذا المشروع البحثي، والأساليب المستخدمة فيه، علماً بأن جميع اقتراحاتك أو مخاوفك مهمة بالنسبة لي.

التوقيع بالموافقة: يرجى الإشارة إلى رغبتك واستعدادك للمشاركة في هذا المشروع البحثي من خلال توقيعك على نموذج الموافقة، حيث أن توقيعك يدل على إقرارك بالمعلومات المذكورة أعلاه.

Participant Information Sheet

The Questionnaire Study

(The Pilot and Main Studies)

Introduction: You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is being conducted to fulfil the doctoral degree requirements at Coventry University in the United Kingdom. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether you would like to take part. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. A copy of this form will be given to you.

Purpose: In this study, I aim to measure and provide detailed descriptive information about the reasons why Saudi university students use Facebook. I am seeking to fill a current knowledge gap by explaining why and how Saudi university students use Facebook, the amount of information they disclose on it, and the time they spent on Facebook. In this work, I will also take into account differences that might exist due to gender.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, you will need to answer a questionnaire, which will last no longer than an hour. You will be asked about your uses of Facebook in relation to the above mentioned issues. You may refuse to answer any question that you do not want to answer. I will use neither your real name nor identifying information in preparing the study or in possible subsequent manuscripts prepared for publication in scholarly journals.

Risks of Participation: There are no identified risks associated with this research beyond those ordinarily faced in daily life. Some participants may consider the subject matter to be sensitive.

Benefits: There are no immediate benefits to participating in this research. The results of this research will contribute to a greater understanding and a larger body of research on social media usage.

Confidentiality: Participants' names will not be used within the research study and all data will remain confidential. To protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms will be used. The results may be published in a thesis, journal articles, and/or presentations at professional conferences. Any reporting that arises from this research study will not identify individuals, places, names or specific events.

Contacts: At any time, participants may contact the student researcher, Shuaa Aljasir, PhD student, Coventry University.

Participants Rights: As a participant in this research, you are entitled to know about the nature of the research. You are free to decline participation, and you are free to withdraw from the questionnaire study or the whole research at any time. Feel free to ask any question at any time about the nature of this research project or the methods I am using. Your suggestions and concerns are important to me.

Signatures: Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by providing your signature on the Informed Consent Form. Your signature indicates an acknowledgment of the terms described above.

Arabic Version of the Participant Information Sheet

بيانات الموافقة على المشاركة

الاستبانة

(الدراسة الاستطلاعية والرئيسية)

مقدمة: أدعوك للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية والتي تعد إحدى المتطلبات لنيل درجة الدكتوراة من جامعة كوفنتري في المملكة المتحدة، علماً بأن المعلومات الواردة في هذا النموذج وضعت لمساعدتك على تحديد مدى رغبتك في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، ففي حال الرغبة في المشاركة يتم استكمال نموذج الموافقة والتوقيع عليه وسيتم تقديم نسخة لك من هذا النموذج.

هدف الدراسة: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى قياس وتقديم معلومات وصفية تفصيلية حول استخدامات الفيس بوك من قبل طلاب الجامعات السعودية، والتعرف على أسباب استخدام طلاب الجامعات السعودية للفيس بوك وكيفية استخدامه، ومقدار المعلومات التي يفصحون عنها على الفيس بوك، والوقت الذي يقضونه في استخدامه، مع الأخذ في الاعتبار الاختلافات التي قد توجد بين الجنسين.

إجراءات الدراسة: إذا وافقت على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، فإننا نأمل منك المشاركة في الإجابة على استبانة تستغرق مدة لا تزيد عن الساعة حول الاستخدامات الخاصة بك على الفيس بوك المتعلقة بالموضوعات المذكورة آنفاَ، ويمكنك الامتناع عن الإجابة على أي سؤال في أي وقت أثناء هذه المشاركة، علماً بأن اسمك أو المعلومات التي قد تشير إليك لن يتم التصريح بها في حال تم نشرها في النشرات أو المجلات العلمية باستخدام اسمك الحقيقي وقد يتم ذكر اسم مستعار عند الحاجة إلى ذلك.

مخاطر المشاركة في هذه الدراسة: لا توجد مخاطر ترتبط بهذه الدراسة أكبر من تلك التي تواجهها في الحياة اليومية، مع الإشارة إلى أن المخاطر تقديرية تختلف باختلاف نظرة المشاركين؛ فقد يرى البعض أن مضمون هذه الدراسة ذا طبيعة حساسة.

فوائد المشاركة في هذه الدراسة: لا يوجد أي فوائد فورية للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة، وستسهم نتائج هذه الدراسة في محاولة تقديم فهم أعمق لاستخدامات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

سرية البيانات: ستظل جميع البيانات سرية ولن يتم استخدام أسماء المشاركين في هذه الدراسة وذلك من أجل حماية هوية المشاركين، علماً بأنه سيتم استخدام أسماء مستعارة في حال الحاجة لاستخدامها في رسالة الدكتوراة أو نشرها في المقالات العلمية وتقديم عروض في المؤتمرات، ولن يتم تحديد هوية الأفراد، أو ذكر أسماء أو أحداث معينة.

قنوات الاتصال: يمكن للمشاركين الاتصال بالباحثة شعاع الجاسر، طالبة دكتوراة بجامعة كوفنتري.

حقوق المشاركين في هذه الدراسة: يحق لك أن تعرف طبيعة البحث الحالي ولديك الحرية في رفض المشاركة أو الانسحاب من الإجابة على الاستبانة أو من كامل الدراسة في أي وقت، آمل منك ألا تتردد في طرح أي سؤال في أي وقت عن طبيعة هذا المشروع البحثي، والأساليب المستخدمة فيه، علماً بأن جميع اقتراحاتك أو مخاوفك مهمة بالنسبة لي.

التوقيع بالموافقة: يرجى الإشارة إلى رغبتك واستعدادك للمشاركة في هذا المشروع البحثي من خلال توقيعك على نموذج الموافقة، حيث أن توقيعك يدل على إقرارك بالمعلومات المذكورة أعلاه.

Participant Information Sheet

(The Content Analysis Study)

Introduction: You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is being conducted to fulfil the doctoral degree requirements at Coventry University in the United Kingdom. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether you would like to take part. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. A copy of this form will be given to you.

Purpose: In this study, I aim to measure and provide detailed descriptive information about the reasons why Saudi university students use Facebook. I am seeking to fill a current knowledge gap by explaining why and how Saudi university students use Facebook, the amount of information they disclose on it, and the time they spent on Facebook. In this work, I will also take into account differences that might exist due to gender.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, I will ask for your permission to view your Facebook profile. You will be asked to add me as a friend on Facebook. Only data about your info page, your profile, your previous status updates on the wall, your number of friends, and the use of certain applications will be recorded. The data collected from your account will be matched with your answers in the questionnaire. Anything I view will remain completely confidential. I will remove you as a friend once I have collected this data. I will use neither your real name nor identifying information in preparing the research or in possible subsequent manuscripts prepared for publication in scholarly journals.

Risks of Participation: There are no identified risks associated with this research beyond those ordinarily faced in daily life. Some participants may consider the subject matter to be sensitive.

Benefits: There are no immediate benefits to participating in this research. The results of this research will contribute to a greater understanding and a larger body of research on social media usage.

Confidentiality: Participants' names will not be used within the research study and all data will remain confidential. To protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms will be used. The results may be published in a thesis, journal articles, and/or presentations at professional conferences. Any reporting that arises from this research study will not identify individuals, places, names or specific events.

Contacts: At any time, participants may contact the student researcher, Shuaa Aljasir, PhD student, Coventry University.

Participants Rights: As a participant in this research, you are entitled to know about the nature of the research. You are free to decline participation, and you are free to withdraw from the content analysis study or the whole research at any time. Feel free to ask any question at any time about the nature of this research project or the methods I am using. Your suggestions and concerns are important to me.

Signatures: Please indicate your willingness to participate in this research by providing your signature on the Informed Consent Form. Your signature indicates an acknowledgment of the terms described above.

Arabic Version of the Participant Information Sheet

بيانات الموافقة على المشاركة

(دراسة تحليل المضمون)

مقدمة: أدعوك للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية والتي تعد إحدى المتطلبات لنيل درجة الدكتوراة من جامعة كوفنتري في المملكة المتحدة، علماً بأن المعلومات الواردة في هذا النموذج وضعت لمساعدتك على تحديد مدى رغبتك في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، ففي حال الرغبة في المشاركة يتم استكمال نموذج الموافقة والتوقيع عليه وسيتم تقديم نسخة لك من هذا النموذج.

هدف الدراسة: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى قياس وتقديم معلومات وصفية تفصيلية حول استخدامات الفيس بوك من قبل طلاب الجامعات السعودية، والتعرف على أسباب استخدام طلاب الجامعات السعودية للفيس بوك وكيفية استخدامه، ومقدار المعلومات التي يفصحون عنها على الفيس بوك، والوقت الذي يقضونه في استخدامه، مع الأخذ في الاعتبار الاختلافات التي قد توجد بين الجنسين.

إجراءات الدراسة: إذا وافقت على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، سيطلب منك إضافة الباحثة كصديقة في حسابك على الفيس بوك، سيتم دراسة البيانات المتعلقة فقط بصفحة المعلومات وصفحة البروفايل، وكتاباتك السابقة على الحائط وعدد الأصدقاء وبعض التطبيقات على حسابك على الفيس بوك، علماً بأنه سيتم مقارنة المعلومات الموجودة في حسابك بإجاباتك على الاستبانة، يمكنك الامتناع عن المشاركة في أي وقت، علماً بأن كل البيانات التي سأطلع عليها ستحظى بالسرية التامة، كما أنني سأقوم بحذفك كصديق فور انتهائي من جمع البيانات، إضافة إلى أن اسمك أو المعلومات التي قد تشير إليك لن يتم التصريح بها في حال تم نشرها في النشرات أو المجلات العلمية باستخدام اسمك الحقيقي وقد يتم ذكر اسم مستعار عند الحاجة إلى ذلك.

مخاطر المشاركة في هذه الدراسة: لا توجد مخاطر ترتبط بهذه الدراسة أكبر من تلك التي تواجهها في الحياة اليومية، مع الإشارة إلى أن المخاطر تقديرية تختلف باختلاف نظرة المشاركين؛ فقد يرى البعض أن مضمون هذه الدراسة ذا طبيعة حساسة.

فوائد المشاركة في هذه الدراسة: لا يوجد أي فوائد فورية للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة، وستسهم نتائج هذه الدراسة في محاولة تقديم فهم أعمق لاستخدامات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

سرية البيانات: ستظل جميع البيانات سرية ولن يتم استخدام أسماء المشاركين في هذه الدراسة وذلك من أجل حماية هوية المشاركين، علماً بأنه سيتم استخدام أسماء مستعارة في حال الحاجة لاستخدامها في رسالة الدكتوراة أو نشرها في المقالات العلمية وتقديم عروض في المؤتمرات، ولن يتم تحديد هوية الأفراد، أو ذكر أسماء أو أحداث معينة.

قنوات الاتصال: يمكن للمشاركين الاتصال بالباحثة شعاع الجاسر، طالبة دكتوراة بجامعة كوفنتري.

حقوق المشاركين في هذه الدراسة: يحق لك أن تعرف طبيعة البحث الحالي ولديك الحرية في رفض المشاركة أو الانسحاب من دراسة المضمون أو من كامل الدراسة في أي وقت، آمل منك ألا تتردد في طرح أي سؤال في أي وقت عن طبيعة هذا المشروع البحثي، والأساليب المستخدمة فيه، علماً بأن جميع اقتراحاتك أو مخاوفك مهمة بالنسبة لي.

التوقيع بالموافقة: يرجى الإشارة إلى رغبتك واستعدادك للمشاركة في هذا المشروع البحثي من خلال توقيعك على نموذج الموافقة، حيث أن توقيعك يدل على إقرارك بالمعلومات المذكورة أعلاه.

Participant Information Sheet

The Interview Study

(The Pilot and Main Studies)

Introduction: You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is being conducted to fulfil the doctoral degree requirements at Coventry University in the United Kingdom. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether you would like to take part. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. A copy of this form will be given to you.

Purpose: In this study, I aim to measure and provide detailed descriptive information about the reasons why Saudi university students use Facebook. I am seeking to fill a current knowledge gap by explaining why and how Saudi university students use Facebook, the amount of information they disclose on it, and the time they spent on Facebook. In this work, I will also take into account differences that might exist due to gender.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed for no longer than an hour. I will audio-record the session with your permission and transcribe the discussion to ensure it is accurate. You will be asked about your uses of Facebook and its compatibility with Saudi culture, your self-disclosure behaviour and privacy concerns, and your usage of Facebook to discuss social and political issues. You may refuse to answer any question that you do not want to discuss during the session. At the end of the research, the record will be destroyed. When constructing the transcript, I may assign you a pseudonym, or you may choose one yourself. I will use neither your real name nor identifying information in preparing the study or in possible subsequent manuscripts prepared for publication in scholarly journals.

Risks of Participation: There are no identified risks associated with this research that are more than those ordinarily faced in daily life. Some participants may consider the subject matter to be sensitive.

Benefits: There are no immediate benefits to participating in this research. The results of this research will contribute to a greater understanding and a larger research body on social media usage.

Confidentiality: Participants' names will not be used within the research study and all data will remain confidential. To protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms will be used. The results may be published in a thesis, journal articles, and/or presentations at professional conferences. Any reporting that arises from this research study will not identify individuals, places, names or specific events.

Contacts: At any time, participants may contact the researcher, Shuaa Aljasir, PhD student, Coventry University.

Participants Rights: As a participant in this research, you are entitled to know about the nature of the research. You are free to decline participation, and you are free to withdraw from the interview study or the whole research at any time. Feel free to ask any question at any time about the nature of this research project or the methods I am using. Your suggestions and concerns are important to me.

Signatures: Please indicate your willingness to participate in this research by providing your signature on the Informed Consent Form. Your signature indicates an acknowledgment of the terms described above.

Arabic Version of the Participant Information Sheet

بيانات الموافقة على المشاركة

(المقابلة)

مقدمة: أدعوك للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية والتي تعد إحدى المتطلبات لنيل درجة الدكتوراة من جامعة كوفنتري في المملكة المتحدة، علماً بأن المعلومات الواردة في هذا النموذج وضعت لمساعدتك على تحديد مدى رغبتك في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، ففي حال الرغبة في المشاركة يتم استكمال نموذج الموافقة والتوقيع عليه وسيتم تقديم نسخة لك من هذا النموذج.

هدف الدراسة: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى قياس وتقديم معلومات وصفية تفصيلية حول استخدامات الفيس بوك من قبل طلاب الجامعات السعودية، والتعرف على أسباب استخدام طلاب الجامعات السعودية للفيس بوك وكيفية استخدامه، ومقدار المعلومات التي يفصحون عنها على الفيس بوك، والوقت الذي يقضونه في استخدامه، مع الأخذ في الاعتبار الاختلافات التي قد توجد بين الجنسين.

إجراءات الدراسة: إذا وافقت على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، فإنني آمل منك الموافقة على إجراء مقابلة والتي تستغرق مدة لا تزيد عن الساعة؛ حيث سيتم تسجيل مجريات اللقاء لتحري الدقة في توثيق البيانات والمعلومات حول الاستخدامات الخاصة بك على الفيس بوك وملائمة استخدامه للثقافة السعودية، مستوى افصاحك عن معلوماتك الشخصية والخصوصية، واستخدامك للفيس بوك لمناقشة الأحداث الاجتماعية والسياسية، ويمكنك الامتناع عن الإجابة على أي سؤال في أي وقت أثناء هذه المشاركة، علماً بأنه سيتم إتلاف التسجيل الصوتي حين الانتهاء من الدراسة، إضافة إلى أن اسمك أو المعلومات التي قد تشير إليك لن يتم التصريح بها في حال تم نشرها في رسالة الدكتوراة أو المجلات العلمية باستخدام اسمك الحقيقي وقد يتم ذكر اسم مستعار عند الحاجة إلى ذلك.

مخاطر المشاركة في هذه الدراسة: لا توجد مخاطر ترتبط بهذه الدراسة أكبر من تلك التي تواجهها في الحياة اليومية، مع الإشارة إلى أن المخاطر تقديرية تختلف باختلاف نظرة المشاركين؛ فقد يرى البعض أن مضمون هذه الدراسة ذا طبيعة حساسة.

فوائد المشاركة في هذه الدراسة: لا يوجد أي فوائد فورية للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة، وستسهم نتائج هذه الدراسة في محاولة تقديم فهم أعمق لاستخدامات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

سرية البيانات: ستظل جميع البيانات سرية ولن يتم استخدام أسماء المشاركين في هذه الدراسة وذلك من أجل حماية هوية المشاركين، علماً بأنه سيتم استخدام أسماء مستعارة في حال الحاجة لاستخدامها في رسالة الدكتوراة أو نشرها في المقالات العلمية وتقديم عروض في المؤتمرات، ولن يتم تحديد هوية الأفراد، أو ذكر أسماء أو أحداث معينة.

قنوات الاتصال: يمكن للمشاركين الاتصال بالباحثة شعاع الجاسر، طالبة دكتوراة بجامعة كوفنتري.

حقوق المشاركين في هذه الدراسة: يحق لك أن تعرف طبيعة البحث الحالي ولديك الحرية في رفض المشاركة أو الانسحاب من المقابلة أو من كامل الدراسة في أي وقت، آمل منك ألا تتردد في طرح أي سؤال في أي وقت عن طبيعة هذا المشروع البحثي، والأساليب المستخدمة فيه، علماً بأن جميع اقتراحاتك أو مخاوفك مهمة بالنسبة لي.

التوقيع بالموافقة: يرجى الإشارة إلى رغبتك واستعدادك للمشاركة في هذا المشروع البحثي من خلال توقيعك على نموذج الموافقة، حيث أن توقيعك يدل على إقرارك بالمعلومات المذكورة أعلاه.

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

(English and Arabic Versions)

Informed Consent Form

Saudi University Students in Facebook Era

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason	☐
3. I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in confidence	☐
4. I understand that I also have the right to change my mind about participating in the study for a short period after the study has concluded	☐
5. I agree to record my words and I agree to the use of anonymised quotes as part of the research project	☐
6. I agree to take part in the research project	☐

Name of participant: .....

Signature of participant: .....

Date: .....

Name of Researcher:.....

Signature of researcher: .....

Date:.....

Arabic Version of the Informed Consent Form
نموذج الموافقة على المشاركة

طلاب الجامعات السعوديين في زمن الفيس بوك

العبارة	
1. أؤكد أنني قد قرأت وفهمت ورقة بيانات المشاركة في الدراسة المشار إليها أعلاه وأن من حقي الاستفسار عن أي معلومة تتعلق بهذه الدراسة	
2. أعلم بأن مشاركتي طوعية ولدي الحرية في الانسحاب في أي وقت دون إبداء أي أسباب	
3. أثق أن جميع المعلومات التي أقدمها يتم التعامل معها بسرية تامة	
4. أعلم بأن لدي الحق في تغيير رأيي حول المشاركة في هذه الدراسة بعد فترة قصيرة من مشاركتي	
5. أوافق على تسجيل المعلومات التي أذكرها واستخدام اقتباسات منها مجهولة المصدر كجزء من المشروع البحثي لهذه الدراسة	
6. أوافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة	

اسم المشارك/ـة:

توقيع المشارك/ـة:

التاريخ:

اسم الباحثة:

توقيع الباحثة:

التاريخ:

Appendix E

Final Draft of Facebook Usage and Gratifications Questionnaire

(English and Arabic Versions)

Symbol:

Age:

Facebook Usage and Gratifications Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire. I would like to ask you a number of questions about your Facebook usage for my research study. Remember that your participation is voluntary. All of the information that you provide will be strictly confidential and for the purpose of research only.

Section 1: Background Information

a. What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female

b. What is your major?

1. Science
2. Humanities & Administration

c. How would you describe your current living status?

1. With parents
2. By self
3. With roommates
4. With a spouse

d. What is your current relationship status?

1. Single
2. Engaged
3. Married
4. Divorced

e. Where do you live?

1. House
2. Apartment
3. Other (please specify):

f. What is your father's highest level of educational attainment?

1. Uneducated
2. Elementary school degree
3. Middle school degree
4. High school degree
5. Bachelor’s degree
6. Other (please specify):

g. What is your mother's highest level of educational attainment?

1. Uneducated
2. Elementary school degree
3. Middle school degree
4. High school degree
5. Bachelor’s degree
6. Other (please specify):

h. Approximately what is your parents' monthly income?

1. SA 1,500 or less
2. SA 1,501 -3,999
3. SA 4,000 -6,999
4. SA 7,000-9,999
5. SA 10,000-14,999
6. SA15, 000-20,000
7. SA 20,000 >
8. Do not know

Section 2: Facebook Usage

a. Approximately, how many years of experience do you have using Facebook?

1. < 1year
2. 1 - 2 years
3. 2.1 - 3 years
4. 3 years >

b. Based on the diary you kept, approximately how many hours a day on average do you actively spend on Facebook?

(_____) hours and (_____) minutes

c. How many Facebook friends do you have in your account?

1. 50 or fewer
2. 51-250
3. 251-500
4. 500 >

d. How do you access Facebook? (Please circle all that apply)

1. Shared computer
2. Personal computer
3. Personal laptop
4. Smart phone
5. Tablet

e. Where do you prefer to access Facebook? (Please circle all that apply)

1. Home
2. University
3. Internet café
4. Friends' home
5. Others (please specify):

f. What kind of name(s) do you display as your name on Facebook?

1. Real full name
2. Nickname

G. What kind of photo(s) do you choose as your profile photo on Facebook?

1. Real photo
2. Symbolic photo

Section 3: Facebook Gratifications

4.1. How often do you obtain the following gratifications from using Facebook? (Please tick the appropriate column)

Gratifications on Facebook	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Usually	Always
Share my place right now					
Keep in touch with high school friends					
Communicate with neighbourhood friends					
Reconnect with childhood friends					
Share my achievements					
Share my celebrations					
Maintain ongoing relationships with university friends					
Join academic groups					
Talk about my emotional problems					
Sympathise					
Let my feelings out					
Ask questions regarding social issues					
Join a social cause					
Raise attention regarding a social issue					
For social criticism					
Share my attended events					
Talk about my study					
Sell things					
Buy things					
Enjoy funny apps					
Play games					
Share that I am on vacation					
Keep in touch with family members					
Discuss global political events					
Share romantic experiences					
Maintain romantic relationship					
Develop romantic relationship					
Explore Facebook profiles that are not in my list					
Find contact information for people I met offline					
Look at shopping ads					
Find out more about someone I heard about					
Find out more about popular figures					
Find out what someone looks like					
Reveal my opinions regarding local political events					
Share what I am doing right now					
Document social issues					
Share my recent activities					
Discuss social issues					
Interact with my extended family					
Learn a foreign language					

The researcher will conduct a content analysis study of the disclosed information and status updates generated on Facebook. Would you like to participate in the content analysis study? If yes, could you please write your email below so that the researcher can send you a friend request on Facebook?

_____

End of the Questionnaire

Thank you again for your assistance!

Shuaa Aljasir

العمر:

الرمز:

Arabic Version of the Questionnaire

استبانة استخدامات وإشباعات طلاب الجامعة السعوديين للفيس بوك

أتقدم بالشكر الجزيل لك لمنحك جزءاً من وقتك الثمين للإجابة على أسئلة هذه الاستبانة، حيث إنني أريد أن أضع بين يديك عدداً من الأسئلة حول استخدامات الفيس بوك لغرض البحث العلمي، إن مشاركتك في تعبئة هذه الاستبانة هو عمل تطوعي في سبيل إثراء البحث العلمي، مع الحرص والتأكيد على أن جميع المعلومات التي تكتب في هذه الاستبانة تخضع للسرية التامة وهي للأغراض العلمية فقط.

القسم الأول: معلومات أولية

أ. حدد جنسك؟

1- ذكر
2- أنثى

ب. ما هو تخصصك الجامعي؟

1- علمي
2- إداري وإنساني

ت. مع من تسكن؟

1- مع الوالدين
2- بمفردك
3- مع صديق
4- مع زوجـ / ـة

ث. ما هي حالتك الاجتماعية؟

1- أعزب/عزباء
2- مرتبطـ/ـة
3- متزوجـ/ـة
4- مطلقـ/ـة

ج. ما هو نوع سكنك؟

1- بيت
2- شقة
3- أخرى (برجاء تحديدها):

ح. ما هو أعلى مستوى تعليمي حققه والدك؟

1- غير متعلم
2- المرحلة الابتدائية
3- المرحلة المتوسطة
4- المرحلة الثانوية
5- المرحلة الجامعية
6- أخرى (برجاء تحديدها):

خ. ما هو أعلى مستوى تعليمي حققته والدتك؟

1- غير متعلم
2- المرحلة الابتدائية
3- المرحلة المتوسطة
4- المرحلة الثانوية
5- المرحلة الجامعية
6- أخرى (برجاء تحديدها):

د. ما هو الدخل الشهري التقريبي للوالدين؟

1- 1500 ريال سعودي فأقل
2- 3999-1501 ريال سعودي
3- 6999-4000 ريال سعودي
4- 9999-7000 ريال سعودي
5- 14999-10000 ريال سعودي
6- 20000-15000 ريال سعودي
7- 20000 ريال سعودي <
8- لا أعرف

القسم الثاني: استخدام الفيس بوك

أ. ما هي خبرتك في استخدام الفيس بوك؟

1- < سنة
2- من سنة إلى سنتين
3- من سنتين وشهر إلى 3 سنوات
4- 3 سنوات <

ب. بناء على المذكرة التي قمت بتعبئتها، كم معدل عدد الساعات التي تقضيها يوميا في الاستخدام النشط للفيس بوك

(_____) ساعة و(_____) دقيقة

ت. كم عدد الأصدقاء المضافون لديك؟

1- 50 فأقل
2- 51 إلى 250
3- 251 إلى 500
4- 500 <

ث. ما هو الجهاز الذي تستخدم من خلاله الفيس بوك؟: (برجاء تظليل جميع الإجابات المطابقة)

1- كمبيوتر مكتبي مشترك
2- كمبيوتر مكتبي خاص
3- لاب توب
4- جوال ذكي
5- تابلت

ج. أين تستخدم الفيس بوك؟ (برجاء تظليل جميع الإجابات المطابقة)

1- البيت
2- الجامعة
3- مقهى انترنت
4- منزل صديق
5- أخرى (برجاء تحديدها)

ح. ما هو الاسم الذي تستخدمه على الفيس بوك؟

1- الاسم الحقيقي
2- اسم رمزي

خ. ما نوع الصورة التي تضعها في صفحتك الشخصية؟

1- صورة شخصية
2- صورة رمزية

القسم الرابع: إشباعات الفيس بوك

ماهي الإشباعات المتحققة من استخدامك للفيس بوك؟ (برجاء وضع علامة صح في الخانة المناسبة)

م	استخدام الفيس بوك	أبدا	نادرا	أحيانا	غالبا	دائما
1	إعلام الآخرين بمكاني الحالي					
2	التواصل مع أصدقائي من المرحلة الثانوية					
3	التواصل مع أصدقائي من الجيران					
4	إعادة التواصل مع أصدقاء الطفولة					
5	مشاركة الآخرين إنجازاتي					
6	مشاركة الآخرين احتفالاتي					
7	المحافظة على صداقاتي مع زملاء الجامعة					
8	الانضمام إلى مجموعات دراسية					
9	التعبير عن مشكلاتي العاطفية					
10	التعاطف مع الآخرين					
11	التعبير عن مشاعري					
12	طرح أسئلة متعلقة بقضايا اجتماعية					
13	المشاركة في حملات تخص قضايا اجتماعية					
14	نشر الوعي فيما يتعلق بقضية اجتماعية					
15	النقد الاجتماعي					
16	مشاركة المناسبات التي حضرتها					
17	التحدث عن دراستي					
18	بيع الأغراض					
19	شراء الأغراض					
20	الاستمتاع بالتطبيقات المسلية					
21	لعب الألعاب					
22	مشاركة الآخرين بأنني في إجازة					
23	البقاء على اتصال مع أفراد عائلتي					
24	مناقشة الأحداث السياسية العالمية					
25	مشاركة خبراتي العاطفية					
26	المحافظ على علاقاتي العاطفية					
27	تطوير علاقاتي العاطفية					
28	الاطلاع على صفحات أشخاص غير مضافين كأصدقاء لي					
29	البحث عن وسيلة اتصال بأشخاص قابلتهم في الواقع					
30	الاطلاع على الإعلانات					
31	التعرف أكثر على شخص سمعت عنه					
32	التعرف أكثر على الشخصيات المشهورة					
33	البحث عن صورة شخص ما					
34	إبداء رأي تجاه القضايا السياسية المحلية					
35	مشاركة الآخرين ماذا أفعل الآن					
36	توثيق الأحداث الاجتماعية					
37	مشاركة نشاطاتي الحديثة					
38	مناقشة المواضيع الاجتماعية					
39	التواصل مع أقربائي					
40	تعلم لغة أجنبية					

ستقوم الباحثة لاحقاً بإجراء دراسة لتحليل مضمون صفحات الفيس بوك مع التركيز على المشاركات التي يقوم بكتابتها المستخدمين والمعلومات التي يفصحون عنها في صفحتهم الشخصية.

هل ترغب في المشاركة في دراسة تحليل المضمون ؟

إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، آمل منك التكرم بكتابة بريدك الإلكتروني أدناه حتى تستطيع الباحثة إرسال طلب صداقة لك عبر الفيس بوك؟

_____

انتهت الاستبانة ، شكراً لك مجدداً لجهدك ووقتك ،،،

الباحثة

شعاع الجاسر

Appendix F

Facebook Profile Checklist [1]

[1] Nosko, A., Wood, E., and Molema, S. (2010) 'All about Me: Disclosure in Online Social Networking Profiles: The Case of FACEBOOK'. *Computers in Human Behavior* 26, 406–418

No.	Variable name	Variable description	√
1.	**Profile picture**	The main photo seen at the top of the profile (e.g., picture of the user, friends, animals, etc. . .)	
	Self		
	Activity		
	Friends		
	Relationship partner		
	Family		
	Work		
	School		
	Animal(s)		
	Symbolic picture		
2.	**Gender**	Sex (e.g., male, female)	
	Male		
	Female		
3.	**Birthday**	The day or month the user was born	
4.	**Birth year**	The year the user was born	
5.	**Email address**	The email address of the user	
6.	**Address**	The home address of the user	
7.	**Current city**	The city or town where the user lives	
8.	**Postal code**	The postal code of the user	
9.	**Relationship status**	Whether the user is: single, in a relationship, engaged, married, 'it's complicated', or in an open relationship	
	single		
	in a relationship		
	engaged		
	married		
	it's complicated		
	in an open relationship		
10.	**News feed**	Updated list of the user's Facebook activity (e.g., events the user are attending, friends the user have added, pictures that have been posted by the user etc. . .)	
11.	**University**	The university/college the user attended or is currently attending	
12.	**High school**	The high school the user attended	
13.	**Employer**	The user's current or former job	
14.	**Job Position**	The user's current or former job duties	
15.	**Viewable Wall**	A bulletin board where users post messages for each other to see	
16.	**Photo album(s)**	Online photo albums where users can upload selected pictures to their profile	
17.	**Tagged photos**	Photos that have been uploaded by another user in which the profile user has been identified or labelled	
18.	**Self-selected photos**	Photos that have been uploaded by the profile users themselves	
19.	**Friends list**	All the friends on the user's friend list	
20.	**Send a gift**	Whether a gift can be sent to the user without prior permission	
21.	**Private message**	Whether a message can be sent to the user without prior permission	
22.	**Poking**	Whether a poke (like a virtual nudge) can be sent to the user without prior permission	

No.	Variable name	Variable description	√
23.	**Gender of interest**	Whether the user is interested in men or women	
	Men		
	Women		
24.	**Activities**	Things the user likes to do (e.g., sports, hobbies, leisure activities…)	
25.	**Political views**	The user's political stance (e.g., liberal, conservative etc...)	
26.	**Religious views**	The user's religious stance	
27.	**Favourite music**	Bands/songs or genres of music the user likes	
28.	**Favourite books**	Favourite books the user has read	
29.	**Favourite shows**	TV shows/genres of shows the user likes	
30.	**Favourite movies**	Movies the user likes to watch	
31.	**Favourite quotes**	Quotations the user enjoys	
32.	**Interests**	The user's personal interests (e.g., painting, photography)	
33.	**Personal description**	Personal details about the user (e.g., the user loves hot chocolate and is the eldest of 3 children)	
34.	**Personal photos**	Photos of the user and others uploaded by the user	

Appendix G

The Semi-Structured Interview Questions

(English and Arabic Versions)

Symbol:

Gender of the interviewee:

Age of the interviewee:

Major of the interviewee:

Date:

Time:

Interview length:

Interview Questions

Compatibility of Using Facebook with Saudi Culture:

1. Have you ever thought about deleting or deactivating your Facebook accounts? If yes, why? If no, why not?
2. Do you think there is a need to develop a Saudi social media platform instead of using Facebook? If yes, why? If no, why not?
3. In what ways is Facebook compatible or not compatible with Saudi culture? Why?
4. From the cards, what are the positive aspects you like most about Facebook's design? Why?
5. From the cards, what are the negative aspects you dislike most about Facebook's design? Why?

Disclosure and Privacy on Facebook:

6. Do you disclose your personal information on Facebook? If yes, why? If not, why not?
7. Do you worry about your privacy when disclosing your information on your Facebook profile? If yes, how? Why? If no, why not?

Discussing Social and Political Issues on Facebook:

8. Do you freely express your thoughts on Facebook about social issues? Political issues? If yes, in what ways? If no, in what ways?
9. Have you been engaged in any discussion about social issues through Facebook? If yes, why and what is/was it for? If no, why not?
10. Have you been engaged in any discussion about political issues through Facebook? If yes, why and what is/was it for? If no, why not?

Arabic Version of the Interview Questions

رمز المقابلة:

الجنس:

العمر:

التخصص:

التاريخ:

الوقت:

مدة المقابلة:

أسئلة المقابلة:

استخدام الفيس بوك وملائمته للثقافة السعودية:

1. هل فكرت يوماً في إلغاء أو تعطيل حسابك على الفيس بوك؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، ما هو السبب؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بلا، ما هو السبب؟
2. هل تعتقد أن هنالك حاجة لبناء شبكة اتواصل اجتماعية سعودية لاستخدامها بدلاً من الفيس بوك؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، ما هو السبب؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بلا، ما هو السبب؟
3. كيف يتوافق أو لا يتوافق استخدام الفيس بوك مع الثقافة السعودية؟ لماذا؟
4. من هذه البطاقات، ماهي الخصائص التي تعجبك في تصميم الفيس بوك؟ لماذا؟
5. من هذه البطاقات، ماهي الخصائص التي لا تعجبك في تصميم الفيس بوك؟ لماذا؟

الخصوصية والإفصاح على الفيس بوك:

6. هل تفصح عن معلوماتك الشخصية على حسابك في الفيس بوك؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، ما هو السبب؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بلا، ما هو السبب؟
7. هل تحرص على الحفاظ على خصوصيتك حينما تقوم بإفشاء معلوماتك الشخصية على الفيس بوك؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، كيف؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بلا، ما هو السبب؟

استخدام الفيس بوك لمناقشة الموضوعات الاجتماعية والسياسية:

8. هل تعبر بحرية عن آرائك في الفيس بوك فيما يتعلق بالموضوعات السياسية؟ الموضوعات الاجتماعية؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، كيف؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بلا، كيف؟
9. هل قمت بمناقشة موضوعات الاجتماعية على الفيس بوك؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، ما هو السبب؟ عن ماذا كانت؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بلا، ما هو السبب؟
10. هل قمت بمناقشة موضوعات سياسية على الفيس بوك؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، ما هو السبب؟ عن ماذا كانت؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بلا، ما هو السبب؟

Appendix H

Microsoft Product Reaction Cards

Toolkit[2]

(English and Arabic Versions)

[2] Microsoft (2002) *Measuring Desirability: New Methods for Measuring Desirability in the Usability Lab Setting*. [online] available from <http://www.microsoft.com/usability/UEPostings/DesirabilityToolkit.doc> [24 December 2011]

The complete set of the 118 Cards				
Accessible	Creative	Fast	Meaningful	Slow
Advanced	Customizable	Flexible	Motivating	Sophisticated
Annoying	Cutting edge	Fragile	Not Secure	Stable
Appealing	Dated	Fresh	Not Valuable	Sterile
Approachable	Desirable	Friendly	Novel	Stimulating
Attractive	Difficult	Frustrating	Old	Straight Forward
Boring	Disconnected	Fun	Optimistic	Stressful
Business-like	Disruptive	Gets in the way	Ordinary	Time-consuming
Busy	Distracting	Hard to Use	Organized	Time-Saving
Calm	Dull	Helpful	Overbearing	Too Technical
Clean	Easy to use	High quality	Overwhelming	Trustworthy
Clear	Effective	Impersonal	Patronizing	Unapproachable
Collaborative	Efficient	Impressive	Personal	Unattractive
Comfortable	Effortless	Incomprehensible	Poor quality	Uncontrollable
Compatible	Empowering	Inconsistent	Powerful	Unconventional
Compelling	Energetic	Ineffective	Predictable	Understandable
Complex	Engaging	Innovative	Professional	Undesirable
Comprehensive	Entertaining	Inspiring	Relevant	Unpredictable
Confident	Enthusiastic	Integrated	Reliable	Unrefined
Confusing	Essential	Intimidating	Responsive	Usable
Connected	Exceptional	Intuitive	Rigid	Useful
Consistent	Exciting	Inviting	Satisfying	Valuable
Controllable	Expected	Irrelevant	Secure	
Convenient	Familiar	Low Maintenance	Simplistic	

Arabic Version of the Cards

القائمة الكاملة ل 118 كرت				
في المتناول	مبدع	سريع	ذو معنى	بطيء
متقدم	يمكن تخصيصه	مرن	محفز	معقد
مزعج	متطور	سريع الزوال	غير آمن	ثابت
مغري	قديم	حديث	لا قيمة له	معقم
يمكن الوصول إليه	مرغوب فيه	ودي	جديد	محفز
جذاب	صعب	محبط	قديم	متقدم
مضجر	غير متصل	مفرح	متفائل	ضاغط
عملي	مخرب	وجدته أمامي	عادي	مضيع للوقت
مشغول	مشتت	يصعب استخدامه	منظم	موفر للوقت
هادئ	ممل	مفيد	يصعب تحمله	جداً تقني
نظيف	سهل الاستخدام	جودته عالية	عاطفي	جدير بالثقة
واضح	فعال	غير شخصي	مراعي	لا يمكن الوصول إليه
تعاوني	كفء	مثير للإعجاب	شخصي	غير جذاب
مريح	لا يتطلب جهد	غامض	نوعية رديئة	لا يمكن السيطرة عليه
ملائم	يمنح سلطة	غير متناسق	قوي	غير تقليدي
قهري	نشيط	غير فعال	قابل للتنبؤ	مفهوم
معقد	يدعو للاندماج	مبتكر	محترف	غير مرغوب فيه
واضح	مسل	ملهم	ذا صلة	لا يمكن التنبؤ به
واثق	محمس	مندمج	موثوق	غير مكرر
مربك	أساسي	يدعو للحذر	متجاوب	صالح للاستخدام
متصل	استثنائي	حدسي	صارم	مفيد
متسق	مثير	يدعو للانضمام	مشبع	قيم
يمكن السيطرة عليه	متوقع	ليس له صلة	آمن	
مناسب	مألوف	صيانته ضعيفة	بسيط	