



# THE PRIORITIES OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES AS A SOURCE IN SHAPING CULTURAL AWARENESS AMONG THE YOUTH SEGMENT A FIELD STUDY FOR THE STUDENTS OF WASIT UNIVERSITY

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<p><b>Received:</b> 2<sup>th</sup> February 2021</p> <p><b>Accepted:</b> 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022</p> <p><b>Published:</b> 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022</p>	<p>The role and importance of the various social media has evolved and its importance has increased in shaping the cultural awareness of young people through the ideas and information presented in their media content. It has the ability to formulate public opinion and increase personal knowledge among young people, which the current researcher seeks to identify the role of social media sites in shaping cultural awareness among young people.</p> <p>The research problem of the current study was: Is there an impact of social media sites represented by (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter) on the formation of cultural awareness among the youth segment in society and the role of these sites in raising contemporary issues of interest to the youth segment and influencing the cultural behaviors of young people</p> <p>To achieve the objectives of the research, the researcher followed the descriptive approach of the survey study with the aim of identifying the relationship between the different variables of research represented in (social media sites and their role in shaping cultural awareness among the youth segment).</p> <p>The research reached several results, including that Facebook is one of the social media sites most viewed and influenced by the public, and the main purpose of using social media sites is for educational and entertainment purposes as well, and that social media sites increase the cultural awareness of the individual through the content of media in it, and that social media sites raise issues of importance to the youth segment, so it pushes that segment to follow them</p> <p>The researcher recommended governmental regulators to block websites that negatively affect the behavior and personality of young people, and to educate young people about using social media sites in different ways.</p>

**Keywords:** Facebook, YouTube, Twitter

## INTRODUCTION

Technological and cognitive progress, especially the rapid development in the field of communication, has made the world a mini-village in which information is transmitted within a matter of seconds. This made the means of communication of great importance in the transmission and exchange of information, ideas and opinions that affect the formulation and formation of public opinion through the different ideas and information presented.

The social network has become the main part on which life depends, it has become a world without limits, it has become the preoccupation of people, and it has become the preferred place for expressing the opinions, ideas and aspirations that people aspire to.

Social networks are a social media phenomenon that has imposed itself on the reality of societies and peoples. As these networks have a positive impact that is beneficial and negative effects that are harmful to the individual or society, which requires us to be aware and culture in this new social media.

Social media sites have transcended spatial and temporal barriers and made the whole world one people. Where anyone can reach anywhere and any known and important figure and start his opinion, advice and complaint that he would not have reached easily.

This technology came with its new traditions and habits, and its strange mechanism in our societies, as our families began to communicate through these modern networks and applications, and people felt that they see each other every day in this virtual world.

Social media sites have become of great importance in our societies and are stimulating in the fields of creativity and a strong competitor for the dissemination of culture and knowledge among members of society through what is published of information and media content that helps to increase the amount of knowledge among members of society.

### METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH

**First:** The research problem and its questions: The study problem focused on whether there is an impact of social media sites represented by Facebook (YouTube, Twitter, on the formation of cultural awareness among the youth segment in society and the role of these sites in raising contemporary issues of interest to the youth segment and influencing the cultural behaviors of Young people, and the problem of our research can be identified by answering the main question of this problem, which is (what is the role of social media sites in shaping cultural awareness among the youth segment), and we can summarize the problem of our research by the following questions:

- 1- What are the motives for young people to use social media sites?
- 2- What is the role of social sites in spreading cultural awareness among the youth segment?
- 3- Do social media sites contribute to raising contemporary issues of interest to the youth segment?
- 4- What is the cultural content broadcast by social media sites towards young people?
- 5- What is the extent of youth reliance on social media sites as a source of cultural information?

**Second:** The research hypothesis: To address this problem and answer the sub-questions from it, we formulate the following hypotheses:

- 1- The interaction of young people with social media sites leads to improving cultural and social awareness.
- 2- Social media sites affect young people according to their use.

**Third:** The importance of the research: The importance of the study deals with a very important topic, which is the role of social media sites in shaping cultural awareness among the youth segment. The importance of the study is as follows:

- 1- The importance of the contemporary information provided by social media sites that increases the amount of knowledge among the youth segment, as it is possible to create new forums for dialogue, expression of opinions and cultural exchange.
- 2- Social media sites represent the new media in which criticism and analysis are practiced and generate ideas and methods that are important in shaping the cultural awareness of the individual.
- 3- The growing importance of cultural issues that shape the positive behavior of the individual.

**Fourth:** Research Objectives: The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- Knowing the motives for young people's use of social media sites.
- 2- Uncovering the role of social sites in spreading cultural awareness among the youth segment.
- 3- Knowing the extent to which social media sites contribute to raising contemporary issues of interest to the youth segment?
- 4- Knowing the cultural content broadcast by social media sites towards young people.
- 5- Knowing the extent of university students' reliance on social media sites as a source of cultural information.

**Fifth:** Research Methodology: The researcher followed the descriptive approach in the appropriate survey to achieve the objectives of the research in order to identify the relationship between the different variables of the study represented in (social media sites and their role in shaping cultural awareness among the youth segment).

**Sixth:** The research community and its fields: The researcher relied on the systematic random sampling method in choosing the type of non-probability samples that are easy to access so that they represent the research community in an appropriate manner to achieve the objectives of the research. The sample included (100) samples from Wasit University students and were distributed on 17/1/2022.

### THEORETICAL CONCEPTS OF RESEARCH

**First, social media sites:** are services available on the web that allow individuals and groups to build public personal relationships through specific systems. It is possible to create a list for those who wish to participate in their communication and see lists of those who contact them, and lists made by others through the system<sup>1</sup>.

It is also known as a very effective network of websites in monetizing social life between a group of acquaintances and friends. It also enables linking individuals and groups by communicating with each other, enabling them to communicate visual and audio and exchanging images from the possibilities that strengthen the social relationship between them<sup>2</sup>.

#### The most prominent types of social media sites

**Facebook:** Facebook is one of the most famous and oldest social networking sites, where a member of this site can set up his own page that contains an overview of his life, friends and interests and introduces people to himself

through it and gets to know others as well. Facebook is one of the most important social media sites, and it does not represent a social forum only, but has become an easy technological base with which anyone can do whatever he wants<sup>3</sup>.

The dictionary of media and communication defines Facebook as “a social media site that was founded in 2004 and allows the publication of private pages and profiles. It was initially developed to serve university students, faculty and staff, but expanded to include all people<sup>4</sup>.

**1- Twitter:** It is a social media site that is no less important than Facebook and is considered the biggest competitor to it. It provides a mini service for users of the tweets, enabling them to send an update to them with a message of no more than (140) characters per message to their own page and visitors can Read it and write responses to it, and Twitter is characterized by the speed of delivery of information, especially news<sup>5</sup>.

**2- YouTube:** It is a well-known video-sharing website that allows participants to upload, watch and share videos for free. This site was founded on February 14, 2005 by three ex-employees of PayPal in the United States of America, and this site uses Adobe Flash technology In displaying animated clips, YouTube is based on an initial idea: Broadcast for yourself or broadcast to yourself: Yourself Broadcast This logo is placed on the first page and is considered an important site on the Internet for free video sharing<sup>6</sup>.

**Second: Cultural awareness:** a term related to man’s social nature, its development, and his creative and scientific activities since time immemorial. Awareness develops through the human’s practice of his social life, the way he interacts with those around him, and the extent of his knowledge and dealing with the nature of the things that surround him. What distinguishes the individual’s self-awareness is his ability to make any decision and his knowledge in his private and public behaviour<sup>7</sup>.

**Third: Youth:** a term given to an age stage that is the peak of strength, vitality and activity among all stages of life in humans, where the female and male who go through the youth stage are called in the singular form a young woman for a female and a young man for a male, and as for the plural youth for both sexes. The stage of youth is one of the most important stages that an individual goes through, as the human personality begins to crystallize. The features of this personality mature through what the individual acquires of skills and knowledge, through physical and mental maturity, and social relations that the individual can formulate within his free choice<sup>8</sup>.

**PRACTICAL STUDY OF RESEARCH**

The priorities of social media sites as a source in shaping cultural awareness among the youth segment

The researcher distributed (hundred) questionnaires in a systematic random sampling manner to the research community targeted in this study, who are (Wasit University students). The answers varied by the respondents due to the demographic factors, viewing data, exposure, and the uses of new media, social media. The results of the practical study of the research came According to the following:

**FIRST, DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS**

**Table No. (1) shows the gender of the respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Males	65	%65
Females	35	%35
Total	100	%100

We note from Table No. (1) that the male category ranked first with a rate of 65%, and the female category ranked second with a rate of 35%.

**Table No. (2) shows the respondents' domiciles**

resident	Frequency	Percentage
urban	70	%70
rural	30	%30
Total	100	%100

We note from Table No. (2) that the urban category ranked first at 70%, while the rural category ranked second with 30%

**Table No. (3) shows the age groups of young respondents**

age categories	Frequency	Percentage
(18-26 years old)	60	%60

)35_27)	30	%30
) 41_35)	10	%10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%100</b>

We note from Table No. (3) that the youth category (18-26 years) ranked first at 60%, while the youth category (27-35) ranked second at 30%, and the youth category (35-41) ranked third with 10%

**Table No. (4) shows the social status of the sample members**

Social status	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Unmarried</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>%70</b>
<b>Married</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>%27</b>
<b>Divorced</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>%3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%100</b>

We note from Table No. (4) that the single category ranked first with a rate of 70%, while the married category ranked second with a rate of 27%, and the divorced category ranked third with a rate of 3%

Second: practical questions for the study

Table No. (5) shows the sample's answers about Do you use social media sites?

Choices	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Yes</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>%65</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>%15</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>%10</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%100</b>

We note from Table No. (5) that the Yes category ranked first at 65%, while the No. category ranked second at 25%, and the category sometimes ranked third at 10%.

**Table No. (6) shows the sample's answers about which social media sites are used.**

Choices	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Facebook</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>%65</b>
<b>YouTube</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>%20</b>
<b>Twitter</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>%15</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%100</b>

We note from Table No. (6) that the Facebook category came first with 55%, while the YouTube category came second with 35%, and the Twitter category came third with 10%.

**Table No. (7) shows the sample's answers about the number of hours spent using social media sites**

<b>Choices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>hour _ two hours</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>%35</b>
<b>two hours- three hours</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>%45</b>
<b>Three hours - more than that</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>%20</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%100</b>

We note from Table No. (7) that the category (one hour - three hours) ranked first at 45%, while the category (two hours - three hours) ranked second with 35%, and the category (three hours - more) ranked third with 20 %

**Table No. (8) shows the motives for the sample members' use of social media sites**

<b>Choices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>educational</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>%35</b>
<b>entertainment</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>%45</b>
<b>Follow news and information</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>%20</b>
<b>Communicating with friends and relatives</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>%15</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%100</b>

We note through Table No. (8) that the educational category ranked first at 50%, while the follow-up to news and information category ranked second with 25%, the communication with friends and relatives category ranked third with 15%, and the entertainment category ranked fourth with 10%

**Table No. (9) shows the answers of the sample members to the question, Do you think that social networks increase the cultural awareness of the youth segment?**

<b>Choices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>%60</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>%30</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>%10</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%100</b>

We note from Table No. (9) that the Yes category ranked first at 60%, while the No. category ranked second at 30%, and the Sometimes category ranked third at 10%

**Table No. (10) shows the responses of the sample members to the question: Do social media sites contribute to presenting contemporary issues that concern the youth segment?**

<b>Choices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>%65</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>%20</b>

<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>%15</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%100</b>

We note from Table No. (10) that the Yes category ranked first at 65%, while the No. category ranked second with 20%, and sometimes the category ranked third with 15%.

Table No. (11) shows the answers of the sample members to the question, Are social media sites a source of information?

<b>Choices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>%80</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>%20</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%100</b>

We note from Table No. (11) that the Yes category ranked first at 80%, while the No. category ranked second with 20%.

Table No. (12) shows the answers of the sample members to the question, What is the extent of the youth segment's dependence on social media sites as a source of cultural information?

<b>Choices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Significantly</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>%40</b>
<b>average</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>%35</b>
<b>weakly</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>%25</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%100</b>

We note from Table No. (12) that a category largely ranked first at 40%, while a category ranked averagely in the second rank with 35%, and a category weakly ranked third with 25%

Table No. (13) shows the credibility of the information published on social media sites related to the youth segment

<b>Choices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>truthful information</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>%50</b>
<b>False information</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>%30</b>
<b>Unconfirmed information</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>%20</b>

We note through Table No. (13) that the category of truthful information ranked first at a rate of 50%, while the category of false information came in the second place at a rate of 30%, and the category of unconfirmed information ranked third with a rate of 20%.

Table No. 14 shows the nature of the information presented on social media sites

<b>Choices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>political information</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40%</b>

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<b>social information</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>%25</b>
<b>Sports information</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>%20</b>
<b>religious information</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>%15</b>
<b>Economic information</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%5</b>

We note from table No. 14 that the category of political information came in the first place with a rate of 40%, and the category of social information came in the second place with a rate of 25%, and the category of sports information came in the third place with a rate of 20%, and the category of economic information came in the fourth place with a rate 5%.

**RESEARCH RESULTS**

- 1- The search results showed that Facebook is one of the most viewed and influenced social media sites
- 2- The results of the research showed that the main purpose of using social media sites is educational and entertainment purposes as well
- 3- The results of the research showed that social media sites increase the cultural awareness of the individual through the media content in them
- 4- Social media sites raise issues of importance to the youth segment, so it pushes this segment to follow them
- 5- The youth segment relies heavily on communication sites as the main source for obtaining information regarding this segment

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on all of the above, the researcher can submit the following treatments to the competent authorities:

- 1- The researcher recommends the governmental regulatory authorities to block websites that negatively affect the behavior and personality of young people.
- 2- The researcher recommends educating young people to use social media sites in the best ways to benefit from them
- 3- The competent authorities must follow up the media content that is presented on the media media sites
- 4- Young people should select media content that increases cultural awareness and avoid negative content

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