# Why Do They Post?
# Motivations and Uses of Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter among Kuwait College Students

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This study explores the differences between Snapchat, Instagram, and Twitter in terms of intensity of use and use motivations. Grounded in the theory of Uses and Gratifications, the current research compares the three platforms with exploratory factor analysis. A cross-sectional survey methodology of college students in Kuwait (N=692) asked respondents to identify the time they spend using social media, satisfaction with social media content, the intensity of using Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter as well as seven use motivations. The analysis of the data indicated that Instagram is the most popular platform among social media users, while Snapchat intensity of use is the highest. Based on the factor analysis results, motivations to use Snapchat are passing the time, self-expression, self-presentation, and entertainment. While the motivations to use Twitter are self-presentation, entertainment, and social interaction. Finally, passing time, social interaction, self-presentation, and entertainment are the motivations to use Instagram.

Keywords: Uses and Gratifications, motivations, social media, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter

Social media are defined as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological functions of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In other words, social media is an Internet-based human communication that allows the creation and exchange of User-Generated Content (USG) on a particular platform. Social media services allow users to create content, connect with other users, and browse through the network (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Zuniga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012). These platforms have attracted millions of users and became part of their daily lives (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Statistics show that 97% of the population of Kuwait have access to the Internet which ranks the country third in terms of Internet penetration in the Middle East (after the United Arab Emirates and Qatar) (Internet World Stats, 2017). Research shows that after Kuwait led the world and the region with the highest penetration rate of Twitter (85%) between 2012 and 2014, Kuwait as of 2017 has the second highest Twitter penetration rate in the region (12.6%) after Bahrain (Rashid, 2012 & Dubai School of Government, 2017). Thus, Twitter's popularity has decreased in recent years as newer social media platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram are rising in popularity (Alajmi, A., Alharbi, A., & Ghuloum, H, 2016; Dubai School of Government, 2013; Kamal, 2016). The social media report by the

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Dubai School of Government (2017) indicated that 11.9% of users had abandoned their Twitter accounts during the past year.

The revolving nature of social media and different ways people use it makes for a noteworthy comparative analysis of the three leading platforms in the region. This study investigates differences in Uses and Gratifications (U&G) among Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, and in doing so, aims to better understand the uniqueness of each platform. This study applies the Uses and Gratifications approach across platforms to predict information seeking, self-documentation, convenience, entertainment, passing time, social interaction, and personal presentation. Before providing the theoretical framework, the next section introduces each of the platforms examined in the study.

## Literature Review

*Twitter.* Founded in 2006, Twitter is one of the biggest social networks in the world. The popular social network has seen a lot of growth since it launched, with an average of 326 million active users as of 2018 (Statista, 2019). Twitter started by allowing users to interact in "real time" using 140 character tweets but increased the number to 280 in early 2018 permitting users to express more of their thoughts without running out of the room. Twitter users can tweet (write) about any topic and follow others to receive their tweets. (Kwak, H., Hosung, C. L., & Moon, S., 2010). Nobody can deny that Twitter has infused itself into daily life around the world, and its impact is increasingly evident. In Kuwait, Twitter has gained great popularity and become an integral platform for political discussions and debate. According to a report by Northeastern University, Kuwait has the most active Twitter users per capita in the world (Saleh, 2016 January 28). Although Kuwait led the world in terms of Twitter penetration rate, it has been affected by government restrictions and electronic criminal laws. Nevertheless, Kuwait has been one of the leading Arab countries in terms of Twitter use and outranked its neighbors in permitting greater space for freedom of expression. While Twitter has become one the most popular social networks around the world, the greater task for analysts and academics is understanding why and how people use it and what are their motivations (Walck, 2013).

*Instagram.* Instagram is the most popular social platform of communication where users can easily share their updates by taking photos (and videos) and stream live videos. It was launched in 2010 and became the fastest growing social network site globally (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Instagram has attracted one billion monthly active users as of 2018 (Statista, 2019) with an average of 95 million photos and videos uploaded by users per day (Lister, 2018). In Kuwait, Instagram has 1.7 million users as per September 2018, and the penetration rate is 40.5% of the entire population. Also, statistics show that nearly 70% of all Instagram users who live in Kuwait are aged 18 to 34 (Kowalcyzk, 2017 May 28). Kuwait's booming Instagram economy has changed the way people shop and advertise their products. People use it as an electronic storefront where they advertise their businesses selling anything and everything (Greenfield, 2013).

*Snapchat.* Snapchat was launched in 2011 and has become one of the most popular social networking and photo sharing apps worldwide with an estimation of 186 million users as per 2018 (Piwek & Joison, 2016; Zephoria, 2018). Snapchat allows users to send images, videos, and text with limited time for the receiver to view the content before it becomes inaccessible. A lot of of Snapchat's popularity comes from the camera filters which users can utilize to edit and filter their pictures and videos before publication. The majority of Snapchat users are 18 to 34 years old. In Kuwait, there are 1.5 million users of

Snapchat, which constitutes more than a third (36.5%) of the total population in Kuwait (Doyle, 2017). However, statistics show that 71% of Kuwaiti nationals use Snapchat compared to only 3% of the Asian expat's population living in Kuwait.

Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat are the top three leading social media platforms in the world. Research has shown that youths and young adults are the heaviest users of social media (Alhabash & Ma, 2017). In Kuwait, over 90% of those 15 to 44 years old use social media(Kamal, 2016). Social media is used for a mix of social and informational purposes. It is mainly used for entertainment, personal utility, information seeking, convenience, and altruism (Almenayes, 2015).

This study explores differences in the uses and gratifications of the three leading social media platforms in Kuwait. The following section provides an overview of the U&G approach as a theoretical framework of this study.

## Uses and Gratifications:  A Theoretical Framework

The main objective of the U&G theory for mass communication research is to explain the psychological needs that shape why people use specific media and what motivates them to engage in certain media use behaviors that fulfill those needs (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005). The theory does not ask what the media does to people. Instead, it asks what does an active audience do with the media, why and with what effects (Lasswell, 1948). It mainly focuses on the fact that people are different and use mediated communication for a variety of purposes (Almenayes, 2015). U&G theory has five major assumptions related to media and their users: (i) audience are active consumers of the media and goal oriented; (ii) audience gratify certain needs when they consume the media; (iii) media satisfy needs; (iv) media users are aware of their interests and motives and have certain expectations of media that help them with media selection; and (v) media users are the ones capable of judging the quality of media (Katz, 1959; Alhabash & Ma, 2017). The theory takes into consideration that media users are goal-directed in their behaviors and are active media users. Consequently, audiences are aware of their needs and select the appropriate media to gratify these needs; they are gratification seekers interacting with the media rather than passive recipients of its content.

While U&G theory is one of the most used theories to understand media use motivations, nonetheless it has been the topic of criticism. Researchers criticize the U&G theoretical framework for its ambiguity of motivations, uses, and needs. The theory is also criticized for its lack of measurement of media exposure and heavily rely on self-reports (Alhabash & Ma, 2017). Another major drawback of the U&G theory is the problematic assertion that participants are cognizant of their motivations for their actions while disregarding contextual and cultural influences (Almenayas, 2015). However, researchers have attempted to overcome these limitations by examining communication behavior by looking into audiences' ability to assign meanings to media content, which in turn satisfy their needs.

Modern society is moving away from traditional exposure of mass media, towards an interactive collection of communication media represented by the Internet (Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). Researchers (Ahmed, I., Elkasim, M., & Mustapha, L., 2017) have argued that the usefulness and ease of use of new technology have changed the way we cosume information. Uses and gratification theory is considered as an axiomatic theory (Lin, 1999), in that its principles are applicable and accepted to various situations involving mediated communications (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005). The growth of Internet use has led to the emergence of a new set of motivations and uses.

Stafford et al. (2004) argue that there are two general types of media uses and gratifications, people use media either for the content (social media or websites) carried by the medium, or the experience of the media usage, i.e. the process (browsing). Therefore, some Internet users may be motivated by the process of random browsing and website surfing, while others may be motivated by the desire of visiting a specific website for its content that fulfills certain needs.

The Internet as a medium has strengthened the potency of U&G theory because it requires a higher level of interactivity from its users and it has been suggested that the Internet is intentionally consumed, as audience make some effort to choose a specific social media platform or website (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005). However, the diversity of options offered by the Internet creates a challenge for academics and media scholars. On the one hand, the Internet has a set of unifying characteristics such as interactivity, asynchronicity, and multimedia. On the other hand, Alhabash and Ma (2017) argue that the Internet cannot be considered as a homogeneous channel that conveys uniform messages.

## Uses and Gratification: The Case of Social Media

In recent years, there has been a growing number of research on social media which emphasizes on the motivations for using these sites and their impact on the society (Almenayes, 2015; Alkandari A., Alsumait, F. & Alhunaiyyan, A., 2017; Alajimi, 2016; & Whiting, A., Williams, D., 2013). U&G theory has proven to be effective in understanding motivations and needs for using the Internet (Ko, Cho & Roberts, 2005). However, researchers have argued that the uniqueness of social media has changed the gratifications and motivations sought from other types of media. The following section reviews past studies that used the U&G theory to examine social media and users' motivations.

Previous research that examined Internet U&G suggests that much of the activity on the Internet involves entertainment and exploratory behavior (Eighmey & McCord, 1998). While Lin (1999), found five classic mass media motivations that predicted Internet motivations, which are surveillance, escape, companionship, identity; and entertainment.

Charney and Greenberg (2001) established eight gratification factors for the Internet use: to keep informed, diversion and entertainment, peer identity, good feelings, communications, sight and sound, career, and coolness. However, Papacharissi (2008) has added a measure of interpersonal communication motives and developed a scale of five primary motives for using the Internet: interpersonal utility, pass time, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment.

Whiting A. (2013) suggests that there are ten uses and gratifications for using social media and they are: social interaction, information seeking, pass time, entertainment, relaxation, communicatory utility, convenience utility, expression of opinion, information sharing, and surveillance/knowledge about others.

While Quan-Haase, A., and Young, A. (2010) found that there are six gratifications obtained from Facebook: pastime, affection, fashion, share problems, sociability, and social information.

Alkandari, A., Melkote, S., and Sharif, A. (2016) found that the use of social media can help university students gratify needs such as self-expression, social interaction, entertainment, and opinion exchange.

Continuing with the theme of socialization, Park, N., Kee, K., and Valenzuela, S. (2009) found that university students join Facebook to fulfill their need for social interaction

with their friends. Also, Alhabash & Ma (2017) argue that early studies of U&G of social media have focused on the social value of social media and its relation to interacting and connecting with friends and family.

Other studies of university students found that students use social media to seek information, entertainment, personal utility, convenience, and altruism features (Almenayes, 2015). Also, research showed that experience with social media use was correlated with communication-related variables. Almenayes (2015) found that the more experience students have with social media use, the more likely they will use it for entertainment and personal utility.

Alkandari et al. (2017) study of university students' use of Instagram suggests that personal-presentation and entertainment were the main motives for using Instagram.

The nature of live posting on Twitter with 280 characters led it to be a source of valuable information (Alrajehi, M., 2016; Kircaburun et al., 2018). According to research, Twitter has been used for social interaction, information sharing, mobilization, and new technology gratification ( Kircaburun et al., 2018). Alrajehi (2016) found that young adults use Twitter 3 to 4 hours per day to meet new people, follow the local news, and engage in discussions.

Although research on Instagram is still developing due to its recent increase in adoption rates (Alhabash & Ma, 2017), however, the research found that Instagram allows self-presentation due to its unique features that allow users to take, filter, share photos, and allows live broadcast and story creation (Kircaburun et al., 2018). Studies that investigated uses and gratification of Instagram use have reported different motivations such as entertainment, convenience, self-presentation, medium appeal, interpersonal interaction, surveillance, documentation, coolness, and creativity (Alhabash & Ma, 2017; Kircaburun et al., 2018; Alkandari et al., 2017).

About snapshot, Kircaburun et al. (2018) suggested that Snapchat is often seen for entertainment, and it is used to communicate with the immediate community. Past research that examined Snapchat from U&G perspective found different motivations such as entertainment, convenience, medium appeal, self-expression, modality, agency, interactivity, navigability, and privacy (Alhabash & Ma, 2017; Kircaburun et al., 2018). Joe, P., Jin, S., and Kim, J. (2015) found that passing time, sharing problems, and improving social knowledge were the highest motivations to use Snapchat.

Previous research on the U&G of social media platforms noticed several observations. First, past literature suggests that the functionality of each platform leads to a unique set of motivations obtained from each platform use. Second, audience activity is an essential part of the U&G perspective. Third, although each platform has its unique functions and motivations for using it, there could be some uniform motivations and similarities across platforms.

Building on previous research in which investigators measured motivations to use different social media platforms, this study aims to explore cross-platform differences in use intensity and motivations for using each platform. The main objective is to investigate Kuwaiti youths' social media behavior and motivations since there is a lack of quantitative data and empirical research about social media use in Kuwait. The study objective is to understand why do youths use each social media platform and what are their main motivations. The second objective is to understand social media use behavior among youths in Kuwait in terms of time spent on social media and what platforms do they use. Advancements in communication technologies and the growing popularity of social media in Kuwait have had an impact on the Kuwaiti society. Therefore, the study aims to explore how and why do youths use social media.

Past research has operationalized social media use by employing various scales that assess the level of an individual's engagement and time spent (Olufadi, 2016). In this study, we define social media use by looking at the average time spent using social media. Also, we define social media intensity from a cognitive and affective perspective (Alhabash Ma, 2017). This study addresses the motivations behind using different social media platforms and asks the following questions:

**RQ1**: What are the motivations behind using Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat?

**RQ2**: What is the correlation between motivations to use Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram and time spent on social media?

**Method**

## Sample

To answer the study's research questions, a self-administered survey questionnaire was conducted for this study. A cross-sectional survey of Kuwait University college students was conducted with a sample of 692. Kuwait University students were chosen because it is the only state university in the country and has the highest number of students. The second reason is that Kuwait University only accepts Kuwaiti nationals, unlike private universities that are open for expats, so it provides a clear view of Kuwaiti students' social media behavior which fits the Study's main objective. Lastly, since Kuwait University is the only state university in the country, it is more representative of the total population in terms of area of living and major.

The study focused on young people because they constitute the highest percentage of social media users (Kamal, 2017). Therefore the data were collected from a purposive sample of university students because of their characteristics as young adults, which meets the objective. This sampling method was adapted from Almenayes (2015). University students enrolled in Kuwait University were asked to participate in this study. The total number of students enrolled in Kuwait University is 35797, while the study recruited 692 participants through a purposive (convenient) sample of undergraduate students. The surveys were completed via face-to-face methodology and were distributed over two months (March 1 to May 1, 2018) to all Kuwait University students. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and participation was voluntary. The questionnaires were administered in Arabic. After the data collection, the study used SPSS for data entry and analysis.

The larger proportion of the sample identified between 18 and 28 years of age (81.6%, N=416), while 8.8% (N=45) is less than 18 years old. Participants who reported their ages between 29 and 39 years old constituted 8.2% (N=42) and 1.4% (N=7) are between 40 and 50 years old. The results show that there were no respondents above 50 years old. The reason the study included age groups over 28 although it was measuring Kuwait University students is that some students in the university are above 28 years old as part of the university's plan to serve the whole community and continuous learning program. Respondents were 40.9% (N=166) male and 59.1% (N=240) female. This gender distribution reflects the enrollment profile of the university student body, which is 70% female (Almenayes, 2015). As per participants' majors, the analysis revealed that 38.8% (N=267) are studying science and engineering, 34.1% (N=235) are enrolled in the College of Arts, 9.1% (N=63) are medicine students, Islamic Sharia and College of life sciences both

constitute 8.7% (N=60) of the sample, and only 0.4% (N=3) and 0.1% (N=1) of the sample are enrolled in the College of Human Sciences and College of law respectively. In terms of area of living, the sample is diversified and represent the total population. The results show that 25.3% (174) are from Aljahra district, 20.2% (N=139) are from Alasima, 18.6% (N=128) are from Alfarwaniya, 16.6% (N=114), 12.9% (N=89) are from Mubarak Alkabeer, and 6.4% (N=44) are from Alahmadi.

Table 1. Age distribution in the sample

| Age group (years) | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 18 | 45 | 8.8% |
| 18-28 | 416 | 81.6% |
| 29-39 | 42 | 8.2% |
| 40-50 | 7 | 1.4% |

Table 2. Participants area of living

| District | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Alasima | 139 | 20.2% |
| Hawally | 114 | 16.6% |
| Farwaniya | 128 | 18.6% |
| Mubarak Alkabeer | 89 | 12.9% |
| Alahmidi | 44 | 6.4% |
| Aljahra | 174 | 25.3% |

## Measures and Procedures

To measure the intensity of using Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, this study used six items adapted from Alhabash & Ma, 2017. Participants were asked to rate, on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) their agreement or disagreement of statements regarding the intensity of use for each platform. These statements are: "(social media platform) is part of my everyday activity," "I am proud to tell people I'm on (social media platform)," "(social media platform) has become part of my daily routine", "I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto (social media platform) for a while," "I feel I am part of the "(social media platform) community,"("I would be disappointed if "(social media platform) shut down."

The study also asked respondents to specify the amount of time on average they spent on social media. Respondents were asked a single question about the total number of hours spent using social media daily on a six-point scale: (1) a few hours per month, (2) few hours per week, (3) few hours per day, (4) from 1 to 3 hours per day, (5) from 3 to 5 hours per day, (6) more than 5 hours per day.

As for motivations to use each platform, the study adapted to Liu, B., Cheung, K., and Lee, O. (2010) list of motivations. Respondents were asked on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to express their agreement or disagreement with statements pertaining to the following motivations for information sharing (three items), social interaction (three items), self-documentation (three items), entertainment (two items), passing time (three items), personal-expression (two items), and convenience (two items) (see Appendix for details).

Similar to Almenayes's (2015), the study used a single-item to measure satisfaction with social media use. Respondents were asked to indicate: "overall, how satisfied are you with social media in what it does in providing you with the things you are seeking?"

Responses ranged from "not at all satisfied" (1) to "extremely satisfied" (5). In addition, the study included a demographic control variable, where respondents were asked to indicate their sex (1) male, and (2) female and age by indicating their age group (1) below 18 years, (2) 18 to 28 years, (3) 29 to 39 years, (4) 40 to 50 years, (5) 51 to 61 years, and (6) more than 62 years. The demographic variables also included questions related to the area of living based on Kuwait's six main districts and university major.

## Results

## Descriptive Statistics of Social Media Use Patterns

Before discussing the analysis, the next section will present some descriptive statistical findings of the sample relevant to the research questions. Figure 1 shows respondents' answers to the social media platforms they currently use. Instagram is by far is the most popular (89%) followed by Snapchat (78%), Twitter (67%), and lastly Facebook (32%) (see Figure 1).

Results show that 21.9% of respondents spend more than five hours per day on social media, 16.4% spend between one to three hours per week and 14.2% spend between three to five hours per day. Results are shown in Figure 2.
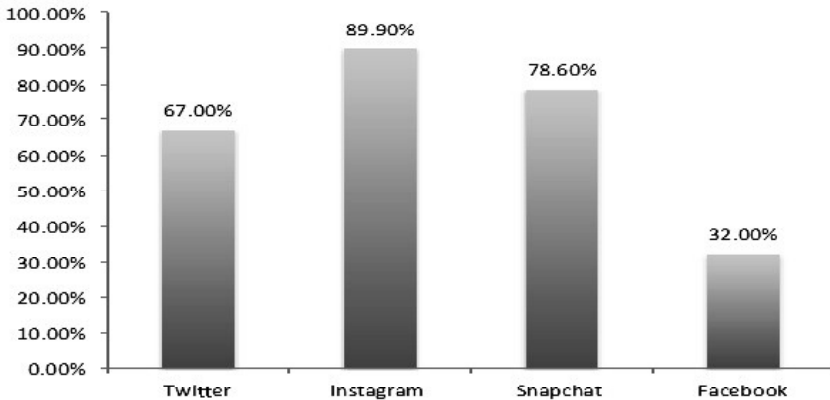


Figure 1. Penetration rates of social media platforms (N=688)
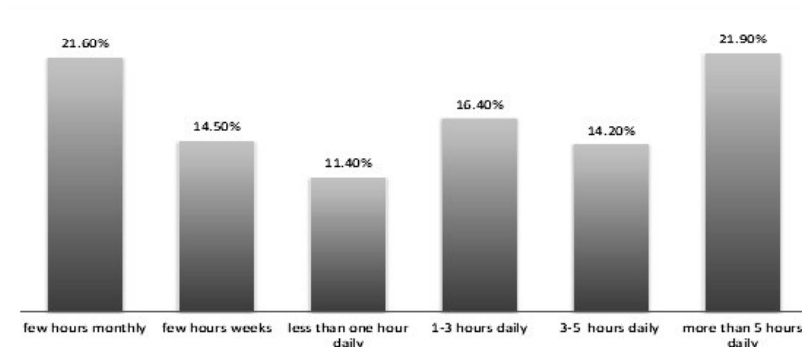


Figure 2. Time spend on social media, (N=690)

557
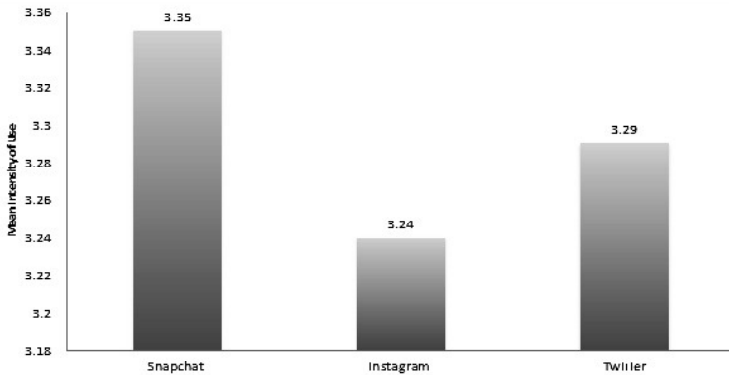
Figure 3.   Means differences in intensity to use Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram, N=655.

## Motivations for Using Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram

**RQ1** asks about the motives for using Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. Eighteen Likert-scale items were used in the questionnaire to examine each social media platform's use motivations. Exploratory analysis with varimax rotation was performed on each platform to study their underlying factors. As a result of the analysis, two items were discarded from the Snapchat factor analysis due to eigenvalue under 1.

Table 3 shows the results of Snapchat factor analysis. As we can see, four factors are representing the underlying dimensions of the motivation behind the utilization of Snapchat. They are self- presentation, entertainment, self-expression, and passing the time.

The results of the Twitter factor analysis are presented in Table 4. Three factors are representing the underlying dimensions of motivation for using Twitter: self-presentation, entertainment, and passing the time. While the analysis of Instagram shows that there are four dimensions of the motivation behind using it, they are self-documentation, entertainment, social interaction, and passing the time. The results are presented in Table 5. Below is the discussion of these factors in more detail.

### *Snapchat Motivations*

The first-factor *self-presentation* accounted for 37.19% of the variance after rotation. It contained six items related to sharing information and recording daily activities (Cronbach's α= .70). *Entertainment* consisted of 4 items, compromised of statements related to enjoyment, passing time and entertainment. It accounted for 9.15% of the variance (Cronbach α= .78). *Personal utility* also contained four items: "to show my personality," "to tell others about myself," "to meet new people" and "it is easy to use" categories (Cronbach α= .75). This factor explained 7.3% of the variance. Finally, *passing time contained* two items "I have nothing to do," "it relaxes me" (Cronbach's α= .73). It explained 5.17% of the variance after rotation.

Passing the time (M=3.04, SD=1.13) and self-expression (M=2.55, SD=0.96) had the highest mean scores. None of the other factors were as salient as the previous two. Snapchat users in this sample primarily regarded the platform as a source of passing the time and self-expression.

Table 3. Factor analysis of gratification obtained from Snapchat

| Factors | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Self-presentation** | 2.41 | 0.93 | | | | |
| Share information | 2.48 | 1.21 | 0.66 | | | |
| Share information useful to people | 2.40 | 1.21 | 0.72 | | | |
| Present information on my interest | 2.40 | 1.68 | 0.51 | | | |
| To record where I have been | 2.27 | 1.42 | 0.59 | | | |
| To record what I have learned | 2.44 | 1.18 | 0.66 | | | |
| To record what I do in life | 2.45 | 1.23 | 0.59 | | | |
| **Entertainment** | 2.27 | 0.91 | | | | |
| It is enjoyable | 2.04 | 1.07 | | 0.71 | | |
| It entertains me | 2.23 | 1.18 | | 0.84 | | |
| It helps pass the time | 2.48 | 1.28 | | 0.73 | | |
| It is convenient | 2.27 | 1.15 | | 0.59 | | |
| **Self-expression** | 2.55 | 0.96 | | | | |
| To show my personality | 2.80 | 1.31 | | | 0.70 | |
| To tell others about myself | 2.65 | 1.31 | | | 0.77 | |
| To meet new people | 2.50 | 1.26 | | | 0.65 | |
| It is easy to use | 2.26 | 1.17 | | | 0.52 | |
| **Passing time** | 3.04 | 1.13 | | | | |
| I have nothing better to do | 2.98 | 1.28 | | | | 0.80 |
| It relaxes me | 3.11 | 1.26 | | | | 0.74 |
| Eigenvalue | | | 6.69 | 1.64 | 1.32 | 1.06 |
| % of variance explained | | | 37.19 | 9.15 | 7.3 | 5.17 |
| Cronbach's α | | | 0.70 | 0.78 | 0.75 | 0.73 |

Note. Loading <0.50 were suspended

## Twitter Motivations

As seen in Table 4, the first factor for Twitter motivations it *self-presentation* accounted for 47.32% of the variance after rotation. It contained seven items related to keeping a record of daily life and sharing personal information (Cronbach's α= .88). *Entertainment* consisted of 7 items, compromised of statements related to enjoyment, entertainment and passing the time. It accounted for 8.65% of the variance (Cronbach's α= .87). Finally, *social interaction* contained five items: "to share information," "to meet new people," "to connect with people similar to me" and "to connect with people who share some of my values" (Cronbach's α= .78). This factor explained 6.08% of the variance.

The analysis shows that self-presentation (M=2.81, SD=1.00) had the highest mean score of all factors. None of the other factors were as relevant as a personal utility. Mainly, Twitter users in this sample regarded Twitter as a source of self-presentation and utility.

Table 4. Factor analysis of gratification obtained from Twitter

| Factors | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Self-presentation** | 2.81 | 1.00 | | | |
| To tell others about myself | 2.67 | 1.35 | 0.78 | | |
| It relaxes me | 3.04 | 1.35 | 0.74 | | |
| I have nothing better to do | 3.02 | 1.35 | 0.72 | | |
| To show my personality | 2.68 | 1.35 | 0.71 | | |
| To record where I have been | 2.83 | 1.34 | 0.67 | | |
| To record what I have learned | 2.77 | 1.37 | 0.63 | | |
| To record what I do in life | 3.03 | 1.34 | 0.60 | | |
| **Entertainment** | 2.51 | 1.05 | | | |
| It entertains me | 2.45 | 1.27 | | 0.77 | |
| It helps pass the time | 2.74 | 1.35 | | 0.77 | |
| It relaxes me | 3.04 | 1.35 | | 0.71 | |
| It is easy to use | 2.36 | 1.25 | | 0.67 | |
| Present information on my interest | 2.33 | 1.30 | | 0.66 | |
| Share information useful to people | 2.40 | 1.32 | | 0.66 | |
| It is enjoyable | 2.24 | 1.19 | | 0.60 | |
| **Social-interaction** | 2.41 | 1.05 | | | |
| It is enjoyable | 2.24 | 1.19 | | | 0.52 |
| Share information | 2.23 | 2.00 | | | 0.71 |
| To meet new people | 2.52 | 1.31 | | | 0.58 |
| To connect with people who are similar to me | 2.52 | 1.25 | | | 0.52 |
| To connect with people what share some of my values | 2.52 | 1.23 | | | 0.52 |
| Eigenvalue | | | 8.51 | 1.55 | 1.09 |
| % of variance explained | | | 47.32 | 8.65 | 6.08 |
| Cronbach's $\alpha$ | | | 0.88 | 0.87 | 0.78 |

Note. Loading <0.50 were suspended.

## Instagram Motivations

Instagram's first-factor *self-presentation* accounted for 45.97% of the variance after rotation (See Table 5). It contained seven items related to sharing information and presenting and self-recording (Cronbach's $\alpha$= .89). *Entertainment* consisted of 5 items, compromised of statements related to enjoyment, entertainment, passing the time and convenience. It accounted for 8.47% of the variance (Cronbach's $\alpha$= .79). Social-interaction accounted for 7.48% of the variance and consisted of 4 items related to meeting new people and connecting with others (Cronbach's $\alpha$= .80). Finally, *passing time* contained two items: "I have nothing better to do" and "it relaxes me" (Cronbach's $\alpha$= .80). This factor explained 5.59% of the variance.

Passing the time (M=3.06, SD=1.20) had the highest mean score, followed by social interaction (M=2.66, SD=1.03) and self-documentation (M=2.61, SD=1.00). The results show that Instagram users in the sample use it to pass the time and communicate with people.

Table 5. Factor analysis of gratification obtained from Instagram

| Factors | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Self-presentation** | 2.61 | 1.00 | | | | |
| Share information useful to people | 2.59 | 1.29 | 0.78 | | | |
| To record what I do in life | 2.78 | 1.29 | 0.73 | | | |
| Present information on my interest | 2.48 | 1.28 | 0.73 | | | |
| To record what I have learned | 2.75 | 1.26 | 0.71 | | | |
| Share information | 2.50 | 1.32 | 0.69 | | | |
| To record where I have been | 2.62 | 1.27 | 0.61 | | | |
| To connect with people who are similar to me | 2.56 | 1.24 | 0.60 | | | |
| **Entertainment** | 2.37 | 1.00 | | | | |
| It entertains me | 2.34 | 1.31 | | 0.81 | | |
| It helps pass the time | 2.61 | 1.33 | | 0.67 | | |
| It is enjoyable | 2.34 | 1.31 | | 0.64 | | |
| It is easy to use | 2.29 | 1.22 | | 0.63 | | |
| convenience | 2.42 | 1.46 | | 0.58 | | |
| **Social-interaction** | 2.66 | 1.03 | | | | |
| To meet new people | 2.55 | 1.26 | | | 0.78 | |
| To tell others about myself | 2.63 | 1.34 | | | 0.71 | |
| To show my personality | 2.78 | 1.35 | | | 0.67 | |
| To connect with people what share some of my values | 2.68 | 1.25 | | | 0.58 | |
| **Passing time** | 3.06 | 1.20 | | | | |
| I have nothing better to do | 3.04 | 1.32 | | | | 0.77 |
| It relaxes me | 3.08 | 1.31 | | | | 0.74 |
| Eigenvalue | | | 8.27 | 1.52 | 1.34 | 1.00 |
| % of variance explained | | | 45.97 | 8.47 | 7.48 | 5.59 |
| Cronbach's $\alpha$ | | | 0.89 | 0.79 | 0.80 | 0.80 |

Note. Loading <0.50 were suspended

In terms of mean scores, results show that motivations vary across each platform. Results are summarized in Figure 4. However, the findings indicate that there is a trend in the prevalence of motivations related to entertainment and self-presentation across all platform, while other motivations varied in their existence. Twitter takes the lead in entertainment motivation, followed by Instagram, and Snapchat, respectively. About self-presentation, as shown in Figure 4that, Twitter leads, followed by Instagram, then Snapchat, respectively. Social interaction motivation emerged in both Instagram and Twitter but was not found in Snapchat due to the nature of the platform, which is based on presentation and self-documentation.
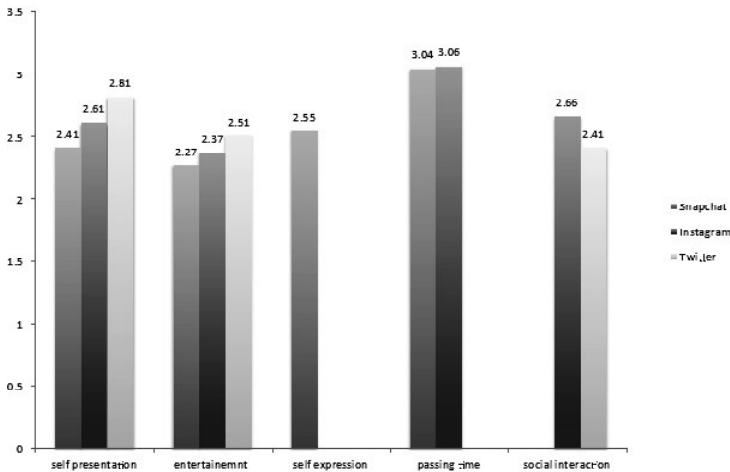
Figure 4.  Mean differences in motivations to use Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram (N=640)

## Correlates of motivations for using Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram

**RQ2** asked about the relationship between motivations for using Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram and time spent on social media. Table 4 shows the results of the statistical analysis used to examine these relationships. Pearson coefficient was calculated for each platform's motivations with the "time spent on social media" variable. This variable was measured using a quantitative scale ranging from 1(the least score) to 6 (the highest score).

Table 5 shows the results of this analysis. As shown below, the more time a respondent spends on social media, the more likely he or she will utilize it for Snapchat self-expression and passing the time ($r= .25$, $r= .95$, $p< .01$, respectively). Also, the more time a respondent spends on social media, the more likely he or she will use it for Instagram social interaction ($r= .18$, $p< .01$). However, the findings suggest that users who spent more time using social media are less likely to use it for entertainment on Snapchat and Instagram ($r= -.28$, $r= -.41$, $p< .01$, respectively) and Instagram self-presentation ($r = -.40$, $p< .01$).

Table 5.  Pearson correlation between motivation factors and social media platforms' variables

| Motivations | Time spent on social media |
| --- | --- |
| **Snapchat** | |
| Self-presentation | .00 |
| Entertainment | -.28** |
| Self-expression | .25** |
| Passing time | .95** |
| **Twitter** | |
| Social interaction | -.04 |
| Entertainment | -.25** |
| Self-presentation | .02 |
| **Instagram** | |
| Passing time | .02 |
| Social interaction | .18** |
| Entertainment | -.41** |
| Self-presentation | -.40** |
| *P<.05.  **P<.01* | |

## Discussion

This study is one of the few studies that examined how Kuwaiti university students use social media and their motivations to use each platform. The study compared the U&G of three leading social media platforms among youths in Kuwait. The most significant value of this study is the examination of the similarities and differences across the three platforms about motivations and usage. This study proves that each platform is distinct and has its features and usage patterns, which were prevalent in the findings. Although social media penetration rate is high, all cross the three platforms, the motivations to use each platform are different.

This study showed that more than third (36.1%) of the respondents spend 3 hours and more on social media every day. In terms of popularity, Instagram had the highest number of users with nearly 90% of the respondents stated that they use the platform, followed by Snapchat with more than three-thirds of the respondents (78.6%) indicating that the use it. Twitter, on the other hand, showed a 67% penetration rate, while 32% of respondents reported using Facebook. These findings are consistent with a previous study by Kircaburun et al. (2018), which suggests Instagram and Snapchat were the most commonly used social media platforms among students. However, the results show that the intensity of using Snapchat was the highest among all three platforms, followed by Instagram and Twitter, respectively. These results indicate that although Instagram is the most popular platform among the respondents, however, results show a greater intensity to use Snapchat. In other words, more favorable affective and cognitive attitudes toward Snapchat and Twitter than Instagram.

Concerning the motivations to use social media platforms, all respondents reported using Snapchat, Instagram, and Twitter for entertainment and self- presentation. The findings indicate that respondents are using social media platforms for their motives to present and manage their identities, online persona, and document their lives. Results show that passing time motive was the highest rated motivation across Snapchat and Instagram. This finding indicates that the nature of Instagram and Snapchat is built around sharing and posting photos and videos, which makes browsing these platforms more enjoyable than others.

The analysis shows that each platform has its unique motivations to use it. For example, in addition to self-presentation and entertainment, respondents reported that they use Snapchat for passing the time and self-expression. As for Twitter motivations, social interaction was found to be one of the motives apart from self-presentation and entertainment. Finally, the study shows that Instagram motivations include passing the time and social interaction in addition to self-presentation and entertainment (see Figure4). This is consistent with Alkandari, et al. (2016)'s a study that suggests Instagram provides categories of needs and motives similar in nature to those of other social media such as self-expression, social interaction, entertainment, and opinion exchange.

These motives were subsequently correlated with time spent on social media. Results show that the more time a user spends on social media, the more likely he or she will use it for Snapchat self-expression and passing the time. In terms of Twitter, the more time a user spends on social media, the more likely he or she will use it for entertainment and social interaction

**Conclusion**

This study was inspired by the limited research on social media in the Middle East, specifically in Kuwait (Alajimi et al., 2016). Despite the reported high penetration rates of the Internet and social media platforms, statistics and quantitative data are very limited. This study was conducted to provide descriptive statistics and understand the motivations that influence social media use in Kuwait. This study identified factors that are influential for motivating Snapchat (passing the time, self-expression, self-presentation, entertainment), Twitter (self-presentation, entertainment, social interaction) and Instagram use (passing the time, social interaction, self-presentation, entertainment). Although information seeking is the most important predictor for social media usage in previous research (Alajimi et al., 2016; Alkandari et al., 2014), our study yielded different results. The surprising conclusions regarding entertainment and self-presentation being the motivations for using all three social media platforms suggests that youths use these platforms for different reasons. Youths use social media especially the new photo-sharing networking sites for self-documnetations and presentation because they feel that taking photos and capturing events is fun and exciting (Alfailawai, 2018). This may also suggest that the increase in fake news and disinformation social media have led to the decline of social media use for news. Youths use social media for personal utility and self-expression. The results reveal that social media have become a platform for self-presentation were users use it to post and document their lives and share it with their followers.

**Limitations and Future Research**

Although this research has reported interesting findings in the context of social media platforms, some limitations were identified and needed to be discussed for future studies. First, this study investigates U&G for using Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram by applying motivations that were previously studied in other cultures. Future studies need to identify the motivations of social media use in the Gulf and Arab countries.

Second, the current study applied a quantitative method (questionnaire) to analyze U&G of social media platforms, a future study that uses qualitative approach needs to be carried out to discover the underlying motivations and user behavior. In-depth interviews with youths about their usage behavior would be a suggestion to understand their behaviors and attitudes.

Third, the definition of some variables might limit the scope of the study. The main variables were based on self-reports and measured the overall use of social media. For example, the variable "time spent using social media" was measured by asking respondents about the time they spend using social media in general. Although this question measures time on social media, it is general and does not measure the time spent using each platform specifically.

Finally, although this study provides a clear explanation for social media platforms' usage among college students in Kuwait, it does not wholly explain social media behavior in general. Even though youths are the heaviest users of social media platforms, our results cannot be generalized to the whole public. Future research should expand the scope of research to diverse demographic groups.

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## Appendix

Motivations of social media use
Statements
**Information sharing:**
I use ___ to ....
share information
(Share information useful to people
Present information on my interest
**Self-documentation:**
I use ___ to ...
To record what I do in life
( To record what I have learned
To record where I have been
**Social interaction:**
I use ___ to ...
To connect with people who share some of my values
To connect with people who are similar to me
(To meet new people
**Entertainment:**
I use ___ to ...
It is enjoyable
It entertains me(
**Passing time:**
I use ___ to ..
It helps pass the time
(I have nothing better to do
It relaxes me
**Self-expression:**
I use ___ to ...
To show my personality
To tell others about myself
**Convenience:**
I use ___ to ...
It is easy to use
It is convenient

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