PROFILING THE AVERAGE SAUDI'S TRUST TOWARDS THE SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

It is claimed that the use of Social Media has entered the era of maturity in Saudi Arabia with an increasing number of studies focusing in examining the phenomenon. The aim of this quantitative study is to profile the average Saudi's attitude towards the Social Media and to investigate the level of trust of the local individual to the medium and study the motives or obstacles for revealing one's true identity online. The results point to a heavy use of the social networks and suggest that the younger the user the more likely it is to get involved in the Social Media. In the case of females, though slightly less in population, the use seems more intense. There is no indication education affects the frequency of the use as long as the individual has a degree at least higher than a secondary diploma. Likewise, income and employment status only indirectly affect the use since they affect the amount of free time one has to get involved with the Social Networks and the more one is connected with the Internet the heavier the use. As to trust the study shows Saudis are reluctant to accept the motivations for such an attitude but, on the other hand, they don't seem to agree with the proven concerns related to the threats associated with it.

Keywords: *Saudi Arabia, Social Media, Identity Disclosure, Trust, Threats*

1. INTRODUCTION

A large number of research studies suggest the rather obvious, i.e., that the use of Social Media Networks (SMN) has increased to cover almost half of the global population, i.e., 3.4 billion individuals out of a total of 7.6 billion [1]. There seems to be a strong correlation between the demographics, i.e., age, gender [2], the personality of an individual, i.e., education, income, employment status, and profession, and their effect on the extend of the Social Media usage [3-5]. Moreover, increasing number of papers imply that Social Media use has well entered what is characterized as the maturity era and many of them discuss issues related to trust [6-9] and a change in their everyday life and consumer behavior even in countries where that was not experienced before [10]. This phenomenon is so dominating it lead to the rapid development of the scientific field of Data Science a major part of which is the study of the profile, attitude and behavior of the users of the Social Media in global scale using actual data from the Social Media itself (e.g. Facebook API, Twitter API, etc.).

In the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, i.e., Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates (GCC from now on), in particular, the number of Internet users has increased to 66% and that of the active Social Media users has reached 54% [11]. Once used, merely, as a social and entertainment tool now social media has penetrated in almost every aspect of the locals' daily lives, transforming the way they socialize, do business, communicate with government officials and agencies and participate in various civil movements. Even a local's behavior related to getting education seems to be affected [12]. This is despite the fact that many are having issues with the media, like in the case of Facebook, which does not seem to disrupt the frequency of that use [13].

Saudi Arabia is the leader of these developments in the Middle East. Indeed, the statistics are quite impressive. They show that the number of Internet users in 2018 was at 30.25 million, which was a penetration of about 91%, with 25 million active Social Media users, i.e., a penetration of about 75%. This is a very serious increase from the 22.59 million Internet users (70% Internet penetration in the country) and the 19 million active Social Media users (about 59% penetration just a year ago). It is estimated that Saudi Arabia experiences the largest Social Media

penetration in 2019 (about 99%) when the global average is estimated at 45%. These are very impressive numbers especially considering the deeply conservative nature of the local society [1, 11, 14].

1.1 Identity Functional Block of SMNs

Any SMN is based on seven functional blocks addressing the needs of its users and firms, namely identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups. The identity block, the subject of second part of this study, provides the functionality the users need to reveal their identities in a social group. It facilitates the disclosure of the so-called personal information such as age, gender, profession etc. Although users wittingly share their information on the SMN, however, they still care about what happens to this information. This is the main reason they often create virtual identities online. The reputation block reflects the extend this practice is preferable. It is, presumably, synonymous to trust but there are variations between platforms [15].

Identity is more than an individual characteristic or an expression of one's self. It is, rather, a social product, an outcome of the particular social environment on an individual's personality. As such, it is seen and utilized differently depending on the social environment including the SMNs. Hence, an individual behaves differently as the "true-self", the "real self" and the "hoped for possible self" depending on the environment. However, it is wrong to think that the online and the offline are two completely separate worlds. In the Internet era, the social environment includes both and an important skill people need to learn is how to coordinate their behaviors in these two realms [16]. During online socializing it might be true, after all, the suggested "it's not who you know but who you add" meaning that the friendships made online through the SMN might showcase one's personality [17].

1.2 "Privately Public" Online Behavior on Social Media

Since among the first concerns in using the real identity in SMNs is the breach of personal privacy [18] the major social platforms have tried to address this issue through their privacy policies [19]. Another term, often used to describe particular online behavior, is that of "privately public". This is a hybrid form of identify disclosure which suggests that users of SMNs conceal part of their private character identify while at the same time they share some of their private videos with a wide audience. That way they keep some anonymity, as a necessary "shield" against stalkers, etc. Moreover, since corporations and institutions are making efforts to get additional information about their employees by sharing content and monitoring them through the companies' websites, SMN participants will keep on being "careful" with their online behavior as far as their privacy is at stake [20].

Creating and managing individual identities is considered a pivot element of the digital age. The digitization of information may exacerbate privacy risks that appear to be inherent in the identity management systems. There is no shortage of principles and guidelines for establishing and maintaining privacy in identity management systems. The general rule of collecting as little information from individuals as possible has a serious drawback: an identity theft is possible even if the user's data is not enough (and difficult to find/ reproduce). Additionally, determining how to apply these rules to a particular system is an ad-hoc operation that requires understanding of the particular environment and the balance between risks and benefits. The real challenge, among others on the matter, is to provide privacy policies to the end users that they truly understand in respect with their data collected.

2. METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study aims to study the profile of the average Saudi towards the Social Media as well as investigate the level of trust to the medium. More specifically, it seeks to answer the following:

- How do local demographics, i.e., age, gender, education, income, employment status affect the Saudi's attitude towards the Social Media?
- What is the connection between Internet usage and Social Media usage if any?
- What is the Saudi's perception of motives for revealing their true identity over the Social Media and what are the possible reasons that discourage such behavior?
- How do local demographics and the Social Media usage affect the level of trust?

2.1 Instrument

Given the problem statement and the first research question, the first part of the instrument

includes closed-ended structured categorization questions related to the age, gender, education, income, employment status, and use of the Internet (Appendix: Questions 1-6). These play the role of the independent variables during the statistical analysis seeking possible causality between them and the investigative questions, i.e., the dependent variables. The range of choices of the possible answers were determined during the pilot phase of the survey on 20 local individuals that helped shape the final draft of the instrument to reflect the particularities of the demographics of the local society.

The second part of the instrument includes the main investigation questions of the study (Appendix: Questions 7-9). These are related to the possible motives for disclosing one self's true identity online or, on the contrary, the reasons for hesitating to do so, and the whatever concerns the individuals have for possible threats coming from such online behavior.

The next step was to moderate the instrument questions in two steps. First, the working draft of the questionnaire was given to 5 individuals of reputation in the country (i.e. Saudi Arabia). Three of them were academics and two were professionals. The goal of this step was two-fold:

- The authors sought to find whether the classification questions, answers rather, were correctly addressing the real classification of the population in terms of age, income and education in particular but the rest as well.
- Any insight from their part as to the investigative questions (second part) and, also, suggested answers was most welcomed.

In the former case, the final draft of the questionnaire incorporated these individuals' opinions since there were major changes in the classifications in particular in the case of income and age that were reflecting the local society reality. In the latter case the moderators mainly suggested improvements aiming to further clarify the questions and their possible answers. There was not found particular need of changes (except minor ones) since the content of the investigative part of the instrument was almost directly and entirely derived from the literature review.

The new draft of the instrument was tested by 20 conveniently selected individuals who accepted to answer it and, in parallel, provide their suggestions to make it even more clear and focused. All these individuals were from the area of the capital Riyadh. The process just described ensured to a large extend, although this judgment is subjective in part and can never be entirely proven, the validity of the instrument.

2.2 The Sample

Nonprobability convenient sampling is the method followed for the survey. Both the computer-assisted online mode (using Google Docs) and the traditional face-to-face mode were applied in the sample of the 4 major Saudi cities, i.e., Riyadh, Jeddah, Damman-Khobar-Dahran, and the southwest region. The responses were anonymous to ensure the anonymity of the survey.

A total of 576 individuals agreed to participate in the survey, including the 20 individuals of during the pilot phase. A very significant number of entries were excluded from the final set of responses as they came from people found to be from other GCC countries or elsewhere and, certainly, not Saudis (which was the scope of the study). Eventually, the final set included 394 responses from Saudi residents with not all responding to all the questions. The sample demographics appear in table 1 and reflect in a balanced and representative way the current demographics in the country. This suggests that the results of the study may be inferred to the general population of the country although this was not the intention of this exploratory study.

3. FINDINGS

Concerning the use of Social Media, in general, the study shows that the vast majority of the sample population is not only connected to the Internet but, also, using the Social Media either "always" (143/368; 36.3%) or "a lot" (135/368; 34.3%) or at least "often" (57/368; 14.5%). Only 6.3% of the participants (25/368) make "little use" of the Social Media and a negligent 1.5% and 0.5% (6/368 and 2/368 respectively) either "rarely" or "never" use them. These figures confirm the findings of other surveys and studies in the region as explained earlier [11, 12].

Table 1: Demographics of the respondents

	Item	N	%		Item	N	%
Gender	Male	180	48.6	Age	<18	17	4.6
	Female	190	51.4		18-25	164	44.6
Education	Elementary	1	0.3		26-35	105	28.6
	Intermediate	6	1.6		36-45	54	14.7
	Secondary	62	16.8		46-60	23	6.2
	Diploma	24	6.5		>60	4	1.0
	Undergraduate	213	57.8	Employment	Employed	176	47.8
	Graduate	49	13.3		Unemployed	25	6.8
	PhD	13	3.5		Student	135	36.6
Income	<4,000 SR	72	21.3		Housewife	22	6.0
	4,001-8,000 SR	55	16.3		Retired	10	2.7
	8,001-15,000 SR	97	28.7	Internet use	Never use	1	0.0
	15,001-25,000 SR	50	14.8		Only email	4	1.1
	25,001-50,000 SR	9	2.7		Rarely use	1	0.0
	>50,000 SR	8	2.3		Little use	8	2.2
	No income	47	13.9		Often	38	10.5
					A lot every day	119	32.9
					Always	191	52.8

Table 2: Frequency of Social Media use based on gender, age, and education

| Demographics		Frequency of SMN use						Overall	
		Never use	Rarely use	Little use	Often	A lot daily	Always daily	Mean	Stand. Dev.
Gender	Male	1; 0.6%	4; 2.2%	13; 7.2%	31; 17.2%	67; 37.2%	63; 35.0%	4.6	1.61
	Female	1; 0.5%	2; 1.1%	12; 6.3%	26; 13.7%	67; 35.3%	79; 41.6%	4.9	1.46
Age	<18	1; 5.9%	0; 0.0%	1; 5.9%	1; 5.9%	6; 35.3%	8; 47.1%	4.8	1.77
	18-25	0; 0.0%	3; 1.8%	7; 4.3%	22; 13.4%	59; 36%	73; 44.5%	5.0	1.28
	26-35	1; 1.0%	2; 1.9%	8; 7.6%	17; 16.2%	37; 35.2%	39; 37.1%	4.8	1.50
	36-45	0; 0%	1; 1.9%	8; 14.8%	10; 18.5%	19; 35.2%	15; 27.8%	4.4	1.72
	46-60	0; 0%	0; 0%	1; 4.3%	6; 26.1%	8; 34.8%	8; 30.4%	4.8	1.40
	>60	0; 0%	0; 0%	0; 0%	0; 0%	3; 75%	1; 25.0%	4.2	2.39
Education	Elementary	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	1; 100.0%	6.0	0.00
	Intermediate	1; 16.7%	0; 0.0%	1; 16.7%	0; 0.0%	1; 16.7%	3; 50.0%	4.5	2.07
	Secondary	0; 0.0%	1; 1.6%	3; 4.8%	8; 12.9%	23; 37.1%	27; 43.5%	4.8	1.64
	Diploma	0; 0.0%	2; 8.3%	3; 12.5%	3; 12.5%	9; 37.5%	6; 25.0%	4.2	1.96
	Undergrad.	0; 0.0%	3; 1.4%	14; 6.6%	35; 16.4%	84; 39.4%	76; 35.7%	4.8	1.37
	Graduate	0;0.0%	0; 0.0%	2; 4.1%	9; 18.4%	13; 26.5%	23; 46.9%	5.3	0.95
	PhD	1; 7.7%	0; 0.0%	2; 15.4%	2; 15.4%	3; 23.1%	5; 38.5%	4.6	1.56
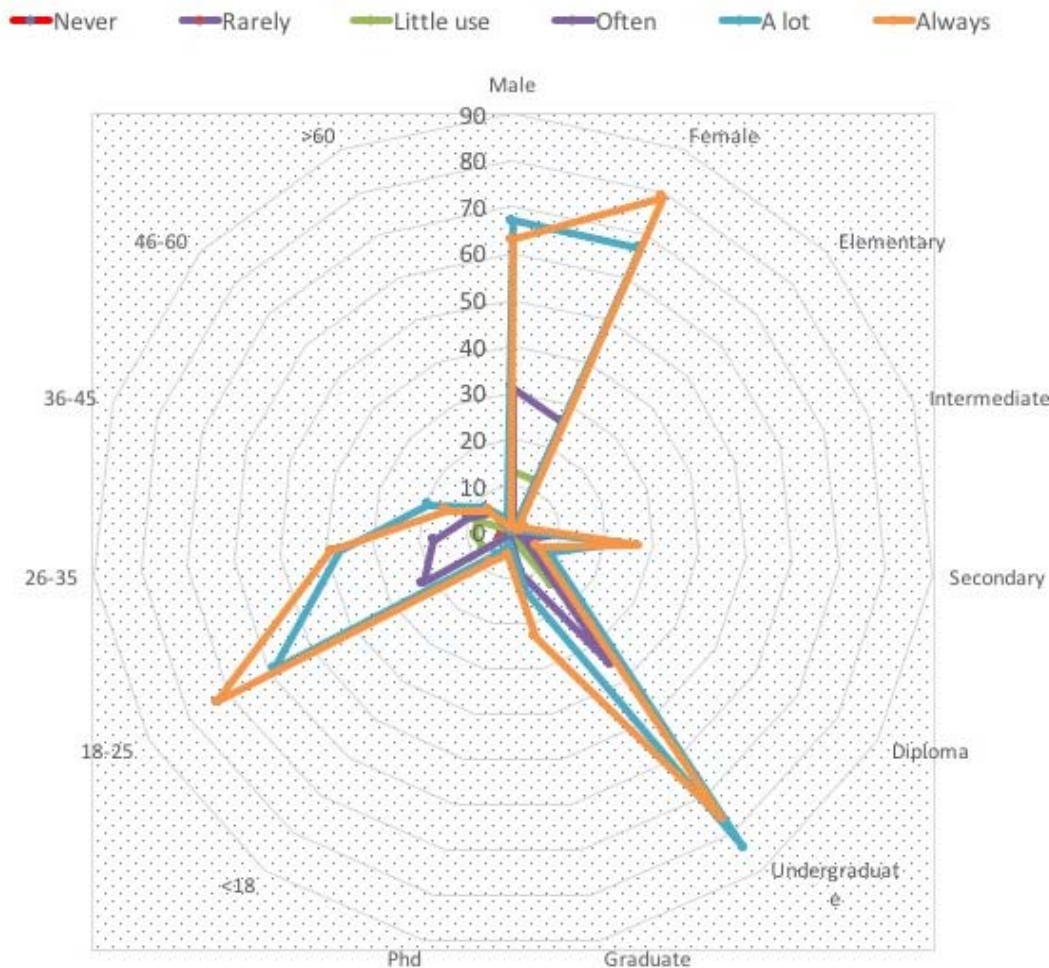
Figure 1: Frequency of Social Media use based on gender, education, and age in KSA

3.1 Frequency of Social Media Use Based on Gender, Age, And Education

Figure 1 illustrates and Table 2 details the role of gender, education, and age on the level of Social Media usage in the country.

In both cases of male and female respondents the usage is high, i.e., means of 4.6 and 4.9 respectively (4: Often, 5: A lot daily) although in the latter case it is slightly higher. The standard deviation indicates a rather consistent "often" use of the Social Media. In the case of age, the younger the individual the more frequent the use (mean is getting closer to 5 moving to younger ages) and the more consistent it appears to be (standard deviation

decreasing towards 1.2 except in the case of those less than 18 years old). This general pattern remains the same in the case of the individual's education as well.

Hence, the results show that, regardless of age, gender, and education, the average Saudi uses the Social Media "often on a daily base".

3.2 Frequency of Social Media Use Based on Income, Employment, And Internet Use

Figure 2 illustrates and Table 3 details the role of income, employment status, and use of the Internet on the level of Social Media usage in the country.

Table 3: Frequency of Social Media use based on income, employment, and Internet use

| Demographics		Never use	Rarely use	Little use	Often	A lot daily	Always daily	Mean	Stand. Dev.
							Frequency of SMN use		Overall
Employment	Employed	0; 0.0%	3; 1.7%	16; 9.1%	31; 17.6%	63; 35.8%	61; 34.7%	4.7	1.51
	Unemployed	1; 4.0%	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	2; 8.0%	8; 32.0%	13; 52.0%	5.4	1.15
	Student	1; 0.7%	3; 2.2%	7; 5.2%	18; 13.3%	48; 35.6%	57; 42.2%	5.0	1.28
	Housewife	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	1; 4.5%	3; 13.6%	12; 54.5%	6; 27.3%	4.6	1.61
	Retired	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	1; 10.0%	3; 30.0%	3; 30.0%	3; 30.0%	4.8	1.03
Income (SR)	<4,000	0; 0.0%	2; 2.8%	4; 5.6%	11; 15.3%	29; 40.3%	25; 34.7%	4.9	1.30
	4,001-8,000	0; 0.0%	1; 1.8%	4; 7.3%	4; 7.3%	23; 41.8%	23; 41.8%	4.8	1.61
	8,001-15,000	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	9; 9.3%	20; 20.6%	33; 34.3%	35; 36.1%	4.9	1.09
	15,001-25,000	1; 2.0%	1; 2.0%	4; 8.0%	5; 10.0%	20; 40.0%	17; 34.0%	4.5	1.94
	25,001-45,000	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	1; 11.1%	1; 11.1%	3; 33.3%	4; 44.4%	5.1	1.05
	>45,000	1; 12.5%	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	2; 25.0%	1; 12.5%	4; 50.0%	4.8	1.75
	No income	0; 0.0%	1; 2.1%	3; 6.4%	9; 19.1%	12; 25.5%	22; 46.8%	5.1	1.06
Internet use	Never use	1; 100.0%	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	1.0	0.00
	Only email	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	2; 50.0%	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	1; 25.0%	4.8	2.06
	Rare use	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	1; 100.0%	0; 0.0%	5.0	0.00
	Little use	0; 0.0%	0; 0.0%	3; 37.5%	0; 0.0%	2; 25.0%	3; 37.5%	4.6	1.41
	Often	0; 0.0%	1; 2.6%	7; 18.4%	18; 47.4%	7; 18.4%	5; 13.2%	4.2	0.99
	A lot daily	1; 0.8%	1; 0.8%	8; 6.7%	19; 16.0%	73; 61.3%	17; 14.3%	4.8	0.96
	Always	0; 0.0%	3; 1.6%	2; 1.0%	19; 9.9%	51; 26.7%	116; 60.7%	5.4	0.84
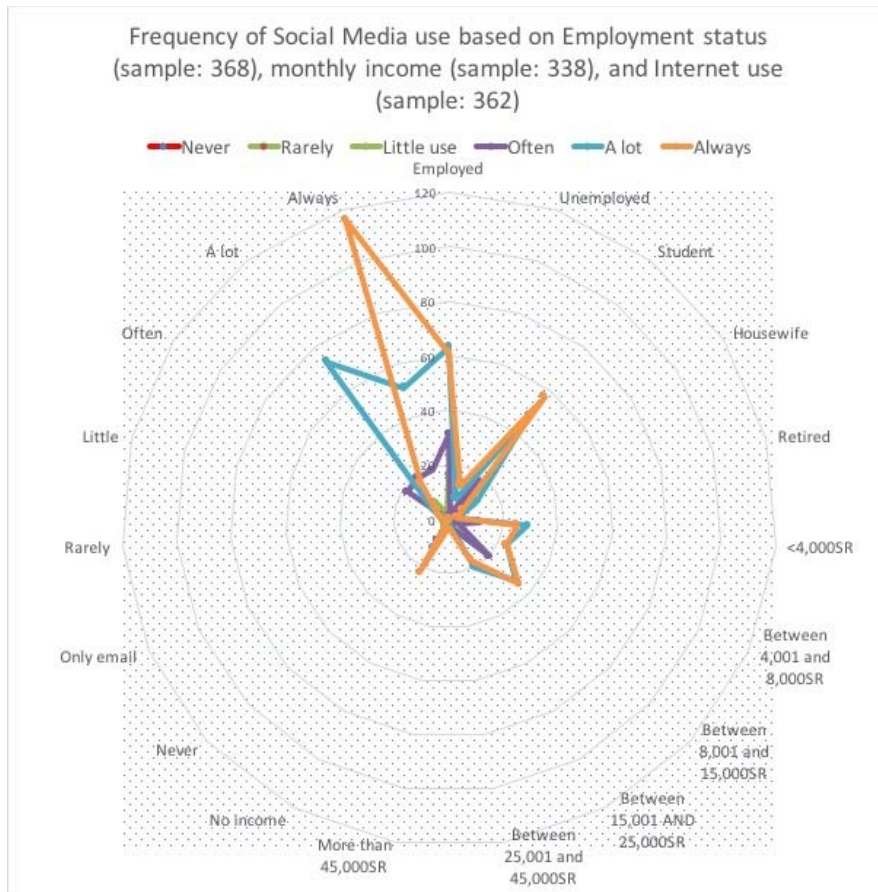
Figure 2: Frequency of Social Media use based on Employment status, income, and use of the Internet in KSA.

The main pattern does not change significantly but only slightly towards the use of the Social Media "always" (increase of mean and decrease of the general standard deviation) when looking things through the individual's employment lens. It is noteworthy, but not surprising, that those "unemployed", and "student" admitted making heavy use of the Social Media "a lot" or "always". Another important statistic is that those individuals with "no income", much as it is expected, tend to make heavy use of the Social Media (mean: 5.1, standard deviation: 1.06). However, the surprise comes from those with high income, i.e., 25,001-50,000 or more than 50,000, who also make heavy use even though one might expect rather the opposite as being busy with their work.

Given the above results it is clear that the Saudis make heavy use of the Social Media regardless of their employment status, income and use of the Internet.

3.3 Motives of Disclosure of True Identity on Social Media

The participants of the survey were asked for the reasons they would be willing to reveal their true identity on a SMN. Figure 3 illustrates and table 4 details their responses. A total of 394 individuals contributes to this particular question although there were several of them that did not provide parts of the requested answers.

In general, it appears that the participants do not trust the SMNs to reveal their true identity and the motives suggested to them are not enough to change this attitude (Negative answers: "Personal credibility" 60.9%; "maintain distant social relations" 80.7%; "enhance their feeling of security online" 76.6%; "enhance personal accountability" 75.9%, "improve socializing" 76.6%; "protect intellectual property rights" 72.3%). What is particularly interesting and worth to remind is that the vast majority (90%) of the respondents use the SMNs either "often", or "a lot", or "always".

A deeper analysis of the cross-tabulation of the data from a participant's gender, age, education, income, and employment status viewpoint reveals the aforementioned general pattern is broadly followed with only slight variations. In the case of "enhanced security" females feel less secure and in the case of "protecting the intellectual property rights" they feel more secure than males. Middle-aged individuals feel slightly more negative and those even older (more than 60) feel very negative when "personal credibility" is the issue. Young individuals (36 years old or less) are more positive

when in need to maintain "distant social relations" and have a feeling of "enhanced security". Housewives are very negative with the "personal credibility" motive whereas students are less negative than the rest. Quite surprisingly, those enjoying a relatively high income (for Saudi standards) i.e. $6,500-$12,000, are very positive with the idea of disclosing their true identity online in order to "enhance their accountability" and less negative if it is to better "socialize". Finally, education does not seem to affect in a clear way the general negative pattern.

3.4 Limited Concerns About Threats

The participants were also asked about their concerns associated with the possibility of revealing their true identity over SMN. Tables 5 and 6 present in detail and figures 4 and 5 illustrate the results of the data analysis of the 368 participants based on the use of the SMNs.

Just more than half (54.6%) see" privacy concerns" as a serious reason behind their negative attitude towards revealing their true identity over the SMN and almost half of them (48.5%) "Fear their reputation will be damaged". The vast majority doesn't have any" regrets for uploading pictures, videos, comments" on the SMNs (70.8%), neither are afraid of "online bullying" (75.1%) and they are not concerned with the "fear of exploitation and abuse" from others on SMN (73.4%). Very few (9%) avoid revealing their true identity online because of" age restrictions applied" perhaps because the elders are a minority in the Kingdom today.

Once again a cross-tabulation analysis of the main findings based on the "age", "gender", "employment status", "income" and "education" reveals additional interesting facts. The "age" ranges between 18 and 35, i.e. those who constitute the majority of the local population and of the study's sample, are the ones who shape the average on "privacy concerns" being slightly more worried than the rest and having "regrets for uploading pictures, videos, comments" more than the others. When examining "cultural issues", "social issues, e.g. divorce" and "religious issues", only the elder either disagree a lot or completely reject the idea these are obstacles with the majority of the rest just refusing the idea following the main" pattern. Gender and education do not seem to affect the main results. Students and housewives have significantly more "regrets for uploading pictures, videos, comments" than the rest and retired have almost none at all.

Table 4: Motives of disclosure of true identity through SMN based on SMN use, gender, age, education

| SMN use	Personal Credibility		Distant Social Relations		Enhance Security		Enhance Accountability		Socialize		Intellectual Property Rights		
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Totals
Never	1; 50%	1; 50%	2; 100%	0; 0%	2; 100%	0; 0%	2; 100%	0; 0%	2; 100%	0; 0%	2; 100%	0; 0%	2
Rarely	3; 50%	3; 50%	5; 83.3%	1; 16.7%	5; 83.3%	1; 16.7%	6; 100%	0; 0%	5; 83.3%	1; 16.7%	6; 100%	0; 0%	6
Little	19; 76%	6; 24%	20; 80%	5; 20%	22; 88%	3; 12%	20; 80%	5; 20%	23; 92%	2; 8%	19; 76%	6; 24%	25
Often	32; 56.1%	25; 43.9%	47; 82.5%	10; 17.5%	41; 71.9%	16; 28.1%	36; 63.2%	21; 36.8%	43; 75.4%	14; 24.6%	40; 70.2%	17; 29.8%	57
A lot	84 62.2%	51 37.8%	115 79.3%	28 20.7%	103 76.3%	32 23.7%	103 76.3%	32 23.7%	104 77%	31 23%	99 73.3%	36 26.7%	135
Always	84 58.7%	59 41.3%	115 80.4%	28 19.6%	107 74.8%	36 25.2%	111 77.6%	32 22.4%	106 74.1%	37 25.9%	97 67.8%	46 32.2%	143
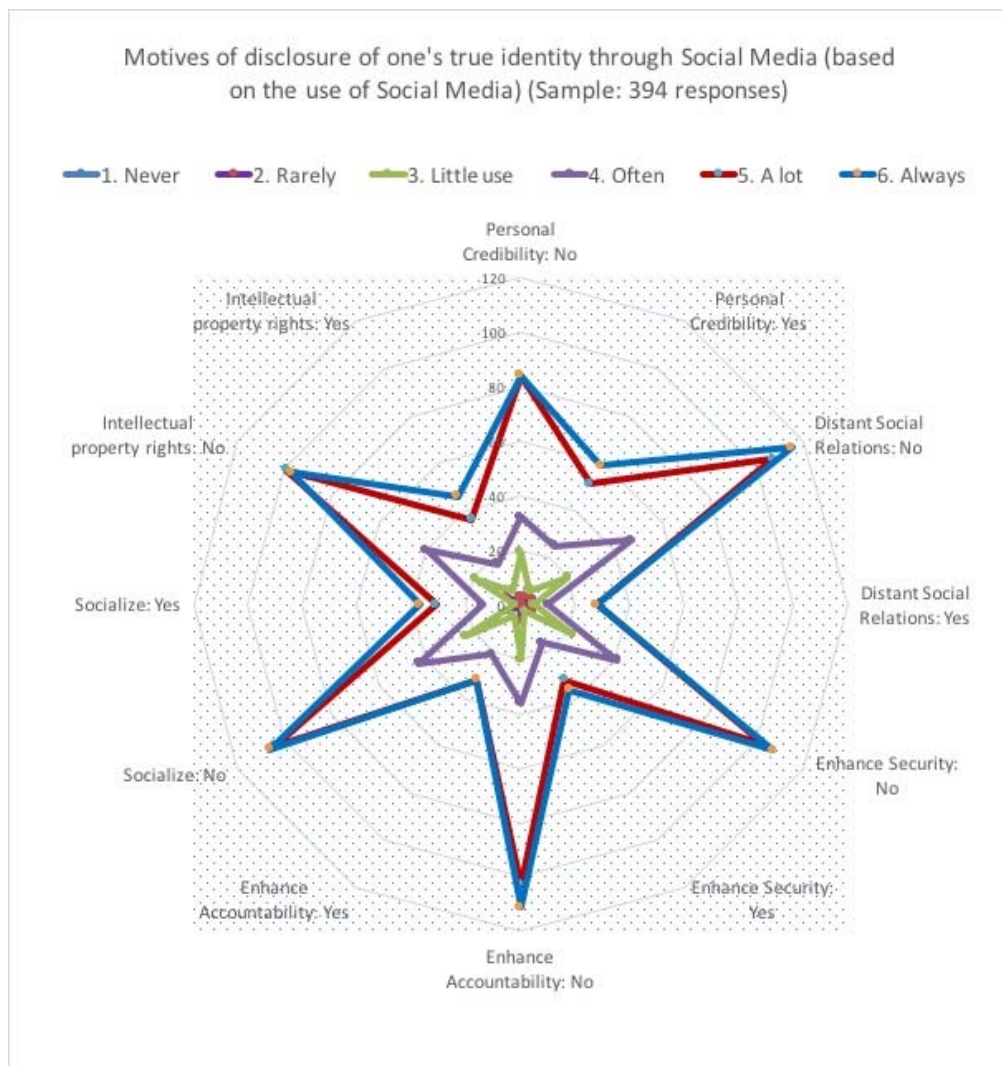
Figure 3: Motives of disclosure of one's true identity through SMNs in KSA.

Table 5: Concerns about threats associated with the use of SMNs (Part I)

| SMN use	Personal privacy concerns		Possible regrets of uploading pictures, videos, comments		Online bullying		Age restrictions		Fear of reputation damage		Fear of exploitation and abuse		Totals
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
Never	2 100%	0 0%	2 100%	0 0%	2 100%	0 0%	2 100%	0 0%	1 50%	1 50%	2 100%	0 0%	2
Rarely	3 50%	3 50%	5 83.3%	1 16.7%	5 83.3%	1 16.7%	5 83.3%	1 16.7%	3 50%	3 50%	4 66.7%	2 33.3%	6
Little	16 64%	9 36%	21 84%	4 16%	20 80%	5 20%	22 88%	3 12%	12 48%	13 52%	17 68%	8 32%	25
Often	25 43.9%	32 56.1%	39 68.4%	18 31.6%	43 75.4%	14 24.6%	53 93%	4 7%	25 43.9%	32 56.1%	42 73.7%	15 26.3%	57
A lot	62 45.9%	73 54.1%	99 73.3%	36 26.7%	98 72.6%	37 27.4%	122 90.4%	13 9.6%	76 56.3%	59 43.7%	99 73.3%	36 26.7%	135
Always	60 42%	83 58%	92 64.3%	51 35.7%	106 74.1%	37 25.9%	131 91.6%	12 8.4%	67 46.9%	76 53.1%	104 72.7%	39 27.3%	143
Total	179 45.4%	215 54.6%	279 70.8%	115 29.2%	296 75.1%	98 24.9%	358 90.9%	36 9.1	203 51.5%	191 48.5%	289 73.4%	105 26.6%	394
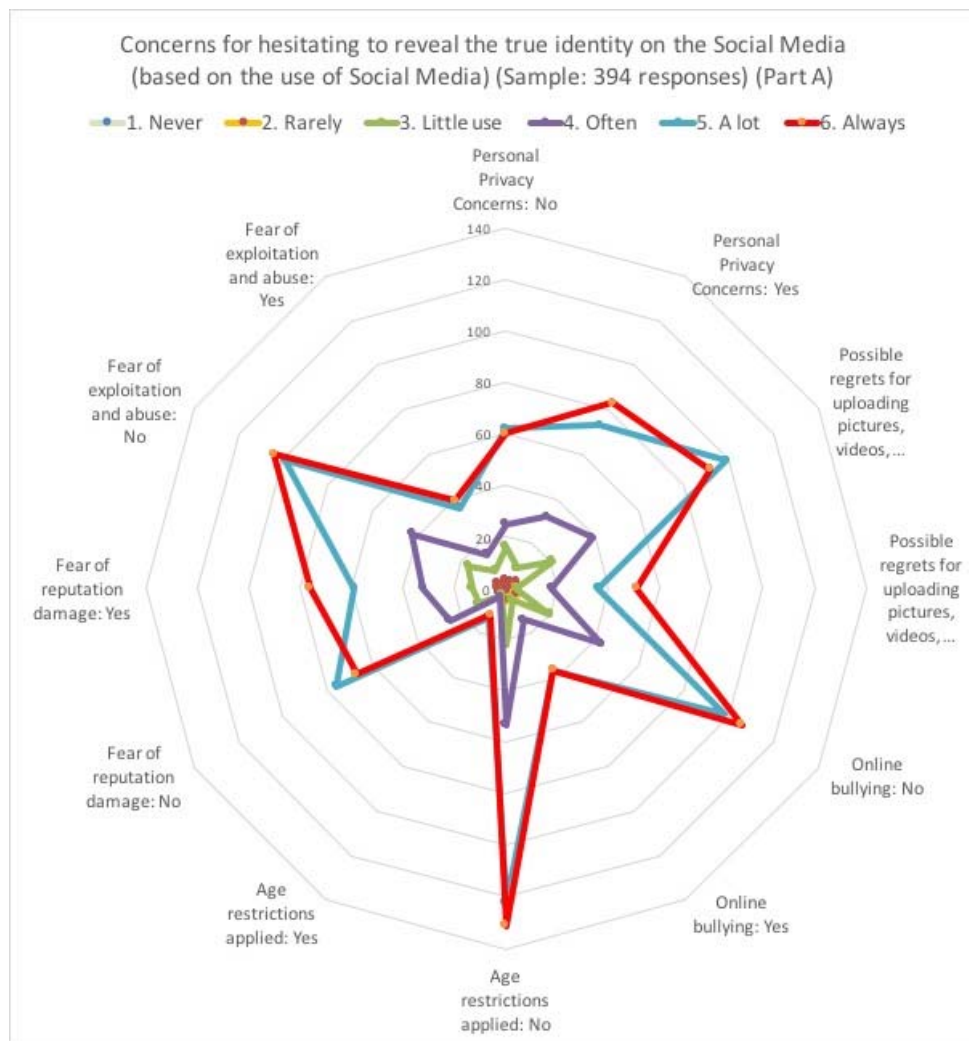
Figure 4: Concerns for hesitating to reveal the true identity on the SMNs in KSA (I).

Table 6: Concerns about threats associated with the use of SMNs (Part II)

| SMN use	Low self-esteem		Cultural Issues		Identity theft		Social issues (e.g. divorce)		Religious Issues		
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Totals
Never	2 100%	0 0%	2 100%	0 0%	2 100%	0 0%	2 100%	0 0%	2 100%	0 0%	2
Rarely	4 66.7%	2 33.3%	5 83.3%	1 16.7%	5 83.3%	1 16.7%	5 83.3%	1 16.7%	5 83.3%	1 16.7%	6
Little	22 88%	3 12%	24 96%	1 4%	24 96%	1 4%	21 84%	4 16%	23 92%	2 8%	25
Often	43 75.4%	14 24.6%	46 80.7%	11 19.3%	52 91.2%	5 8.8%	47 82.5%	10 17.5%	49 86%	8 14%	57
A lot	111 82.2%	24 17.8%	100 74.1%	35 25.9%	118 87.4%	17 12.6%	119 88.1%	16 11.9%	121 89.6%	14 10.4%	135
Always	117 81.8%	26 18.2%	113 79%	30 21%	123 86%	20 14%	117 81.8%	26 18.2%	125 87.4%	18 12.6%	143
Total	323 82%	71 18%	310 78.7%	84 21.3%	348 88.3%	46 11.7%	332 84.3%	62 15.7%	348 88.3%	46 11.7%	394
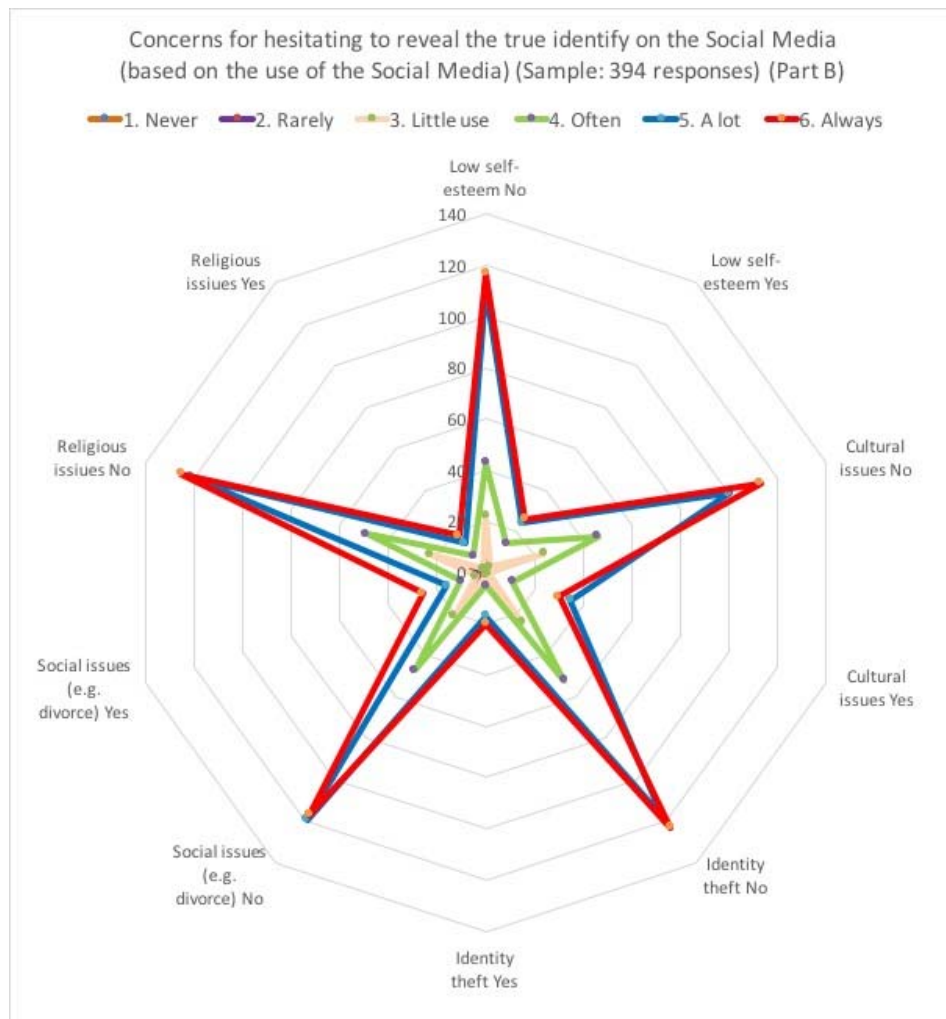
Figure 5: Concerns for hesitating to reveal the true identity on the SMNs in KSA (II).

4. DISCUSSION

So far it was well known for Saudis that they are making heavy use of smartphones and all kinds of different electronic devices including tablets, laptops, etc. It was, also, known that SMS texting is among their favorite hobbies (maybe together with car racing and drifting). This study reveals a few other facts that were pretty much assumed and expected but not formally recognized yet.

The first is that female individuals make slightly more use of the Social Networks with males following closely behind. This does not necessarily mean that more females are using the social media than males (the opposite might also be true) but that they use it more heavily, as far as the time they spend on it, and more intensely. Similarly, concerning the individuals' age, the younger an individual the more the use of these media with the older ones making also heavy use. Education does not seem to affect the use of the Social Media of the average Saudi if the individual's level is higher than the secondary level. Income does not affect this behavior in a negative way regardless if it is high or if the individual has no income at all. Unemployed individuals or students tend to use the media heavily with housewives almost equally so. It is, also, clear and expected, that if the individual makes heavy use of the Internet it will lead to heavy use of the Social Media as well.

The second is that, despite the above and the deep level of penetration of the Social Media use in the country, the local individuals do not trust them enough to reveal their true identity regardless of the possible motives one would suggest they might have. This is independent, also, from the particular demographics characteristics of the population with just some minor variations that do not affect the main pattern. As negative as it might seem at first, this is not really discouraging for the future of the online communities of the social networks given the short life of these communities so far, i.e. around 15 years and in some cases even less than 10 years. It should only be taken as a recommendation to the administrators of these communities to work more on improving the online environments and provide to their members an enhanced sense of security and protection of personal privacy aiming to just increase the number of the individual members with a positive attitude towards the idea of revealing their true identity over these networks.

Rather contradicting with the previous is the third fact which suggests that the Saudis seem to feel no particular threat from their engagement with SMN apart from some worries for their privacy and,

to some extent, some fear that their reputation will be damaged. The most interesting part of this current study is that only the unemployed and the retired individuals are even less concerned about all these threats than the rest of the population. This could be interpreted in several ways one of which being that for the unemployed, their main concern being to get a job, their "shields" and worries about the rest are either somewhat or significantly lowered. As to the case of the retired it can be generally assumed that, perhaps, they don't really care since they enjoy the safety of their retirement.

In trying to interpret these findings the reader should keep in mind some realities about the people with the social media. First, people are very keen with the idea of presenting themselves in different ways based on the target audience they are addressing. Therefore, their "persona" is distinguished between what could be called the "public self" and the "inner self". Thus, online interactions are analogous to those someone has with "strangers in the train" in which case that individual might easily open up and, maybe, disclose intimate details that s/he might never say to someone in the "inner circle" (relatives etc.).

The above all "boil down" to one general interpretation suggested by the findings. No matter the motives, with small and very limited exceptions, people in Saudi Arabia don't reveal their true identity because they can present themselves the way they "want", as opposed to the way they are, i.e. "the actual-me" and because they, thus, can avoid annoying questions about their country, habits, religion and culture or questions about their neighborhood, people they know, etc.

The negative part of the findings is that they don't seem to care about a couple of real threats i.e. the fact that their personal information can easily escape (forever) from their own control and that because of the absence of identity check anyone can assume any name without real control.

5. CONCLUSIONS-FUTURE WORK

This is an exploratory study trying to bridge the gap of knowledge regarding some qualitative characteristics of the use of the Social Media in Saudi Arabia. The above suggestions are only meant to give some good insight to the local decision makers to study in a more systematic and exhaustive way to see whether they are valid to the whole population and if, as the authors believe, that is so then proceed to educating the local society of the ways to avoid the traps related with the extensive use of the SMN.

The particular study is only about Saudi Arabia. It would be interesting to examine the situation in the other important countries of the GCC, especially U.A.E., Oman, and Qatar to have a holistic view of the profile of the average Arab individual in the region.

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APPENDIX

Profiling the average Saudi's trust towards the Social Media

Thank you in advance for your time. The answers will remain confidential and the results will be used only for the purposes of this research

Q1. What is your gender?
  _a. Male   _b. Female

Q2. What is your age?
  _a. Below 18   _b. 18 to 15   _c. 26 to 35   _d. 36 to 45
  _e. 46 to 60   _f. Older than 60   _g. Don't know / Can't say

Q3. What is your educational level?
  _a. Elementary   _b. Intermediate   _c. Secondary (high school)
  _d. Diploma or Vocational   _e. Undergraduate (B.Sc.)   _f. Graduate (M.Sc.)
  _g. Postgraduate (PhD)   _h. Other:_____   _i. Don't know / Can't say

Q4. What is your employment status?
  _a. Employed   _b. Unemployed   _c. Student   _d. Housewife
  _e. Retired   _f. Don't know/Can't say

Q5. What is roughly your family monthly income (in SR)?
  _a. <4,000   _b. 4,001-8,000   _c. 8,001-15,000   _d. 15,001-25,000
  _e. 25,0001-50,000   _f. > 50,000   _g. No income   _h. Don't know/ Can't say

Q6. What is the frequency of your use of the Internet?
  _a. Never use it   _b. Only emails   _c. Rare use   _d. Little use
  _e. Use it often   _f. > A lot daily   _g. Always daily   _h. Don't know/ Can't say

Q7. What is (roughly) the frequency of your Social Media usage?
_ a. Never use it   _ b. Rarely (1 hour per month)
_ c. A little (2 hours biweekly)   _ d. Often (up to 5 hours a week)
_ e. A lot (3 hours a day)   _ f. Always connected
_ g. Don't know/can't say

Q8. What are the reasons that, you believe, would urge individuals in Saudi Arabia to reveal their true identities over social media?
_ a. Build personal credibility   _ b. Maintain distant social relations.
_ c. Enhance security   _ d. Enhance accountability
_ e. Make new relations/socializing _ f. Protect intellectual property rights
_ g. Don't know/can't say   _ h. Other: _____

Q9. What are the reasons, you believe, individuals in Saudi Arabia would hesitate to reveal their true identities over social media?
_ a. Personal privacy concerns   _ b. Regrets in uploaded pictures, videos, comments
_ c. Online bullying   _ d. Age restrictions applied
_ e. Fear of reputation damage   _ f. Fear of exploitation and abuse
_ g. Low self-esteem   _ h. Cultural issues
_ i. Identity Theft   _ j. Social problems (e.g. Divorce)
_ k. Religious issues   _ l. Don't know/can't say
_ m. Other: _____