The Dependence of University Youth on Social Media for Obtaining News about the Gulf Crisis

اعتماد الشباب الجامعي على الشبكات الاجتماعية في الحصول على المعلومات حول الأزمة الخليجية

Falah Amer Aldahmashi
Department of Communication and Media, Faculty of Arts, King Faisal University, Al Ahsa, Saudi Arabia

فلاح عامر الدهمشي

قسم الاتصال والإعلام، كلية الآداب، جامعة الملك فيصل، الأحساء، المملكة العربية السعودية

ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify Saudi university students' reliance on social media to obtain news about the Gulf crisis, and questions to what extent the Saudi youth are satisfied with the content of social media related to the Gulf crisis. The key hypothesis of the study is that there is a great motivation among the Saudi youth to consider social media websites as primary trustful, knowledgeable and informative sources. As this research is descriptive in nature, the study organised a survey compatible with the requirements of scientific methodology, and with the substance of the study itself. In terms of sample size, a sample of 200 Saudi university youths was selected. In conclusion, the study marked certain findings: that social media was the main source of information that Saudi university students utilise to follow the successive proceedings of the Gulf crisis. Meanwhile, social media websites have become an essential aspect of their lives. Also, the study highly recommends professionality, obligation and assurance of the credibility of every material qualified to be published on social media websites. For the official circles in charge of issues related to youth, the study appeals to these circles to organise educational workshops that enable the youth able to differentiate and appreciate the best ways and means to obtain information and news.

الملخص

هدفت الدراسة إلى التعرف على اعتماد الشباب الجامعي على الشبكات الاجتماعية في الحصول على المعلومات حول الأزمة الخليجية، ومدى رضاه عن تناول هذه الشبكات للأزمة الخليجية. بنت الدراسة فرضيتها على أن هناك دافعية كبيرة عند الشباب السعودي من شريحة طلاب الجامعات في متابعة واستقاء المعلومات من مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي الأمر الذي يترتب عليه كثير من المترتبات المعرفية. تندرج هذه الدراسة ضمن البحوث الوصفية التي تعتمد على منهج المسح بالاستبانة، حيث تم بناؤها لأغراض الدراسة وفقا للخطوات العلمية المتعارف عليها، والتي طبقت على عينة الدراسة حجمها (200) مفردة من الشباب الجامعي. وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى عدد من النتائج أهمها: تصدر الشبكات الاجتماعية للمصادر التي يعتمد عليها الشباب الجامعي في متابعته الأزمة الخليجية، وأن هذا الاعتماد يتزايد من حين لآخر، وأوصت الدراسة بضرورة الالتزام والتأكد من صدق المواد التي يتم نشرها والتعامل معها بمهنية عالية، كما طالبت الدراسة الجهات التي تتعامل مع الشباب بضرورة عقد ورش عمل تثقيفية لتعريف الشباب بأفضل الطرق للتأكد من صدق ومهنية المواد التي يتعرضون لها.

1. Introduction

The events of the Gulf crisis have formed a sequence over the years. In March 2014, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE withdrew their ambassadors from Qatar because of what they defined as Doha's failure to comply with previously agreed Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) decisions. The most notable among these failures were the Qatari attitude towards the 3 July revolution in Egypt, the support the State of Qatar gave to the Arab Spring revolutions, the relations of the Government of Qatar with the Muslim Brotherhood, and the media handling of Al-Jazeera news of some events. In November 2014, ambassador assignments for Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Bahrain to Doha were announced after the State of Qatar's government declared its commitment to some of the resolutions that were previously agreed upon by the GCC (Zayani, 2015). Al-Jazeera direct news Egypt was shut down, and in addition, some leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood were deported from Qatar to Turkey. In May 2017, the Qatar News Agency broadcasted a statement by the Emir of Qatar criticising what he called 'anti-Iranian sentiment', but Qatari officials quickly denied the statements, blaming hackers for the mix-up. Saudi and Emirati criticism escalated sharply after Sheikh Tamim phoned Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, which was considered as a challenge to the Kingdom. On 5 June 2017, Saudi Arabia announced the severing of relations with Qatar and shut all air, land and seaports between the two countries. The Saudi Foreign Ministry stated that since 1995, Saudi Arabia and its brothers had made strenuous efforts to urge the authorities in Doha to abide by their commitments and agreements. However, these authorities had repeatedly violated their international obligations and breached the agreements they signed under the

umbrella of the GCC to stop hostilities against Saudi Arabia and to stand against terrorist groups and activities, the latest being the failure to fulfil the Riyadh Agreement of 2014 (Bødker, 2017: 56–74). According to a statement published by the Saudi Press Agency, an official source stated that, in accordance with its sovereign rights guaranteed by law and in order to protect its national security from the dangers of terrorism and extremism, the Government of Saudi Arabia decided to sever diplomatic and consular relations with the State of Qatar. Saudi Arabia also decided to shut all air, land and seaports to and from Qatar, in addition to prohibiting passage into Saudi land, airspace and territorial waters, and to start immediate legal procedures for an agreement with brotherly and friendly countries and international companies in order to implement the same procedure as soon as possible for all means of transport to and from Qatar. On Tuesday, 6 June 2017, the General Authority of Civil Aviation in Saudi Arabia declared the cancellation of all licences granted to Qatar Airways, closing all its offices in the Kingdom within 48 hours, and withdrawing all licences granted by the authority to all Qatar Airways employees. The Saudi Monetary Agency (SAMA) instructed the Kingdom's banks not to deal with Qatari banks in Qatar Riyals and to suspend all transactions with them (Ferrucci, 2017: 79–89). On 5 June 2017, the UAE expressed its support for the Kingdom of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia's statements according to the framework of its commitment and support for the GCC system. It described Saudi Arabia's official statement to sever diplomatic relations with Qatar as 'decisive' because of the continued policy of the Qatari authorities, which was destabilising the security and stability of the region, and a lack of commitment on their part to the Riyadh Agreement for the return of ambassadors and to the supplementary agreements of 2014, as well as Qatar's continued

فلاح عامر الدهمشي. (2021). اعتماد الشباب الجامعي على الشبكات الاجتماعية في الحصول على المعلومات حول الأزمة الخليجية.
المجلة العلمية لجامعة الملك فيصل، فرع العلوم الإنسانية والإدارية، المجلد (22)، العدد (1)

358

support and funding of terrorist organisations, extremism and sectarianism, and of the Muslim Brotherhood and its ongoing work to spread and promote the ideology of Al-Qaeda and Daesh through its direct and indirect media. Furthermore, it cited Qatar's revoking of the statement issued by the Arab American Islamic Summit in Riyadh, dated 21 May 2017, to combat terrorism, which considered Iran the state sponsor of terrorism in the region. This was in conjunction with Qatar harbouring extremists and wanted persons in its territory and interfering in the internal affairs of the UAE and other countries. The statement pointed out that the policies adopted by the Qatari authorities had led to a rupture among the people of the region, with an emphasis on the whole in respect to the people of Qatar because of the ties and kinship of history and religion (Marleen, 2012).

This study, in its theoretical approach, relies on the theory of reliance or dependence. We can determine the dependence of young Saudis on social media through this theory. The theory of reliance pertains to the interactive relationship between the media, the public, the community and existing systems, and through an analysis of this relationship, the impact of social media on individuals and society can be understood. According to the theory, social media interact with existing social systems, and their role becomes increasingly important in times of uncertainty, tension and social change (Cui, 2016: 852–70). The media often reduce tension and support mechanisms for change. The basic idea of this theory is that the use of social media by individuals occurs outside of the influence of the society in which they live and that social media's influence is increased when the media convey the news continuously and intensively (Taekke, 2017: 182–94).

2. Previous Studies

A study by Al-Yahyai (2013) entitled 'The Reliance of the Omani Audience on Social Media during a Crisis, An Empirical Study on the Juno Climate Crisis' showed that Omani newspapers and magazines had the highest rate of exposure, at 50 per cent, of the respondents to the different media, while the highest rate of non-exposure was to foreign radio stations, which reached 40.1 per cent. The results showed that Al Watan newspaper and the Oman newspaper had the highest rate of exposure by the respondents to the Omani newspapers and magazines, at 92 per cent, while the highest rate of non-exposure was to the newspaper Koura, which had 94.2 per cent. It was found that Oman satellite news had the highest rate of exposure among Omani channels and radio stations, with 74.5 per cent, while the highest rate of non-exposure was to Oman local news, with 31.2 per cent. The study by Radwan (2016) aimed at identifying the extent of young Palestinians' dependence on mobile phones as a source of news at times of crisis, as well as recognising the reasons and motivations for this dependence, and the cognitive, emotional and behavioural influences. The study was part of a piece of descriptive research. The data was collected through a survey and personal interview methods. The sample was randomly selected, and it consisted of 207 young Palestinian respondents from all the governorates of the country. The study was applied during the period from 2 July 2015 to 15 June 2016, and it used the theory of reliance on the media. The study concluded several results, most notably:

- Respondents relied on mobile phone news (77.8%) in times of crisis, while 72.2 per cent trusted the news they accessed via this method.
- Applications of social communication for mobile news that young Palestinians relied on in following up the events of the Al-Quds Intifada was 88.2%.
- The respondents highest preference was for the speed of the news, then the interaction via the hashtags to follow up on the events of the Jerusalem Intifada via mobile phone.
- The present study aims to identify the reliance and dependence of university students on social media for obtaining news about the Gulf crisis.

3. The Study Problem

The rapid spread of social media has led to the public's reliance on them for exchanging news. It has become a place for debating political and social issues, discussing ideas and opinions and establishing friendships of all kinds, especially among university students. The study aims to reveal the motives of university students for relying on social media for accessing news about the Gulf crisis by surveying a sample of these students.

3.1. Study Questions:

- Question 1: What are the motives of university students for using social media?
- Question 2: What are university students' reasons for relying on social media when following the current Gulf crisis?
- Question 3: What are the cognitive, affective, and behavioural effects on university students as a result of their reliance on social media when following the current Gulf crisis?

3.2. Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify the intensity of the use of social media among young Saudis in light of the events in the Gulf crisis.
- To determine the factors affecting the reliance of young Saudis on social media during these events and the nature of their interaction with the media.
- To measure the extent to which cognitive, emotional and behavioural influences are associated with relying on social media during the Gulf crisis.
- To determine the most important news discovered by young Saudis as a result of their reliance on social media.
- To determine young Saudis' most important sources of news.
- To determine trends in the attitudes of young Saudis towards the Gulf crisis.
- To intercept the effects of social media on young Saudis.

3.3. The Importance of the Study:

First, the prominent role of the media in all its forms in leading events, political decision-making and the rapid transfer of values and culture among peoples, as well as the effective role of the media in the spread of satellites and their ability to keep pace with events as soon as they occur, have all been studied and researched. However, the growing presence of social media in our Arab media, which is similar to the balloon phenomenon in its inflation and density, is no longer symmetric with the scarcity of academic media studies that address this phenomenon with a scientific methodology and try to monitor it critically and analytically in order to offer guidance and orientation.

Second, the media are no longer just a method of entertainment and amusement, or simply a means of monitoring and analysing the news. They have become guiding agents of political action and decision-making at both regional and international levels. It is based on this fact that the present study derives its importance. It looks at the relationship of the media phenomenon with the study of crises, which is considered one of the most important modern human sciences and that has increased in importance in the current era when many changes have occurred at international, regional and national levels, and where the media component is considered key.

Third, the privileged position of the media stems from the influential role it plays at times of crisis by providing the public with data and news. This role also extends to the period after the crisis ends and contains its effects.

Fourth, many crises exist in the Arab world, including the Gulf crisis, and university youth in all countries are affected by these crises. This study tries to examine how young Saudis perceive this crisis in light of their reliance on social media.

Fifth, the young are the most important segment in any society, and if

فلاح عامر الدهمشي. (2021). اعتماد الشباب الجامعي على الشبكات الاجتماعية في الحصول على المعلومات حول الأزمة الخليجية.
المجلة العلمية لجامعة الملك فيصل، فرع العلوم الإنسانية والإدارية، المجلد (22)، العدد (1)

359

today they represent half of the present, tomorrow they will be the whole future. All nations rely on university youth to dominate the future out of a deep understanding that they are the key to any democratic, political, economic or social development transition. University youth are the most dynamic and influential segment in any strong society, where political participation is the essence of this composition. To discuss university youth in our Arab society is to talk about the present and the future, which is full of important political transformations that transport our people to wider horizons in order to meet the future challenges and requirements of development and democracy.

4. Methodology

In this study, a descriptive approach was used to identify the dependence of university students on social media for obtaining news about the Gulf crisis.

4.1. Instrument of the Study:

The researcher used a questionnaire to study the dependence of university students on social media in obtaining news about the Gulf crisis.

4.2. The Study Sample:

The study sample consisted of 200 students, who were selected using the intentional random method from King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia during the second semester of the 2017–2018 academic year.

4.3. Validity and Reliability:

There is a set of methods to ascertain stability. The researcher chose the method of retesting. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to a group sample from the study community. The correlation coefficient between the two tests was 95 per cent, thus confirming the stability of the scale, and this validates the scale for achieving its goal. The researcher used the method of virtual honesty, which is expressed by the agreement between the arbitrators and the respondents that the scale or tool is valid. Based on the test and the opinion of the arbitrators, some of the questions in the questionnaire were rearranged, and some open questions were closed.

4.4. Statistical Analysis:

The data have been analysed using the Statistical Package Program (SPSS), frequencies and percentages have been extracted, and Cronbach's alpha testing has been used to identify the reliability of the study tool. In order to answer the study questions, arithmetic averages and statistical deviations have been used.

5. Results

Question 1: What are university students' motives for using social media? In order to answer this question, the arithmetical averages and standard deviations that measure the level of the political motivation of university students for their use of social media and the general average of the total field were extracted. Table 1 illustrates this.

Table 1: The arithmetical averages and standard deviations of all paragraphs that measure the level of political motivation for university students' use of social media

#	Paragraph	Arithmetical average	Standard deviation	Rank	Level
1	Following news and local issues	4.06	0.99	1	High
2	Following news and regional issues	3.46	1.19	3	High
3	Following news and Arabic issues	3.67	1.10	2	High
4	Following news and global issues	3.42	1.24	4	Medium
5	Following political analysis	2.53	1.21	8	Medium
6	Learning about political affairs in the region	3.07	1.19	5	Medium
7	Following elections and candidates	2.39	1.30	9	Medium
8	Watching talk shows	2.58	1.29	6	Medium
9	Learning about political parties that gainsay state policy	2.35	1.23	10	Medium
10	Participation in political opinions and trends	2.55	1.41	7	Medium
	General average	3.01	0.87		Medium

Table 1 shows the mathematical averages of all the statements that measure the level of political motivation for the use of social media among university students. They ranged between 2.35–4.06. The most prominent statements were 1, which stipulates 'following news and local issues' and 3, which reads: 'Following Arab news and issues'. The lowest mathematical averages were found in statement 9, which describes 'learning about political parties' with an average of 2.35. The general average of all statements that measure the level of political motivation for the use by university students of social media was 3.01 with an average level.

Question 2: What are the reasons for the reliance of university students on social media when following the current Gulf crisis? In order to answer this question, the arithmetical averages and standard deviations that measure the reasons for the dependence of university youth on social media when following the Gulf crisis and current events were extracted. The overall average of the total area is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: The arithmetical averages and standard deviations that measure the reasons for the dependence of university students on social media when following the ongoing Gulf crisis were extracted

#	Paragraph	Arithmetical average	Standard deviation	Rank	Level
1	High speed	4.03	0.93	1	High
2	The information is accurate and clear	3.42	1.15	11	Medium
3	A variety of political information is available	3.56	1.13	10	Medium
4	Easy access to information	3.89	1.15	2	High
5	The possibility of comparing its contents with the contents of other sites	3.70	1.14	6	High
6	Ease of recording and accessing results	3.63	1.16	8	Medium
7	The possibility of language conversion and translation	3.85	1.08	3	High
8	Information is free of charge	3.72	1.34	5	High
9	Analysing information	3.11	1.32	14	Medium
10	In-depth dealing with events	3.13	1.25	13	Medium
11	Provides accurate policy information	2.66	1.29	7	Medium
12	Addresses the needs of viewers	3.38	1.28	12	Medium
13	High levels of freedom those sites have	3.61	1.05	9	Medium
14	Have high credibility	3.00	1.24	15	Medium
15	Introduces different opinions	3.84	1.05	4	High
	General average	3.50	0.70		Medium

Table 2 shows that the mathematical averages of all the statements that measure the reasons for the dependence of university students on social media when following the ongoing Gulf crisis ranged from 3.00–4.03. The most notable of these were statement 1, which states 'high speed' with a high level, followed by statement 4 with an average of 3.89 with a high level, which states 'easy access to information', while the lowest arithmetic mean was statement 14, which states 'enjoy high credibility' with an average of 3.00 and a

فلاح عامر الدهمشي. (2021). اعتماد الشباب الجامعي على الشبكات الاجتماعية في الحصول على المعلومات حول الأزمة الخليجية.
المجلة العلمية لجامعة الملك فيصل، فرع العلوم الإنسانية والإدارية، المجلد (22)، العدد (1)

360

medium level. The general average of all the statements that measure the reasons for the dependence of university students on social media when following the ongoing Gulf crisis was 3.50 and a medium level.

Question 3: What are the cognitive, affective, and behavioural effects on university students as a result of their reliance on social media when following the current Gulf crisis? In order to answer this question, the arithmetical averages and standard deviations that measure the level of cognitive, affective and behavioural effects on university students as a result of their reliance on social media when following the current Gulf crisis and the general average of the total field were extracted. Table 3 illustrates this:

Table 3: Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of all statements that measure the cognitive, affective, and behavioural effects on university students following the Gulf crisis

#	Paragraph	Arithmetical average	Standard deviation	Rank	Level
1	Cognitive effects	3.15	0.91	1	Medium
2	Emotional effects	3.40	0.89	2	Medium
3	Behavioural effects	2.91	0.97	4	Medium
	Effects as a whole	3.13	0.81		Medium

Table 3 shows that the arithmetic averages that measure the cognitive, affective, and behavioural effects achieved by university students as a result of their use of social media to follow the Gulf crisis ranged between 2.91 and 3.40. The most prominent of these were the 'emotional effects' with a mean average of 3.40 and a medium level, followed by 'cognitive effects', which came in at an average of 3.15 and an average level, while 'behavioural effects' ranked last with an average of 2.91 and a medium level. The mean of the effects as a whole was 3.13.

Each section is presented separately.

5.1. Cognitive Effects:

Table 4: The arithmetical averages and the standard deviations of all statements related to cognitive effects

#	Paragraph	Arithmetical average	Standard deviation	Rank	Level
1	Contributed to raising the level of my political knowledge	3.40	1.22	1	Medium
2	Explained the reasons for the political issues raised	3.10	1.15	5	Medium
3	Provided important information on political events	3.24	1.13	3	Medium
4	Increased my understanding of political affairs in my region	3.22	1.12	4	Medium
5	Enhanced my knowledge about the Gulf crisis	2.72	1.19	6	Medium
6	I became more aware of political events	3.25	1.28	2	Medium
	General average	3.15	0.91		Medium

Table 4 shows that the arithmetic averages of all statements related to cognitive effects ranged between 2.72 and 3.40. The most prominent was statement 1, which states, 'contributed to the elevation of my political knowledge' and was a high level. Statement 6 had an average of 3.25 and a medium level and states 'I became more aware of the political events'. The lowest average was for statement 5, which states 'it enhanced my information about the election process', with an average of 2.72. The general average of all statements on knowledge effects was 3.15 and a medium level.

5.2. Emotional Effects:

Table 5: The arithmetic average and the standard deviations of statements relating to the emotional effects

#	Paragraph	Arithmetical average	Standard deviation	Rank	Level
1	Awareness of the seriousness of the events of the Gulf crisis	3.67	1.03	1	High
2	Sympathy for victims of political events	3.72	1.03	2	High
3	Less reluctant to express my political views	3.34	1.22	4	Medium
4	More reluctant to express my political views	2.99	1.24	6	Medium
5	Fear of the development of political events and issues	3.25	1.22	3	Medium
6	Fear of the impact of political issues around the world in my region	3.24	1.13	5	Medium
	General average	3.40	0.89		Medium

Table 5 shows that the arithmetic average and the standard deviations of all statements relating to emotional effects ranged between 2.99 and 3.76. The most prominent statement was paragraph 1, which stipulates 'awareness of the seriousness of the current political events' and was a high level. Then came statement 2 with an average of 3.72, and a high level. It states 'sympathy for victims of political events'. The general average of all statements on emotional effects was 3.40, and a medium level.

5.3. Behavioural Effects:

Table 6: The arithmetical averages and standard deviations of all statements on behavioural effects

#	Paragraph	Arithmetical average	Standard deviation	Rank	Level
1	Increased my desire to follow the events of the Gulf crisis	3.57	1.12	1	High
2	I participated in discussions and dialogues on political events	2.92	1.33	4	Medium
3	I participated in conferences and seminars on political events	2.56	1.48	7	Medium
4	It influenced my views and my political orientation	2.87	1.23	5	Medium
5	It increased my desire to participate in the events of the Gulf crisis	2.45	1.52	8	Medium
6	My desire to participate in the events of the Gulf crisis decreased	3.11	1.38	2	Medium
7	It increased my desire to participate in elections	2.78	1.36	6	Medium
8	My desire to participate in elections decreased	2.99	1.44	3	Medium
	General average	2.91	0.97		Medium

Table 6 shows that the arithmetical averages and standard deviations of all statements on behavioural effects ranged between 2.45 and 3.57. The most prominent statement is 1, which states that the desire 'to follow the events of the Gulf crisis' increased at a high level, followed by statement 6, with an average of 3.11, and a medium level, which states: 'My desire to participate in the events of the Gulf crisis decreased'. The lowest average (2.45) was for statement 5, which states 'It increased my desire to participate in the events of the Gulf crisis' with a medium level. The general average for all the statements on behavioural effects was 2.91 and an average level.

6. General Results

By presenting the results of the statistical analysis and addressing the study questions, the results can be summarised as follows:

- The results showed that 48.8 per cent of university students used social media for more than three hours per day.
- The results showed that 95.5 per cent of university students use their real names on social media.
- The results showed that 45 per cent of university students use their own photos on social media.
- The results showed that 99 per cent of university students use their

فلاح عامر الدهمشي. (2021). اعتماد الشباب الجامعي على الشبكات الاجتماعية في الحصول على المعلومات حول الأزمة الخليجية.
المجلة العلمية لجامعة الملك فيصل، فرع العلوم الإنسانية والإدارية، المجلد (22)، العدد (1)

361

own data on social media.

- The results showed that 84.3 per cent of university students did not have more than one social media account.
- The results showed an average level of motivation among university students to use social media.
- The results showed an average level of political motivation among university students to use social media.
- The results showed reasons for the reliance of university students on social media in following the crisis in the Gulf and current events to a high degree.
- The results showed the effects of knowledge and cognitive behaviours among young university students as a result of their reliance on social media when following the Gulf crisis.

7. Discussion

7.1. A discussion of the first question: What are university students' motives for using social media?

The result discussion of the question shows the mathematical averages of all the statements that measure the level of political motivation for the use of social media among university students. They ranged between 4.06–2.35. The most prominent statements are those that stipulate 'following news and local issues' and 'Following Arab news and issues'. The lowest mathematical averages were found in the statement that describes 'learning about political parties' with an average of 2.35. The general average of all statements that measure the level of political motivation for the use by university students of social media was 3.01 and at an average level. The results show that university students are interested in using social media to learn about current events, such as local and Arab issues. That is, university students are interested in the Gulf crisis and its events as well as local events. However, learning about political parties was of minimal interest to the sample, which indicates weakness in the work of political parties, as well as an unwillingness of the public to engage with them.

7.2. A discussion of the second question: What are the reasons for the reliance of university students on social media when following the current Gulf crisis?

The results section shows that the mathematical averages of all the statements that measure the reasons for the dependence of university students on social media when following the ongoing Gulf crisis ranged from 3.00–4.03. The most notable of these was the statement 'high speed' with a high level, followed by the statement with an average of 3.89 at a high level, which states 'easy access to information', while the lowest arithmetic mean was the statement that states 'enjoy high credibility' with an average of 3.00 and a medium level. The general average of all the statements that measures the reasons for the dependence of university students on social media when following the ongoing Gulf crisis was 3.50 and at a medium level. The results show that university students do not care about the validity of the news circulating on social media as much as they care about the speed and ease of access to the information. This indicates mistakes when obtaining news. Usually, news that is fast and easily accessed cannot be trusted and could harm the entire community if believed unquestioningly.

7.3. A discussion of the third question: What are the cognitive, affective and behavioural effects on university students as a result of their reliance on social media when following the current Gulf crisis?

The results show that the arithmetic averages that measure the cognitive, emotional and behavioural effects on university students as a result of their use of social media when following the Gulf crisis ranged between 2.91 and 3.40. The most prominent of these was the

'affective effects' with a mean average of 3.40 and a medium level, followed by 'cognitive effects', which came in at an average of 3.15 and an average level, while 'behavioural effects' ranked last with an average of 2.91 and a medium level. The mean of the effects as a whole was 3.13. We conclude from these results that the use by university students of social media to follow the Gulf crisis was at a medium percentage with reference to the students' attention to the issues surrounding them and that their use for following the Gulf crisis has achieved cognitive, emotional and behavioural effects at a medium level.

8. Recommendations

In light of the findings of the study, the following is recommended:

- Websites must adhere to professionalism and accuracy of all materials used on social media sites.
- The public should investigate the accuracy of social media pages they use, and make sure that these pages do not publish false information.
- University students should not publish information on any subject without making sure it is correct, so as not to mislead or confuse the public because of the rapid spread of information and news on social media resources.
- Universities should offer courses that teach students how to deal with social media.
- Conferences and educational sessions led by youth organisations should be held to educate university youth about the positive and negative aspects of the materials presented by social media and how to deal with these sites in the right way.

Bios

Falah Amer Aldahmashi

Department of Communication and Media, King Faisal University, Al Ahsa. Saudi Arabia, faldahmashi@kfu.edu.sa 00966554404583

Dr Aldahmashi is an associate professor of media (radio and television). He is the representative of King Faisal University in the Saudi National Center For Assessment and a consultant for the same centre. He is an author and has published various books and articles. He has given and attended various training courses and seminars. He is a writer for local and regional newspapers.

References

Al Zayani, A. (2015). *The GCC Youth Attitudes Towards News Ticker As A Source Of News Attitude.* Master's Dissertation, Bahrain University, Manama.

Al-Yahyai, T. (2013). *The Reliance Of The Omani Audience On Social Media During A Crisis, An Empirical Study On The Juno Climate Crisis.* Master's Dissertation, Cairo University.

Bødker, H. and Brügger, N. (2017). The shifting temporalities of online news: The Guardian's website from 1996 to 2015. *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism,* **19**(1), 56–74.

Cui, Xi and Yu Liu. (2016). How does online news curate linked sources? A content analysis of three online news media. *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism,* **18**(7), 852–70.

Ferrucci, P. (2017). Technology allows audience role in news construction. *Newspaper Research Journal,* **38**(1), 79–89.

Marleen, B. (2012). *The Role of Social Media in Crisis Communication from a Democratic Perspective.* Master's Dissertation, University of Twente.

Radwan, A. (2016). *Young Palestinians' Dependence on Mobile Phones as a Source of News at Times of Crisis.* Master's Dissertation, The Islamic University, Gaza.

Reuters with AP. (2017). *Saudi Arabia, Egypt Lead Arab States Cutting Qatar Ties, Iran Blames Trump.* CNBC. Available at: https://www.cnbc.com/2017/06/04/saudi-arabia-bahrain-and-egypt-cut-diplomatic-ties-with-qatar.html (accessed on 02/04/2020)

Taekke, J. (2017). Crisis communication and social media. A systems- and medium-theoretical perspective. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science,* **34**(2), 182–94.