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## Determination of Social Media Satisfaction

### Among Iraqi Audience Toward Religious Issues

#### ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the level of satisfaction with the public's use of social media platforms. The goal is also to shed light on how the users of social media sites fulfill their needs and motives for getting information about religious issues which related Islamic topics. Also, through this paper, we will show the role of the new media in spreading religious awareness among the public, for the reason that the electronic media is no longer satisfied with just monitoring the event and communicating information, but rather has the power to influence the behavior of users, becoming the pressure and control factors, triggering event and preparing for it at the same time. This research is designed according to the method of quantitative research. A questionnaire was prepared and distributed to a random, anomalous sample of the Iraqi audiences in order to determine the satisfaction of using the new media in terms of religious issues. This research shows how important social networking platforms are and how it has become an integral part of the daily behavior. This research also added a new experience to the concept application of Theory of Uses and Gratification (U&G), where it applies the concept of this theory and knowledge of the levels of influence on the public through their utilization of social networking sites and discovers the satisfaction that they obtain. The results of this search indicate that the Iraqi public's motives from their use of social media platforms are cognitive motives that enhanced their knowledge of religious issues of Islamic.

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**تحديد مدى رضا الجمهور العراقي عن وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تجاه القضايا الدينية**

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الخلاصة:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحديد مستوى الرضا عن استخدام الجمهور لمنصات التواصل الاجتماعي. الهدف هو أيضاً إلقاء الضوء على كيفية تلبية مستخدمي مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي لاحتياجاتهم ودوافعهم للحصول على

وقائع المؤتمر العلمي السابع تحت شعار (العلوم الانسانية بين التحديات الراهنة والافاق المستقبلية) الذي اقامته كلية الآداب في جامعة

واسط بتاريخ 2023/7/1

معلومات حول القضايا الدينية التي تتعلق بالموضوعات الإسلامية. كما سنبين من خلال هذه الورقة دور الإعلام الجديد في نشر الوعي الديني لدى الجمهور ، لأن الإعلام الإلكتروني لم يعد يكتفي بمجرد متابعة الحدث ونقل المعلومات ، بل أصبح له القدرة على التأثير. سلوك المستخدمين ، ليصبحوا عوامل الضغط والتحكم ، ويطلق الحدث ويستعد له في نفس الوقت. تم تصميم هذا البحث وفق منهج البحث الكمي. تم إعداد استبيان وتوزيعه على عينة عشوائية شاذة من الجمهور العراقي من أجل تحديد مدى الرضا عن استخدام الإعلام الجديد من حيث القضايا الدينية. يوضح هذا البحث مدى أهمية منصات التواصل الاجتماعي وكيف أصبحت جزءاً لا يتجزأ من السلوك اليومي. كما أضاف هذا البحث تجربة جديدة لمفهوم تطبيق نظرية الاستخدامات والإشباع (U&G) ، حيث يطبق مفهوم هذه النظرية ومعرفة مستويات التأثير على الجمهور من خلال استخدامهم لمواقع التواصل الاجتماعي ويكتشف الرضا. التي حصلوا عليها. وتشير نتائج هذا البحث إلى أن دوافع الجمهور العراقي من استخدامهم لمنصات التواصل الاجتماعي هي دوافع معرفية عززت معرفتهم بالقضايا الدينية الإسلامية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: وسائط جديدة ؛ القضايا الدينية؛ وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي نظرية الاستخدامات والإشباع. تأثير وسائل الإعلام

## INTRODUCTION

The media played different roles over time, for every time there was a prominent media outlet. What we are witnessing now from a technological and digital race in the media has made it an important tool for spreading information and entertainment, educating people, and increasing their awareness about different issues.

New media is an activity that never stops in life. To understand this point, it is important first to look at how humans learn things, build ideologies, and adopt different attitudes towards public issues and the characteristics of life, including religious issues. The new media possesses capabilities that make it the most influential way to introduce ideas and perspectives into the human brain to transmit messages implicitly and unconsciously. This technique is widely used in creating subjects or for spreading awareness. Information, topics, news stories, movies, etc. may permeate the subconscious of users of new media or social media platforms, and establish opinions and perspectives on important issues. This technique is like preparing fertile ground for

incubating seeds that may hatch later when the time is right. Also, when the human mind is constantly and continuously bombarded with certain ideas "according to the principle of repetition", it finally begins to accept them. The potential of the new media has now been used to educate people about religious issues and matters.

Social media was used to spread religious concepts and teachings, and it has become clear that nowadays, individuals have a necessity to use social media sites because these electronic platforms possess advantages and characteristics. The most important of which is the knowledge services that they provide to users. The essence of media work is to provide the public with information about news and events conducive to achieve various goals. The most powerful of all is to influence the behavior of the target audience. Through what a person is exposed to in large quantities of information across infinite space and around the clock through various electronic media images, they may contribute, directly or indirectly to adopt comforting ideas and this is reflected in the behavior of individuals in their interactions with each other toward some issues. Also, these methods contribute to building convictions and trends about a specific issue in an individual, as well as it has a major role in influencing social upbringing, which in turn affects the intellectual, social, and psychological building of the human being. Through programs with clear trends, as found in programs concerned with religious and intellectual issues, it has influenced human beings in a cumulative way across a span of time, where it contributes to a cycle by drawing a picture of the things, people, beliefs, and concepts around us and this is reflected in our attitudes and behavior towards the surrounding reality. On this basis and through this research, we were able to determine the levels of satisfaction among the Iraqi Muslim public when they used the new media. Through the trend of religious issues and adopting the theoretical concept of the Theory of Uses and Gratifications (U&G), we were able to monitor the role that the media plays in promoting concepts and beliefs of Islamic value and consolidating them to find the determinants of the satisfaction that the public obtained when they used the new media.

This research was designed to emulate the quantitative research methodology, through which a questionnaire was prepared and distributed to the Iraqi public. The sample was selected irregularly and randomly, where there was a number of participants in this study (270

respondents). The researcher also conducted a preliminary test on 10 participants from outside the sample framework to ensure that the questionnaire fulfills the objectives of the study.

This research does not aim to present new media as a basic tool for building our religious and cultural identity but to explore and discuss the capabilities that electronic media possess if they are used as a tool to build a society following the correct teachings of the divine religions. The media enables us to reach the whole world. We can use it to spread the true message of religions drawn from heaven.

### *Statement of Research Problem*

The research problem is determined in the presence of an urgent need to know the role of social media in satisfying religious issues among the Iraqi public, there is a lack of literature and studies on the uses and gratifications of social networking sites for religious and ideological issues in all their dimensions for individuals, it is not important for the messages to be available and varied, but rather how they reach, consume, influence , convince, and how the public deals with and responds to them.

The research problem is the pillar on which to base the research structure and the stages of completion in theory and the field. From this standpoint, the research problem crystallizes around a major question: (What satisfaction do Iraqi individuals get from their use of social networking sites?), and from it, several questions branch out as follows: a) What published content of Islamic religion issues on social media sites that the public prefers? b) What are the social media platforms that the public depends on to gain their Islamic culture knowledge? c) What are the levels of gratification the Iraqi Muslim public get from social networking sites on religious issues?

### *Research Aims*

The research aims for this study are: a) to know the satisfaction that individuals get from their use of social networking sites. b) to show the published content on Islamic religion issues in social media sites that are preferred by the public. c) to know the social platforms that the public depends on to gain their Islamic culture knowledge. d) to know the levels of gratification that the Iraqi Muslim public gets from social networking sites on religious issues.

### *Significance of Research*

This research would have practical and theoretical implications. The practical importance of the research came from its content, where it involved studying the general landscape of electronic media or so-called the 'new media' and showing the extent of its interest in religious issues. Through this research, we will shed light on what the public does with the media and not what the media does with the public, for the sake of clarifying the degree of reliance of the Iraqi Muslim audience in acquiring religious knowledge from social media platforms. Additionally, the research is significant because of the great importance social networking sites bring to our life where it has become an integral part of the usual daily behavior. In other words, we can say that all individuals in our society today use social media on a daily basis. There is no way it is dispensable today.

As for the theoretical importance of this research, it crystallizes around the concept application of Theory of Uses and Gratification (U&G). It will be adding a new experience to apply the concept of this theory and knowledge of the levels of influence on the public through their utilization of social networking sites and discover the satisfaction they obtain about such important and sensitive issues like religion.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *The Role of the New Media in Spreading Religious Awareness*

The role of new media is in alongside the development and technological advancement humanity is witnessing. Cultural values, life ideologies, and other important beliefs are built, organized, and transmitted to individuals through the new media platforms represented by social networking sites {Formatting Citation}. It is well-known that the media is the mediator that contributes to the upbringing of individuals of all ages. This makes the media a fundamental pillar of the educational social process, as its impact is reflected on all individuals and groups that make up this society (Ashley, C., & Tuten, T., 2015, P32). Therefore, the media in the Islamic educational sense should be ideal and realistic, which is commensurate with its role for informative and educational media content.

The role that electronic media plays in religious issues is substantial. It has become an essential part of the lives of a Muslim because it is based on the foundations and principles of the great Islamic teachings. Considering that all religions seek to create a suitable educational environment for the upbringing of individuals in a normal manner, without imbalance or contradiction, which are the inherent characteristics of the media content, and its contents broadcast in some media outlets (Adams S.A, 2010,P391-400), whether they take the form of a news article, a cultural or social program, a series, a video clip, or a picture. The authentic Islamic educational media always adheres to the values, standards, rules, and principles of the Islamic religion. Moreover, the electronic media is no longer content with just monitoring the event and communicating information but has become the power, influence, pressure, and control factors, making the event and preparing for it at the same time (Ben, A., & Matamoros, A., 2016,P65).

As for the religious content of electronic media, it is intended to provide the masses in general with the facts of the religion that are derived from the "sky" directly or indirectly, through new media such as websites and other social media platforms. It includes specialized religious or general media pages with a contact person as a mediator by using the available space on social media sites to spread and communicate with the public to form a correct public opinion that is aware of religious truths, realizes them, and is influenced by them in their beliefs, worship, and dealings. Besides demonstrating the truth and decorating it to people in all legitimate ways, methods, and scientific means, it also reveals the faces of falsehood and oppressing it, to bring minds to the truth and correct their behavior. Therefore, every message does not reach its goal except through the media (Atton, C., 2006,P4).

As discussed by researchers (Saifee, Aziz ur Rehman, Sahikh, Zubair Ahmed Sultan, Sameera Baloach, Abdul Ghafoor Khalid, Irfan) the new media, represented by social media platforms, play a very important role in spreading the teachings of religion, including the teachings of the Islamic religion. It educates people because digital technology has made it very easy for people - who live in different places of the world - to access information, teachings, and Islamic literature. Furthermore, electronic media is making a very bright impact in the world at large, especially by providing methods of teaching and obtaining information while sitting at home. Now all Muslims and even non-Muslims can listen to the talk shows of great scholars and

see information on the Islamic religion. They can attend their lectures and lessons and even participate in them.

Muslims have now realized the importance of media and technology and they are working hard in these areas for religious education. It seems that in the very near future we will be able to create a single platform where all Muslims from different parts of the world can discuss their problems and any information they are looking for will be found there. Hence, exerting more effort to spread Islam and its teachings using media and technology could lead to the emergence of spreading awareness of the Islamic religion (Saifee et al., 2012,P55).

### *Internet, (Social Media)and Religion Issues*

In the last three decades, scholars' interest in the impact of the Internet and digital culture on daily life has grown rapidly. This is marked by the emergence of a quantum of studies on new media, religion, and digital culture(Campbell, 2013). The Internet has made available many digital spaces that are used by Muslims all over the world. Today, we can observe countless ways in which the internet and social media are being turned into platforms for Islamic issues(Fakhruroji, 2015). The popularity of Islamic practices over the Internet has also increased significantly in Arab and Asian Islamic countries due to the growth of communication technologies and social media. Social media platforms have provided great opportunities for Muslims to present the religious issues of the Islamic faith in a visual and textual form. Including people's expressions of piety, and exploring new forms of religious and social practices. Social networking sites in particular have become a focal point for presenting Islamic issues and topics(Slama, 2017). One of the most important religious issues that emerged from the development of the Internet in the contemporary Islamic society is the emergence of the practice of Islamic learning on the Internet. The abundance of Islamic information and knowledge on the Internet not only sparks new directions in the practice of Islamic learning, but also creates other broader socio-cultural practices(Fakhruroji, 2019). This research argues that the use of social media and the Internet is not just an exercise in knowing the Iraqi public's use of these platforms, but it also includes three broader social and cultural phenomena: first, the practice of Islamic learning is a form of religious participation since the Internet has enabled to continue practicing in accordance with their teachings; Second, the practice of Islamic learning as an expression of

their Islamic identity. And third, Islamic learning as part of their efforts to maintain Islamic networks in a global context(Husein & Slama, 2018).

The trend of studies on the Internet and Islamic religious issues is increasing, studies related to the Internet and religion have been focusing on how religions present online practices along with their characteristics considering the advantages and disadvantages(Brasher, 2001), it then turned to explore the online adaptation of traditional religious practices(Bhagavatula et al., 2010). Since then, studies have begun to move from the context of online religion to the nature and perception of the public regarding the practices of online religion and spirituality (). Indeed, a number of studies that have emerged recently have analyzed not only online religious participation but also the relationship between social dimensions and online religious practices{(Fakhruroji, 2015) ;(Fakhruroji, 2019)

}. In recent years, one of the most important transformations in the field of Islam in Muslim countries, including Iraq, is the increasing reliance of Muslims on social media when practicing their religious rites. More importantly, Muslims themselves often view their online activities as part of their religious endeavors to improve their religiosity. Social media is particularly relevant in this regard because, perhaps unlike other media, it is deeply ingrained in users' daily lives(Horst & Miller, 2012). Media studies have also discovered the effectiveness of users. To what extent these theoretical shifts were inspired by the introduction of new or social media is open to debate, yet it seems clear that these conditions of new approaches in Islam studies and new media provide a useful analytical direction for studying the latest dynamics of Islam in Muslim countries such as Iraq(Husein & Slama, 2018).

#### *New Media Satisfaction According to the Theory of Uses and Gratification*

The key theory of this study is the Theory of Uses and Gratifications, which is connected to the research subject as it discusses problems related to media selection, usage, and user satisfaction. Therefore, it is suitable for the study of electronic communication media. This theory was presented by Katz and Blumler (1973). It is an approach that contributes to an understanding of why and how media users actively seek to identify specific media to meet specific needs (Katz, E., Haas, H., & Gurevitch, M., 1973, P43). Additionally, the theory helps

understand why and how media users actively want to have specific satisfaction with it, rather than the content. It was an approach that a social and psychological communicator used to explain why people use the media and what they do with it.

The theory states that ICT users are aware of their social and psychological desires, so they are always interested in finding certain media that satisfy their desires (Ruggiero, T.E. 2000). Rosengren (1974) considered three goals in developing the Theory of Uses and Gratification. First, to explain how individuals use mass communication to meet their needs, and this is what people do with the media. Second, to discover the underlying motivations of individual media users, while the third goal is to recognize the positive and negative consequences of individual use of social media.

Furthermore, Rubin, A. M. (2002) also summarized different motivations and needs. First, media users seek to use it for cognitive needs. It includes the use of media to obtain information, knowledge, and understanding. Second, media users intend to use it for emotional needs. It involves using the media to preserve emotion, pleasure, and feelings. Third, media users intend to use it for complementary personal needs. It entails using the media to achieve credibility, stability, and prestige. Fourth, media users intend to use it for complementary social needs. It aims to use the media to interact with family members and friends. Fifth, media users intend to use it to release tension. It revolves around using the media as an escape and distraction.

Both Heath and Bryant (2013) argued that the essence of applying a specific theory of communication to particular situations is to observe and speculate on people's behaviors. Therefore, in the field of communication technologies, it is expected that the uncertainty can be reduced by simply targeting the use of specific media for communication. Thus, applying the theory of uses and gratification to study simultaneous or asynchronous computer-mediated communications such as e-mail and social media sites is appropriate and is assumed to solve the problems of communication dissatisfaction in virtual communications (Liu, I. L. B., & Lee, M. K. O., 2016,P 56-70).

Therefore, it was unanimously agreed to use communication media such as SNS, IM, and e-mail for common motives among users, and social interaction platforms. These motives ranged between relationship preservation, information search, style, fun, and other purposes.

Other factors were also found to influence individual users' needs and psychological motivations for using certain media such as positivity, openness, safeguards, social networks, and performance predictions (Stafford, T.F., & Schkade, L.L., 2004,P23). Kuo, Chen et al. (2013) present other factors that were found to influence users' motivation towards communication technologies as a matter of particular interest, critical mass, and subjective criteria. Research has also demonstrated affiliation, pleasure, self-esteem, and reciprocity as factors behind people's use and satisfaction of various social media. Psychological concepts such as expressing affection, expressing negative feelings, obtaining appreciation, gaining entertainment, and achieving cognitive impulses were later included as factors affecting their uses of certain media, as a means of communication and gratification (Zheng, X., & Lee, M. K. O., 2016,P65-76). Further, scholars added intrinsic motivation as another factor that influences individuals' media choice, and they also added self-development, ease of use, broad exposure, and relaxation as other factors affecting individuals' communication technology choices. Corus Perez, Royce Mavi, and Sans Blas (2014) established socialization and recreation as factors that stimulate motivations towards the use of certain media. While from the perspective of mobile application use, factors such as human contact and social benefit have been cited as the underlying drivers of consistency with particular media use (Mantymaki, M., & Riemer, K., 2014,P210 -220). Moreover, the recent study by Krishnan and Hunt (2015), include factors such as socialization, relationship development, and maintenance as uses and gratifications derived by various social network users. Later, social and information needs such as human messaging interaction and interactions between human beings {Wei, Lin, Lu, and Chuang (2015)} has become drive factors of the use of specific social networks. The need for documentation was subsequently identified as one of the vital drive factors for users continued use of specific social media (Basak, E., & Calisir, F., 2015,P181 - 189).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### *Methodology of Research*

This research is considered within the quantitative research that deals with survey studies. The researcher used the survey method as a method of study through which data and information are

collected about a phenomenon or incident, intending to determine its's current situation and identify its strengths and weaknesses, and to know the extent of the validity of the situation or the extent of the need to introduce basic partial changes (Creswell, J. W., 2009,P63). Therefore, it is appropriate to use a quantitative approach to determine the determinants of social media gratification among Iraqi audiences toward religious issues.

#### *Limitation of Research and Location of the Study*

This study was conducted in the city of Baghdad, Iraq. The reason for choosing the place of study is because Baghdad is the capital of Iraq, which has various doctrines and groups. The sample is taken from the public who were randomly and unintentionally selected. 270 participants were selected to answer the questionnaire that was conducted in September 2020. The study included 197 male participants and 73 female participants.

#### *Pre-Test*

In order to test the validity of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was presented for the first time on an exploratory sample of 10 participants from the individuals of the city of Baghdad and from outside the sample members, where the respondents were chosen in an unintentional random manner. The participants answered the questionnaire, and then the scale was re-applied to the members of the survey. This task was repeated two weeks after the first application, and the calculation of the reliability coefficient between the two applications was 0.88, which is a high stability coefficient suitable for the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was based on the method of a random or irregular sample. It falls within the framework of the non-probability type of samples, which is a suitable method for withdrawing available and easily accessible research units that represent the research community. The sample consists of 270 participants from the general public of Baghdad and they were all using social media platforms. A questionnaire was designed to find out the determinants of satisfaction among the Iraqi public from the use of social media sites towards religious issues. The

questionnaire incorporates twelve open-ended and closed-ended questions, which includes the personal data of the respondents, as well as a scale rating system in four of its questions. The researcher also conducted a preliminary test on his sample, consisting of 10 participants who were randomly selected outside of the sample frame, to ensure that the questionnaire achieved the objectives of the study.

A. Demographic variables:

1. The gender of the respondents:

The respondents participating in the research within the selected sample, whose total number was (270), were distributed according to the gender variable. (197) male respondents contribute to the percentage of 73%, representing the largest part. From the research sample, only (73) female respondents; which contribute to the percentage of 27% of the total sample. These results indicate that the majority of the respondents are males. See Figure 1 below.

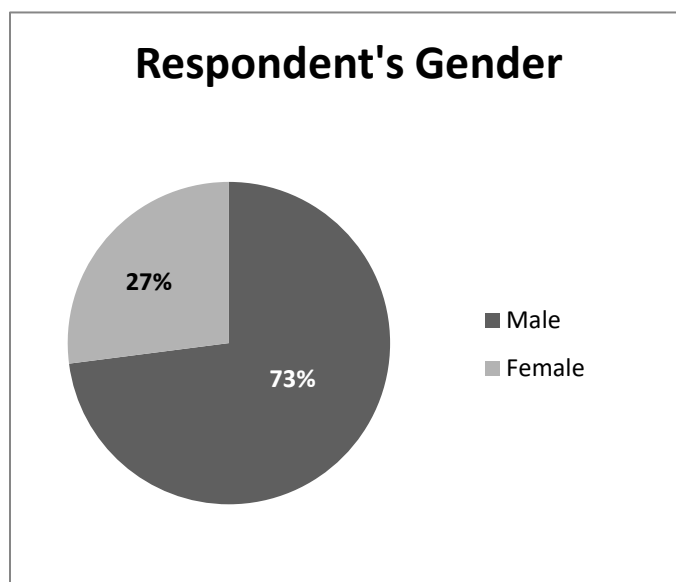


Figure 1: Shows the percentage of males and females participating in the study

2. Ages of the respondents:

The age groups of the respondents were divided between different levels. The number of those whose ages ranged from 18-30 years was sixty-four (64) participants, while the number of those whose ages ranged from 31-40 years was eighty-one (81) participants. The number of participants whose ages ranged from 41-50 years old was sixty-seven (67), and the number of

participants whose ages were from 51-60 years old was Fifty-eight (58). These data indicate that the majority of the participants are those who have reached the stage of full mental and cognitive maturity.

### 3. Educational qualification:

The levels of academic achievement of the research participants were distributed between different levels or degrees. The numbers for those who have secondary education or less is one hundred and eight (108) participants with the percentage of 40%, while those who obtained a bachelor's degree is one hundred and thirty-eight (138) participants with the percentage of 51%, and the number of participants with higher education is twenty-four (24) with the percentage of 9%. These results indicate that the majority of the participants in this study are literate, and this helps in the robustness and sobriety of the desired results of the research.

### 4. Marital status:

It was found that one hundred forty-two (142) of the participants are married, and their percentage make up 53%. Besides that, seventy-nine (79) participants are in a single category, which contributed to 29 %, and the rest three (49) of the participants, came from the divorced and widow's category that contributed to 18%.

B. When asked about the extent of their interest in following up on religious topics and issues that are published on social networking sites, the respondents' answers indicated that one hundred sixty-two (162) participants chose a lot of interest in following up on religious issues and topics that are published on social media and their percentage make up 60% of the total sample while thirty-eight (38) participants chose little of interest in religious issues, which contributed to 14% and the rest seventy (70) participants chose not interested in religious topics published on social media, which contributed to 26% of the total sample. These results indicate that the Iraqi public attaches great importance to religious issues and is keen to follow them on social media. See Figure 2.

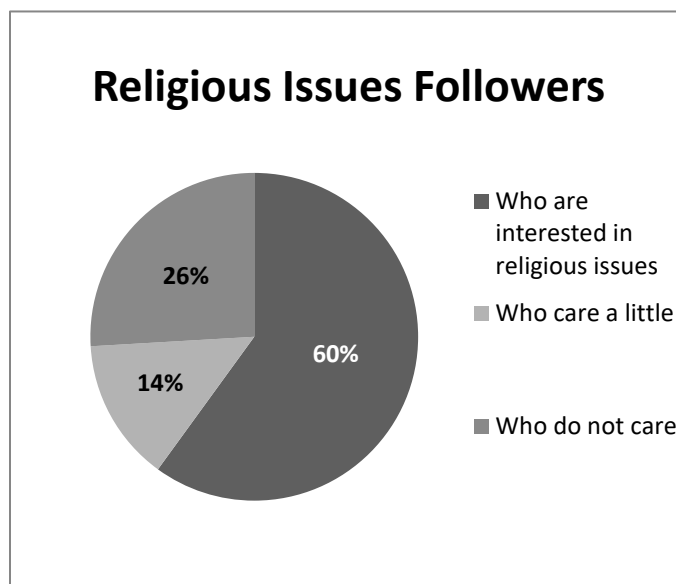


Figure 2: Shows the percentage of those who are interested in following religious issues that published on social media

C. When asked about the question on which of the networking platforms are preferred by the participants in following religious topics and issues, one hundred and twenty-four (124) participants, which contributed to 46% of the total sample went to choose Facebook while one hundred and sixteen (116) of the participants, which contributed to 43% of the total sample preferred to follow religious issues through YouTube. As for the other social media platforms, only thirty (30) participants, which contributed to 11% of the total sample answered that they preferred to follow religious topics through Instagram or Twitter. We conclude that the Iraqi public prefers to follow religious issues and topics primarily through Facebook and YouTube, as shown in Figure 3.

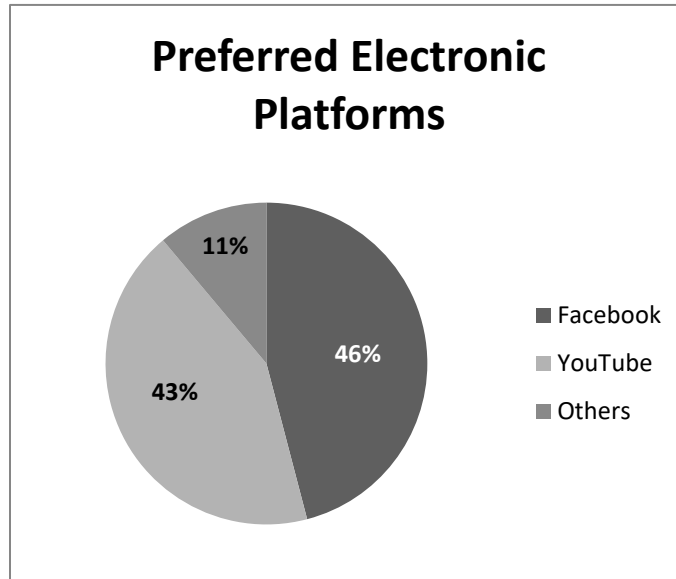


Figure 3: Shows which of social media platforms that the public prefers to follow religious issues through

D. When asked about which media styles they prefer to follow through social networking sites, it is evident that that one hundred and seven (107) participants, which contributed to 40% of the total sample prefers to follow videos on social media. Another eighty-nine (89) participants, which contributed to 33% agreed that they prefer photos, and seventy-four (74) participants, which contributed to 27% follows the news and articles category. Based on that, we conclude that the Iraqi society prefers to follow the videos and pictures primarily through social networking sites, as shown in Figure 4.

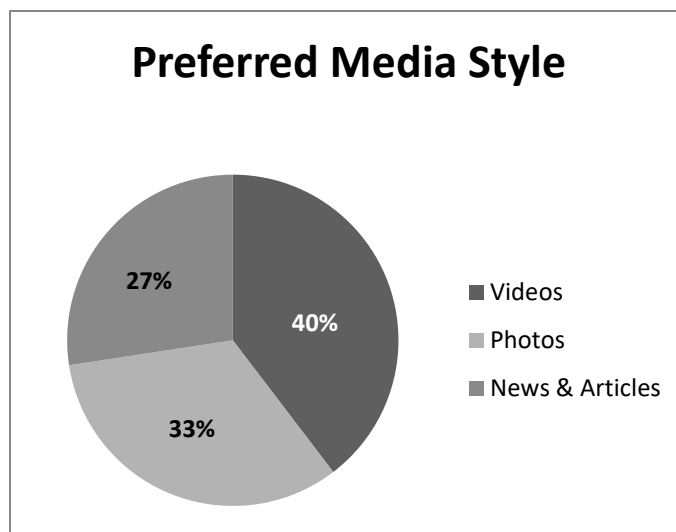
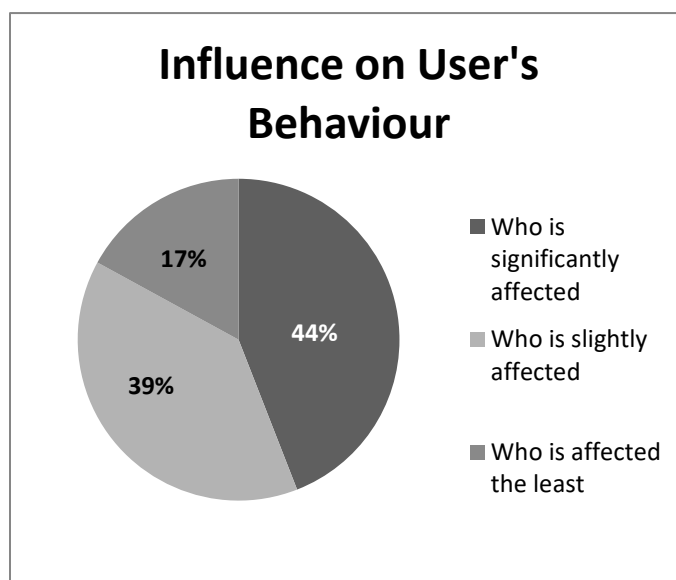


Figure 4: Shows the media methods or (media styles) that respondents prefer to follow on social networking sites

E. When asked about the extent to which the topics with Islamic content published on the social networking sites have affected their behavior towards religious issues, there were one hundred nineteen (119) participants, which contributed to 44% answered that there was a significant impact on their behavior. As for those who were slightly affected, the number shows of one hundred and five (105) respondents, which contributed to 39%, and there were forty-six (46) participants, which contributed to 17% of the total samples who said that religious topics did not



affect them on their behavior. These results indicate that social networking sites have a great influence on the behavior of social media users towards religious issues. See Figure 5.

Figure 5: Shows the influence of social media users on their behavior towards religious issues

F. When asked about the question on what level does the social media platforms satisfy their knowledge needs in religious issues, there were one hundred and fifty-seven (157) participants, which contributed to 58% of the total sample agreed that the religious topics presented by social media satisfy their knowledge needs towards religious issues while eighty-one (81) participants, which contributed to 30% went to choose not to the required level and the rest thirty-two (32) participants, which contributed to 12% stated that religious topics published on social media did not meet their knowledge needs and the direction of religion. These results indicate that social networking sites contribute significantly to satisfy social media user's knowledge needs in terms of religious issues, as shown in Figure 6.

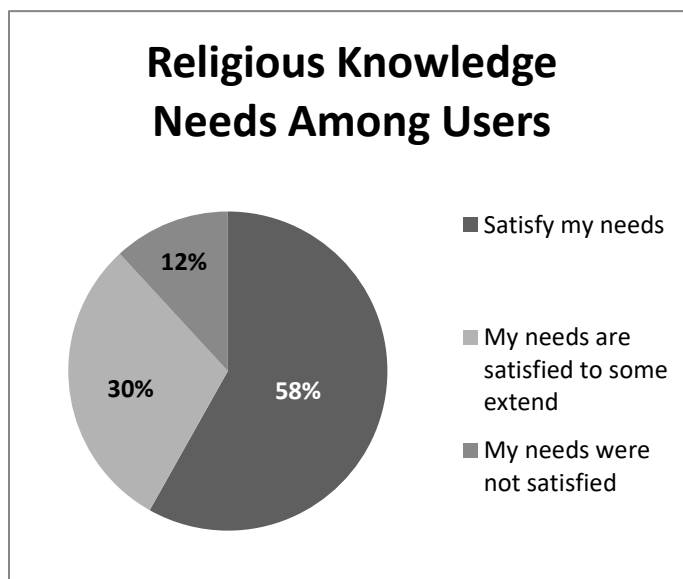


Figure 6: Shows the extent to which social media contributes to meeting users' knowledge needs regarding religious issues

G. When asked about the motives of the Iraqi public's use of social media sites in religious issues, it shows that one hundred nineteen (119) participants, which contributed to 44% of the total sample agreed that they use social media sites to promote religious culture. Another one hundred and three (103) participants, which contributed to 38% agreed that the motives for their use of electronic platforms in religious issues are cognitive motives, and forty-eight (48) participants, which contributed to 18% of the total sample mentioned that they use social networking sites in order to increase their religious awareness. The data indicates that the Iraqi public's motives from their use of social platforms are cognitive motives that enhance their knowledge of religion, as shown in Figure 7.

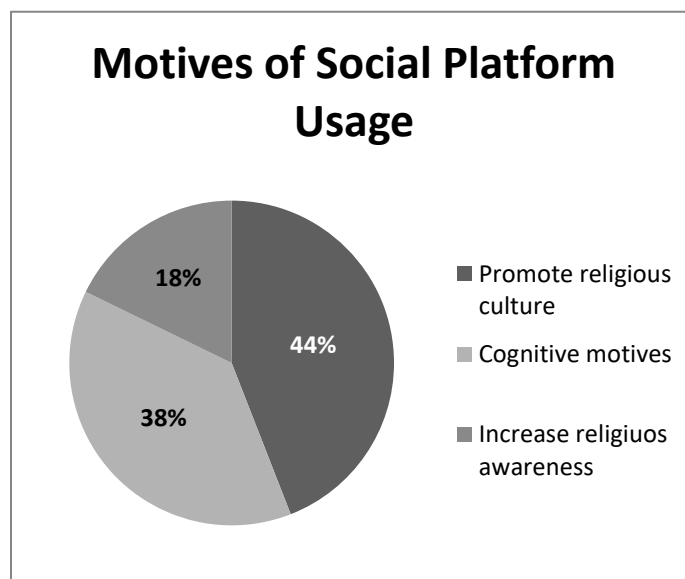


Figure 7: Show the motives of the public's use of social media platforms in religious issues

H. When asked about to what extent are the topics with Islamic contents has been contemporized but yet still maintain its authenticity from their legitimate sources from the viewpoint of the respondents, it shows that one hundred nineteen (119) participants, which contributed to 44% of the total sample agrees that the information are characterized by a great degree of modernization yet still maintain its authenticity from the legitimate sources. Another eighty-seven (87) participants, which contributed to 32% agrees that the information is characterized to only certain extent, and sixty-four (64) participants, which contributed to 24% of the total sample mentioned that the information are not characterized at all in terms of modernization and keeping its authenticity. The respondents' answers indicate that the sophistication of their Islamic cultural awareness and the accuracy of their follow-up towards Islamic contents in media messages, as shown in Figure 8.

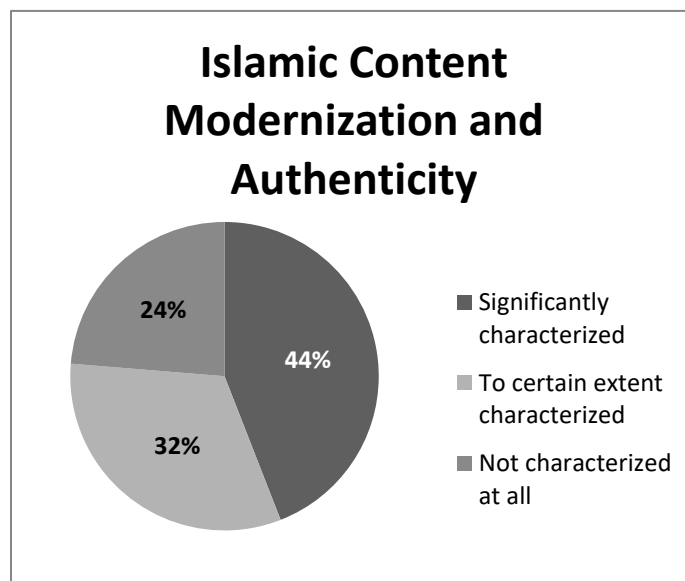


Figure 8: Shows to what extent are the topics with Islamic contents has been contemporized but yet still maintain its authenticity from their legitimate sources from the viewpoint of the respondents

I. When asked about to what extent social media contribute to increasing religious awareness among the Iraqi public, it shows that one hundred thirty (130) participants, which make for 48% of the total sample tended to agree that the social networking sites contributes significantly to increase Islamic religious awareness. Another eighty-eight (88) participants, which make for 33% answered that it contributes to a moderate degree, and fifty-two (52) participants, which make for 19% of the total sample chose that it contributes to a weak degree. The participants' answers reflect the great role of the social networking site in increasing religious awareness among the Iraqi public, as shown in Figure 9.

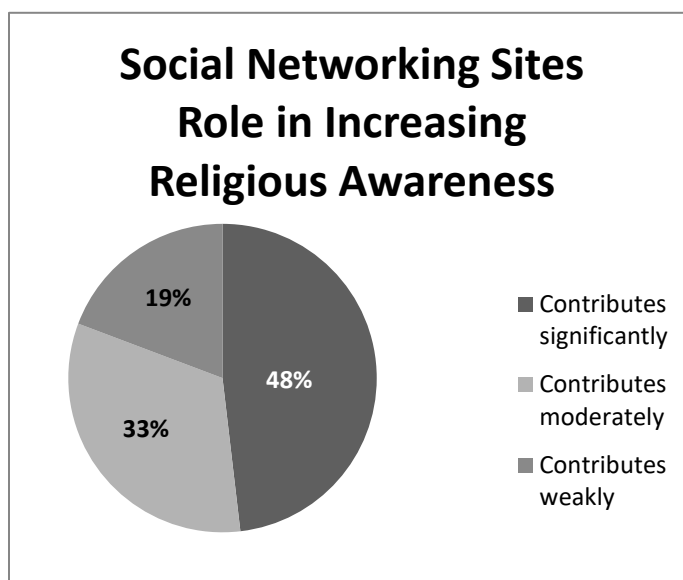


Figure 9: Shows the degree of contribution of social networking sites to increasing Islamic religious awareness among the public

J. When asked about does the electronic media provide support and reinforce the Islamic culture and its principles, it is evident that one hundred and thirty-five (135) participants, which contributed to 50% of the total sample agree that the contents offered by social media sites did reinforce Islamic culture. Another seventy-five (75) participants, which contributed to 28% agrees that social media sites enhance Islamic culture to some extent, and the rest sixty (60) participants, which contributed to 22% thinks that social media sites did not reinforce Islamic culture. The participants' answers indicate that the religious content provided by social media reinforces and supports Islamic culture for the Iraqi public, as shown in Figure 10.

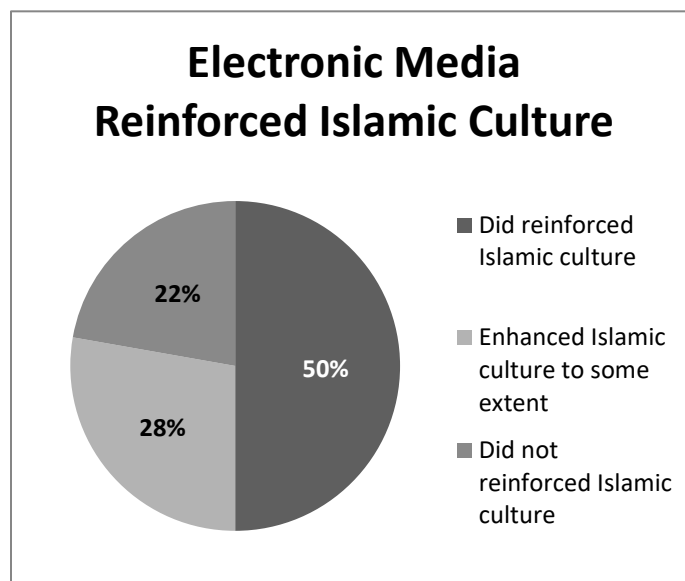


Figure 10: Shows to which extent the electronic media presented support and enhanced Islamic culture among the Iraqi public.

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Conclusions*

Through this research, we can show the Iraqi general public needs and motives for using social media platforms in religious issues. We can also determine the Iraqi public's satisfaction when using social networking sites and their reliance on electronic platforms in religious issues which related Islamic topics.

The research highlights how digital technology is used for Islamic religious purposes. The religious participation that emerges in the practice of Islamic learning online can be recognized by the way Muslims increasingly live their religion in the context of electronic culture as they find a number of new practices increasingly mediated. Besides representing religious participation, practicing Islamic learning also expresses their faith and identity as Muslims. However, in fact, the assimilation of the media logic that Muslims do through their participation in religious messages has actually turned into an experience of simplifying and reducing the religious meaning of doctrinal matters through the possibility of digital technology in employing media messages with Islamic religious significance. Through the Internet and a number of platforms such as websites and social media, the uses of Iraqi Muslims have diversified, they can know the exact direction of the Qibla or the exact prayer times. They can also access the Quran online, read important hadith collections and books on Islam, and listen to religious lectures via social media.

Through the analysis of the results, it was found that the new media has a major role in increasing the Islamic religious awareness of the Iraqi public. These results indicate that the Iraqi public attaches great importance to religious issues (which have topics of Islamic contents) and is keen to follow them on social media. In addition to that, we can conclude that the Iraqi public prefers to follow religious issues and topics Islamic primarily through Facebook and YouTube more than other social platforms. It was also found that the Iraqi public prefers to follow videos and pictures more than other media methods available on new media platforms. We also found that social networking sites have a great influence on the behavior of users of social media platforms regarding religious issues, and it also indicates that social networking sites contribute significantly to satisfy social media user's knowledge needs in terms of religious

issues Islamic. Besides that, the Iraqi public's motives from their use of social media platforms are cognitive motives that enhanced their knowledge of religious issues. The Iraqi public believes that the topics with Islamic content have been modernized but yet still maintain their authenticity from their legitimate sources. In addition, it was also found that the respondents' Islamic cultural awareness has been enhanced, which made us conclude that the religious content provided by social media reinforces and supports Islamic culture for the Iraqi public.

This research shows how important social networking platforms are and how it has become an integral part of the daily behavior. There is no way it is dispensable today. This research also added a new experience to the concept application of Theory of Uses and Gratification (U&G), where it applies the concept of this theory and knowledge of the levels of influence on the public through their utilization of social networking sites and discovers the satisfaction they obtain about such important and sensitive issues like religion. Based on the foregoing and through analyzing the data, we conclude that the determinants of the Iraqi public's satisfaction with the use of social media sites in religious issues and topics are cognitive and behavioral gratifications.

### *Recommendations*

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, here are several recommendations to be considered:

- a. Creating an Islamic media reference for all Islamic media outlets that are related to it and on point, so that it acts as an umbrella through which the Islamic media discourse matures.
- b. Moderation in the Islamic media discourse, so that it does not tend towards exaggeration, excess, and extremism, neither does it lax lenient, in which both do not conform to the spirit of the Islamic teachings and also goes beyond the limits of Islam teachings itself.
- c. To establish an Islamic media discourse in all its means, especially through social networking sites, because it is based on dialogue, persuasion, controversy and striving, and according to the requirements and necessity of each case, and this includes introducing Islam to its truth and addressing other civilizations, regimes, and references in the world.

- d. The content of the media message should contribute to building the personality of the individual based on religious, ideological, ethical, behavioral, cultural, and intellectual Islam, and have a high degree of power and influence to counteract the counter-media.
- e. Building an Islamic media discourse that balances spirituality and materialism so that it contributes to building the personality of the recipient according to this budget for considerations of this world and the hereafter.
- f. The necessity of establishing a news agency, satellite stations, and information centers with a balanced Islamic identity and belief.

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