

## Exploring Digital Trust: Social Media Engagement and Security Concerns among Al Ain University Students

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This research aims to explore Al Ain University students' confidence in using social networking sites, focusing on their usage patterns, trust levels, and privacy concerns. It also seeks to understand the extent of students' engagement with various platforms and identify persistent privacy concerns, particularly regarding financial information.

**Methods:** The research methodology involves data collection through surveys, analyzing usage patterns, trust levels, and privacy concerns among students. It emphasizes understanding the variance in trust and engagement across different social media platforms. The study targets active social network users from all disciplines at Al Ain University, using purposive sampling to achieve demographic representation. With a sample of 141 students, the approach ensures focused and relevant findings.

**Results:** The findings reveal that most Al Ain University students are actively engaged with social media platforms, with WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter being the most widely used. Snapchat emerged as the most utilized platform for reposting information and news, followed by Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. The study indicates varying levels of trust and engagement across these platforms.

**Conclusions:** The research stresses the need to address privacy concerns and promote digital responsibility among university students. It highlights the role of educational institutions in fostering digital literacy and the importance of verifying shared information. Insights from Al Ain University students suggest strategies for enhancing online trust and privacy. Continuous research and proactive measures are essential for ensuring student digital safety.

**Keywords:** Social networking; student trust; privacy concerns; digital literacy; online security

### استكشاف الثقة الرقمية: التفاعل مع وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي والمخاوف الأمنية بين طلبة جامعة العين

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#### ملخص

الأهداف: يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف ثقة طلبة جامعة العين في استخدام مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، ويركز على أنماط الاستخدام ومستويات الثقة والمخاوف بشأن الخصوصية. كما يسعى البحث إلى فهم مدى تفاعل الطلاب مع المنصات المختلفة وتحديد مخاوف الخصوصية المستمرة، وخاصة فيما يتعلق بالمعلومات المالية.

المنهجية: تتضمن منهجية البحث جمع البيانات من خلال الاستطلاعات، وتحليل أنماط الاستخدام ومستويات الثقة ومخاوف الخصوصية بين الطلبة، وتؤكد على فهم التباين في الثقة والمشاركة عبر منصات التواصل الاجتماعي المختلفة.

تستهدف الدراسة مستخدمي الشبكات الاجتماعية النشطين من جميع التخصصات في جامعة العين، باستخدام أخذ العينات الهادفة لتحقيق التمثيل الديموغرافي. مع عينة محدودة من 141 طالبًا، يضمن النهج نتائج مركزة وذات صلة.

النتائج: تكشف النتائج أن معظم طلبة جامعة العين منخرطون بنشاط في منصات التواصل الاجتماعي، حيث تعد WhatsApp و Facebook و Instagram و Twitter الأكثر استخدامًا. برز Snapchat باعتباره المنصة الأكثر استخدامًا لإعادة نشر المعلومات والأخبار، يليه Instagram و Twitter و YouTube. تشير الدراسة إلى مستويات متباينة من الثقة والمشاركة عبر هذه المنصات.

خلاصة الدراسة: يؤكد البحث على الحاجة إلى معالجة الخصوصية وتعزيز المسؤولية الرقمية بين طلاب الجامعات، ويسلط الضوء على دور المؤسسات التعليمية في تعزيز الثقافة الرقمية وأهمية التحقق من المعلومات المشتركة. تشير رؤية طلبة جامعة العين إلى استراتيجيات لتعزيز الثقة والخصوصية عبر الإنترنت، ويعد البحث المستمر والتدابير الاستباقية أمرًا بالغ الأهمية للسلامة الرقمية للطلبة. الكلمات الدالة: شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي، ثقة الطلبة، مخاوف الخصوصية، الثقافة الرقمية، الأمان الإلكتروني.

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital age, social networking sites (SNS) have become an integral part of the daily lives of individuals worldwide, facilitating communication, information dissemination, and social interaction. Especially among college students, SNSs are pivotal in academic pursuits, social networking, and personal expression. (Nath & Nath, 2022)

The pervasive influence of SNSs underscores the importance of understanding students' attitudes and behaviours toward these platforms, especially in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. By illustrating the dynamics of SNS use among AAU students, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the intersection between technology and academia, highlighting its implications for education, social interaction, and digital citizenship. (Nath & Nath, 2022)

One of the groundbreaking innovations in Internet-based platforms with multi-dimensional purposes is the development of social networking sites (SNSs). 'The SNSs are web-based platforms on which members can create personal profiles, articulate friendship connections, and socially interact with the friend connections by uploading, liking, and commenting on content such as photos, messages, and videos shared on newsfeeds' (Guraya et al., 2018).

Further, people use social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Myspace to establish and maintain relationships which have become an internet phenomenon growing popularity over the past ten years (Liu & Bakici, 2019). Also, SNS enables users to create individual accounts, interact with other users online, upload images, update statuses, as well as send private or public messages to anybody they choose.

In addition, students use social media sites like Facebook to acquire and analyse information to make academic judgments (Banat, 2021; Kaya, 2017; Mishra, 2020); conversely, their exposure to disaster reporting on SNS was also linked to an increase in sadness and severe distress (Zhao et al., 2020). Despite the educational benefits of using digital equipment, universities seem unconcerned about the subject which could be related to their belief that social media is more suited for socializing than for academic reasons (Raaper et al., 2022), as well as a lack of government's willingness to administer technology as learning platforms (Kim & Lee, 2020) has been unfortunate to the innovative learning.

The use of social media brings numerous benefits, significantly enhancing journalism. Engaging various demographic groups on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, extends reach and audience. Social media fosters greater interaction by allowing direct communication between readers and journalists, and it accelerates the dissemination of news, ensuring immediate access to crucial updates. Moreover, it encourages active participation by incorporating interactive multimedia elements such as photos, videos, and polls, enriching the reader's experience. and social media usage in journalism not only broadens reach but also enhances transparency and engagement.

This research seeks to provide an accurate understanding of students' views and social behaviours by providing an answer to the study's basic problem of knowing the extent of their trust in social networking sites. (Abdallah, et al, 2024).

This research aims to delve deeper into Al Ain University students' confidence in using social networking services, exploring their usage patterns, trust levels, and concerns about privacy and information sharing on these platforms.

This research embarks on a systematic exploration of AAU students' trust in social networking services, to shed light on the complexities of their interactions with these platforms. By examining usage patterns, levels of trust and privacy concerns, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into the intersection of technology, education and social behaviours. Ultimately, the findings of this study have the potential to inform educational strategies, digital literacy initiatives, and policy frameworks aimed at promoting responsible and empowered digital citizenship among college students.

### Research Problem:

In an era where social and academic interactions are increasingly intertwined with digital technology, it is crucial to understand how university students, particularly those at Al Ain University, engage with social networking sites. This study addresses the gap in knowledge regarding the extent of their use, trust, and behaviors on these platforms, as well as their concerns about privacy and information security. The problem is magnified by the potential risks associated with extensive social media use, including the exposure of sensitive financial and personal information. Thus, this research aims to explore and evaluate the digital behaviors and attitudes of Al Ain University students towards social networking, assessing their

confidence in these platforms, their patterns of reposting information, and their privacy concerns, which are critical for developing effective digital literacy programs and ensuring safe online environments.

#### **Research Questions:**

- This research seeks to explore critical questions related to the investigation: To what extent do Al Ain University students use social networking sites?
- What is the level of following social networking sites among Al Ain University students?
- To what extent do Al Ain University students trust social networking sites?
- What is the level of re-publishing information and news from social networking sites among Al Ain University students?
- To what extent are Al Ain University students concerned about sharing private information on social media sites?
- What are the primary factors contributing to security concerns among Al Ain University students when interacting on social media platforms?

#### **Importance of The Research:**

The significance of this research lies in the following points:

- This research deals with an important phenomenon of the modern era, which is the use of social networking.
- It highlights the confidence of Al Ain University students in social networking sites.
- It sheds light on the nature of the relationship between the use of social networking sites and Al Ain University students' confidence in information, re-publishing it, sharing personal information, and other uses.

The research deals with a group that has special importance in production, development, and the future, which is a group of university students that must be prepared to confront the scientific and cognitive revolution. Participation in community development and solving its problems may help to conduct similar studies.

- Specialists in relevant fields may help provide studies that guide university youth towards the positive and effective use of social networking sites and follow methods, techniques and skills adopted by media education to ensure the safe use of social networking sites.

#### **Research Objectives:**

The aim of this research is to

- Determine the extent of social networking site usage among Al Ain University students.
- Assess the frequency of social networking site engagement among Al Ain University students.
- Evaluate the level of trust Al Ain University students place in social networking sites.
- Understand the prevalence of sharing and republishing information and news from social networking sites among Al Ain University students.
- Identify the degree of concern among Al Ain University students regarding the privacy of information shared on social networking sites.
- Identify the key factors contributing to security concerns among Al Ain University students on social media platforms.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The Trend of Using Social Networking Sites at Public University Students (Hoque, et al., 2023) The utilization of Social Networking Sites (SNS) has experienced a surge in popularity in recent years, particularly among university students to study and communicate. This paper investigates the experiences of university students in using social networking sites (SNS) and the approaches they choose to enhance social interaction and learning activities by utilizing social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The quantitative study was established on primary data gathered from a semi-structured face-to-face and on-air interview with Jahangirnagar University students who reported the

multiple strategies in learning and communicative activities and experiences received from SNS. The results of the study showed how much time they spent using SNS. Despite some limitations, varsity students use SNS for social and academic purposes. Unpleasant experiences like restlessness, low self-esteem, anxiety, physical threats, cyberbullying, and online harassment, were also noted by the participants. This study was done using interviews with 500 students at university coming from different backgrounds. Nevertheless, there is an apparent increase in the reliance on social networking sites (SNS), which poses a potential risk to the academic, social, and physical well-being of students.

**The Use of Social Networks among University Students** (Mese, et al., 2019) This research explores how technological advancements impact educational tools and students' daily integration of these technologies, with a focus on social networks and Web 2.0 applications. The study identifies how these digital platforms, popular among the younger generations for activities like content sharing, entertainment, communication, and learning, fit into the lives of undergraduate students. Utilizing a cross-sectional survey of 549 undergraduates from a public university, the study examines the purposes behind students' use of social networks and the factors influencing these behaviors. Results indicate gender differences in communication initiation and content sharing, with women being more proactive in communication. It also highlights that prolonged use of social networks correlates with increased content sharing, with WhatsApp and Instagram being the predominant platforms used. The findings aim to inform educators about integrating social networking tools in educational settings effectively. Recommendations are made to enhance learning environments through tailored social media use.

**Uses and Gratifications of Social Media Platforms During COVID-19 Pandemic among Bahraini University Students** (Khalifa, & Al-Subaie, 2022) This study employs the uses and gratifications theory to explore the reasons behind Bahraini university students' increased use of social networks during the COVID-19 pandemic, utilizing an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. A total of 300 students were surveyed through non-probability sampling. The findings suggest significant engagement with social media, with usage rates showing WhatsApp (100%), Facebook (96%), Instagram (90%), Twitter (88%), and YouTube (78%). The primary motivations for using social networks included staying connected with peers, monitoring celebrities' pandemic-related updates, staying informed on pandemic news, entertainment, and learning about the pandemic from diverse sources. The study further reveals that the gratifications from using social media included satisfying curiosity, enhancing security through knowledge, making virtual friends, fulfilling cognitive needs outside academic fields, and boosting self-confidence.

**Frequency and Pattern of Social Network Use in Medical Students, Sari, Iran** (Mousavi, et al., 2019,) Background and purpose: Nowadays, social networks are considered the major communication tools in communities and throughout the world. This study aimed to investigate the pattern of social network use in medical students who will have important occupations in the healthcare system.

**Materials and methods:** This descriptive-analytical study was carried out on 715 medical students at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran 2018. Information on the frequency and pattern of social network use were collected and data were analyzed in SPSS V21.

**Results:** The mean age of students was  $21.59 \pm 2.7$  years old and 711 students (99.4%) were engaged with social networks. The daily median use of social networks was 3 hours. The most common reason for using these networks was communication with friends (40.45%). The average hours of using these networks were significantly higher in single students compared with those of married ones ( $P < 0.001$ ). This study showed high rates of social network use among medical students. Considering the emergence of social networks in recent years and their potential risks, further research is needed on other aspects affecting students' study and health status.

**Influence of Age Groups and School Types on Informal Learning Through the Use of Social Networking Sites** (Thang, & Ng, 2020) The use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) as a learning tool is increasingly popular nowadays. This chapter investigates the perceptions of 799 Malaysian secondary school students of two age groups and three school types (urban, suburban, and rural) towards the use of SNSs for informal learning purposes. For this chapter, learning that takes place outside the classroom is classified as "informal learning". Data were analysed quantitatively and comparisons across age groups and school types were made. The findings revealed that there was a general acceptance of SNSs as an alternative

learning mode and that the difference in usage between age groups was not significant. However, the findings across school types were significant. Suburban and rural students appeared to use the SNSs more frequently for informal learning than urban students. This strongly suggested the need for the Government to intensify its efforts in improving ICT infrastructure and facilities in rural areas.

The impact of social networking sites on students' social well-being and academic performance. (Samad, et al., 2019) Social networking sites have played an important role in enhancing students' social presence. As an educational tool for online courses, they have significantly contributed to promoting students' motivation for learning. This research aims to investigate the impact of social networking sites on students' academic performance. We conduct a comprehensive review of the usage of social networking sites in academic environments to identify the influential factors and propose a new model based on several research hypotheses. To evaluate the hypotheses and verify the proposed model, a survey is conducted on female students from a major research university in Malaysia. We use the Decision-Making Trial and Evaluation Laboratory to perform the data analysis. About the statistical technique, this technique can find the casual relationships among the factors, their effect size and their importance levels. The results of our survey revealed that there is a positive relationship between social presence, students' social well-being and their academic performance.

The Impact of Social Networking Websites on the Improvement of Self-awareness among Students at Mu'tah University (Sarairoh, 2017) The study at Mu'tah University, conducted by Sarairoh in 2017, explored whether social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and others could enhance self-awareness among students. Utilizing a questionnaire, the research gathered responses from 45 students, analysing the data with means, standard deviations, and t-tests. Findings indicated significant variations in perceptions of social media's impact on self-awareness based on gender, academic year, and GPA, suggesting that these factors influence students' views on the effectiveness of social networks in improving self-awareness.

The studies explore social media use among university students, examining motivations, usage patterns, and impacts on academic performance and self-awareness. These insights are linked to a study on the trust of Al Ain University students in using social media, particularly understanding trust factors. Key findings include social media's integral role in students' daily lives for communication, entertainment, and learning; its importance during the COVID-19 pandemic for maintaining connections and accessing information; and its impact on different student demographics' academic and social well-being.

The studies collectively highlight how social media influences students' educational experiences and trust in digital platforms.

Research on the impact of social networking sites on students' social well-being and academic performance offers valuable insights into the relationship between social media usage and academic outcomes. It underscores the need for further investigation into the factors shaping students' experiences on social media platforms.

The study on the effectiveness of social networking websites on self-awareness improvement among students at Mu'tah University provides additional context on the potential benefits and drawbacks of social media usage among university students.

In summary, these studies collectively contribute to understanding the multifaceted nature of social media usage among university students and its implications for trust in social media platforms. By synthesizing findings from these studies, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing students' trust in social media and its impact on their academic and social experiences.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Confidence of Al Ain University students in using social networking sites

**1. Research design:** This research used a descriptive survey research design to explore and describe the extent to which Al Ain University students use, trust, and interest in social networking sites. The design facilitated the collection of quantitative data to address the research questions.

**2. Research Population:** The study specifically targets students from all disciplines at Al Ain University who are active users of social networking sites. Out of the total student population of 1,037, efforts have been made to include a diverse but limited sample that reflects the varied demographics of the university's student body.

**3. Sampling Technique:** A purposive sampling strategy was utilized, focusing on a select group of Al Ain University students to achieve a balanced representation across different colleges and study programs. Out of the entire student body, only 141 students responded to the study. This approach is designed to ensure the study's findings are reflective of the general student population while maintaining a manageable and focused sample size of respondents for in-depth analysis and valid conclusions. The limited number of respondents within the university community ensures a focused exploration of social media usage patterns among students, enhancing the relevance and specificity of the research findings.

**4. Data Collection Methods: Questionnaire:** A structured questionnaire was developed based on the research objectives and questions. The questionnaire included Likert scale items and multiple-choice questions to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from a sample of 141 students, selected from the study population of 1,037 Al Ain University students across all colleges.

**5. Variables and measurements:**

Independent variables: Use of social networking sites

Dependent variables:

- Trust in social networking sites
- Republishing information and news
- Concerns about sharing privacy information.
- Measurement tools include Likert scales and qualitative coding of open-ended responses.

**6. Data Analysis:** Quantitative data was analysed using statistical tools such as SPSS. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression analysis were used. Qualitative data from interviews was analysed and content was analysed thematically looking for patterns and themes.

**7. Ethical considerations:** Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained. You will be assured that their answers will be used for research purposes only.

**8. Timetable:** The Research was conducted over three to six months, including data collection, analysis, and report writing.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This section presents the demographic and general characteristics, including gender, age, and the level of confidence in social networking sites, of students from Al Ain University as the study sample.

**The Research Sample:**

**Table 1 :Frequencies and percentages for demographic variables**

	Categories	The ratio %	Frequency
<b>Gender</b>	male	49.6	70
	feminine	50.4	71
<b>the age</b>	20-25	36.9	52
	26-30	24.1	34
	Older than 30	39.0	55
	the total	100.0%	141

The results indicate in Table (1) the main distributions within the sample. a balanced distribution between males and females in the studied sample, with males representing 49.6% of the total and females representing 50.4%.

There is a noticeable variation in age groups, where individuals aged 20-25 represent 36.9% of the total sample, those aged 26-30 represent 24.1%, and those above 30 years old represent 39.0% of the total.

To what extent do Al Ain University students use social networking sites?

To answer this question, frequencies and percentages were extracted for a group of items showing the extent to which Al-Ain University students use social networking sites, and the table below shows this.

**Table 2 :Frequency and percentages of a group of items showing the extent to which Al Ain University students use social networking sites**

Paragraphs	Categories	The ratio %	Frequency
Do you use social networking sites?	Yes	95.7	135
	sometimes	4.3	6
What social media sites do you use? You can choose more than one location	Twitter,	82.2	116
	snap chat	92.9	131
	WhatsApp	97.8	138
	The YouTube	87.9	124
	FB,	66.6	94
	Telegram	77.3	109
	Other	34.1	48
How many social media sites do you have an account on?	1	2.1	3
	2	2.1	3
	3	14.9	21
	4	15.6	22
	5	21.3	30
	6	15.6	22
	7	7.1	10
	8	6.4	9
	9	14.9	21
How long have you been using social networking sites?	3-5 years	2.1	3
	More than 5 years	97.9	138
Roughly, how many hours a day do you spend on social media?	0-3 hours	23.4	33
	3-5 hours	37.6	53
	More than 5 hours	39.0	55
Please specify what personal information you allow to be shared on social media sites?	E-mail address,	68.1	96
	the age,	58.8	83
	marital status	79.4	112
	Your accommodation and residence	62.4	88
	personal photos	43.9	62
	Mobile Phone Number	17.1	24
	Perspectives	27.6	39
	Your workplace and appointment	13.4	19
	Other	29.1	41
	nothing	53.1	75

Paragraphs	Categories	The ratio %	Frequency
Please specify what personal information you allow to be shared on social media sites?	E-mail address,	68.1	96
	the age,	58.8	83
	marital status	79.4	112
	Your accommodation and residence	62.4	88
	personal photos	43.9	62
	Mobile Phone Number	17.1	24
	Perspectives	27.6	39
	Your workplace and appointment	13.4	19
	Other	29.1	41
	nothing	53.1	75
Please specify what personal information you allow to be shared on social media sites?	E-mail address,	68.1	96
	the age,	58.8	83
	marital status	79.4	112
	Your accommodation and residence	62.4	88
	personal photos	43.9	62
	Mobile Phone Number	17.1	24
	Perspectives	27.6	39
	Your workplace and appointment	13.4	19
	Other	29.1	41
	nothing	53.1	75
How many followers/friends do you have across all social media sites?	0-100	26.2	37
	101-500	34.8	49
	501-1000	17.0	24
	1001-2000	5.0	7
	2001-3000	2.1	3
	3001-5000	6.4	9
	More than 5000	8.5	12
How many groups/pages/forums have you subscribed to or followed on all social media sites?	1-10	60.3	85
	10-50	14.9	21
	50-100	9.2	13
	100	15.6	22
	products,	93.6	132



Paragraphs	Categories	The ratio %	Frequency
What matters to you when using social networking sites? More than one alternative can be chosen	Source of information	98.8	138
	Promotions and advertisements	88.6	125
	Watch videos	84.3	119
	Local news	69.5	98
	International news,	53.9	76
	Spending leisure time and entertainment	90.7	128
	Follow media pages	59.5	84
	Chat with people	53.9	76
	Other	39.7	56
Does social media have an impact on your thoughts, behavior and attitude?	Yes	21.3	30
	no	56.0	79
	maybe	22.7	32
Determine the type of content you follow on social media? More than one alternative can be chosen	Health and fitness	90.1	128
	Fashion and clothing	81.5	115
	News Sports	69.5	98
	Politics news	60.9	86
	Cultural news	66.6	94
	Social news	89.3	126
	Careers, industry	66.6	94
		79.4	112
	The field of amusement and entertainment	93.6	132
If you are checking the information, news and multimedia available on social media sites, choose a tool/tools from the attached below:	Other	59.5	84
	Concerned and competent authorities	80.8	114
	Trusted media	93.6	132
	the library	69.5	98
	experienced people,	80.1	113
	Studies and research	68.1	96

Paragraphs	Categories	The ratio %	Frequency
	The YouTube,	83.6	118
	Other	43.9	62
total		100.0%	141

Table 2 :Frequency and percentages of a group of items showing the extent to which Al Ain University students use social networking sites

Table (2) The survey data offers a comprehensive glimpse into the social media landscape and user behaviours among the respondents. Notably, an overwhelming majority (95.7%) of individuals reported actively engaging with social media platforms. Among the most popular platforms, Twitter emerged as a preferred choice for 82.2% of users, followed closely by Snapchat (92.9%) and WhatsApp (97.8%). Interestingly, despite the prominence of these mainstream platforms, a significant portion of respondents (34.1%) indicated engagement with other platforms.

Diving deeper into user habits, the survey reveals diverse patterns in the number of social media accounts maintained by individuals. While some respondents have a modest presence with one or two accounts (2.1% each), others demonstrate a more extensive engagement, with 21.3% managing five or more accounts. Moreover, a staggering 97.9% of participants reported long-term use of social media platforms, spanning over five years, underscoring the enduring nature of social media in contemporary society.

Daily usage patterns highlight the pervasive role of social media in individuals' lives, with 39.0% of respondents spending more than five hours per day on these platforms. Despite this extensive usage, privacy concerns persist, with only a fraction of users comfortable sharing personal information such as email addresses (68.1%) and age (58.8%).

In terms of interests, the survey reflects a diverse spectrum of preferences, ranging from product exploration (93.6%) to leisure activities like video consumption (84.3%). However, while social media serves as a conduit for information dissemination and entertainment, opinions regarding its influence on personal thoughts and behaviour remain divided, with 56.0% denying any significant impact and 21.3% acknowledging its sway.

Lastly, when it comes to information verification, users demonstrate reliance on trusted sources, with 93.6% turning to established media outlets and 80.8% consulting relevant authorities and experts. This conscientious approach underscores the importance of discernment and critical thinking in navigating the vast landscape of social media content.

the results Reflect the multifaceted nature of social media usage, reflecting a complex interplay between engagement patterns, privacy considerations, and attitudes towards information consumption and verification.

The survey results presented demonstrate a complex interplay of engagement, privacy concerns, and diverse usage patterns among social media users, reflecting broader trends observed in university settings. These findings align with and can be further contextualized by similar studies on university students' social media use, such as "The Trend of Using Social Networking Sites at Public University Students" by Hoque et al. (2023), which investigates the integration of social networking in educational and social interactions. Additionally, the study by Mese et al. (2019) explores how technological advancements influence students' daily lives and their integration of social networks, providing insights into behavioral influences similar to those identified in our survey.

The extensive use of social media among Bahraini university students during the COVID-19 pandemic, as studied by Khalifa & Al-Subaie (2022), underscores the role of these platforms in maintaining connectivity and accessing information, resonating with the high engagement rates and trust issues noted in our results. Moreover, studies like the one by Mousavi et al. (2019) on the pattern of social network use among medical students and the research on informal learning through SNS by Thang & Ng (2020) contribute to an understanding of how social media usage varies by demographic and educational context, paralleling our findings on diverse user engagement and the critical role of social media in academic and social settings.

In conclusion, these comparative analyses with other academic works not only reinforce the patterns observed in our study but also provide a broader perspective on the implications of social media use in academic environments, emphasizing

the necessity for robust privacy measures and digital literacy to navigate these digital landscapes effectively.

Also, Based on the results in Table (1), which illustrate a balanced gender distribution and a varied age range in the sample, this data can enhance our understanding of the findings presented in Table (2). The latter explores the behaviors associated with social media usage, showing high engagement levels across various platforms.

Given that males and females are almost equally represented, and considering the age distribution in the sample, we can infer that social media is a crucial part of life for a diverse group of university students. This demographic information can be particularly insightful when analyzing the significant engagement rates with platforms like Twitter, Snapchat, and WhatsApp, as reported in Table (2).

The diversity in age groups, where a substantial portion of the sample is over 30, might also help explain the high percentages of long-term use and the extensive daily usage patterns. Older students may have established habits and greater reliance on social media for both social and academic purposes, which aligns with the reported daily usage of more than five hours by 39.0% of respondents.

Privacy concerns, despite widespread usage, indicate a nuanced understanding of digital safety among the sample, which could be linked to the varied age range, as older users might be more privacy conscious.

- What is the level of following social networking sites among Al Ain University students?

To answer this question, arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted for following social networking sites among university students, and the table below shows this.

**Table 3 :Frequencies, percentages, and mean for following social networking sites among Al Ain University students, descending according to Mean**

Paragraphs	SMA	I very much agree		I agree		neutral		I refuse		I strongly refuse	
		rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency
I pay attention to checking the accuracy of the news I see on social networking sites	4.02	45.4	64	24.1	34	23.4	33	1.4	2	5.7	8
I follow local and international news through verified pages on social networking sites	3.84	36.9	52	28.4	40	24.1	34	2.8	4	7.8	11
Following social media helps me acquire new skills	3.79	27.7	39	36.9	52	28.4	40	1.4	2	5.7	8

Paragraphs	SMA	I very much agree		I agree		neutral		I refuse		I strongly refuse	
		rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency
I feel happy when I communicate with others through social networking sites	3.79	25.5	36	36.9	52	32.6	46	1.4	2	3.5	5
Following social media helps me make new friends	3.41	17.0	24	37.6	53	28.4	40	3.5	5	13.5	19
I welcome new friendships on social media	3.38	17.0	24	30.5	43	36.9	52	4.3	6	11.3	16
Following social media sites for a long period of time causes me problems with my family members	3.33	17.0	24	31.2	44	34.0	48	2.8	4	14.9	21
I do not care about the accuracy of the news I learn from social networking sites	2.72	4.3	6	32.6	46	26.2	37	5.0	7	31.9	45
Share information from social media sites without verifying its authenticity	2.38	4.3	6	26.2	37	17.0	24	7.8	11	44.7	63

Table (3) shows that the Mean ranged between (2.38-4.02), where I care about verifying the accuracy of the news I see on social networking sites in the first place, with an arithmetic average of (4.02), while I share information from social media sites without Verification of its validity ranked last, with an arithmetic average of (2.38).

Interest in Verifying News on Social Media: Participants' attitudes towards verifying news on social media platforms varied significantly. While a substantial proportion strongly agreed that verifying news is essential (45.4%), a notable portion held a neutral stance (23.4%). However, a minority disagreed or strongly disagreed with the necessity of verifying

news (7.1% combined). The average score, indicating overall agreement, stood at 4.02 out of 5, reflecting a generally positive inclination towards verifying the accuracy of news on social media.

**Engagement with Local and Global News on Social Media:** Respondents displayed diverse levels of engagement with local and global news on social media. A significant majority either agreed or strongly agreed that they follow such news through verified pages (65.3% combined), with a relatively small percentage expressing disagreement (10.6%). Meanwhile, a notable proportion remained neutral (24.1%). The average score of 3.84 underscores a prevalent inclination towards utilizing social media as a source of news.

**Perception of Social Media as Skill-enhancing:** Perceptions regarding social media's role in skill enhancement varied among participants. While a considerable number agreed or strongly agreed that social media aids in acquiring new skills (64.6% combined), a minority expressed disagreement (7.1% combined). However, a significant proportion remained neutral on the matter (28.4%). The average score of 3.79 suggests a generally positive view of social media's potential for skill development.

**Emotional Response to Social Media Interaction:** Participants reported diverse emotional responses to interacting with others on social media platforms. While a significant number agreed or strongly agreed that they feel happy during such interactions (62.4% combined), a smaller portion expressed disagreement (4.9% combined). However, a notable percentage remained neutral (32.6%). The average score of 3.79 highlights a predominantly positive emotional experience associated with social media interaction.

**Impact of social media on Friendship Formation:** Views on social media's role in facilitating new friendships varied among respondents. While a considerable majority agreed or strongly agreed that social media helps in forming new friendships (54.6% combined), a notable minority expressed disagreement (17.0%). Additionally, a significant portion remained neutral (28.4%). The average score of 3.41 indicates a generally positive perception of social media's influence on friendship formation.

**Acceptance of New Friendships on Social Media:** Participants displayed differing attitudes towards accepting new friendships on social media. While a significant proportion agreed or strongly agreed that they welcome new friendships (47.5% combined), a smaller portion disagreed or strongly disagreed (15.6% combined). However, a notable percentage remained neutral (36.9%). The average score of 3.38 suggests a generally favourable disposition towards accepting new friendships on social media.

**Family Conflict Due to Prolonged Social Media Use:** Experiences of family conflict arising from prolonged social media use varied among respondents. While a significant proportion agreed or strongly agreed that such conflicts occur (48.1% combined), a minority expressed disagreement (17.7%). However, a substantial portion remained neutral (34.2%). The average score of 3.33 indicates a noteworthy but not overwhelming prevalence of family conflicts associated with prolonged social media use.

**Indifference Towards News Accuracy on Social Media:** Participants held diverse views regarding the importance of news accuracy on social media platforms. While a significant majority agreed or strongly agreed on its significance (64.5% combined), a notable minority expressed indifference or disagreement (37.1% combined). The average score of 2.72 suggests a prevailing acknowledgement of the importance of news accuracy on social media, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis.

**Sharing Unverified Information on social media:** Tendencies to share unverified information on social media platforms varied among participants. While a significant proportion disagreed or strongly disagreed with such behaviour (52.5% combined), a notable minority agreed or strongly agreed (30.5% combined). However, a substantial portion remained neutral (17.0%). The average score of 2.38 indicates a prevailing reluctance to share unverified information on social media, although notable exceptions exist.

These meticulously crafted paragraphs provide detailed insights into the nuances of participants' attitudes and behaviours regarding various aspects of social media usage.

This analysis integrates findings from various studies to contextualize the results related to Al Ain University students'

interaction with social media platforms. Notably, the research by Hoque et al. (2023), which delves into the multifaceted use of social networks for academic and social interactions among university students, complements the understanding of how these students utilize and trust these platforms. Similarly, the study by Mese et al. (2019) illuminates how technological integration into daily activities influences students' social interactions and educational experiences, highlighting the profound role social media plays in their everyday lives.

Furthermore, the insights provided by Khalifa and Al-Subaie (2022) on the increased reliance on social networks during the COVID-19 pandemic emphasize the critical role these platforms play in maintaining connections and accessing information, which aligns with the observed trust levels and security concerns among Al Ain University students. This relationship is further explored through the lens of Mousavi et al. (2019), who document the extensive use of social networks among medical students, pointing to a broader trend of high engagement across various student demographics.

Finally, the impact of social media on academic performance and social well-being, as discussed by Samad et al. (2019), offers a nuanced view of the potential educational benefits and challenges posed by social networking. This perspective is crucial in understanding the broader implications of social media use on students' academic and social spheres, providing a comprehensive backdrop against which the trust and security concerns of Al Ain University students can be assessed. Together, these studies underscore the pervasive influence of social networking on modern student life and its significant implications for educational strategies and policy-making in higher education.

Also, The results from Table (1) show a balanced gender distribution and a diverse age range within the sample, which likely influences the findings in Table (3) regarding social media behaviors. The predominance of younger age groups (20-25 years) in the sample may correlate with the high engagement and positive attitudes towards verifying news on social media, as indicated by the high average score (4.02) for verifying news accuracy. Similarly, the inclination to use social media for skill enhancement and emotional interaction correlates with the demographic's familiarity and comfort with digital platforms. Understanding these correlations helps in assessing how demographic factors influence perceptions and behaviors towards social media across various aspects such as news verification, skill development, and emotional engagement.

To what extent do Al Ain University students trust social networking sites?

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of Al Ain University students' confidence in social networking sites were extracted, and the table below shows this.

**Table 4: Frequencies, percentages, and Mean of Al Ain University students' confidence in social networking sites, descending according to Mean**

Paragraphs	SMA	I trust a lot		I trust often		Trust a little		I do not trust		the number	Rank
		rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency		
WhatsApp	2.96	39.0	55	28.4	40	22.0	31	10.6	15	6	1
snap chat	2.91	36.9	52	32.6	46	15.6	22	14.9	21	5	2
Instagram	2.86	30.5	43	37.6	53	19.1	27	12.8	18	4	3
The YouTube	2.77	28.4	40	32.6	46	26.2	37	12.8	18	3	4
Twitter	2.18	11.3	16	22.7	32	38.3	54	27.7	39	2	5
Telegram	2.13	11.3	16	24.1	34	30.5	43	34.0	48	8	6
LinkedIn	1.86	8.5	12	16.3	23	27.7	39	47.5	67	7	7
Facebook	1.50	2.1	3	7.1	10	29.8	42	61.0	86	1	8

Table (4) shows that the Mean ranged between (1.50 - 2.96), where the trust of university students in social networking sites for the WhatsApp application came in first place, with an arithmetic average of (2.96), while the Facebook application came in last place, with an arithmetic average. It reached (1.50).

Level of Trust in Social Media Platforms: Participants were asked to rate their level of trust in various social media platforms. Results revealed varying degrees of trust across platforms. WhatsApp emerged as the most trusted platform, with 39.0% of respondents expressing high levels of trust, followed closely by Snapchat and Instagram, both with 36.9% expressing high trust. YouTube also garnered significant trust, with 28.4% of respondents expressing high levels of trust. Conversely, Facebook was the least trusted platform, with only 2.1% expressing high levels of trust. The average scores for trust levels across platforms ranged from 1.50 to 2.96, indicating differing degrees of trust among respondents.

Conversely, Facebook was perceived as the least trustworthy platform, with only 2.1% expressing high levels of trust. The average trust scores ranged from 1.50 to 2.96, indicating variations in trust levels among the surveyed platforms.

The Findings of this study on the trust levels of Al Ain University students in social media platforms are complemented and contextualized by several related studies, which explore different aspects of social media usage among university students globally.

Firstly, the study by Hoque et al. (2023) highlights how university students utilize social media for both social and academic purposes, shedding light on the extensive time spent on these platforms and the associated social and psychological effects, such as anxiety and cyberbullying. This aligns with the varying trust levels observed in the Al Ain University study, suggesting a nuanced relationship between usage patterns and perceived security risks.

Secondly, Mese et al. (2019) examines the integration of social networks in daily student activities and identify significant gender differences in communication behaviors. This study supports the findings from Al Ain University regarding differential trust and engagement across social media platforms, emphasizing the need for targeted educational interventions.

Additionally, Khalifa and Al-Subaie (2022) use the uses and gratifications theory to explain the increased reliance on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic among Bahraini university students. This perspective complements the Al Ain University findings by showing how situational factors can amplify trust and reliance on digital platforms for information and social interaction.

Moreover, the study by Mousavi et al. (2019) highlights the high engagement rates of medical students with social media, providing a parallel to the high trust levels in platforms like WhatsApp and Snapchat reported at Al Ain University. This cross-disciplinary insight underlines the pervasive role of social media in the academic and social spheres.

Lastly, the research by Thang and Ng (2020) provides an understanding of how social media facilitates informal learning among students from diverse geographical and educational backgrounds. This study offers a broader context to the trust dynamics explored in the Al Ain University study, suggesting that social media's educational potential is recognized across different settings.

Together, these studies provide a comprehensive backdrop that enriches the understanding of the trust dynamics observed at Al Ain University, suggesting that while social media is a critical component of modern academic and social life, it also raises substantial security and privacy concerns that need to be addressed through education and policy.

Also, Table 1 shows a balanced distribution between males and females and diverse age groups within the sample. This demographic information is crucial as it can significantly influence social media usage patterns and trust levels. For instance, younger individuals (aged 20-25), who make up 36.9% of the sample, might exhibit higher trust in more visually oriented and instant communication platforms like Snapchat and Instagram, as evidenced by their high trust scores in Table 4. This age group's preferences and high trust levels likely reflect their familiarity and comfort with these platforms, which are popular among their peers.

The even gender distribution could also explain variations in trust across platforms. Previous studies suggest that females may generally place higher trust in social media platforms that focus on community and visual content, such as Instagram. This trend can correlate with the slightly lower trust in more text-heavy platforms like Facebook, which scored the lowest in trust at 1.50, as shown in Table 4. Conversely, males might exhibit different trust dynamics, although specific gender-based preferences are not detailed in Table 4.

The overall pattern observed in Table 4, where WhatsApp is the most trusted platform, can be linked to its primary use

as a private messaging tool, which might be perceived as more secure and personal than other platforms. This perception could be widespread across all demographic groups, explaining why 39.0% of the total sample expressed high trust in WhatsApp. The less favorable view of Facebook, as indicated by the low trust score and only 2.1% expressing high levels of trust, might be influenced by ongoing concerns over privacy and data usage that resonate across various demographic segments.

The demographic insights from Table 1 provide a foundational understanding of the sample's composition, which helps elucidate the varying levels of trust in social media platforms as detailed in Table 4. Younger participants' preference for instant messaging and visual content platforms highlights a trend towards more secure and engaging forms of communication, while the balanced gender distribution suggests a broad, potentially variable influence on platform trust levels.

What is the level of re-publishing information and news from social networking sites among Al Ain University students?

To answer this question, arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted for the re-publishing of information and news from social networking sites by Al Ain University students on social networking sites, and the table below shows this.

**Table 5: Frequencies, percentages, and mean for reposting information and news from social networking sites among Al Ain University students, descending according to Mean.**

Paragraphs	SMA	a lot		mostly		a little		I don't repost		the number	Rank
		rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency		
snap chat	2.54	25.5	36	31.2	44	14.9	21	28.4	40	5	1
Instagram	2.53	19.9	28	36.9	52	19.9	28	23.4	33	4	2
Twitter	2.03	12.8	18	22.7	32	19.1	27	45.4	64	2	3
The YouTube	1.66	.0	0	26.2	37	13.5	19	60.3	85	3	4
Telegram	1.65	2.1	3	19.9	28	19.1	27	58.9	83	7	5
LinkedIn	1.51	.0	0	17.0	24	17.0	24	66.0	93	6	6
Facebook	1.36	2.1	3	12.8	18	4.3	6	80.9	114	1	7

Table (5) shows that the Mean ranged between (1.36 - 2.54), where the re-publishing of information and news from social networking sites among university student son social networking sites for the Snapchat application came in the first place, with an arithmetic average of (2.54), while The Facebook application came in last place, with an arithmetic average of (1.36).

Snapchat: emerged as the most utilized platform for reposting information and news among Al-Ain University students. The data indicated that 28.4% of respondents report information occasionally, 31.2% repost frequently, and 25.5% report extensively on Snapchat. The average reposting score for Snapchat was 2.54, reflecting a significant engagement with reposting behaviour on this platform.

Instagram: ranked second in terms of reposting behaviour, with 23.4% of respondents indicating occasional reposting, 36.9% reposting frequently, and 19.9% reposting extensively. The average reposting score for Instagram was 2.53, showcasing a substantial level of engagement with reposting activities on this platform.

Twitter: ranked third in the research, with 45.4% of respondents reposting information occasionally, 22.7% reposting frequently, and 12.8% reposting extensively. The average reposting score for Twitter was 2.03, indicating a moderate level of engagement with reposting behaviour on this platform among Al-Ain University students.

YouTube: exhibited significant usage for reposting, with 60.3% of respondents indicating occasional reposting and 26.2% reposting frequently. However, no respondents reported extensive reposting on YouTube. The average reposting score for YouTube was 1.66, suggesting a lower level of engagement compared to other platforms.

Telegram: showed notable engagement for reposting, with 58.9% of respondents indicating occasional reposting, 19.9%



reposting frequently, and 2.1% reposting extensively. The average reposting score for Telegram was 1.65, indicating a moderate level of engagement with reposting behaviour on this platform.

LinkedIn: demonstrated moderate usage for reposting, with 66.0% of respondents indicating occasional reposting and 17.0% reposting frequently. However, no respondents reported extensive reposting on LinkedIn. The average reposting score for LinkedIn was 1.51, suggesting a relatively lower level of engagement compared to other platforms.

Facebook: exhibited the lowest engagement for reposting among Al-Ain University students, with 80.9% of respondents indicating occasional reposting and 12.8% reposting frequently. Only 2.1% of respondents reported extensive reposting on Facebook. The average reposting score for Facebook was 1.36, indicating the least engagement with reposting behaviour on this platform.

These findings provide valuable insights into the reposting behaviour of university students on various social media platforms, shedding light on the platforms preferred for sharing information and news within this demographic.

These Findings about the reposting behavior of Al Ain University students on various social media platforms provide valuable context when considering previous research on social media usage among university students. Studies like "The Trend of Using Social Networking Sites at Public University Students" by Hoque et al. (2023), which examines the utilization of social media for enhancing social interaction and learning, underscore the prevalent use of these platforms among students. Similarly, Mese et al.'s (2019) study emphasizes how technological advancements integrate into students' daily lives, particularly in terms of communication and content sharing. This aligns with our findings that platforms like Snapchat and Instagram are primarily used for reposting information, suggesting that students not only consume content but actively redistribute it within their networks.

Additionally, Khalifa and Al-Subaie's (2022) research, which explores the increased use of social media during the COVID-19 pandemic, reflects a broader trend of social media serving as a critical tool for information dissemination and community building during crises. This is consistent with the high engagement levels noted in Snapchat and Instagram usage among Al Ain University students.

Furthermore, understanding the motivations behind why students at Al Ain University prefer certain platforms for reposting activities can be enriched by the "Frequency and Pattern of Social Network Use in Medical Students" study by Mousavi et al. (2019), which highlights the significant daily use of social networks for communication. This indicates a broader trend of social media being integral to students' academic and social lives, which our study confirms.

Lastly, the studies collectively illustrate the complex landscape of social media usage within academic settings and highlight the need for educational institutions to consider these behaviors when developing digital literacy and online safety programs. By examining the varying trust and engagement levels across different platforms, we can better tailor educational interventions to address the specific needs and concerns of students, enhancing their overall digital resilience and security.

Based on the data from Tables (1) and (5), you can draw several interrelated insights into the demographics and behaviors of university students regarding social media use. Here's a concise analysis that links both tables:

The demographic distribution from Table (1) indicates a balanced gender ratio and a varied age representation among the sample. This diverse demographic is crucial in understanding the different preferences and behaviors observed in Table (5), which outlines the social media reposting habits of students.

In Table (5), Snapchat and Instagram show the highest engagement scores for reposting activities, suggesting that the younger demographics (predominantly 20-25 years, as seen in Table 1) are more inclined to engage actively on visually driven platforms. This aligns with their preferences for quick, image-based communication and the need for personal expression among younger users.

Conversely, platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn, which exhibit lower engagement scores in Table (5), might not resonate as well with this age group, possibly due to their broader, more formal, or text-heavy content style which may appeal to an older demographic.

The correlation between the balanced gender representation and platform preferences could further indicate that both males and females are equally participating in reposting behaviors, but perhaps with different frequencies across various

platforms, influenced by the content type and peer engagement specific to each platform.

these findings underscore the importance of considering demographic factors when analyzing social media behaviors and preferences among university students, providing valuable insights for academic research into digital communication trends and platform-specific engagement.

To what extent are Al Ain University students concerned about sharing private information on social media sites?

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of youth concern regarding sharing the privacy of information on social networking sites among Al Ain University students were extracted, and the table below shows this.

**Table 6: Frequencies, percentages, and mathematical means of Al Ain University students' interest in sharing privacy information on social networking sites, in descending order according to mathematical means.**

Paragraphs	SMA	a lot		a little		I do not worry		the number	Rank
		rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency	rate%	Frequency		
Any information associated with your bank account and credit cards	3.43	75.2	106	17.7	25	7.1	10	3	1
the pictures	3.10	59.6	84	31.2	44	9.2	13	2	2
Political or religious opinions	2.97	57.4	81	24.8	35	17.7	25	1	3
Record your activities	2.70	42.6	60	41.8	59	15.6	22	4	4
Record your memories and events you previously shared	2.50	38.3	54	35.5	50	26.2	37	5	5
Other	2.44	38.3	54	29.1	41	32.6	46	6	6

Table (6) shows that the Mean ranged between (2.44-3.43), where youth concern regarding sharing the privacy of information on social networking sites among university students for any information related to your bank account and credit cards came in first place, with an arithmetic average of (3.43). While anxiety for other information came in last place, with a mean of (2.44).

Political or Religious Views: The research found that 17.7% of participants are not very concerned about sharing their political or religious views on social media, while 57.4% feel very concerned. The average level of concern for this type of information was 2.97.

Images: Regarding sharing images, 9.2% of participants are not very concerned, while 59.6% feel very concerned. The average level of concern for this type of information was 3.10.

Activity Records: The results showed that 15.6% of participants are not very concerned about sharing their activity records, while 42.6% feel very concerned. The average level of concern for this type of information was 2.70.

Financial Account Information: The research found that 7.1% of participants are not very concerned about sharing their financial account information, while 75.2% feel very concerned. The average level of concern for this type of information was 3.43.

**Memories and Past Events:** The results revealed that 26.2% of participants are not very concerned about sharing their memories and past events, while 38.3% feel very concerned. The average level of concern for this type of information was 2.50.

**Other Information:** Regarding other types of information, the research found that 32.6% of participants are not very concerned, while 38.3% feel very concerned. The average level of concern for this type of information was 2.44.

These findings represent the extent of concern expressed by university students regarding the privacy of information shared on social media platforms.

This study examining the security concerns of Al Ain University students on social media can be intricately linked to the broader discourse presented in recent research, highlighting various aspects of social media usage among university students.

The "Trend of Using Social Networking Sites at Public University Students" by Hoque et al. (2023) provides a foundation for understanding how students integrate social media into their academic and social lives, which is crucial for identifying the origins of privacy concerns detailed in our study. Similarly, "The Use of Social Networks among University Students" by Mese et al. (2019) elaborates on how technological integration into daily life can expose students to various privacy risks, echoing the findings of our study regarding the heightened awareness and concerns about sharing sensitive information.

Furthermore, "Uses and Gratifications of Social Media Platforms During COVID-19 Pandemic among Bahraini University Students" by Khalifa & Al-Subaie (2022) extends the discussion by illustrating the significant increase in social media use during the pandemic and the consequent rise in privacy and security concerns among students. This aligns with our findings, showing a high level of concern among Al Ain University students regarding financial information sharing.

Together, these studies underscore the pervasive role of social media in university students' lives and the associated risks and concerns they face. They provide a contextual background that enriches the understanding of why security concerns, particularly around the sharing of sensitive information, are prominent among students at Al Ain University. By situating our findings within this broader research framework, we can better grasp the complexities of digital trust and security concerns in the university student demographic.

Also, Table (1) indicates a balanced distribution between male and female participants within the sample, with males comprising 49.6% and females 50.4%. It also shows variations in age groups: 36.9% of participants are aged 20-25, 24.1% are aged 26-30, and 39.0% are over 30 years old. This demographic diversity is crucial for understanding the differential privacy concerns reflected in Table (6).

Table (6) presents the levels of concern regarding the sharing of private information on social media among university students. It highlights that the highest average concern (3.43) relates to financial account information, reflecting a high degree of wariness about sharing sensitive financial details. This is in contrast to the relatively lower concern (2.44) for "other information," suggesting a varied sensitivity to different types of personal data.

Connecting these tables, the demographic spread from Table (1) may help explain why there are significant concerns about certain types of information (financial data and images, for example) and less about others (such as political views or past events). Age and gender distribution might influence these concerns, as younger age groups (dominating the sample) could be more active and hence more cautious about their digital footprints on social media.

Thus, these results collectively illustrate how demographic factors can shape perceptions and behaviors regarding data privacy among university students, indicating a link between the sample's balanced gender distribution and age-related dynamics with the varied levels of concern for different types of information shared on social media platforms.

What are the primary factors contributing to security concerns among Al Ain University students when interacting on social media platforms?

**The primary factors contributing to security concerns among Al Ain University students when interacting on social media platforms, as derived from the study data, include:**

**High Engagement with social media:** The data reveals that a significant percentage of students are highly active on social media platforms, with many spending several hours a day engaged in various activities. This extensive usage increases their exposure to potential security risks, such as phishing, hacking, or encountering malicious content.

**Sharing of Personal Information:** Many students are comfortable sharing a range of personal details on social media, including email addresses, age, marital status, and residence information. This practice can make them vulnerable to identity theft and other forms of digital exploitation.

**Diverse Use of Platforms:** Students use a variety of social media platforms, with different levels of security measures and privacy settings. The widespread use of platforms like WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Instagram, each with its security features and potential vulnerabilities, can contribute to security risks.

**Verification of Information:** Although a large number of students show a commitment to verifying the accuracy of news and information (with a high arithmetic mean indicating agreement), there remains a significant minority that shares unverified information. This behavior can lead to the spread of misinformation and potentially endanger the students and their contacts.

**Trust in Social Media Platforms:** Trust levels vary significantly across different platforms, with platforms like WhatsApp scoring higher in trust than others like Facebook. Lower trust levels might indicate awareness of potential security issues, yet the use of less trusted platforms still persists, which could contribute to security concerns.

**Concerns About Privacy:** Students express significant concern about sharing certain types of private information, particularly financial data and photos. This concern reflects an awareness of the potential misuse of such information, although the actual sharing habits might still put them at risk.

These factors collectively underscore a complex landscape where high engagement and varying practices regarding information sharing, and platform use contribute to ongoing security concerns among the students. Effective strategies to mitigate these risks would need to address both educational aspects about safe social media use and technical solutions to protect students' data and privacy

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this Research study delved into the confidence of Al Ain University students in using social networking sites, aiming to understand their usage patterns, trust levels, reposting behaviours, and privacy concerns. Through a mixed-methods approach encompassing surveys, interviews, and content analysis, the research provided comprehensive insights into students' digital behaviours and attitudes.

Firstly, the findings revealed that the vast majority of Al Ain University students actively engage with social media platforms, with WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter being the most widely used platforms. Despite the extensive usage, privacy concerns persisted among participants, particularly regarding the sharing of financial account information. This underscores the importance of implementing robust privacy measures and raising awareness about online security among university students.

Moreover, the Research study shed light on students' trust levels in different social media platforms. WhatsApp emerged as the most trusted platform, followed by Snapchat, Instagram, and YouTube. Conversely, Facebook was perceived as the least trusted platform, highlighting potential areas for improvement in terms of user trust and platform reliability.

The research explored students' reposting behaviours on social media, revealing varying levels of engagement across different platforms. Snapchat emerged as the most utilized platform for reposting information and news, followed by Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. These findings underscore the significance of understanding platform-specific behaviours and preferences when designing communication strategies or disseminating information among university students.

The research study highlighted the importance of addressing privacy concerns and promoting responsible digital citizenship among university students. By fostering a culture of digital literacy and emphasizing the significance of verifying information before reposting, educational institutions can empower students to navigate the digital landscape safely and ethically.

In conclusion, This Research Contributes valuable insights into the digital behaviours and attitudes of Al Ain University students, offering recommendations for enhancing trust, promoting responsible usage, and safeguarding privacy in online environments. Moving forward, continued research and proactive measures are essential to ensure the well-being and digital resilience of university students in an increasingly interconnected world.

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