

The Role of Social Media in Spreading the Culture of Volunteer Work Among University Students

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Abstract

This study explores the role of social media - especially social networking sites - Facebook, in spreading the culture of volunteer work among young people, especially university youth in Saudi Arabia. The study used the descriptive method and developed a questionnaire to collect data from 414 students from different universities in Saudi Arabia, who were chosen by the random sampling method. The results indicated that Facebook effectively promotes volunteer work campaigns and contributes effectively to introducing students to more aspects of volunteer work. The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences in the responses of the respondents about the role of Facebook in promoting the culture of volunteer work due to gender. The findings also revealed that the statistical differences between the responses of the participants were not statistically significant because of the difference in the student's faculty.

Keywords: social media, Facebook, university students, voluntary work

1. Introduction

The culture of volunteer work represents one of the cultural components of urban societies, as volunteer work is an important service to society. It is one of the most useful means of developing an individual's personality by contributing to supporting their cultural upbringing and social formation (Kaun & Uldam, 2018). The volunteer culture seeks to achieve a set of skills, knowledge, and values associated with acts of kindness provided to society. The importance of modern technology for information and communication can be optimally exploited in a way that benefits society, given the new horizons and profound changes that technology has brought about in various aspects of human life, cultural, intellectual, and social (Limba & Šidlauskas, 2018). It has also greatly affected all patterns of human communication and opened a wide scope for embodying the concept of the global village.

In addition, technology is also considered an application of science in solving the problems facing humans, and the amazing development in the fields of communication technology has allowed it to be linked to all areas of human activities, so it has become an important part of the daily lives of people (Greenhow & Lewin, 2019). The Internet is among the most prominent manifestations of modern communication technology, which has largely succeeded in opening new opportunities for individuals to interact, share their concerns and problems, and provide assistance to those who need it (Dean, 2020). Global communication has developed through the Internet to the point that humans can communicate more quickly in time and space through the advanced software used on the Internet and social networking sites and the various facilities they provide to users, enabling them to gain knowledge and access information in record time instead of requiring effort and a long time (Lau, 2017).

The second generation of the Internet provided new possibilities for communication across the network through social networking sites. Studying social networking sites and their impact on people and how to exploit them by some organizations specializing in the field of volunteer work has increased, which has become clear in Arab societies (Alamri, 2019). The importance of using it in periods of war, disasters, combating diseases, unemployment, poverty, and other problems and crises to which Arab countries are exposed has been made clear. Volunteering has become one of the most prominent actions in people's lives today (Mese & Aydin, 2019). We have noticed the effective use of social networking

sites in the field of humanitarian services since their inception and launch. It had a pioneering position and was the voice of everyone who was able to penetrate space to reach all parts of the globe (Xie et al., 2023).

Facebook is the most widely spread global company and accounts for the largest share of Internet users and social networking sites around the world. This site provides the capabilities of social networking and participation between people, exchanging opinions, comments, and publications with all types of written, photographic, and video content, enhancing with Messenger services and hundreds of other services provided by the site in the field of media, marketing, and advertising (Kircaburun et al., 2020).

Hence, this study focuses on optimally using these sites to identify the extent of the success of humanitarian initiatives and volunteer campaigns through social networking sites carried out by the parties concerned with volunteer work and their impact on society. The study also seeks to identify awareness of the benefits achieved from optimally using these sites to achieve the consolidation of the culture of volunteer work among university students in Saudi Arabia.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Volunteer work represents a supreme human value in advanced human societies, and it is a basic indicator of the world's civilizational peace. The spread of the culture of volunteer work is evidence of the positive direction of any country's path in the path of higher human ideals and line with the researcher's interest in the fields of work. Several initiatives invite people to do volunteer work. Sometimes these initiatives come directly from the university administrators and faculty members. Because youth are active members on social media websites, they see and follow several initiatives also on volunteering. It was necessary to explore the role of social media - especially social networking sites - Facebook, in spreading the culture of volunteer work among young people, especially university youth in Saudi Arabia.

1.2 Questions of the Study

- 1- To what extent does the social media network - Facebook contribute to enhancing the concept of volunteer work among Saudi Arabian university students?
- 2- Are there any statistically significant differences in the role of Facebook in promoting the culture of volunteer work due to the variables of gender and faculty?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study has two significant sides. The first is from a theoretical perspective, as this study aspires to be one of the studies that have a role in specializing in the role of social networking sites in establishing the culture of volunteer work. Therefore, the researcher will address this topic in addition to the need for the Arabic library for this type of modern and important studies that keep pace with modern developments in the field of communication, so this study came as an attempt to fill the gap in this field or enhance the few existing ones. The second is from the applied aspect, as this study will bring great and important benefit to those concerned in the field of charitable and humanitarian initiatives and volunteer work, whether internal or external organizations or individuals, as shown by the results it will reach.

1.4 Study Limitations

Time limits: the study was applied during the academic year 2022-2023.

Spatial limits: the study included universities in Abha, Saudi Arabia.

Applied limits: a sample of students from Saudi Arabian universities.

2. Literature Review

Volunteering, as pointed out by several writers, is not a completely selfless act as it also brings about personal advantages. An action is more likely to be deemed voluntary if the costs exceed the benefits. In general, volunteering may be driven by either altruistic or egoistic motives, or even a combination of the two (Seelig, 2018). The purely selfless aspect of volunteering is becoming less common, while the subjective worth of helping, which encompasses the desire and incentive for enjoyment and amusement, is increasing. A new trend, so-called leisure volunteering, has emerged, despite the fact that in order for an activity to be classified as volunteering, it must include some kind of service to another person or organization (Cheng et al., 2020). Volunteering for cultural and leisure events, sports associations, disability support groups, and neighbourhood organisations has grown in prominence while conventional, value-based volunteering has declined, according to scholars. Shorter commitment lengths and significant levels of organisational instability characterise this new kind of volunteering (Raza et al., 2020).

Constructivist and functional theory explain voluntary social behavior by explaining the results that this behavior achieves in society. This theory sees that society is made up of interconnected parts, each part performing a specific function that serves the goals of everyone (Alelaimat et al., 2023). These social theory systems to maintain the stability of society apply to volunteer work as one of its aspects of integration. The idea of the functional theory is based on the role of volunteer

work in achieving social integration, assuming that through participation in volunteer work, interaction occurs between volunteer members, which leads to many benefits for the volunteers themselves, such as gaining different knowledge, engaging in new experiences, and not feeling lonely. They can also compensate for weak relationships and social issues in contemporary urban societies (Boulianne & Theocharis, 2020).

The concept of volunteer work does not differ from one society to another, and it is defined as a human practice that represents good work and the meanings of goodness, but it differs in its form, directions, and size from one society to another and differs in its period (Liu & Ma, 2020). An example of this is the variation in the volume of volunteer work depending on the situation of society, as it increases relatively in times of wars and natural disasters and its volume decreases in periods of calm and stability (Limba & Šidlauskas, 2018). Volunteer work is divided into two parts. Individual volunteerism is a behaviour or social action that the individual practices on his initiative, with his desire and will, and does not seek any financial return from it, and is founded on religious, social, moral, or humanitarian principles (Dean, 2020). Volunteering at an institution is more sophisticated, more structured, and benefits society more broadly than volunteering on an individual basis. As associations and civil and governmental organizations contribute to the growth of society, institutional volunteer work helps to combine disparate social efforts and energy. These are just a few of the numerous institutions in society where volunteer work is extremely important. If they are synchronized and come together, it makes them synergistic and has a substantial and effective influence (Greenhow & Lewin, 2019; Khasawneh, 2023).

Social networking sites have developed into cutting-edge organizations that raise youth, instill positive habits and behaviors in them, and serve as a vital instrument for social change (Mese & Aydin, 2019). Social and educational institutions in the United Arab Emirates are keen to create events and programs that will help university students in the country make the most of their free time by keeping them occupied. Additionally, to instill and nurture significant ideas and concepts into the student's personality (Alamri, 2019). Instead of being a means of indoctrination, education serves as a valuable tool for developing students' whole personalities, encouraging a sense of self-worth and social responsibility, preparing them to take on life's responsibilities, and helping them find an integrated balance across all facets of their personalities through the promotion of volunteerism.

Youth care involves offering a variety of services and activities, as well as creating social and athletic organizations to occupy their free time. However, given the vast array of opportunities that modern technology presents for young people to engage in a variety of activities, this care only addresses a portion of the needs of this demographic (Kircaburun et al., 2020). The process that occurs between an individual and all of his or her social, psychological, and mental components and the environment, with all of its social and cultural components, situations, and circumstances, is known as human behavior. It serves as the foundation for communication between people, organizations, and civilizations.

Previous studies

Abbas et al. (2019) investigated the positive and negative influences on students' thoughts and how these influences aided in their ability to communicate both good and bad things to others. The cluster sampling approach was modified for this study, and participants came from five preselected locations. 831 full and valid replies were obtained from the intended sample of university students, whose ages ranged from 16 to 35. A total of 1013 questionnaires were issued. This study examined how students behaved when using social media by applying the social pleasure theory. Eighteen antagonistic and constructive social media characteristics were particularly identified in this study based on prior research. The results showed that social media use among students in Pakistan had more detrimental effects on behaviour than beneficial ones.

Raza et al. (2020) explored the impact of social networking sites on university students' life happiness by first identifying the primary rewards that drive their use of social networking sites and then concentrating on the psychological effects. This study examined the reasons for using social networking sites and the psychological effects linked to social networking site usage by utilizing the theories of social influence and uses and gratifications. The results show that students' involvement in social networking sites, where they experience social benefit and social overload, is what drives the urge to preserve interpersonal connectedness, entertainment value, and social improvement value. While social overload causes students' life happiness to decline, the existence of social benefits raises life contentment.

Boda et al. (2020) examined the immediate and long-term consequences of a single network intervention in a cohort of undergraduates just recruited to an engineering department. Two months before the student's first day of university, we divided the students into small groups at random during an introductory event. The purpose of the groups was to provide more possibilities for mixed-gender interaction. Two months following the intervention, we see that pairs of students allocated to the same group had a greater rate of friendships, shared friends, and mixed-gender friendships than pairings from other groups (short-term effects). According to the findings, induced friendship links may act as early seeds for intricate social network processes even if they are less permanent than other friendships.

Alt (2018) evaluated the hypothesis that excessive use of social media for pleasure during class may result from a student's poor transition to college. Furthermore, for the first time, the mediating function of a recently identified phenomenon

called fear of missing out (FoMO) that links social media participation to college life maladjustment was investigated. A total of 290 undergraduate students provided the data. The findings of the path analysis indicated that social media use is only associated with the maladjustment to college variable since it is associated with FoMO. By demonstrating the strong mediation function of FoMO in explaining social media use during lectures, this study supports earlier research.

Aparicio-Martínez et al. (2020) looked at the relationships between social networking addiction and factors such as prenatal testosterone, loneliness, self-esteem, and personal fulfilment. Cross-sectional research with a focus on male and female college students (N = 278) between the ages of 17 and 25 was conducted. Numerous surveys, such as the Social Network Addiction Questionnaire, employed it. The findings indicated that there were differences in addiction between males and females. Additionally, several characteristics were associated with this addiction, including the significance that males and females placed on social networks and females. Additionally, the results suggested that gender might play a role in social network addiction, with sociopsychological variables being more important in females and a mix of biological and social factors in men.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The appropriate method for this study is the descriptive method, which is one of the types of research that includes the study of essential facts related to the nature of a phenomenon, situation, group of people, or events. It is not limited to studying the characteristics of the phenomenon but rather goes beyond that to knowledge of the variables and factors in the presence of the phenomenon.

3.2 Sample

A sample of 414 was selected from university students using a simple random sampling method. The participants were asked to confirm their consent and approval to take part in this project. Their approval was obtained through an online form sent along with a questionnaire. The following table represents the data on the sample of this study.

Table 1. Information on the participants of the study

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	203	49.0
	Female	211	51.0
Faculty	Media college	87	21.0
	Administration college	77	18.6
	Engineering college	36	8.7
	Medical College	75	18.1
	Architecture and design	60	14.5
	Humanities	46	11.1
	Agriculture college	33	8.0
Total		414	100

3.3 Instrument

The study used the questionnaire as an instrument, which is one of the tools of field research that is used in media research. It consists of several questions and situations about which information is sought. The questionnaire is sometimes used as an alternative to personal interviews, especially when it is required to obtain information or data from a group for which it is difficult to use the interview face-to-face. The first reasons are the lack of time and the reduction of effort and expenses, or if the researcher is far from the individuals from whom the information is required to be obtained. The number of the questionnaire's items was 26 paragraphs.

To test the validity of the tool, the questionnaire was presented to a group of arbitrators with experience and expertise in the field of media at Saudi Arabian universities to judge the extent of its validity and then to take these arbitrators' observations and suggestions into account. Then, an inventory of the arbitrators' opinions was conducted, and this arbitration resulted in an agreement rate of 95% or more based on the opinions of the arbitrators' members and the amendment of some of the phrases that the arbitration members thought should be amended because they were not clear or more likely than others.

The Cronbach Alpha for internal consistency test was used in the statistical analysis of the study results to measure the extent of consistency in the respondents' answers to all the questions on the scale. The internal consistency coefficient

between the responses is another way to interpret the Cronbach Alpha, which denotes high According to the following table, its value, which is based on the degree of high stability and runs from 0 to 1, is acceptable at 60% or 70% and above.

Table 2. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the items of the questionnaire

Dimension	Number of items	Cronbach alpha's coefficients
The extent to which Facebook contributes to introducing Saudi Arabian university students to the concept of volunteer work	1-9	0.97
Contents related to volunteer work	10-17	96.0
Students' needs for posting on Facebook regarding volunteer work	18-26	0.96
Total	26	0.94

3.4 Data Analysis

To answer the study questions, descriptive and analytical statistical methods were used. The frequencies and percentages of the sample studied were extracted, and to know the respondents' responses to the study questions, arithmetic means and regressions were used. Standard scores, as well as the use of the Cronbach Alpha test, were used to ensure the stability of the study tool. The Independent Sample T-test and the One-Way ANOVA test were used to detect differences.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 The First Question

To answer this question, arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted to identify the responses of members of the study participants on the dimensions of the questionnaire. The following table presents the results.

Table 3. The mean scores and standard deviations for the dimensions of the questionnaire

Items	Dimension	Mean score	St. dev	Level
1-9	The extent to which Facebook contributes to introducing Saudi Arabian university students to the concept of volunteer work	3.88	0.66	High
10-17	Contents related to volunteer work	3.83	0.64	High
18-26	Students' needs for posting on Facebook regarding volunteer work	3.88	0.68	High

The table shows that the first dimension had a mean score of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 0.66, with a high level. This dimension indicates that Facebook is an effective means of promoting volunteer work campaigns and contributes effectively to introducing students to more aspects of volunteer work. It also contributes a lot to acquainting university students with influential experiences about volunteer work around the world. The second dimension had a mean score of 3.83, a standard deviation of 0.64, and a high level. This dimension indicates that Facebook posts about volunteer work have a significant impact on strengthening the fraternal spirit among members of society, and at the same time, they show the human value of volunteer work. Thus, Facebook posts about volunteer work increase the value of cooperation in society. This therefore prompts university students to participate in volunteer work campaigns through it. The final dimension had a mean score of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 0.68, with a high level. This dimension indicates that what university students need is to work on providing spaces on Facebook to invite others to volunteer work and to be keen on disseminating volunteer work to spread the benefit. The result also showed that university students need more information that should be published on Facebook about organizations, which deal with volunteer work.

4.2 The Second Question

The Independent Sample T-test was used to identify statistical differences in the participants' responses about the role of Facebook in promoting the culture of volunteer work due to gender. The following table presents the results.

Table 4. Differences in the participants' responses due to gender

Source of variance	Gender	Mean score	Standard deviation	Freedom Value	T value	Sig.
Gender	Male	4.00	0.55	412	4.717	*0.00
	Female	3.73	0.61			

Table 4 illustrates that there are statistically significant differences in the responses regarding the role of Facebook in promoting the culture of volunteer work due to gender. The t value for the responses was (4.717) and statistically significant (0.00), which is less than (0.05). This indicates that the respondents had different levels of response to the role of Facebook in promoting the culture of volunteer work, depending on their gender. The mean score for the male respondents was (4.00) and the mean score for the females was (3.73). The differences were in favour of the male group over the female group.

The mean scores and standard deviations were extracted, and the one-way ANOVA test was used to identify the differences in the responses of the participants about the role of Facebook in promoting the culture of volunteer work due to the faculty variable. The following table presents the results.

Table 5. One Way ANOVA analysis for the differences in the responses due to the faculty variable

Source	Variance	Sum of squares	Freedom Value	Mean square	F value	Sig.
the responses of the participants about the role of Facebook in promoting the culture of volunteer work due to the faculty variable	Between groups	4.858	6	0.810	1.265	0.07
	Within groups	145.488	407			
	Total	150.346	413			

It is clear from Table 5 that the differences in the role of Facebook in promoting the culture of volunteer work as attributed to the college variable are not statistically significant. The value of the statistic (F) reached 1.256 and is statistically significant (0.07), which is higher than the significance level (0.05). This demonstrates that the study sample’s view of the role of Facebook in promoting the culture of volunteer work was at similar levels across their colleges, and the differences did not reach the level of statistical significance. This result is explained in the same direction as the lack of differences attributed to academic level and confirms that the university environment in the study community is similar, and therefore there was no difference in their responses according to the college. The results indicated that Facebook is an effective means of promoting volunteer work campaigns and contributes effectively to introducing students to more aspects of volunteer work. It also contributes greatly to acquainting university students with influential experiences about volunteer work around the world.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the role of social media - especially the social networking site - Facebook, in spreading the culture of volunteer work among young people, especially university youth in Saudi Arabia. The findings come at a time when Facebook and several social networking sites have become a permanent platform for individuals and institutions to express the goals and mission of the organization, and to learn about many projects, plans, and experiences in the world with various topics and issues, including the issue of volunteer work. The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences in the responses of the respondents about the role of Facebook in promoting the culture of volunteer work due to gender. This indicates that the respondents had different levels of response to the role of Facebook in promoting the culture of volunteer work according to their gender, and the differences were in favour of the male group over the female category. The findings also revealed that the statistical differences between the responses of the participants were not statistically significant because of the difference in the student's faculty. This indicates that the view of the study sample respondents on the role of Facebook in promoting the culture of volunteer work was at similar levels across their colleges, and the differences did not reach the level of statistical significance.

6. Recommendations

The study recommends the authorities concerned with education should work to add training hours to students’ programs on how to use social networking sites to spread the culture of volunteer work. It is recommended to encourage volunteer organizations to properly manage their accounts on social media sites and invest their potential in spreading the culture of volunteer work. The study also recommends investing in other means of communication to promote the importance of volunteer work campaigns and their social impacts on society.

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Authors contributions

Yusra Jadallah Abed Khasawneh¹and Mohamad Ahmad Saleem Khasawneh²were responsible for study design was

responsible for data collection. Prof. DDD drafted the manuscript and Yusra Jadallah Abed Khasawneh revised it. All authors read and approved the final manuscript. In this paragraph, also explain any special agreements concerning authorship, such as if authors contributed equally to the study.

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