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Depending On Twitter For Breaking News: A Comparison Between American And Saudi Students

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DEPENDING ON TWITTER FOR BREAKING NEWS

A COMPARISON BETWEEN AMERICAN AND SAUDI STUDENTS

A Thesis
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Meek School of Journalism and New Media
The University of Mississippi

by

MARIA ZOHEIR HAMDAN

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aimed to measure the extent of American and Saudi students’ dependence on Twitter to get breaking news and how they interact with this platform in light of uses and gratifications theory. To investigate the similarities and differences between the two groups, 91 American students and 98 Saudi students participated in an online survey in spring 2018. It concluded that both American and Saudi students depend on Twitter to get breaking news, and finding out what is happening is the first motivation to use Twitter. While most Saudi students voted for Twitter as the most important source to get news, most American students rely on online journalism as the first source. Also, while American students like to tweet to represent their own ideas, Saudi students do not.

Unlike American students, Saudi students avoid posting regarding breaking news to avoid conflict with others and they get confused when they are exposed to conflicting perspectives. Some similarities between two groups were found. Both groups check mostly their Twitter accounts from smartphone devices, and they selected accounts created by newspapers as their first choice to follow for news on Twitter. Tweets with photos or videos are the most preferred structure among American and Saudi students, and both depend on online journalism to get more details after they get the news from Twitter.

Keywords: Twitter, breaking news, news, college students, social media, uses and gratifications.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this manuscript to my parents, Zoheir and Rajaa, my sisters, brother, my husband and my lovely baby, Saud. I am grateful for your support and help.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Kristin Swain, for supporting and guiding me throughout this time. She has been accessible, knowledgeable and supportive. She is always a joy to see, and she always does not hesitate to help me.

My thanks are also extended to my committee members: Dr. Debora Wenger and Dr. Robert Magee, for their help and great insights. Their valuable input was important in helping me finish this work.

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Countless thanks go to my parents, sisters, brother, husband and my baby for being a part of every success stage in my life.

Lastly, I would like to thank King Abdul Aziz University that grants me the scholarship to pursue my higher studies. I am proud to be a part of it.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................ ii
DEDICATION.......................................................................................................................... iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .......................................................................................................... iv
CHAPTER I ............................................................................................................................. 1
CHAPTER II ........................................................................................................................... 5
  Uses and Gratifications Theory Overview ................................................................. 5
  Factors That Affect Social Media Usage ................................................................. 11
  Differences Between Students with Different Backgrounds in Social Media Usage ....... 12
  Twitter Overview ............................................................................................................ 15
  Twitter Usage .................................................................................................................. 18
  Twitter and news ........................................................................................................... 22
  Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 32
CHAPTER III ......................................................................................................................... 33
  Research Questions ....................................................................................................... 33
  Measure .......................................................................................................................... 33
  Data Collection .............................................................................................................. 35
  Participants ..................................................................................................................... 36
  Data Analysis .................................................................................................................. 37
CHAPTER IV ........................................................................................................................ 39
  The First Part .................................................................................................................. 39
  The second Part ............................................................................................................. 44
CHAPTER V ........................................................................................................................ 53
  Discussion ....................................................................................................................... 53
  Contribution .................................................................................................................... 55
  Limitations ...................................................................................................................... 56
  Future Studies ................................................................................................................ 57
BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................................................................................. 59
LIST OF APPENDICES ....................................................................................................... 67
Appendix 1: IRB Approval ............................................................................................... 68
# LSIT OF TABLES

Table 1: Twitter’s Terms .................................................................................................................. 17
Table 2: Rating of the Twitter’s structure based on the students’ perspectives ........................................ 89
Table 3: Rating statements regarding exposure to Twitter .................................................................. 90
Table 4: Motivations to use Twitter ................................................................................................... 91
Table 5: Satisfaction with Twitter coverage of stories ........................................................................ 92
Table 6: Rating statements regarding tweeting opinions .................................................................... 93
Table 7: Rating statements regarding retweeting ................................................................................ 94
Table 8: Comparison between Saudi and American students regarding exposure to Twitter .............. 97
Table 9: Comparison between Saudi and American students regarding tweeting opinions .................. 99
Table 10: Comparison between Saudi and American students regarding retweeting .......................... 101
Table 11: Comparison between Saudi and American students regarding motivations to use Twitter .... 104
Table 12: Comparison between Saudi and American students based on their satisfaction with Twitter coverage... 105
Table 13: Comparison between Saudi and American students regarding preferred tweeting structure .......... 106
LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1: Applications students check when they want to get breaking news ................................................................. 84
Chart 2: The devices students use to check their Twitter account .......................................................................................... 85
Chart 3: Ways that students follow to interact with news on Twitter .................................................................................. 86
Chart 4: The most important source of news based on Students’ perspectives ................................................................. 87
Chart 5: Sources that students depend on to get details after they receive news from Twitter .................................... 88
Chart 6: Comparison between American and Saudi students based on sources that students depend on to get details after they get news from Twitter ........................................... 95
Chart 7: Comparison between American and Saudi students based on the types of accounts they follow to get news ............................................................................................................. 96
Chart 8: Comparison between American and Saudi students based on social media applications that they depend on to get news ........................................................................................................ 103
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Social media is one of the most significant tools that contributes to make the world a small village in the twenty-first century. Mingle and Adams (2015) define social networking sites as “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (p. 3). Social media includes blogs, wikis, networking sites, photo or video sharing sites, messaging, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds and probably others in the future.

Although the number of users is completely different from one site to another, the idea is the same: the influence of social media is undeniable. Social media influences peoples’ lives in several fields: politics, economics, academics and social issues certainly. Researchers from different fields have studied social media users to understand the practices, implications, culture and meaning of the sites, as well as how these users engage in them. At the beginning, researchers have focused on usage of these sites separately. When any site becomes popular, the majority have tried to determine the amount of usage among different categories in a society (Rouis, Limayem & Sangari, 2011).

The strength of social media sites corresponds with the number of users around the world. The number of users has shown an exponential increase. While 2.46 billion used social
media in 2016, it is expected to reach some 2.95 billion by 2020 (Statistics and facts about Social Networks, 2016). For those youth who go online, social media use is high nearly three-quarters use a social networking site, such as Facebook or MySpace (Subrahmanyan & Kaveri, 2012).

Many studies show that Twitter usage has increased among different classes of people. It represents an important used information dissemination site, with 284 million active users tweeting 500 million tweets every day (Pentina, Basmanovab & Zhangc, 2016). While Twitter has a variety of uses, its news influence is perhaps the most important (Wu & Shen, 2015). Twitter enables journalists to reach a large segment of population, especially during critical times like political conflicts, elections, and evaluates the trends of public opinion during these times. Therefore, many news organizations and journalists currently depend on Twitter to publish news (Tandoc & Johnson, 2016), and Twitter as a result shows a varied range of thoughts and opinions. Also, Twitter has played a significant role in the shaping public opinion either positively or negatively. It contributes to helping citizens freely reflect their views since there is no censorship, especially in oppressive countries. However, it sometimes represents deceptive news and contributes to spread false information.

Twitter users now tend to be heavier news consumers than other social media users. The same situation applies to students who are more likely to depend on social media, especially Twitter to get breaking news because they often possess social media (Gottfried & Shearer, 2016). Tandoc and Johnson (2016) claim that Twitter is still a significant news source for the college students involved in their study. They indicated that Twitter is the first popular source among college students making them aware of breaking news.
Similarly, Shearer and Gottfried, (2017) found that Twitter is one of the most significant news sources among college students. In general, exposure to Twitter has influenced students’ exposure to traditional media and their willingness to verify news. This exposure has potentially affected the ways of interactions with news and on building their attitudes and opinions about the current issues. Also, while students from different backgrounds and cultures depend on Twitter to get news, some cultural differences will appear between students.

Various studies are dealing with Twitter as one of the most popular social networks from several aspects like its role in news, education and communication. The aim of these studies was better understanding why users use Twitter and their attitudes and perceptions towards this platform. Few studies have regarded using Twitter for getting breaking news, especially based on audience’s opinions. The influence of social and cultural systems and political environments on usage is one of the aspects that was not discussed. Only one research has undertaken this topic (Pentina et al., 2016). The researchers compared Ukrainian and American students and studied the differences between them. Otherwise, the researchers claimed that future studies should test how users use Twitter to get breaking news.

This research will fill the gap by comparing Saudi and American students based on their usage of Twitter to get breaking news. By doing that, news organizations and politicians that integrate to Twitter will recognize what attracts students to Twitter. Results will help them grab students' attention and improve the quality of their presence on social media to ensure having informed citizens in the next generation.

For the scholarly aspect, this research will add great knowledge to the communication field. Results from this study will contribute to better understanding of students gratify their
needs to surveil the environment by getting breaking news from Twitter, and their motivations to use Twitter to get breaking news. Also, it will add to the theory by emphasizing how cultural factor influences students’ depending on a medium (Twitter) to get breaking news.

This study aims to figure out to what extent students are exposed to Twitter and depend on this platform to get breaking news. Also, it aims to point out how they interact with news on Twitter by tweeting, sharing, replying or liking tweets. The research will help figure out other sources that students depend on to get news and their desire to check the accuracy of news.

The literature review of this study consists of four main topics. The first one is about theoretical background, specifically uses and gratifications. The second part is about social media usage, gratifications, and differences between student background. The third section is about Twitter and general usage. The fourth part is about Twitter and its usage for news.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Uses and Gratifications Theory Overview

The origin of the uses and gratification perspective took place in the 1940s with an interest in why audiences involved in different kinds of media behavior (Ruggiero, 2000). Initially suggested by Elihu Katz in 1959, this perspective mainly concerned with the overarching question of what people did with media, instead of what media did to people (Siraj, 2007, as cited in Li Li, Chen & Masato, 2013).

It assumes that individuals are alert recipients of media content and active processors of information (Siraj, 2007, as cited in Li Li et al., 2013). Until the 1970s, uses and gratifications research focused on seeking for gratifications, excluding outcomes, or gratifications obtained. During the 1970s, uses and gratifications researchers carefully examined audience motivations for exposure to media content and developed additional typologies of the uses people made of the media to gratify both social and psychological needs. In other words, uses and gratifications theory is an approach originating from traditional mass communications research, which aims to understand socially and psychological why people choose specific media platform and content for gratification purposes (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973).
There are three goals of uses and gratifications theory. The most important goal is to explain how individuals use media to meet their own needs. The second one is discovering what primary reasons motivate people to use media. The last goal is to identify both positive and negative results of the individual's use of media (Rubin, 1984, as cited in Li Li et al., 2013).

Fundamental Assumptions

Katz et al., (1973) claim that uses and gratifications theory proposes that communication behavior is goal-directed and purposeful, in that people choose to interact with media based on their needs, wants, or expectations. Uses and gratification theory possesses five fundamental assumptions. Media users must be active. Although it is assumed that audience members may vary in their level of activity in a continuum from active to passive, people may make rational decisions to reject or accept particular media. Second, users must be goal-driven in their media usage. Third, media must possess the ability to fulfill a wide array of the user's needs. Fourth, audiences must be aware of and capable of communicating the specific motives for media choices and usage. Fifth, the theory focuses on the importance of media content and exposure, as well as the context in which the exposure takes place.

Common Reasons for Media Use

McQuail, Blumler and Brown (1972) suggest four categories of reasons for media use: entertainment, social interaction, personal identity and getting information.

First, entertainment because the media content offers pleasure for the audience; this is often characterized as escapist. “escape” can be termed a need for tension release (Wu & Atkin, 2016).
The second purpose is social interaction; movies, news or different kinds of television programs are common topics of discussion; audiences use the media to gratify this social interaction. Blumler (1979) determined three primary social origins of media gratifications: normative influences, socially distributed life changes and the subject overreaction of the individual to the social condition.

Social interaction was the second most important usage of social media mentioned by Northern Finnish University students. They claimed the possibilities for enhancing bonding and providing communal support. They reported that they used the social media for improving social relationships and communication with friends and family members (Uusiautti & Määttä, 2014).

The third purpose is personal identity; the audience can get a sense of themselves and their peer group from movies and series as an example. A person may identify with particular film stars, who we may even use as role models.

The fourth purpose is getting, sharing and distribution information: the media are full of information, which the audience can use it in their lives. Some of the students considered that the social media could be used more effectively for information sharing and increase awareness about social issues and other current events. They indicated that they can get an abundance of important information by exposure to social media tools because social media delivers information about things that are not reported by the traditional news media. In addition, students emphasized using social media for work. They focused mostly on social media role on marketing and communication opportunities, and also they had noticed the possibilities for ideas sharing and cooperation and for finding a workplace (Uusiautti & Määttä, 2014).
Some research has been done regarding social media usage for learning in Saudi Arabia. Alsuraihi, Almaqati, Abughanim and Jastaniah (2016) investigated to what extent medical students among different universities in Saudi Arabia depend on social media. This study showed that social media tools are commonly used in learning among students. The majority of students stated that they use social media in the education process. Kutbi (2015) explored why undergraduate female students in Saudi Arabia use social media for learning and their perception toward this usage. Female students stated that they would use social media in the class discussion, homework, assignments, journals and activities that require interaction with their peers.

Omar, Rashid and Majid (2014) categorized the previous motivations in seeking information, seeking entertainment, social interaction, personal identity and self-disclosure.

Common Reasons for Social Media Usage Based on Uses and Gratifications Theory

Whiting and Williams (2013) sought to demonstrate the importance of uses and gratifications theory to social media. By depending on this theory in their study, they explored and discussed the uses and gratifications that consumer receive from using social media. They identified ten obtained gratifications as a result of social media usage:

1) Social interaction: Almost 90% stated they have more contact with people through social media sites than face-to-face.

2) Information seeking: 80% of sample said that they use social media to seek out information. Participants reported that they use social media to find information about different things like:
sales, deals, or products; find information on events, birthdays, and parties; and look at information about businesses. Respondents also said that they use social media for learning.

3) **Pass time**: 76% reported that they use social media to pass the time. Respondents stated that they use social media when they have idle time, or when they are bored and want something to do. Many individuals reported using social media to pass time at work or school.

4) **Entertainment**: more than a half of respondents reported that they used social media as a source of entertainment. Some of the entertainment activities reported were playing games, listening to music, and watching funny videos. Some of the sample mentioned that they use social media for humor and comic relief.

5) **Relaxation**: 60% of respondents used social media for relaxation purposes. Some of Respondents also mentioned how social media helps them escape from reality and escape the stress of the real world. Over 16% of respondents mentioned they use social media to escape from the real world.

6) **Expression of opinions**: This type of social media use was mentioned by 56% of respondents and is defined as using social media to express thoughts and opinions. Respondents discussed how they like to make comments such as liking postings and photos, commenting on posts, and sharing comments on other’s posts.

7) **Communicatory utility**: More than a half of respondents mentioned how they use social media to give them topics to talk about them with others. Others mentioned that they talk to others about what they found on Facebook and that they will ask their friends if they saw what a person said on Facebook.
8) **Convenience utility:** this type of social media use was mentioned by 52% of respondents. Several respondents actually used the word convenient in their responses, such as “it is convenient and accessible anytime and anywhere”. Others mentioned that they use social media because it is readily available and has no time restraints. One individual mentioned that she uses social media because of the convenience of being able to communicate with a lot of people at one time.

9) **Information sharing:** This type of social media use was mentioned by 40% of respondents. This factor is different from information seeking which was previously discussed. Information sharing is defined as using social media to share information about you with others. Unlike television and the Internet, social media is interactive in nature and allows consumers to communicate and share information via a two-way dialogue. This information-sharing construct has not been used by other uses and gratifications researchers. Many respondents mentioned that they like to post updates and share pictures. Some study participants mentioned that they advertise their business on Facebook and some mentioned that they share information in order to market themselves.

10) **Surveillance/knowledge about others:** this kind of social media usage was mentioned by 32% of the respondents and is defined as watching people or things and watching what others are doing. Respondents mentioned many different ways that they use social media to watch others. Many individuals mentioned that they want to know what others are doing and that they try and keep up with others.
Factors That Affect Social Media Usage

Studies have reflected many factors that affect social media usage. Gender is one of the most important factors that affects Facebook usage. One study revealed interesting and significant gender differences in Facebook usage and related perceptions. It found that female students were more influenced by their friends and teachers than male students, and they were more active in information seeking and contributing activities (Wu & Shen, 2010). Park, Kee and Valenzuela (2009) concluded that while people join groups on the Facebook, each motivation or gratification could differ according to their demographic characteristics, like gender. They found that female students are more likely to use the Facebook groups to get information.

The other factor that affects usage and gratification is motivation by others to use social media. Chen (2011) concluded that people who are motivated by family requests to participate in Facebook were much less likely to participate in Facebook activities.

Time or social presence plays a significant role in social media usage. Similarly, Chen (2011) asserts a positive relationship between time and gratifications by examining spending time on Twitter and gratifying this need to connect with other people by comparing between active and non-active users. The result shows that spending a lot of time using Twitter over a series of months is more responsible for gratifying people’s need to connect with others. This differs from the hours per day people spend on Twitter or the specific acts of sending messages or repeating others’ messages on Twitter. Also, Han, Min and Lee (2015) concluded that social presence positively affects the gratification of social connection needs on Twitter.
The factor of perceived usefulness importantly affected the decision of students to use Facebook as an educational tool. Also, it is a significant predictor of the behavioral intention of students to use Twitter as an information source (Al-Daihani, 2016).

The other factor that proved its influence appeared in one study. It has shown that informativeness, interactivity and playfulness have the possibility to impact user intention or behavior positively (Chiang, 2013). Besides that, the analysis of the relationship between senior citizens’ motivations and their participation in actions on Facebook reflects that social connection is the main motivation for involvement in most activities on Facebook (Jung & Sundar, 2016).

The position of the person considers a factor that affect usage. Cohen and Duchan (2012) compared the Twitter usage in instructional processes (teacher tweets) and the usage in the learning processes (student tweets). It reflects a significant difference according to the social and the organizational features. The study concluded that in these categories, the students used Twitter more than the teacher: in the social usage category, 69% were student tweets while 31% were teacher tweets. In the management usage category, 64% were students tweets compared with 36% by the teacher.

The last factors are biological and cultural ones. They impact a surveillance function in people’s minds or an innate desire to know about the news and what is going on in the society. Culture affects what kinds of stories people pay attention to, but changing factors force people to process only a small amount of news (Tandoc & Johnson, 2016).

Differences Between Students with Different Backgrounds in Social Media Usage

Few studies have aimed to examine the differences in social media usage based on students’ country of origin. However, some studies have been done to compare American
students with students from other countries. One study has aimed to investigate the differences between U.S. and Chilean college students’ reading practices. According to socializing via Facebook as a standard, which means time that students spent on Facebook for non-academic purposes, American spent 16.40 hours per week while Chilean students spent on these activities 14 hours per week. Both U.S. and Chilean students spent more time socializing via Facebook than they spent on academic and extracurricular reading activities (Huang, Orellana & Capps, 2016).

Another study indicated difference between pharmacy students from the United States of America and China based on use of social media sites and perception toward Facebook use. Actually, this study did not reveal significant differences in the frequency of use of Facebook for general purposes. However, Chinese students were more likely to connect with librarians on social media, which indicated that social media has the capacity to help international students in their academic and cultural synthesis. Unlike American students, Chinese students seldom connected with their parents using social media sites. It was attributed to their higher power distance value than American students (Xu & Mocarski, 2014).

Pentina et al., (2016) have explored motivation to use Twitter in two different countries. In the USA, which poses a strong economy and focuses on individualism and Ukraine, which whose economy is developing and whose culture emphasizes family. Researchers conducted interviews with Twitter users in each country to collect data. The results indicate a disparity between the two groups. News and content sharing is the most highly valued Twitter motivation for Ukrainian students. This is shown the expanded role Twitter may play in developing countries where people cannot access to source information. In the USA, social interaction and
exchange was the most valued role of Twitter, explaining its originally intended role of instant sharing of personal updates with family and friends.

In Ukraine, participants who are motivated by the need to play, entertain and share jokes, as well as older members, enjoy larger numbers of followers. In contrast, in the USA, those who register with Twitter to share advanced information, solve problems and make decisions, as well as older users, get larger followings.

While the relevant content creation and sharing inherits popularity among the two groups, different types of content seem to be more important. The number of brands one follows on Twitter also seems to be driven by different Twitter motivations in different countries. In the Ukraine, more brands are followed by those pursuing social interaction and exchange needs while in the USA, the motivation of information sharing and professional development drives brand following.

On the other hand, some studies have been done to compare Saudi students to students from other countries. Almakrami (2015) aimed to figure out the differences between Australian and Saudi students based on motivations to use Facebook. It found that cultural aspects affect users’ self-disclosure on Facebook. In Saudi Arabia, there are some social restrictions surrounding the development of desirable offline relationships, and people perceive Facebook as a platform that is free of such restrictions. Therefore, Saudi Arabians tend to be more open and free in their relationships on Facebook. On the other hand, Australians have fewer social restrictions surrounding the development of offline relationships. Thus, they tend to be more conservative on Facebook. They mainly use their information to enhance their offline contacts,
more with family and relatives. They believed that new relationships should start offline and then (probably) move to Facebook.

The result shows that Australian participants more frequently share their personal achievements and accomplishments on Facebook in order to present themselves in a favorable way to their friends. However, Saudi participants reported more rejection to presenting themselves on Facebook by sharing news or achievements because they are afraid of being affected by the evil eye.

Al-Saggaf (2015) compared Saudi and Australian people based on Twitter usage to discover mainly the impact of the culture. The study revealed major differences. The tweets in the tags that trended in Saudi Arabia, did not significantly observe this protocol. Twitter users are not aware of the appropriate use of Twitter. In the #spill tag, Twitter users felt comfortable communicating directly with the Australian leader; Saudis, on the other hand, did not because it may be considered inappropriate or disrespectful. The re-tweeting of tweets suggests that these tweets are important. From a Saudi cultural viewpoint, the re-tweeting of tweets claims that the user is important compared to other users.

The first study did not reveal major differences between students while the other four studies did; they have revealed major differences due to disparity between the cultures. More studies are needed to examine possible cultural differences based on social media usage.

Twitter Overview

Twitter is one of microblogging sites. Microblogging is a service, which combines social networking and blogging, but the messages exchanged are limited in terms of size. Users have to subscribe to the services (Alwagait, Shahzad & Alim, 2015).
Twitter was created by Jack Dorsey in 2006. It originally had a unique status by allowing Twitter users to follow anyone without being followed back and by limiting all posts to 140 characters. Recently, Twitter enabled users to tweet with an expanded 280-character limit (Larson, 2017). Tweets are generally visible also to non-Twitter users except private accounts. Any user may visit the Twitter website to view tweets from a specific account, or use Twitter’s search box to find all tweets including specific keywords or hashtag (Bruns & Burgess, 2012).

Twitter offers the chance to keep some of the anonymity previously pursued in online communication. Unlike Facebook, users do not need to include information about themselves in their profiles to find friends. Therefore, Twitter does not focus on one’s identity and it focuses more on one’s thoughts. This fact explains the differences between motivations to use both of them (Hughes, Rowe, Batey & Lee, 2012).

“Twitter’s communicative structure is determined by two overlapping and interdependent networks: one long-term and relatively stable, based on follower-followee relationships; one relatively short-term and emergent, based on shared interest in a topic and coordinated by a common hashtag” (Bruns & Burgess, 2012, p. 803).
### Table 1: Twitter’s Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Twitter user</td>
<td>A Twitter user can create a public profile which involves full name, location, a web page, a short biography and the tweets of the user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A follower</td>
<td>A follower is someone who has chosen to get tweets from a certain user, whereas following is whom the person has opted to follow and receive tweets from users may set their accounts to “private”, in which case they will have to accept any follow requests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweet</td>
<td>This refers to posting a content of up to 140 characters, which is termed as tweets. The content of tweets may vary from users’ daily activities to news. Some messages may also include URLs to web pages, hashtag, photo or video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweet</td>
<td>This refers to forwarding a tweet from another user to the followers. Such re-sharing of tweets is a usual mechanism in Twitter to spread content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow</td>
<td>This refers to linking to another user and receiving the linked user’s tweets after that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mention</td>
<td>One could mention one or more users in a tweet by including in the tweet the mentioned user name(s) prefixed by the @ sign. The mentioned user(s) will then get the tweet. This is a means for users to get attention from the other users so as to start new chat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replies</td>
<td>When a user wants to direct to another user, or reply to an earlier tweet, he or she places the @username mention at the beginning of the tweet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorite</td>
<td>a feature on Twitter that allows you to mark a tweet as a favorite to easily see it later. Click the &quot;Favorite&quot; link (next to a star icon) beneath any tweet to favorite it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct messages</td>
<td>It is useful for small-sided conversations between two of Twitter users who wish to enjoy privacy without having to place privacy exceptions on their accounts because it can only be seen by the other user to whom they were sent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashtags</td>
<td>Hashtags comprised in a tweet tend to group tweets in conversations or represent the main terms of the tweet. They are usually referred to topics or common interests of a community. Each hashtag is a keyword prefixed by a # symbol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend</td>
<td>Twitter presents a current list of top terms, or trending subjects. These terms present the subjects that are being deliberated most at that moment on the site’s fast-flowing stream of tweets. A trending topic can be categorized as news when it is produced by a newsworthy event that major news outlets either had reported by the time the trend popped up or will report soon after it will be appeared on Twitter (Zubiaga, Spina, Martinez &amp; Fresno, 2015).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keywords</td>
<td>These are identified by the hashtag (#). Users insert the hashtag before a keyword or topic. When clicked, the keyword comes up with all tweets that are related to that keyword or topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain</td>
<td>These are tweets that do not contain replies, retweets or mentions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Twitter Usage**

Various studies address social media generally and Twitter specifically as the most popular social network from several aspects. The objective of these studies was to better
understand why users use Twitter and their perceptions towards this platform. For example, Knighta and Kaye (2015) explored the Twitter usage of students at Edge Hill University. They found that use of Twitter for seeking information was the first purpose and sharing information was the second while follow famous people comes at third ones. Connecting with friends and with new people took the fourth and fifth activities.

However, despite the popularity of studies that have addressed Twitter usage for educational purposes, studies that have addressed how and why individuals use this tool for different purposes are few. Studies have recognized many Twitter purposes, such as idea sharing, social purposes, entertainment and getting information and news.

American and Saudi people reflect heavy usage of Twitter. In Saudi Arabia, one third of Saudi Arabia’s online population are active Twitter users, and Saudi Arabia ranks the first among ten different countries around the world while the United States of America ranks eighth (Kutbi, 2015).

Idea Sharing and Academic Usage

Twitter could be used for discussing ideas with others and coordination of activities, in a similar way to chatting but in a more dynamic way. Syn and Oh (2015) claimed that learning is one of the major reasons for users to engage in Twitter. People use it to ask for help and recognize others’ opinions. However, that does not reflect a major purpose in one study. Knighta and Kaye (2015) explored the academic usage of students on Twitter. They found that contact specific tutors was the first purpose while asked questions to specific users was the second activity. Asked questions as a general post was the third while discussed course content with tutors was the fourth. Asked course-related questions in open-forums, posted course-related
updates whilst in lectures and posted course-related updates after lectures took the least voted activities.

Alrajehi (2016) conducted a study to figure out the purposes of Twitter usage in a high school, and he has found that 6.8% of participants used Twitter to seek guidance, 6.7% used it to increase knowledge, 6% used Twitter to have high quality of writing, and lastly 5.7% used it to improve their ability to communicate with others.

In contrast, Twitter usage for academic purpose is considered major. Alwagait et al. (2015) have identified that 58% of the students in their research have a positive attitude for using Twitter for academic purposes. Alsuraihi et al. (2016) claims that Saudi medical students evaluated Twitter as a teaching tool. This study concluded that students believed that Twitter is an effective and useful tool to their learning. It also enhanced student-tutor relationship. Kutbi (2015) investigated the reasons beyond using social media as learning tool. The first reason, based on students’ perspectives, is that it is funny and easy tool to deal with.

Social Purposes

Twitter has a variety of social purposes. It has meaning beyond news; it is more than just a real-time service. One study found that about three in ten, Twitter is used to tell others what they are doing and thinking about. For a quarter of users, Twitter is a way to keep in touch with people they know. For 20 % of participants, it is a way to keep in touch with famous people (Rosenstiel Sonderman, Loker, Ivancin & Kjarval, 2015). According to another study, only a small percentage indicated that Twitter was used for personal communication (Tandoc & Johnson, 2016). The results of using Twitter for social aspects are inconsistent.
Like studies about Twitter for social purposes, studies about Twitter usage for entertainment have shown inconsistent results. Alrajehi (2016) found that 6.1% of high school students depended on Twitter for entertainment. In contrast, according to another study, more participants indicated that they use the service for its entertainment purpose. 57.2% use it because they find it entertaining. A nearly equal percentage of individuals believe Twitter is exciting while 36% agreed in using Twitter to pass the time (Kraft, 2010).

A Source of Information

The first popular usage of Twitter is that it works as a source of information. Alrajehi (2016) realized that Twitter is used as source of information; half of students who were involved in the study used Twitter as a source of information while 38.9% of them sometimes used Twitter as a source of news and never used it as a source of information. This research is valued because it distinguishes between news and information while the others did not.

According to another study, 40% said they use Twitter to be alerted to breaking news, and 36% to keep up with the news generally (Rosenstiel et al., 2015). One study indicated that only a low percentage of Twitter users utilized the site for information seeking". 29.8% of participants in this study said they use Twitter to keep up with current events (Kraft, 2010).

Studies seldom indicate the factors that affect Twitter usage for informational purpose. However, one study claimed that the use of Twitter for informational purposes was found to correlate positively with conscientiousness and need for cognition and negatively with neuroticism, extraversion and sociability (Wu & Atkin, 2016). Ease of use does not seem a
significant factor that affects students usage of Twitter to get news. Al-Daihani (2016) claimed that ease of use is insignificant effect on students’ intentions to use Twitter as an information source.

In Saudi society, Al-Jabri, Sohail and Ndubisi (2015) measured motivations of Saudi Twitter users to continue using Twitter and concluded that social interaction, freedom of expression and enjoyment are significantly associated with usage of Twitter. Among the three purposes, enjoyment was the most robust predictor of usage.

Twitter and news

Breaking news can be defined as “information that is being received and broadcast about an event that has just happened or just begun” (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2017). Twitter is usually the first source to spread information. It publishes breaking news early before other news media (Hu et al., 2012). Measuring trends on Twitter reflects a subset of trending subjects in the early stages of breaking news (Zubiaga et al., 2015). The importance of Twitter as a source of news increases in critical times. While Twitter users follow news in general on the service, and sometimes read tweets as a way of passing time and entertainment, they act completely different during critical events. They are becoming more participatory in commenting, posting and sharing at moments when pivotal events are trending on Twitter (Rosenstiel et al., 2015).

Despite Twitter’s importance in publishing news, studies have revealed that the public does not entirely trust Twitter as a credible source. According to one study, about the third of participants indicated that they use Twitter because they can trust the information they get from it (Hu et al., 2012). According to another study, some of Twitter users believed in Osama bin Laden’s death before confirmation came from mass media. Researchers attribute this to the
people who posted the news were politicians and journalists, who were authorities on this subject. For false information, 64% of Twitter news users said they encountered information on Twitter they discovered lately it wasn’t true. 16% of Twitter news users said they retweeted or posted a tweet that they later discovered false (Rosenstiel et al., 2015). This study stops short of investigating actual and false information because it did not reveal how participants distinguish between them.

Motivations to Get News

Motivation can be defined as “people initiate and persist at behaviors to the extent that they believe the behaviors will lead to desired outcomes or goals” (Brannen, 2010, p.4). They are sometimes referred to as cognitive illustrations of what a person is trying to absorb in a given situation. Results show that the different scopes of motivation have different effects on news-seeking and attention behaviors. It is significant to know whether people are highly motivated and realize the kind of the motivation that drives them. Individual motivations and preferences play a significant role in expecting who follows the news and why because of environment of plentiful choices and alternatives in media (David, 2009).

The more one is motivated to consume news, the more kinds of sources there will be in one’s news consumption and more time he will spend on that (Lee, 2013). Generally, there are a variety of motivations to get news. Lee (2013) summarized these motivations in: informational gain, entertainment, opinion motivation, social motivation and psychological needs.

One of the essential reasons people consume news is gaining information. Information-motivated news consumption encompasses: use for surveillance, to gratify the need to know, to realize what is happening in the world and to know the way the government performs its
functions. One study claims that being knowledgeable and informed about public affairs, public policy and social issues is consequential to one’s effective participation on Twitter.

Some people turn to news to entertain themselves. For example, a number of recent studies have explored the ways in which political comedy shows and late-night entertainment talk shows educate their viewers on political issues through the use of humor, especially among the younger people. Entertainment motivated news consumption covers news use with the following objectives: to gratify the need for excitement, laughter, humor and relaxation.

Some people depend on congenial information sources for opinion validation, others depend on uncongenial information sources for exposure to different opinions. Others still avoid uncongenial information sources to avoid viewpoint challenges. Opinion motivations include: the need to seek assistance in forming opinions on certain issues, to expose one to several viewpoints and to expose them to a similar person mind.

Social-motivated news consumption is related to consuming news for social values or interpersonal benefits. Consumption social motivations cover: the need to keep up with what happens around people and to be able to talk about them, to appear knowledgeable to others, to be more sociable and to imitate others in following news.

Studies show that media usage has psychological antecedents and correlations. These psychological needs are recurring individual concerns for a specific result, coming about because of one's interaction with others. There are psychological needs that are potentially more basic antecedents of news media use motives, such as needs for cognition and evaluation.

Motivations to Get News from Twitter
One study has revealed the reasons beyond getting news from Twitter. It is valued research because it compared Twitter users and non-Twitter users. People across both groups declared different motivations to get news. The first reason is that it helped users across the two groups function as citizens. Twitter users were more likely to say they liked to talk about news with their friends (66% vs. 59%) and they find it a way to relaxing and entertaining (36% vs. 29%). People who do not use Twitter were more likely to say that news helps them save money when they shop (11% for Twitter users, 21% for non-users). Twitter users were more likely to say the news helps them with their work (30% vs. 6% for non-Twitter users) (Rosenstiel et al., 2015).

After that, Rosenstiel et al. (2015) analyzed why Twitter users depend on this platform specifically to get news. The majority said that it is a great way to get news in its early stages. The second reason is that participants get a chance to be exposed to sources they would not regularly use. The third reason is that it is an easy way to scan major news. A small percentage of Twitter users said that Twitter was a way to “engage a journalist or news source directly” while the least important reason was interaction with friends.

Another study found that almost half of participants use Twitter to find out what other people believe are important issues of the day. 36 % use Twitter to understand the job our government is doing while a similar percentage (36.5%) said they use it to be aware of important issues of the day. 39% said they use it to keep up with news in general (Kraft, 2010). The studies show conflicting results about interactions with others as motivation to consume news on Twitter. Also, they have limitations, as they did not compare what Twitter users expect to get and the gratifications they obtain.
An, Cha, Gummadi and Crowcroft (2011) focused on motivations to receiving diverse opinions on Twitter. They listed four motivations: to reach an accurate judgment, to improve one’s ability to refute what he is against, diversity is a valuable experience and understanding both sides is a very valuable perspective.

Twitter’s' Advantages from audiences’ and journalists’ perspectives

Recognizing Twitter’s advantages based on audiences and journalists’ perceptions explains why people depend on this platform to consume news. The first advantage is that Twitter enables journalists to interact with audience and personalize their tweets; journalists take advantages of interaction by getting more information about their audiences’ needs and interests and reflect that in their writing. Also, journalists express their emotions by including symbols. On the other hand, Twitter supports users to create their own content, changing users from passive readers to active ones (Wasike, 2013).

Twitter helps people express their views. Most of the respondents believed that Twitter helps women to express their views on issues that are discussed in the Kuwaiti society freely regardless of whether their opinion correspond with the majority opinion or not (Dashti, Al-Abdullah & A Johar, 2015). For Saudi society, Twitter enables interaction between females and males without restrictions in a way that cannot exists on the streets or public places. For young Saudi women, Twitter is a notably accessible resource because they are limited by several barriers against participation in politics and discourse in general (Winder, 2014).

The second advantage is Twitter's position as an adept news breaking tool and reaching a high population (Wasike, 2013). Alrajehi (2016) has found that spread is considered one of the most important advantages based on high school students’ perspectives in Kuwait.
Brevity is the third advantage. Contents are created in short length and simultaneous contents are updated all the time (Phuvipadawat & Murat, 2010). According to the previous study, students have listed brevity as one of the reasons to prefer Twitter among other social sites (Alrajehi, 2016). In Saudi society, one possible explanation for Twitter’s popularity is that the Saudi cultural traditions give more attention to oral communication and casual conversation. The short tweets on Twitter, where each post is limited to 140 characters, are possibly more relevant to Saudi societal traditions than writing a long-form essay. This may explain why blogging has not reached the same level of popularity as Twitter and other social media such as WhatsApp that focus on brief snippets of dialogue (Winder, 2014).

Twitter could be used for measuring the value of news; trending topics which used by some newsrooms is an additional measure of the newsworthiness of specific stories (Bruns & Burgess, 2012).

Some features enrich Twitter strongly. The retweet function makes Twitter powerful by allowing users to forward messages to other users. The other feature is that Twitter is the easiest way to share additional materials, like links, photos, video and audio with others, which contributes to enrich media coverage (Park, 2015).

Twitter is a great platform for increased news consumption because users are more likely to read tweets than other news forms, even if the information does not interest them. Most of Twitter users in one study believe that they get more news after they have started using Twitter than they did before they joined this platform. 61% say they get more news since joining. Just 24% say their news consumption has stayed about the same. Beyond that, the power of Twitter is driven by the fact that users are exposed to information they did not know they were interested in (Rosenstiel et al., 2015). Twitter helps newspapers raise the number of readers. One study found
that the adoption of Twitter has a positive association with attracting online readership to their websites. For example, by including a hashtag or picture of the organization in a tweet, the organization can create a positive association with it and generate interactivity at the same time (Hong, 2012).

Characteristics and Habits Associated with Twitter Use

Most studies agree that Twitter users are likely to be young. Younger adults were most likely to tweet regarding what they are doing or thinking or post news or information or attach links to news or information (Alrajehi, 2016; Kraft, 2010).

According to another study, Twitter users also tend to be younger than social media users in general. They tend to use the service more during specific times a day. Almost all Twitter users are also users of other forms of news media. Most Twitter users access Twitter through their phones. 82% of Twitter users access the tool to get news on their phones, and many access Twitter across multiple devices (Rosenstiel et al., 2015). Another study confirms this fact. It claimed that Twitter users are exceptionally mobile. 80% of those who tweet or retweet do that by using a mobile device, like a Blackberry or iPhone (Kraft, 2010).

The vast majority of Twitter users to get news are exposed daily and heavily. According to one study, 74% are exposed daily, and the overwhelming majority of Twitter news users get their news by scrolling their timeline or browsing tweets of those they follow. The other ways that users could follow news are less frequent, like checking trending topics, seeing tweets in articles on other websites. The small percentage indicated that they checked Twitter’s “discover” section or use Twitter push notifications to their phones or tablets. (Rosenstiel et al., 2015).

Tweeting
Most studies focused on analyzing tweets from reputable newspapers. However, they neglected to analyze audience's tweets regarding news. For newspapers tweets, Twitter’s microblogging format and limit of 140 characters is a perfect way for local news media to express news stories with tweet structures, like hashtags and links in order to increase site traffic rate (Greer & Yan, 2011).

One study sought to figure out local news organizations tweets structures. While there are a variety of tweeting structures, it claimed that local news media links were the most frequently used structure. The second most often used structure were photos or videos. Tweets with hashtags and tweets with usernames were the least used structures (Meyer, 2015).

For content, Kraft (2010) analyzed tweets by elected public officials. He categorized their tweets into four different categories. The first one is informational tweets to increase people’s knowledge. The second one is personal tweets that do not relate to political or policy issue. Other tweets are opinionated, which explain the political leanings of a public official about particular matters and events. The last type is interactive tweets, which involve direct or indirect communication with Twitter users.

There are some suggestions to improve newspapers’ tweeting in order to engage more Twitter users. One study concluded that news organizations should attempt to follow breaking news and provide updates via Twitter. In addition, news organizations should combine Twitter structures with breaking news tweets, like #JustIn or #BREAKING (Kraft, 2010). Also, newsroom administrators must get benefits of Twitter’s full potential and promote the organization, content, contests and programming to the newspaper’s website (Meyer, 2015).
Twitter users follow a variety of sources. Users tend to get information from multiple media sources, especially on similar subjects. Users are more likely to subscribe to multiple media sources within a specific topic, such as politics, technology than to media sources across different subjects (An et al., 2011).

While there are many kinds of sources to follow to get news on Twitter, users depend mostly on journalists’ accounts. 73% said they follow individual writers, journalists or commentators. 62% said they follow news organizations, and 39% said they follow subsection accounts of a news organization like lifestyle or technology (Rosenstiel et al., 2015).

Recently, Tandoc and Johnson (2016) sought to recognize the news consumption patterns of a set of college students. Researchers found that Twitter was displacing traditional news media at least for getting the news first. More than half of the students learn about breaking news first from Twitter while traditional media took late rank.

To get more details, students depend on newspaper websites, TV news websites and online-only news sites. Frequency of Twitter use was the only significant predictor of getting news first from Twitter instead of any other source. Actually, this study did not seek how the students interact with Twitter, recognizing their preferences and their motivations to get news from Twitter. Also, it did not examine their tweeting, sharing or replying regarding breaking news.

News sharing (Retweeting)

One study claimed that users are more willing to share news. 64% of Twitter users say they both read and share news on the Twitter. Just 21% say they just read; only 2% say they get their news from another tool and just use Twitter to share it (Rosenstiel et al., 2015).
Studies indicate that prior social media sharing experience and socializing were the two most important factors influencing intention to share news on social media. It is possible that previous experience with a specific medium can grow one’s confidence in his ability to conduct several actions in that media (Lee & Ma, 2012). Another study found factors affecting the attitude toward knowledge sharing positively. These factors were: reputation, expected relationship, sense of self-worth and subjective norm (Pi, Chou & Liao, 2013).

The results indicate the kind of tweeting receives more retweeting. A positive message in social tweets is more likely to be re-tweeted, but the negative tweets among news tweets get re-tweeted more often (Tandoc & Johnson, 2016). The more retweets a tweet got, the more likes it also received. The results also show that tweets regarding breaking news or sports issue, received more retweets. Regarding content, the most tweeted subjects among users were crime news, tweets followed by political and human interest (Meyer, 2015).

Writing Comments (Replying)

The result reflects Twitter users desire to comment on news. Wu and Atkin (2016) stated that almost half of the respondents have posted comments or replied to other’s comments on online news comment sections. More than 60% of respondents had posting experience, either on their own accounts or others’ social media platforms. Kraft (2010) indicated that fewer than half of participants in his study have used Twitter to send a message or reply to a tweet posted by a politician.

Many factors contribute to encourage users comment on news. Agreeableness was found to be a significant positive predictor of various motivations for commenting on online news. Besides that, a desire to obtain feedback from others will positively encourages users to posting comments on online news (Wu & Atkin, 2016). Also, socializing considers one of the strongest
motivation that drives posting; it is more important than surveillance motivation (Choi, 2016). Finally, having high interest in hard news makes people more likely to comment on news on social media (Kalogeropoulos, Negredo, Picone & Nielsen, 2017).

Studies seldom tell the characteristics of people who interact with tweets. However, one study found that men were more likely than women to reply to a politician (Kraft, 2010).

Conclusion

Many studies have investigated social media usage for a variety of motivations in order to see to what extent these sites gratify the human needs based on uses and gratifications theory. They are: getting information, entertainment, social interaction and personal identity.

Several studies discussed students’ usage of Twitter for distinct motivations, like academic purposes, interaction with familiar people and to get news (Alwagait et al., 2015). Regarding news, researchers have focused more on analyzing tweets by politicians during critical times. While many studies confirm that Twitter is the first source to get news (Edson et al., 2016; Hu et al., 2012, Tandoc & Johnson, 2016), few discussed people’s interactions with Twitter to get breaking news.

One study has investigated how people interact with news on Twitter from different aspects, but the segment was not limited to students, and it did not apply the study to breaking news. Otherwise, many aspects were still not studied, like user’s preference, interaction and the relation between traditional media and Twitter (Rosenstiel et al., 2015). Another aspect that was not addressed deeply is the impact of cultural systems and political environment on usage patterns except one study (Pentina et al., 2016).
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

This study examines how students from the United States of America and Saudi Arabia interact with breaking news and their different motivations to use Twitter. The following research questions to guide the survey:

RQ1: What motivates American and Saudi college students to use Twitter to get breaking news?
RQ2: What are Twitter news consumption patterns among college students from the U.S. vs. Saudi Arabia?

Measure

Data were collected through an online quantitative survey. The online survey method was chosen to a large number of participants from both Saudi Arabia and the United States of America without incurring major costs. Also, a survey can gather information from a variety of individuals in a relatively short period of time. Some researchers went with this choice when they compared students from different backgrounds (Huang et al.; 2016, Xu & Mocarski, 2014).

The survey was created in Qualtrics, an online survey application, and the questions were designed to assess the extent that students are exposed to Twitter and depend on this platform to get breaking news, as well as how they interact with Twitter. It also seeks to examine the impact of culture and political systems on American and Saudi students in light of Twitter usage.
patterns. The Institutional Review Board approved the survey as Exempt under 45 CFR 46.101(b) (#2) on 11/16/2017 (See Appendix 1: IRB Approval).

The survey introduction consists of the researcher’s name and organization, the study and its purpose, benefits and risks of participation, contact information and statement of contest.

The survey asked participants to answer questions regarding their dependence on Twitter to get breaking news. Both structured questions and open-ended questions were included in the survey. Most questions were multiple choice, and some questions asked the participants to check all responses that apply. A few questions regarded evaluations of statements regarding their exposure to Twitter, as well as retweeting and tweeting opinions.

The questions regarding Twitter usage measured many variables, including motivations to use Twitter, hours spent checking Twitter, numbers and kinds of news accounts followed, how participants get news from Twitter, the primary reasons to follow Twitter news accounts and the primary reasons to follow multiple sources, interact with Twitter news, the sources that the participants depend on to get more details, and the preferred tweet structures on Twitter. Some questions considered differences between American and Saudi students. For example, one question asked students to rate how much they are satisfied with Twitter coverage, and this question included major news events unique to each group.

Many questions were adapted from the study “Twitter and the news: How people use the social network to learn about the world” (Rosenstiel et al., 2015). One question regarding the preferred tweet structure was derived from “Digital journalism: Twitter's use of local newspapers and television news stations” (Meyer, 2015). One question regarding the reason of following
many sources on Twitter was derived from “Media landscape in Twitter: A world of new conventions and political diversity” (An et al., 2011).

The end of the survey asked the participants to answer questions regarding their demographic information like age, major, school, languages, race, gender, religion, political origination and home county. Also, there is a chance for participants to add comments on the survey.

The survey required 10 minutes or less. While the participation was voluntary, participants were forced to answer all questions except two: If you tweet about breaking news, why do you do it? and “How can you tell the difference between factual and false information on Twitter?” (See Appendix 2: the survey).

Data Collection

The survey was distributed to graduate and undergraduate American and Saudi students. The researcher depended on snowball sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their contacts. Therefore, the sample group is said to grow like a rolling snowball. As the sample builds up, enough data are collected to be useful for research and according to the determined time.

To recruit American students, the survey was sent to almost 1,500 students at the University of Mississippi's Meek School. A reminder email was sent to them after one week, to their official emails. Also, the graduate school tweeted a post to ask students to participate in the survey. Moreover, the thesis adviser posted the survey on the Meek School Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/MeekJournalismGroup/. The researcher also targeted American students by posting the survey on American Discussion club (Staff, students and
graduates Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1044197575634877/ and American Student Government Association, or ASGA, (Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/asgaonline/).

The survey recruited Saudi students through some Facebook group. The first one includes Saudi students who study in Britain, U.S. and Australia, Saudi students association: https://www.facebook.com/groups/ksauniv/. Another group for Saudi students who study abroad was the Saudi students in the United States of America group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/631294813695261/. Another group was Mubtath: https://www.facebook.com/groups/mbt3th/. The last one was Saudi association in Oxford, MS: https://www.facebook.com/groups/631294813695261/. Saudis in UK also shared the link in its account in Twitter: https://twitter.com/SaudiUK?lang=en

To recruit more participants, especially American ones, the researcher registered with the “Find Participants” website. https://www.findparticipants.com

The researcher also shared the survey link among American and Saudi friends via the What up application and the researcher’s personal accounts on Twitter and Facebook.

A link to the survey was available for about one month, from February 7, 2018 to March 7, 2018.

Participants

Although 406 started the survey, but 208 did not submit it. Of the 201 students who completed the survey, 98 were Saudi, 91 were American and 12 were from other countries. The 12 students were excluded from the recorded responses.
The 98 Saudi students were from 55 different universities in U.S., Britain, Australia and Saudi Arabia. Of these, 83 were graduate students and the rest were undergraduate, with a gender breakdown of 57 females vs. 40 males; one preferred not to answer. The majority of them knew two languages, including their mother language, and the majority said they were somewhat religious and not interested in politics.

The American students were from 9 universities in the United States of America, including from the University of Mississippi. The researcher reached these students via her university. The American respondents were 67 females vs. 23 males; one preferred not to answer. The majority were seniors and self-identified as somewhat conservative. Almost half were somewhat religious, and almost half were Protestant Christians.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Qualtrics and SPSS. The researcher cross-tabbed the Saudi/American variable with several other variables to compare them. In order to see which comparisons were statistically significant, the researcher ran chi-square tests. For some questions where the respondents could choose more than one answer, the researcher ran the same test in Excel.

For some questions that asked about age, number of sources, number of hours to get news from Twitter and social media, and number of replies from news outlets, the participants had to enter numbers. The researcher deleted non-numerical answers like "I cannot remember," "a lot," "some" and other statements that could not be measured. The researcher took the highest number of students who write a range regarding number of sources and number of replies from news outlets to students’ tweet. However, for hours, once some students determine the time by
the minutes and other by the hours, the researcher converted all of them to minutes. Then the researcher took the average range for students who wrote a range. After determining the average, maximum and minimum, the researcher converted all of them to hours to represent them in the results. The researcher created age categories: 18 to 20, 21-29 and 30 and older.

For questions that asked students to rate tweet structure and their motivations to use Twitter, the researcher used the means generated by Qualtrics to present the preferred structure and motivations in order.

In open-ended questions, which asked students to explain how they differentiated between factual and false information, the researcher made a list of ways that students use to distinguish between them. For another open-ended question, which asked students to tell their motivations to tweet, the researcher made a list of these motivations.

The researcher generated data for the tables and charts in Qualtrics and SPSS, to represent the findings. To compare Saudi and American students, other tables compared Saudi and American students in light of other variables.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results answered the research questions regarding motivations to use Twitter to explore breaking news and how American and Saudi students interact differently with news on Twitter. The first part of the results regards all the students while the second part compares the American and Saudi students.

The First Part

Social media Usage for News

When students were asked to choose all applications that they check when they want to get breaking news, most students chose Twitter (84.12%), while 38.62% chose Facebook. 17.98% of students chose other applications. Only 12.69% chose YouTube, and 1.05% chose Multiply, and MySpace and Windows Live got 0.52 % percent each (See Chart 1). Students spent 2.20 hours on average daily to get news from social media sites; 0 was the minimum, and 12 hours was the maximum.

Characteristics and Habits Associated with Twitter Use

Students check their Twitter accounts with several different devices. The vast majority of the surveyed students access their Twitter accounts via their smartphones (95.23%), and 30.15% of the students access their Twitter via laptop, while 8.99% of students access their Twitter account via iPad/iPod. Only 4.06% use a desktop computer, and 3.17% use other ways (See
Chart 2). Students spent 1.74 hours on average daily, to get news from Twitter; 20 hours was the maximum, and 0 was the minimum.

Students get news from Twitter in five different ways: 75.13% get Twitter news by scrolling the timeline. 65.60% get the news by looking for trending topics, 37.56% use a search box, 14.28% use push notifications sent to their phone, and only 2.11% use another way (See Chart 3).

Twitter Usage for News

Almost half of the students chose Twitter as the most important source to find news (48.68%), while 25.93% selected online journalism to get breaking news, and 10.58% selected TV stations. Only 5.82% chose other applications like Reddit, Snapchat and Instagram, and 4.76% chose Facebook (See Chart 4). Students who were 30 and older represented the highest range of students who consider Twitter the most important source to get news among others.

When students were asked to choose the kinds of accounts they use to get breaking news, almost the third (65.07%) chose newspaper accounts to get breaking news, while 44.97% chose TVs stations, 40.74% of students selected political analysts. 25.92% of students selected print magazines, and only 21.16% selected other accounts. Radio stations came in as the last kind of accounts that students selected with 11.64%.

Students were asked to choose all the platforms they use to get more details after they learn about the news from Twitter. 60.84% of the students go to online journalism sources to get more details, and 34.39% depend on TV stations, 27.51% depend on a person or organization they follow on another account, 16.40% depend on word of mouth to get more details, and
12.69% of the students depend on Facebook while 11.11% depend on print journalism. Meanwhile, 6.87% of the students depend on radio stations, while 7.40% of students depend on other platforms; and only 2.11% depend on a blog (See Chart 5).

Students were asked to choose the tweet structure they prefer when they check Twitter. Most students preferred tweets with photos or videos. Tweets with links took second place. Tweets with hashtags came in third place, while plain tweets were the least preferred structure (See Table 2).

When students were asked to check all the ways to interact with news on Twitter. Almost two-thirds of the students (62.43%) interact with breaking news by liking tweets, followed by retweeting with 58.73%. Using hashtags to tweet took 16.40%, and direct messaging took 10.58%. Creating messages (tweets) took the smallest percentage (9.52%).

Students were asked about the source that they depend on to correct false information that they get from Twitter account. More than a third of students encountered corrective information after an inaccurate tweet through a different tweet from another account (39.68%). Another source, not on Twitter, debunking the report took the second place with 34.39%. Only 11.11% of the students depended on a later tweet from the same source correcting, the mistake, and 10.58% depended on a word of mouth. Most students (84.66%) did not receive Twitter replies from news outlets when they tweeted to them. The maximum times of receiving replies were 20 times, and the minimum was 0. The maximum number of sources that the students followed was 200, while the minimum was 0. The average was 14.21 sources.

Rating Students' Statements Regarding Exposure to Twitter
Most students considered exposure to Twitter as a daily routine: 34.39% strongly agreed and 29.63% somewhat agreed. 33.86% of students agreed that they check Twitter when they have a political concern. 28.57% strongly disagreed that they care about who retweets breaking news more than the producer of the tweets. 7.41% of students strongly agreed that they pay more attention to hashtag tweets than tweets without hashtags. 29.10% of students somewhat disagreed that they do not trust news on Twitter because they cannot differentiate between real news and rumors. 41.27% of students somewhat agreed that Twitter keeps them updated about breaking news (See Table 3).

Motivations and Satisfaction with Twitter Coverage of News

Students show a variety of motivations to use Twitter. Most students used Twitter to find out what is happening in the news. Gathering information was the second purpose, while passing the time was the third and interacting with friends was the fourth. Evaluating opinions and relaxation came last (See Table 4).

Students were asked to choose the primary reason for following any news account on Twitter and follow multiple sources. 35.45% of students follow news accounts because it is an accessible way to get news, and 30.16% do so because it is the first source to provide breaking news. 14.29% use Twitter to get news and interact with friends at the same time. 10.05% do not follow news accounts on Twitter. The primary reason of 7.94% of the students was having an idea about cultural leaders’ perspectives about an issue. Only 2.12% chose other.

Easy access to information is the main reason among students from 19 to 21 and between 22 to 29 to follow any news source on Twitter. For students 30 years and older, Twitter is considered to be the first source to provide news, and this was their main reason.
29.63% of students who follow multiple sources of news do so to explore different perspectives about an issue, while a similar percentage (21.16%) follow multiple sources to verify the accuracy of stories. 12.70% do so because they value news diversity. Figuring out the most important issues is the fourth reason with 17.99%. 8.99% of students do not follow news accounts on Twitter, while 2.65% of students chose other reasons.

The primary reason for following multiple sources of news among students from 19 to 21 and for 30 years and older was verifying the accuracy. For those who are between 22 and 29, exploring different perspectives was the main reason. There is a significant difference between the age range and the primary reason ($\chi^2 = 31.498, df = 12, p < .01$).

Among the stories and satisfaction with Twitter coverage, the highest percentage of the students (39.15%) were strongly satisfied with Twitter coverage of the presidential election in 2016. The highest percentage of the students (38.10%) were somewhat satisfied with Twitter coverage of Texas church shooting in 2017. The highest percentage of the students (23.81%) were somewhat dissatisfied with Twitter coverage of arresting princes, ministers and business figures in anti-corruption crackdown in Saudi Arabia. More than half of students (66.14%) did not know flooding of the Red River Valley in the United States story (See Table 5).

Rating Students' Statements Regarding Tweeting

The highest percentage of the students (33.33%) strongly disagreed that they tweet because they cannot express their opinion freely in the society. However, the highest percentage of the students (31.75%) strongly agreed that they do not post their opinions to avoid conflicts with others. Almost a third of the students (27.51%) somewhat agreed that tweeting for more than 140 characters gives them a chance to fully express their opinions. Only 7.41% strongly
agreed that they tweet on hashtag because they feel these subjects reflect hot topics (See Table 6).

Motivations to Tweet Regarding Breaking News

Students showed different motivations to tweet, from letting their friends know about an issue, expressing their opinions to make jokes. The majority of the students tweet regarding breaking news to make their friends aware of the news.

Rating Students' Statements Regarding Retweet

The highest percentage of students (40.21%) strongly disagreed that they retweet a tweet based on the numbers of retweet. The highest percentage of students (37.57%) somewhat agreed that they retweet a tweet based on its importance. The highest percentage of students (38.62%) strongly agreed that they do not retweet a post until they verify its accuracy, and 47.62% of them strongly agreed that they delete a tweet if they find that it is not accurate (See Table 7).

The second Part

Comparison Between American and Saudi Students

Similarities

Smartphones were the most popular device used by both American and Saudi students when they check their Twitter accounts. 93.40% of the American students access their Twitter via their smartphone, compared to 96.93% of Saudi students who do so. Online journalism is a common source between the two groups to get more details after they get the news from Twitter. 73.62% of the American students go to online journalism to get more details, and 48.97% of the Saudi students do the same (See Chart 6).
Tweets with videos or photos the most preferred type of tweet for both groups. 29.59% of the Saudi students consider tweets with videos or photos were very preferred, while 39.80% of them consider this structure preferred mostly. 52.75% of the American students consider tweets with videos or photos were very preferred, while 25.27% of them consider this structure preferred mostly. Plain tweets were the least preferred tweets structure for both groups.

Newspaper-owned accounts are the most popular type of account on Twitter that both groups follow on Twitter. 66% of the Saudi students check this type, while 64% of the American students do so (See Chart 7).

Rating Students' Statements Regarding Exposure to Twitter

Both American and Saudi students showed agreement that they check Twitter when they have a political concern, and both rely on Twitter more than any other site. American students are more likely to follow Twitter accounts that oppose their political orientation than Saudi students, but there is no significant difference (See Table 8).

Rating Students' Statements Regarding Tweeting and Retweet

Both American and Saudi students agreed that they tweet their opinions because it costs less to publish on Twitter. They also revealed agreement in which they share their opinions on Twitter because it is easy to create messages with 140 characters or less. Both American and Saudi students showed agreement in which they retweet news based on its importance. American and Saudi students strongly disagreed that they tweet based on the number of retweets. (See Table 9 and Table 10).

Motivations
Based on the average, finding out what is happening is the first purpose for both American and Saudi students. Also, both American and Saudi students selected exploring different perspectives as the primary reason to follow many sources of news on Twitter. 31.63% of the Saudi students selected this reason, while 27.47% of the American students selected the same reason.

Differentiate Between Factual and False Information

Saudi and American students were asked to tell the differences between factual and false information on Twitter based on their perspectives. A few students stated that they do not know how to distinguish between factual and false information. Some of the students said that they know how to distinguish between factual and false information, but do not know how to explain the distinction.

The majority said that they depend on the credibility of the source. Some of them depend on the popularity of the sources names. Others state that they do their own research, not on Twitter, but on Google or other sources.

Differences

Social Media Usage for News

Among the variety of social media platforms, 89.79% of Saudi students depended mainly on Twitter to get news, while 13.26% of them depended on Facebook. 78.02% of the American students depended on Twitter, and 65.93% of them depended on Facebook (see Chart 8). Compared with American students, Saudi students spent more time on social media sites to get breaking news. They spent 2.5 hours to get breaking news on average, the minimum was 0,
and the maximum was 15 hours. The average number of hours American students spent on social media was 2.4 hours, the minimum was 0, and the maximum was 12 hours.

Twitter Usage for News

Twitter is considered a more important source for breaking news for Saudi students than American students. 67.35% of the Saudi students consider Twitter as the most important source to get breaking news. However, 34.07% of the American students, which is the highest percentage among them consider online journalism as the most important source of news ($X^2 = 32.488, df = 7, p < .01$).

The study reveals differences based on the way of getting news from Twitter. Most Saudi students (70.40%) depended on looking at trending topics. In contrast, the highest percentage of the American students (84.61%) depended on scrolling the timeline to get the news on Twitter.

While American and Saudi students show a variety of account types they follow to get news, American students follow print magazine accounts more than Saudi students. 47% of the American students follow print magazines, while only 7% follow print magazine accounts (See Chart 7).

Students were asked about the number of news sources they follow on Twitter, The highest percentage of Saudi students (15.3%) follow 15 sources of news, while the highest percentage of American students (13.2%) follow 0 source of news.

The most popular way to interact with news among Saudi students (56.12%) is retweeting news, while liking is the most popular way among American students to interact with news (81.31%).
Saudi students depend mainly on Twitter even when they get false information from Twitter account. 46.94% of the Saudi students correct their information through a tweet from a different person or news source debunking the report, while the highest percentage of the American students (38.46%) depend on another source, not on Twitter, debunking the report.

The study reveals differences between American and Saudi students based on the hours both groups spent on Twitter daily to get breaking news. American students spent 1.9 hour on average and the min was 0 and the maximum was 20 hours. However, Saudi students spent less time. 1.7 hour was the average of exposure and the minimum was 0 and the maximum was 10 hours.

Motivations and Satisfaction with Twitter Coverage of News

As mentioned previously, the primarily motivation for Twitter use for survey participants is to get the news. However, the study reveals some differences between American and Saudi students for secondary motivations. For Saudi students, based on the average, gathering information is the second purpose while evaluating opinions is the third. Passing the time, interacting with friends and relaxation are the three motivations least voted for.

However, passing the time was the second purpose among American students and gathering information was the third while connecting with others took the fourth place. Evaluating opinions and relaxation were the least likely purposes.

There is a significant difference based on gathering information ($X^2 = 10.013$, $df = 4$, $p < .05$), connecting with others ($X^2 = 19.110$, $df = 4$, $p < .01$), passing the time ($X^2 = 35.808$, $df = 4$, $p < .01$), and relaxation ($X^2 = 20.856$, $df = 4$, $p < .01$). The majority of the Saudi students strongly
disagreed that they use Twitter for relaxation. The majority of the American students strongly agreed that they use Twitter to pass the time. The American students showed more agreement to use Twitter to connect with others. However, Saudi students showed more disagreement to using Twitter for gathering information (See Table 11).

The highest percentage of Saudi students (37.76%) follow news accounts on Twitter to get news because it is the first source to provide news. In contrast, the highest percentage of American students (36.26%) follow news accounts on Twitter because it is an accessible way to get news.

Saudi students were more satisfied with Twitter coverage of arresting princes in anti-corruption ($X^2 = 51.342, df = 4, p < .01$). American students were more satisfied with Twitter coverage of Texas shooting in 2017 ($X^2 = 23.672, df = 4, p < .01$), Las Vegas shooting in 2017 ($X^2 = 31.491, df = 4, p < .01$), Boston Marathon attack ($X^2 = 25.829, df = 4, p < .01$) and hurricanes in Florida 2017 ($X^2 = 17.673, df = 4, p < .05$) (See Table 12).

Rating Students' Statements Regarding Exposure to Twitter

Saudi students indicated more agreement on whether they get confused when they see different perspectives. 28.57% of them somewhat agreed, and 8.16% of them strongly agreed ($X^2 = 26.243, df = 4, p < .01$) ($MA = 2.16, MS = 3.03$). Also, they showed more agreement as to whether they get anxious when they see conflicting news on Twitter. 33.67% of them somewhat agreed, and 13.27% of them strongly agreed ($X^2 = 13.347, df = 4, p < .05$) ($MA = 2.63, MS = 3.21$). Saudi students revealed more agreement to the statement in that they unfollow less important news accounts in order to not miss important news. 34.69% of them somewhat agreed and 29.59% strongly agreed ($X^2 = 33.736, df = 4, p < .05$) ($MA = 2.84, MS = 3.73$).
Saudi students care more than American students about who retweets breaking news more than the producer ($X^2 = 10.974, df = 4, p < .05$) ($MA = 2.23, MS = 2.77$). However, Saudi students pay more attention to tweets using a specific hashtag than others. 24.49% of them somewhat agreed and 12.24% of them strongly agreed with this statement ($X^2 = 23.826, df = 4, p < .01$) ($MA = 2.1, MS = 2.93$). (See Table 8).

Rating Students' Statements Regarding Tweeting

Most of the Saudi students do not tweet regarding breaking news. Saudi students who tweet do so because they want to let their friends know about an issue. Few Saudi students declared that they tweet to express their points of view. One of the students declared that he tweets if there is an urgent issue, “I rarely post a tweet about news, it’s mostly retweets, but if I did, I must have found that news shocking, or it has DIRECT impact on me and my followers “friends/coworkers/family” and I want to let them know it’s happening, and it’s changing the world, my country, city, university, or even neighborhood.”

Some American students revealed that they tweet regarding breaking news. Also, American students showed more variety of motivations to tweet. Beside letting others know about an issue like Saudi students, some students declared that they tweet to make jokes and to provide humor and insight or irony. Others showed that they are passionate about tweeting.

One of the students stated, “As a broadcast journalism student and someone who was heavily involved in the Student Media Center with NewsWatch Ole Miss, it is not only my duty to inform the public, it is my passion. I finished my courses early and am now finishing my last credit at a news station and it has made me realize even more how important it is to inform the public on what they deserve to know and be informed of.”
More than Saudi students, American students tweet to show themselves or express their opinions. 37.36% of American students somewhat agreed and 15.38% of them strongly agreed with this statement ($X^2 = 12.801, df = 4, p < .05$) ($MA = 3.16, MS = 2.64$). Related to that, more American students agreed with the idea that tweeting more than 140 characters allows them to more fully express their opinions. 27.47% of them somewhat agreed and 20.88% strongly agreed.

Saudi students care about hashtags more than Americans, tweeting with a hashtag was more preferred among Saudi students. 29.59% of them preferred mostly this structure ($X^2 = 13.751, df = 4, p < .01$) ($MA = 2.8, MS = 3.37$) (See Table 12). Also, Saudi students showed more agreement to a statement “I tweet with hashtag to reach a large segment”. 24.49% of them somewhat agreed, and 14.29% of them strongly agreed ($X^2 = 10.317, df = 4, p < .04$) ($MA = 2.54, MS = 2.96$). 20.40% stated that they tweet on a hashtag to interact with breaking news compared to 12.08% of the American students do so.

Saudi students strongly agreed that they do not post to avoid conflicts with others. The highest percentage of them (37.76%) showed strong agreement, while American students showed less agreement. 25.27% only of the American students strongly agreed with the statement ($X^2 = 9.592, df = 4, p < .05$) ($MA = 3.2, MS = 3.71$).

The highest percentage of the American students (43.96%) strongly disagreed that they tweet because they cannot express themselves in the society, while Saudi students showed more agreement than them. 17.35% of the Saudi students somewhat agreed and 10.20% strongly agreed ($X^2 = 12.801, df = 4, p < .02$) ($MA = 2.16, MS = 2.73$). (See Table 9).
Saudi students showed more agreement to a statement in which they delete a tweet if they figure out that it is not accurate. 57.14% of the Saudi students strongly agreed with the statement ($X^2 = 11.854, df = 4, p < .02$) ($MA = 3.76$, $MS = 4.27$). Also, Saudi students are more likely to retweet when they know the original source of the information. 32.65% of the Saudi students, which is the highest percentage of the students strongly agreed with the statement. ($X^2 = 12.779, df = 4, p < .02$) ($MA = 3.2$, $MS = 3.79$). (See Table 10).
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

The thesis examined the differences between American and Saudi students based on their motivations and exposure to Twitter to get breaking news. This study confirms the result of other studies, in which Twitter is still a significant news source for the college students to get breaking news (Tandoc and Johnson, 2016; Shearer and Gottfried, 2017). Finding out what is happening is the main motivation to use Twitter among Saudi and American students. Also, this study confirms the results of one study (Tandoc & Johnson, 2016), in which Twitter was replacing traditional news media as the first source of news media for participants, who would then depend on online journalism for details. Both American and Saudi students consider exposure to twitter as a daily routine to get breaking news.

Regarding the results of motivations to use Twitter, while Knighta and Kaye (2015) found that Twitter usage for seeking information was the first purpose among students, this study partly confirms the result because seeking information was an important use among Saudi students only. The results of the study correspond with another study (Pentina et al., 2016), in which news and content sharing is the most highly valued Twitter motivation for Ukrainian students like Saudi students. Both countries have a developed economy and a family-emphasized culture.
While both American and Saudi students rely on Twitter to get breaking news, Saudi students show more dependence on this platform. They rely mainly on Twitter as a main source of news because it is the first source that provides news based on their perspectives. Also, they depend on this platform when they get false information from Twitter account. Additionally, they unfollow less important news accounts on Twitter in order to not miss important news.

Saudi students use Twitter carefully because they do not like to tweet regarding breaking news. That confirms the result in which Saudi people prefer oral communication than written ones (Winder, 2014). Additionally, they delete a tweet if they figure out that it is not accurate. Moreover, they retweet if they know the original source of the tweet. This study agrees with the previous study (Almakrami, 2015), in which Saudi participants do not like to tweet to tell others about themselves. In a previous study, Saudi participants reported that they did not share news or achievements on Facebook.

The Saudi students show a change as a conservative people, in which they follow accounts that oppose their political orientation, but the American students do that more. However, Saudi students feel anxious and confused as a result of exposure to conflicts in Twitter and avoid posting regarding breaking news to avoid conflicts with others.

American students show less reliance on Twitter. For them, online journalism is the most important source of news. They have a variety of motivations for using Twitter, like passing time, connecting with others and expressing sense of humor. In order to correct information they get from Twitter, they depend on another source. Also, they reflect awareness in which they did not show confusion or anxiety as a result of exposure to conflicting on Twitter. They are different than Saudi students in which they are not afraid to express their opinions on Twitter.
Unlike Saudi students, American students do not care about hashtag. They are not likely to tweet with hashtag and pay attention to tweet on it because they do not think that they reflect the major issues.

Both American and Saudi students care about their country's issues, but they do not have much of an idea about what is happening in other countries. Each group is satisfied with the Twitter coverage in their respective countries.

The study partly confirms the result of one study (Rosenstiel et al., 2015), in which scrolling the timeline is the primary means among users to get news on Twitter. It is the first way among American students, not Saudi students.

For some features of Twitter, the highest percentage of students (33.86%) neither agree nor disagree that the new feature of Twitter (tweeting for more than 140 characters) allow them to fully express their opinions. Students may need more time to decide if it is helpful. However, a small percentage shows disagreements with this feature.

Contribution

This thesis has paved the way for more research into the cultural differences among students in social media usage. Saudi students depend mainly on Twitter as the first source to explore news while American students do not. American students enjoy getting access to a plenty of sources. Results show that both students depend on online journalism to get more details about news they receive from Twitter, that indicates the importance of online journalism even in the social media age.
The results of the study add to the uses and gratifications theory, by figuring out the motivations of American and Saudi students to get news from Twitter. There are different motivations: finding out what is happening, entertainment, gathering information, relaxations, connecting with others and evaluating opinions. Also, it provides motivations of following news accounts on Twitter and following many sources of news on Twitter. Moreover, it provides the motivations of tweeting among the American and Saudi students.

From the open-ended questions it was understood that American students are more likely to tweet and have a greater variety of motivations to tweet more than Saudi students. Also, American students try to support their answers by giving some examples. They also like to criticize the work once they provide some notices regarding the survey. In short, American students are more likely to share their opinions and use Twitter to express their ideas.

Both American and Saudi students mostly prefer tweets with photos or videos, but local news accounts on Twitter depend mostly on tweets with links (Meyer, 2015). Additionally, Greer and Yan (2011) suggested that newspapers should include hashtags and links in order to increase site traffic rate. However, they have to include more photos and videos in order to get more traffic.

Limitations

While this study seeks to examine the motivations of students to get news from Twitter, a qualitative method, specifically focus groups or interviews may be more suitable to get in depth details and making sure of the results. For example, in a focus group, a researcher can monitor how many hours exactly students use Twitter and how they interact with this platform.
There are some limitations regarding the sample. Saudi students who study in different countries like Australia, Britain, United States of America took the survey, but American students who took the survey live in the U.S.A., and the majority are from the University of Mississippi. Therefore, Saudi students have the experience of studying abroad while American students may not, and the majority of the Saudi students were graduate students.

The survey would be improved in some ways. Some questions need to be modified. For example, in a question regarding social media platforms, the researcher did not include Snapchat or Reddit. Another example, in a question about the major, the researcher did not include many majors like business and accounting.

Future Studies

Directions for future studies are driven from the limitations of this study. While this study depended on a survey to collect the data, other studies may analyze user engagement on Twitter.

Based on the results of the study, several additional studies could be developed. Even though this study focuses on the students and two countries, intensive research is needed by focusing on different categories of people in different countries with different backgrounds. Other future research could measure exposure to international sources on Twitter and other social media sites and examine the impact of some factors, like travelling abroad and knowing languages on exposure to different mediums.

While this study basically explores the consumption patterns of news on Twitter, future studies may explore the motivations to tweet or retweet and habits related to that like frequently of tweeting and kinds of tweeting topics to get in depth details. For example, in this study, Saudi
students state that they do not like to tweet regarding breaking news, but this study did not reveal the reasons of that.

Some students declare that they depend on Snapchat and Reddit to get breaking news, other studies may compare the two groups based on their dependence on these platforms.


Teens, social media, and relationships: An interview with Kaveri Subrahmanyan. (2010). *The Prevention Researcher, 17*(S1), 11.


LIST OF APPENDICES
Appendix 1: IRB Approval
Ms. Hamdan:

This is to inform you that your application to conduct research with human participants, "Twitter usage for getting breaking news: A comparison between American and Saudi students" (Protocol #18x-119), has been approved as Exempt under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

Please remember that all of The University of Mississippi’s human participant research activities, regardless of whether the research is subject to federal regulations, must be guided by the ethical principles in The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research.

It is especially important for you to keep these points in mind:

• You must protect the rights and welfare of human research participants.

• Any changes to your approved protocol must be reviewed and approved before initiating those changes.

• You must report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the IRB at irb@olemiss.edu.

Jennifer Caldwell, PhD, CPIA, CIP
Senior Research Compliance Specialist, Research Integrity and Compliance
The University of Mississippi
212 Barr
P.O. Box 1848
University, MS 38677-1848
U.S.A.
+1-662-915-5006
irb@olemiss.edu | www.olemiss.edu
Greetings. I am Maria Hamdan, a graduate journalism student at The University of Mississippi. My thesis looks at how students rely on Twitter for breaking news. This anonymous survey takes about 10 minutes or less. There are no anticipated risks to you from participating in the study. Although there is no payment for participation, your participation may make you more aware of Twitter usage you’d like to change or improve. No one can associate you with your responses, and there is no penalty if you refuse or withdraw from the survey. The University of Mississippi Institutional Review Board (IRB) has determined that this study fulfills the human research subject protections obligations required by state and federal law and university policies. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or irb@olemiss.edu. Please contact Maria Hamdan at mzhamedan@go.olemiss.edu if there is something not clear or if you need more information.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and I consent to participate in the study. By proceeding with the questions below, I agree to participate in this survey and acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

There are many ways to find news. What is the most important source for you?

- Print newspapers
- Print magazines
- Online journalism
- TV station
- Radio station
- Word of mouth
- Twitter
Which social media platforms do you use to get breaking news (newly received information about an event currently occurring or developing)? Check all that apply.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Windows Live
- Friendster
- Flikr
- Blogger.com
- Bebo
- Multiply
- MySpace
- Other

On average, how many hours do you spend daily on a social networking sites for breaking news? .........................

On average, how many hours do you spend daily on Twitter to get breaking news? .........................

Which kinds of accounts do you follow on Twitter to get breaking news? (Check all that apply)

- Print magazines
- Newspapers
- TVs stations
- Radio stations
- Political analysts
- Other accounts

How many sources of news do you follow on Twitter? ............................................

How do you access your Twitter account? (Check all that apply)

- Desktop computer
- Laptop
- Smartphone
- iPod \ iPad other
- Other

How do you get news from Twitter (check all that apply)?

- Scrolling the timeline
- Use a search box
- Looking for trending topics
- Push notifications to my phone
- Other

Why do you use Twitter?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To gather information</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To connect or interact with others</td>
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<td>To evaluate opinions</td>
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<tr>
<td>To pass the time</td>
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<tr>
<td>For relaxation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
If you follow multiple sources of news on Twitter, what is the primary reason?
  o To explore different perspectives about an issue
  o To verify the accuracy of stories
  o To figure out the most important issues
  o To reach an accurate judgment
  o I value news diversity
  o Other
  o I do not follow news accounts on Twitter

If you follow any news account on Twitter, what is the primary reason?
  o It is the first source to provide breaking news
  o To get news and interact with friends at the same time
  o To have an idea about cultural leaders’ perspectives about an issue
  o Accessible way to get news
  o Other
  o I do not follow news accounts on Twitter

How do you interact with breaking news on Twitter? (check all that apply)
  o Retweet
  o Create messages (tweet)
  o Liking
  o Direct messaging
  o Using hashtag to tweet
After you get news from Twitter, where do you go to get more details? (Check all that apply)

- A person or organization you follow on another account
- Print journalism
- Online journalism
- TV station
- Radio station
- Word of mouth
- A blog
- Facebook
- Other

On a scale of 1 – 5 with 5 being the most preferred, rate these Twitter formats for accessing breaking news.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tweeting structure</th>
<th>1: Not preferred</th>
<th>2: Barely preferred</th>
<th>3: Somewhat preferred</th>
<th>4: Mostly preferred</th>
<th>5: very preferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tweets with links</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tweets with videos or photos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tweets with hashtags</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plain text tweets</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rate the following statements about exposure to Twitter to get news

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I check Twitter when I have a political concern.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Checking Twitter is a daily routine that alerts me about breaking news.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I rely on Twitter for breaking news more than any other site.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I follow Twitter accounts that oppose my political orientation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twitter keeps me updated about breaking news that concerns me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeing conflicting perspectives on Twitter confuses me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeing conflicting news on Twitter makes me anxious.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not trust news on Twitter because I cannot differentiate between real news and rumors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I unfollow less important news accounts, so I do not miss more important tweets.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I care about who retweets breaking news more than the producer of the tweets.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pay more attention to hashtag tweets than tweets without hashtags.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rate the following statements about retweeting breaking news

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will retweet a news item only after I verify its accuracy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will retweet a news item according to its number of retweets.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will retweet news according to its importance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will retweet a news item only as soon as I see the news the first time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I delete tweets if I figure out that they are not accurate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I retweet only when I know the original source of the information, not who retweeted it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rate the following statements about tweeting opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use Twitter to tell others about myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tweet my opinions because it costs less to publish.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share my opinions on Twitter because it is easy to create messages with 140 characters or less.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not post about political issues because I try to avoid conflicts with people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share my opinions on Twitter because I cannot express my opinions freely in my society.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tweet with hashtags because it helps my tweet reach a larger audience, and more people may follow me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tweet with hashtags because I feel these subjects reflect hot topics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweeting more than 140 characters allows me to more fully express my opinions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you tweet about breaking news, why do you do it?...............................................................


How much are you satisfied with Twitter coverage of the following stories and events?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Strongly satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat dissatisfied</th>
<th>Strongly dissatisfied</th>
<th>I do not know this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arresting princes, ministers and business figures in anti-corruption crackdown in Saudi Arabia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Church Shooting in 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Vegas shooting in 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricanes in Florida in 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Presidential Election in 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston marathon terrorist attack in 2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flooding of the Red River Valley in the United States in 2009</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Have you ever received a Twitter reply from a news outlet?

- Yes
- No

How many times have you received Twitter replies from news outlets?.................

How can you tell the difference between factual and false information on Twitter?

..................................................................................................................

Where do you encounter corrective information after an inaccurate tweet?

- Another source, not on Twitter, debunking the report
- Through a tweet from a different person or news source debunking the report
- Through a later tweet from the same source correcting the mistake
- Word of mouth
- Other
What is the name of your university?.........................................................................................

What is your current year in school?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate student

What is your major?

- Medicine
- Science
- Math
- Engineering
- Art
- Journalism
- Integrated marketing communication
- other

How old are you?.................................

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to answer

What is your home country?

- United States of America
o Saudi Arabia
o other

Have you ever been outside your home country?

  o Yes
  o No

How many languages do you know including your mother language?.................

Do you consider yourself to be religious?

  o Very religious
  o Somewhat religious
  o Not at all religious
  o Prefer not to answer

If you do consider yourself to be religious, what religion do you identify with the most

  o Protestant Christianity
  o Catholicism
  o Islam
  o Other religion
  o None - I am not religious
  o Prefer not to answer

How would you describe your political orientation?

  o Very liberal
  o Somewhat liberal
  o Somewhat conservative
  o Very conservative
o Islamist

o None - I am not interested in politics

o Prefer not to answer

How do you classify your race or ethnicity?

o White

o Black or African American

o American Indian or Alaska Native Asian

o Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

o Hispanic or Latino

o Afro-Asian

o Arab

o Saudi Arabs (Native-Born)

o Other

o Prefer not to answer

Thank you for you participating in this survey. You are welcome to add any additional comments below………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
Appendix 3: Charts and Tables
Chart 1: Applications students check when they want to get breaking news

Facebook
Twitter
YouTube
Windows Live
Friendster
Flickr
Blogger.com
Bebo
Multiply
MySpace
Other
Chart 2: The devices students use to check their Twitter account
Chart 3: Ways that students follow to interact with news on Twitter

- Scrolling the timeline
- Use a search box
- Looking for trending topics
- Push notifications to my phone
- Other
Chart 4: The most important source of news based on Students’ perspectives
Chart 5: Sources that students depend on to get details after they receive news from Twitter

- A person or organization you follow on another account
- Print journalism
- Online journalism
- TV station
- Radio station
- Word of mouth
- A blog
- Facebook
- Other
Table 2: Rating of the Twitter’s structure based on the students’ perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tweeting structure</th>
<th>Not preferred</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Barely preferred</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat preferred</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Mostly preferred</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>very preferred</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tweets with links</td>
<td>17.99%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12.17%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22.75%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21.69%</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25.40%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweets with videos or photos</td>
<td>3.17%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.82%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.46%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32.80%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>40.74%</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweets with hashtags</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.52%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33.86%</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain text tweets</td>
<td>19.58%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21.16%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32.80%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>20.63%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5.82%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>count</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>count</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>count</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>count</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>count</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I check Twitter when I have a political concern.</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5.82%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25.93%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>33.86%</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>23.28%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking Twitter is a daily routine that alerts me about breaking news.</td>
<td>13.76%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.34%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29.63%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>34.39%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I rely on Twitter for breaking news more than any other site.</td>
<td>13.76%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11.64%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19.58%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>24.34%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30.69%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I follow Twitter accounts that oppose my political orientation.</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15.34%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26.98%</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30.16%</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>8.47%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter keeps me updated about breaking news that concerns me.</td>
<td>5.82%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41.27%</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing conflicting perspectives on Twitter confuses me.</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>29.63%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing conflicting news on Twitter makes me anxious.</td>
<td>20.11%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>29.63%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>10.05%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not trust news on Twitter because I cannot differentiate between real news and rumors.</td>
<td>20.11%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>29.10%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20.11%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I unfollow less important news accounts, so I do not miss more important tweets.</td>
<td>11.64%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14.81%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>26.46%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18.52%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I care about who retweets breaking news more than the producer of the tweets.</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>25.93%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pay more attention to hashtag tweets than tweets without hashtags.</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>21.16%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26.46%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.41%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: Motivations to use Twitter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To gather information</td>
<td>4.23%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.41%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.76%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40.74%</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>33.86%</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To connect or interact with others</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11.64%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.22%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>31.75%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To evaluate opinions</td>
<td>8.47%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.64%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20.63%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>43.92%</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>15.34%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To pass the time</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.41%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.23%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38.62%</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>31.22%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For relaxation</td>
<td>17.46%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13.76%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27.51%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>29.63%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>11.64%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To find out what's happening</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.12%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.82%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30.69%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56.08%</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5: Satisfaction with Twitter coverage of stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Strongly satisfied</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>somewhat dissatisfied</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Strongly dissatisfied</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>I do not know this story</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arresting princes, ministers and business figures in anti-corruption crackdown in Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30.69%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.35%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24.87%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Church Shooting in 2017</td>
<td>17.99%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38.10%</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>15.87%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23.28%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Vegas shooting in 2017</td>
<td>37.04%</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>26.46%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10.05%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.47%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.99%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricanes in Florida in 2017</td>
<td>38.10%</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>31.75%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>11.64%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.35%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.17%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Presidential Election in 2016</td>
<td>39.15%</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>31.75%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10.05%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.58%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.47%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston marathon terrorist attack in 2013</td>
<td>21.69%</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35.45%</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>15.34%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.41%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.11%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flooding of the Red River Valley in the United States in 2009</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.23%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>66.14%</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6: Rating statements regarding tweeting opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use Twitter to tell others about myself.</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17.46%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29.63%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>11.64%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tweet my opinions because it costs less to publish.</td>
<td>21.16%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31.75%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8.99%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share my opinions on Twitter because it is easy to create messages with 140 characters or less.</td>
<td>17.46%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13.23%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30.69%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>28.04%</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10.58%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not post about political issues because I try to avoid conflicts with people.</td>
<td>12.70%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18.52%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22.75%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>31.75%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share my opinions on Twitter because I cannot express my opinions freely in my society.</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>18.52%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24.34%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.41%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tweet with hashtags because it helps my tweet reach a larger audience, and more people may follow me.</td>
<td>25.40%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>15.34%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>19.58%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tweet with hashtags because I feel these subjects reflect hot topics.</td>
<td>18.52%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17.99%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30.16%</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>25.93%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7.41%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweeting more than 140 characters allows me to more fully express my opinions.</td>
<td>12.70%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33.86%</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>27.51%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7: Rating statements regarding retweeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will retweet a news item only after I verify its accuracy.</td>
<td>8.99%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20.63%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>24.87%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>38.62%</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will retweet a news item according to its number of retweets.</td>
<td>40.21%</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>19.58%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>26.98%</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10.05%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.17%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will retweet news according to its importance.</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.41%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.93%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37.57%</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>32.80%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will retweet a news item only as soon as I see the news the first time.</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23.28%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>31.75%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>17.99%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I delete tweets if I figure out that they are not accurate.</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.23%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.16%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21.69%</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47.62%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I retweet only when I know the original source of the information, not who retweeted it.</td>
<td>5.29%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29.10%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.51%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 6: Comparison between American and Saudi students based on sources that students depend on to get details after they get news from Twitter
Chart 7: Comparison between American and Saudi students based on the types of accounts they follow to get news
### Table 8: Comparison between Saudi and American students regarding exposure to Twitter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>counts</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>counts</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>counts</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>counts</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>counts</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I check Twitter when I have a political concern.</td>
<td>9.18%</td>
<td>13.19%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>6.59%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22.45%</td>
<td>29.67%</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
<td>31.87%</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking Twitter is a daily routine that alerts me about breaking news.</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>8.79%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>16.48%</td>
<td>34.69%</td>
<td>24.18%</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I rely on Twitter for breaking news more than any other site.</td>
<td>8.16%</td>
<td>19.78%</td>
<td>11.22%</td>
<td>12.09%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.35%</td>
<td>21.98%</td>
<td>29.59%</td>
<td>18.68%</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I follow Twitter accounts that oppose my political orientation.</td>
<td>17.35%</td>
<td>20.88%</td>
<td>17.35%</td>
<td>13.19%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30.61%</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
<td>29.59%</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter keeps me updated about breaking news that concerns me.</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
<td>8.79%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.24%</td>
<td>16.48%</td>
<td>38.78%</td>
<td>43.96%</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing conflicting</td>
<td>11.22%</td>
<td>34.07%</td>
<td>19.39%</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32.65%</td>
<td>26.37%</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>8.79%</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA: Saudi, US: American
I do not trust news on Twitter because I cannot differentiate between real news and rumors.

I unfollow less important news accounts, so I do not miss more important tweets.

I care about who retweets breaking news more than the producer of the tweets.
### Table 9: Comparison between Saudi and American students regarding tweeting opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use Twitter to tell others about myself. *****</td>
<td>25.51%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22.45%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22.45%</td>
<td>37.36%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tweet my opinions because it costs less to publish.</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
<td>27.47%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
<td>26.37%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share my opinions on Twitter because it is easy to create messages with 140 characters or less.</td>
<td>18.37%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.61%</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32.65%</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not post about political issues because I try to avoid conflicts with people. *****</td>
<td>6.12%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.35%</td>
<td>19.78%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.47%</td>
<td>21.98%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share my opinions on Twitter because I cannot</td>
<td>23.47%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>31.63%</td>
<td>16.48%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.35%</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The table represents the percentage distribution of responses from Saudi (SA) and American (US) students.
I can express my opinions freely in my society.

| I tweet with hashtags because it helps my tweet reach a larger audience, and more people may follow me. | 19.39% | 31.87% | 19 | 29 | 18.37% | 12.09% | 18 | 11 | 23.47% | 34.07% | 23 | 31 | 24.49% | 14.29% | 24 | 13 | 14.29% | 7.69% | 14 | 7 | 98 | 91 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| I tweet with hashtags because I feel these subjects reflect hot topics. | 12.24% | 25.27% | 12 | 23 | 21.43% | 14.29% | 21 | 13 | 27.55% | 32.97% | 27 | 30 | 28.57% | 23.08% | 28 | 21 | 10.20% | 4.40% | 10 | 4 | 98 | 91 |
| Tweeting more than 140 characters allows me to more fully express my opinions. | 9.18% | 16.48% | 9 | 15 | 11.22% | 7.69% | 11 | 7 | 39.80% | 27.47% | 39 | 25 | 27.55% | 27.47% | 27 | 25 | 12.24% | 20.88% | 12 | 19 | 98 | 91 |

****p < .05
****p < .04
Table 10: Comparison between Saudi and American students regarding retweeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will retweet a news item only after I verify its accuracy.</td>
<td>11.22%</td>
<td>6.59%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.12%</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>16.33%</td>
<td>25.27%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20.41%</td>
<td>29.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will retweet a news item according to its number of retweets.</td>
<td>46.94%</td>
<td>32.97%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
<td>17.58%</td>
<td>22.45%</td>
<td>31.87%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.16%</td>
<td>12.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will retweet a news item according to its importance.</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>5.49%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
<td>12.24%</td>
<td>21.98%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
<td>39.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will retweet a news item only as soon as I see the news the first time.</td>
<td>26.53%</td>
<td>17.58%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22.45%</td>
<td>24.18%</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>35.16%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17.35%</td>
<td>18.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.06%</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.08%</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
<td>29.67%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I delete tweets if I figure out that they are not accurate. **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I retweet only when I know the original source of the information, not who retweeted it. **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < 0.02
Chart 8: Comparison between American and Saudi students based on social media applications that they depend on to get news.
Table 11: Comparison between Saudi and American students regarding motivations to use Twitter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>motivations</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To gather information*****</td>
<td>1.02%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15.31%</td>
<td>12.09%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>48.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To connect or interact with others*</td>
<td>11.22%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.41%</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.33%</td>
<td>6.59%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To evaluate opinions</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.22%</td>
<td>12.09%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26.53%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To pass the time*</td>
<td>12.24%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.24%</td>
<td>2.20%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19.39%</td>
<td>6.59%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For relaxation*</td>
<td>25.51%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.31%</td>
<td>12.09%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.55%</td>
<td>27.47%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To find out what's happening</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.02%</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>6.59%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

****p <.05
*p <.01
Table 12: Comparison between Saudi and American students based on their satisfaction with Twitter coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stories</th>
<th>Strongly satisfied</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>somewhat dissatisfied</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Strongly dissatisfied</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>I do not know this story</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anti-corruption crackdown in Saudi Arabia*</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
<td>6.59%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.76%</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26.53%</td>
<td>20.88%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Church Shooting in 2017*</td>
<td>11.22%</td>
<td>25.27%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31.63%</td>
<td>45.05%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>17.58%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Vegas shooting in 2017*</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
<td>53.85%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25.51%</td>
<td>27.47%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.24%</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricanes in Florida in 2017****</td>
<td>27.55%</td>
<td>49.45%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30.61%</td>
<td>32.97%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.27%</td>
<td>9.89%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Presidential Election in 2016</td>
<td>32.65%</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>34.69%</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>9.89%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston marathon terrorist attack in 2013*</td>
<td>16.33%</td>
<td>27.47%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25.51%</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15.31%</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flooding of the Red River Valley in the United States in 2009</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>2.20%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>12.09%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.24%</td>
<td>20.88%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**** p < .05
*p < .01
Table 13: Comparison between Saudi and American students regarding preferred tweeting structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>structure</th>
<th>Not preferred</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Barely preferred</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Somewhat preferred</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Mostly preferred</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Very preferred</th>
<th>count</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tweets with links</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweets with videos or photos***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweets with hashtags*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Plain text tweets</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>16.33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Count of Tweets with videos or photos***</td>
<td>3.06%</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>8.16%</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Count of Tweets with hashtags*</td>
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<td>14.29%</td>
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<td>34.07%</td>
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<td>Count of Plain text tweets</td>
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<td>13.27%</td>
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<td>38.78%</td>
<td>26.37%</td>
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</table>

***p < .03
*p < .01
VITA
Maria Zoheir Hamdan
| 662.518.9296 | maryiahamdan121@hotmail.com

EDUCATION
King Abdul-Aziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
2007-2011
Bachelor of Arts in Journalism & Mass Communication GPA 5.00 out of 5.00

Teaching Assistant at Department of Media at King Abdul-Aziz University (2012 - 2014)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE
• Arabic and Islamic Mass Communication (for four semester)
• Public Opinion (for four semesters)
• Saudi Mass Communication and Its Rules (for one semester)
• Introduction to Mass Media (for one semester)

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS
• Participation in the organization of Academic Production Conference (2013)
• Supervision of the Media Club activities (2013 - 2014)
• Post seminar Almadina newspaper (2012)
• Participation in Implementation and presentation "Orientation" (2012)
• Post seminar “Mass Communication Ethics” (2012)
• Supervise the preparation of magazine” Media makes change” (2011 - 2012)
• Participation in team volunteer activities as one body (2010)

TECHNOLOGY
• Software includes: Microsoft Office, Google Docs, iWork, and Mind map.