

**Social Networks and Their Role in the Development of Information Identity
among Students of the College of Applied Sciences in Ibri**

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Abstract:

Libraries, in the current era, seek to benefit from the various modern technologies that emerged as a result of the information and technological revolution. Social networks with their different types are one of the most important technologies which played a major role in creating channels of communication amongst users. This study examines the reality of the role of social networks in the development of information awareness among the students of the College of Applied Sciences in Ibri, where the researchers aim, through the results of this study, to realize the benefits of these networks in developing the students' information awareness which will be reflected in educating the specialists concerned. A questionnaire is given randomly to a user groups (LRC) to describe the current state of use of social networks. The researchers have reached that all College students from the sample representing the college community and targeted by the subject of the study have one or more accounts on social networks, which can be invested to find lasting and effective communication channels with them.

Keywords: Communication Networks, Students of the College of Applied Sciences in Ibri, Information Awareness.

Introduction :

Social networking is considered one of the most important applications that appeared in the middle of the last century and it is a term given to a group of sites that appeared with the second generation of the Web 2.0 allowing communication between individuals in a virtual community environment that brings them together specific interests and desires and is limited to a specific place or time or a specific specialization or specific group.

Social media has shaped a form of modern electronic media that has been associated with educational institutions, as it has formed ready solutions to problems existing in these institutions represented in achieving communication with the users of its services and publishing its activities and actions.

The researchers aspire through the study to achieve a meaningful benefit from these networks in developing information awareness in students in the College of

Applied Sciences in Ibri. The study will also be reflected on educating specialists working in these libraries with the best tools that contribute to achieving the library's mission, as well as knowing the nature of the information needs of students.

Review of the Literature:

There have been many previous studies that dealt with social networks and diversified in their handling of the topic, and the researchers found - within the limits of their understanding - that most of the studies addressed Facebook more broadly, but a few did so with other networks, and also collected some studies between more than one means of social media, which were all vanished in general.

The research resulted in Omani intellectual production - within the limits of knowledge - the lack of studies that combined social networks and their role in libraries or learning resource centers in the Sultanate of Oman with the exception of one study of Al-Hajji and Al-Busaidi (2017).

Ismael's study (2018) talked about the use of social networks among workers in academic libraries in order to reveal their needs and motives for obtaining information, as well as what social networks are used in the Niles University libraries, how to use them, and the difficulties that hinder their use.

The study found that the employees of the University Library of Al-Neelain are those that hold bachelor's and master's degrees and have the knowledge and experience that qualify them to deal with the global network of the Internet and Social Media, and they use these networks to communicate with friends and obtain information, and most of the workers use these networks through their smart phones for the ease of dealing through them, and their availability with them all the time, the study revealed the existence of difficulties in using social networks, which were represented by the slow internet, lack of English Language skills, and the library's lack of interest in developing its pages on Social Communication Networks.

The study recommended the adoption of a policy to take advantage of social networking to pay attention to suggestions and opinions of users, and to respond to their posts and comments, and the need to develop library pages on communication networks.

The study showed the necessity of taking into consideration that the supervisors of the library pages on social networks are those who have skills in dealing with modern technologies (computers, telephones, etc.) and have experience in dealing with social networks to be able to develop the web pages of their libraries and improve the response to the comments of the users and their views and benefit from their proposals.

Al-Busaidi's study (2017) on the employment of academic libraries in the universities of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Arabian Gulf also addressed the characteristics of the social networks, Facebook and Twitter in the marketing of information services, where the study aimed to identify the reality of the employment of academic libraries in the universities of the Gulf Cooperation Council

for the characteristics of the social networks, Facebook and Twitter. The study indicates that academic libraries have used (23) features of Facebook Network out of (24) in marketing library services, and academic libraries have used (12) features of Twitter Network out of (14) features in marketing library services. The study recommended the necessity of intensifying efforts to activate the characteristics of social networks further due to their role in marketing library services.

Many libraries and information centers are unaware of these features that are provided by social networks, and their use is limited to specific features such as (publishing only), which affects the effectiveness of the page and its users, and are routinely overlooked, provided by libraries, which is used to develop library pages on social media and allow easy access to them.

Al-Hajji and Al-Busaidi's (2017) study examined the case study of the main library at Sultan Qaboos University in its use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others in terms of marketing and promoting its services, providing knowledge to users, and dealing with their comments and inquiries on social media sites.

The study aimed to identify the extent to which the main library invests in social media to provide its services and promote it, as well as to measure the extent of users' interaction with the library through comments, posts, likes, suggestions, and others.

The results of the study showed that the library's investment in social media came in a series as follows: (Office instructions and directives - University service and the external community - Library services and information sources).

The most interactive social media site from visitors came in a series as follows: (YouTube - Instagram - Twitter - Facebook). The most popular comments and likes on social networking sites are as follows: (Twitter - Instagram - Facebook). The study recommended that the library should invest more in social media in order to market and promote its services.

In a study conducted by Al-Kharusia (2017) on a proposed model for using social networks in Omani academic libraries by adopting the soft systems methodology, the study aimed to reveal the reality of the use of communication networks in Omani academic libraries, and the researcher developed a model for the use of social networks in Omani academic libraries.

The study used an intentional sample from the staff of seven Omani academic libraries, and the results of the study revealed a problem in the use of social networks in Omani academic libraries that there are few libraries that use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, and that there are problems experienced by these libraries such as: lack of awareness and training, and lack of number of employees, and the absence of a clear policy to use these networks in Omani academic libraries.

The results of the study confirmed that the use of social networks may enhance information services and their development in various fields, including introducing the library and marketing its services and communicating with users.

Al-Kharusia's study is considered one of the rare and recent studies that used a specific methodology which is the soft systems which are divided into four basic

stages (definition of the problem of study, development of human activities systems, compared to what has been proposed of systems that help to develop and improve the problem of study with reality, application). This model is considered one of the practical models in relying on it to study the reality of using social networks in libraries.

Matbouli's study (2017) also talked about the applications of social networks in university libraries, and the study aimed to evaluate and compare the applications of Egyptian and Arab governmental university libraries to social networks. A group of sub-goals represented in identifying the capabilities provided by the social networks of university libraries which can be used to achieve the goals of those libraries and to know the reality of the use of university libraries for applications, and to set standards for evaluating university libraries applications on social networks in Egypt and compare them with the applications of Arab libraries Yeh University, and to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges (SWOT) for the exercise of the uses of university libraries for social network applications. Also, visualization and proposals that help the university libraries on the optimal use of social networks to achieve its objectives and service users.

The study reached results that confirm that there are multiple capabilities provided by social networks that libraries can be employed to achieve their goals, and that there is a disparity between Egyptian and Arab libraries in terms of the use of social networks that differ from other libraries. So some libraries have accounts on most social networks. The majority use Facebook, and some use Twitter, and so on .

The study also confirmed the availability of the criteria for evaluating university libraries applications on Egyptian and Arab social networks with 100% of all elements mentioned in the study such as: (type of institution and society, website, page design, accessibility, beneficiary comments, etc .). The study also analyzed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges at the Egyptian and Arab libraries' level.

The researchers in foreign intellectual production found a lot of studies that dealt with social networks with different aspects in more depth. The researchers chose studies that integrate with the subject of their research and were not exposed to Arab studies.

Al Rayes & Moorsel's (2011) study which aimed to investigate the integration of cloud computing and social networks and indicated that cloud computing and social networks are among the most important web trends that have emerged as part of the Web2.0 phenomenon, and both technologies have showed how to communicate with people and facilitate the exchange of information among them and improve the use of technologies via the Internet. The study also examined the technical convergence and intersection between social networks and cloud computing, and integrated social cloud services are a new area that has a great potential, but is limited in the history of research, and this study supports this field by providing valuable feedback to the final user to stimulate and direct future development. The study has many important visions related to the integration of social and cloud technologies. The awareness of the use of social networks and cloud computing has reached a high level and is

increasing. However, these technologies have resulted in some obstacles to achieving optimal utilization of resources and information management.

The growing use of social media provides drivers and opportunities to develop new services that integrate social networks and cloud computing models and allow their simultaneous and coordinated use. The survey indicates that a large percentage of current internet users support the provision of social cloud services and will be willing to adopt them. However, security-related concerns privacy in these new frameworks which currently affects user participation and these issues can be addressed by seeking better solutions.

The Mofawas' study (2011) aimed to identifying and exploring the impact of social networking sites on young people in western countries in light of the context of negative outcomes such as identity theft, cyber bullying, verbal abuse, and lost productivity in the context of positive influences such as cohesion, interdependence and freedom of expression.

The study used the qualitative approach to obtain a deep insight into perceptions and changes in the behavior of Arab youth aged 15-29. The initial data was collected through self-managed questionnaires from 12 participants, specifically Arab youth living in the United Kingdom.

The results of the study showed that teenagers and young adults prefer to use social media because it gives them confidence, teaches them how to interact with the social environment, and allow them to express themselves. However, from the point of view of a mature audience, social media does not benefit Arab youth, and it is primarily a source of waste of time and effort.

The study also concluded that the use of social media at an early age of 15-20 years exposes Arab youth to more negative impacts such as identity theft, loss of productivity, isolation and weakening social ties. Over time, as young adults mature, they start using social media more positively than ever. Prior to improving their personal and professional relationships and enhancing their social life through a virtual platform, in addition to that, there was no general consensus that the use of social media develops aggressive behavior among Arab youth.

The study of Al-Otaibi and Graval (2010) also aimed to identify the reality of the use of social networks for educational purposes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and to reveal the current situation in the use and benefit of this new trend, and the results of the study showed that Saudi Arabia was open to this idea and it has already started to be used in many universities. In order to reach this conclusion, a survey and several interviews were conducted at a public and private university in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: King Abdulaziz University and Dar Al-Hekma College, respectively. The results were analyzed by (SPSS) to understand the most important trends and correlations in the data.

The study concluded that there is strong evidence that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia can support the use of social network applications and has already begun to use social network principles to enhance the learning experience for both the student and teacher and the current infrastructure, such as the Internet. Most people in the Kingdom have accepted the use of Social networks, especially when it comes to

applying them to education, Most students in Saudi Arabia have already made use of the CHAT + and wikis room for forums. (78% of the population finds this at least useful) and other forms of electronic communication as a helping tool with their studies. There is a statistically significant correlation between the use of social networking sites and their use for educational purposes as well as the frequent use of the Internet for assistance. Another important relationship is that scientific specialization and age are linked to the attractiveness of social networks in the educational process. Finally, it is noted that each university has different views regarding the use of wikis or blogs, and it feels different when it comes to asking questions online. The private university is clearly more advanced in using social networks than the public university. What's really interesting is that the rate of internet usage as a result of using social networks is higher than the global average.

The results of the study also showed that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has invested much over the past ten years in technology and more specifically the Internet. This has created a valuable ground for developing online educational tools that can play a major role in the overall concept of an effective education system.

Methodology and Procedures

In this study, the researchers adopted the Descriptive Analytical Approach that relies on collecting data from the college, then analyzing that to access information related to describing the current state of using social networks using the questionnaire tool, in addition to using the theoretical approach in preparing the theoretical scientific background of the topic. A questionnaire was distributed amongst students so as to get the information required.

The researchers followed the procedural steps necessary to develop and adopt the current study tools to display the initial questionnaire to a number of arbitrators with specialized members of the faculty at Sultan Qaboos University and the College of Education in Rustaq.

Thematic limits: the role of social networks in developing information awareness of students.

Spatial boundaries: The College of Applied Sciences in Ibri, affiliated to the Ministry of Higher Education, Sultanate of Oman.

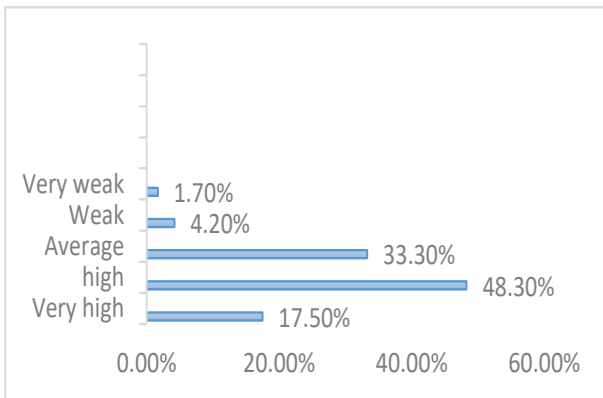
Time limits: The first semester of the academic year 2019/2020.

population: Students of the College of Applied Sciences, Ibri

Results and Discussion:

The questionnaire sample included all years of College students, as the sample approved by the researchers is a random sample representing all of the college community of students. They represent all majors. The questionnaire was sent via the e-mails of students and through the electronic communication networks of the Learning Resources Center (Twitter - Facebook - Instagram), (121) questionnaires were returned from them.

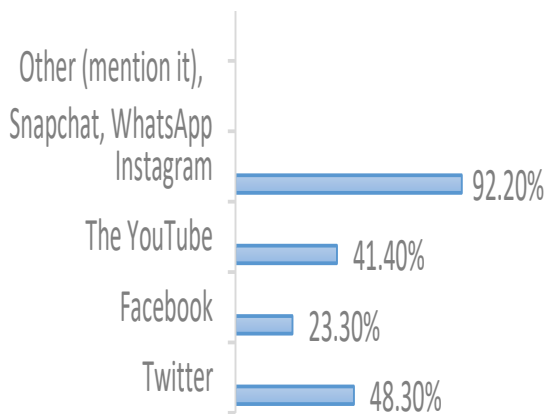
Table (1) Skills of dealing with social networks



percentage	responses	average student skills in dealing with social media (social networks)
17.5%	21	Very high
48.3%	58	high
33.3%	40	Average
4.2%	5	Weak
1.7%	2	Very weak

Through table (1), 48.3% of the sample's students describe their skills in dealing with social networks as high. A very small percentage of the study sample is weak in the skills of dealing with social networks with a rate of 1.7% due to the technical development and students' openness to technology And technologies, and this is evidenced by studies with the widespread use of technology in general and the use of social networks in particular.

Table (2) Owning accounts on social media:



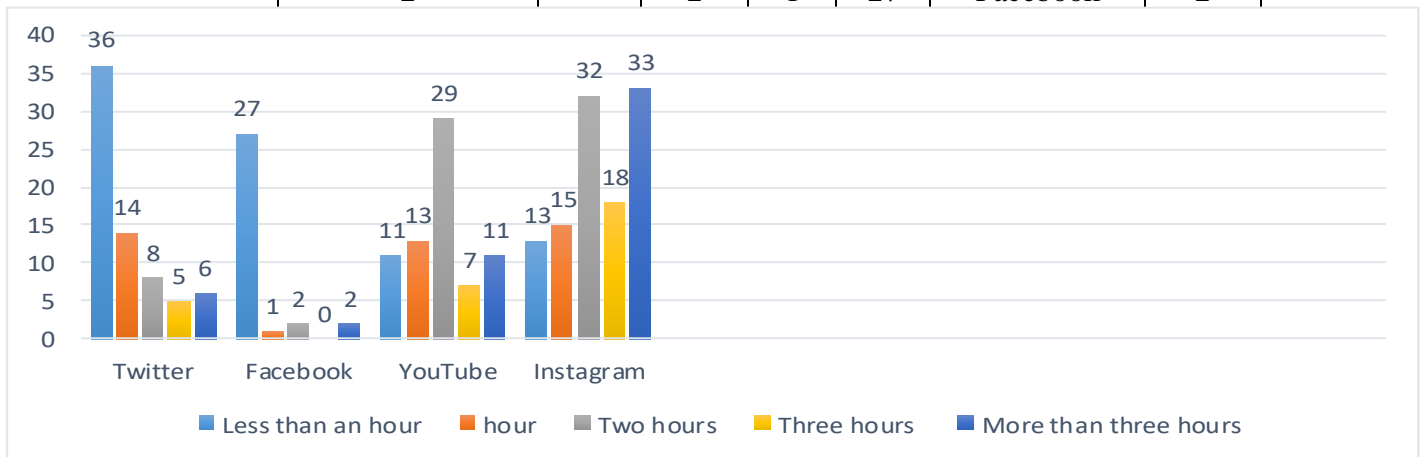
percentage	responses	Do you have accounts on social media (social networks?)	
48.3%	56	Twitter	1
23.3%	27	Facebook	2
41.4%	48	The YouTube	3
92.2%	107	Instagram	4
	44	Other (mention it), Snapchat, WhatsApp	5

Table (2) shows that students use Instagram more broadly, where responses were (107) using Instagram at a rate of (92%) which is high. With reference to the center's

Instagram account, we found that it is the most active and more interactive and participatory account. With reference to the supervising specialists, the researchers found that the Instagram account supervisor has previously attended many training workshops on digital marketing via social networks, and comes second in terms of using Twitter with the number of responses (56) by (48.3%) and the least used Facebook with the number of responses (27) by (23.3%). Also, a few number indicated using Snapchat as another method of social media.

Table (3) The study sample's use of social media during the day:

Table	More than three hours	Three hours	Two hours	hour	Less than an hour	Determine how often you use to continue social media (social networks) per day:	
	6	5	8	14	36	Twitter	1
2	-	2	1	27	Facebook	2	



(3) shows that students spend more time on Instagram by more than 3 hours and less time on Twitter by less than an hour, which confirms what was mentioned in Table (2) that Instagram is one of the most used social networks among College students. The use varies among other social networks, and this is proven by the study, that social networks have become part of our lives, and that students use them widely, and therefore they represent successful communication channels in the society.

Table (4) Motives for Using Social Media

students		Use of social media
percentage	responses	
78%	95	Connect with family and friends news
31%	38	To meet new friends

74%	90	Follow the current events
80%	98	Amusement and entertainment
59%	72	An appropriate way to gain knowledge
44%	54	An easy and fast way to share opinions
47%	57	good means for scientific communication
49%	60	can follow up issues related to my major
44%	54	communicate with work colleagues

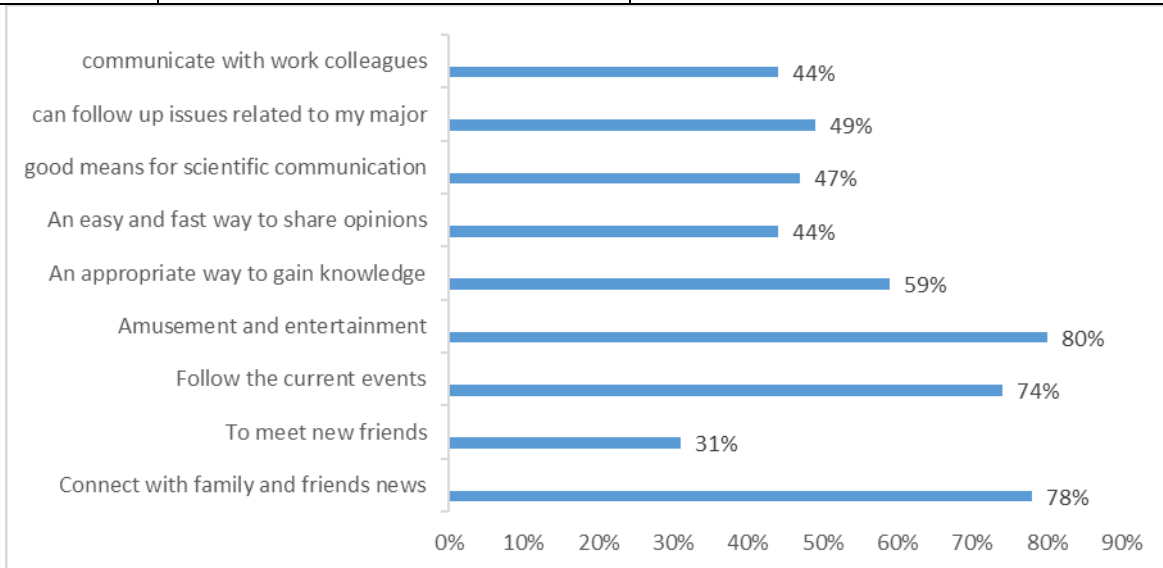


Table (4) shows that 80% of the sample use social networks for entertainment and that their reasons for opening social network accounts is as follows:

- An appropriate way to obtain knowledge (59%)
- Follow up on topics related to scientific specialization (49%).
- A good method for scientific communication (47%)
- An easy and fast way to share opinions (44%)

Table (5) activities and services that are used through the library's social media accounts

students		activities and services of student's interest via social media in library:
percentage	responses	
59%	69	follow up college's news
39.3%	46	follow up instructions and warnings for students
33.3%	39	making comments regarding services at library
40.2%	47	knowing about all updates of the library
43.6%	51	Learn about training programs

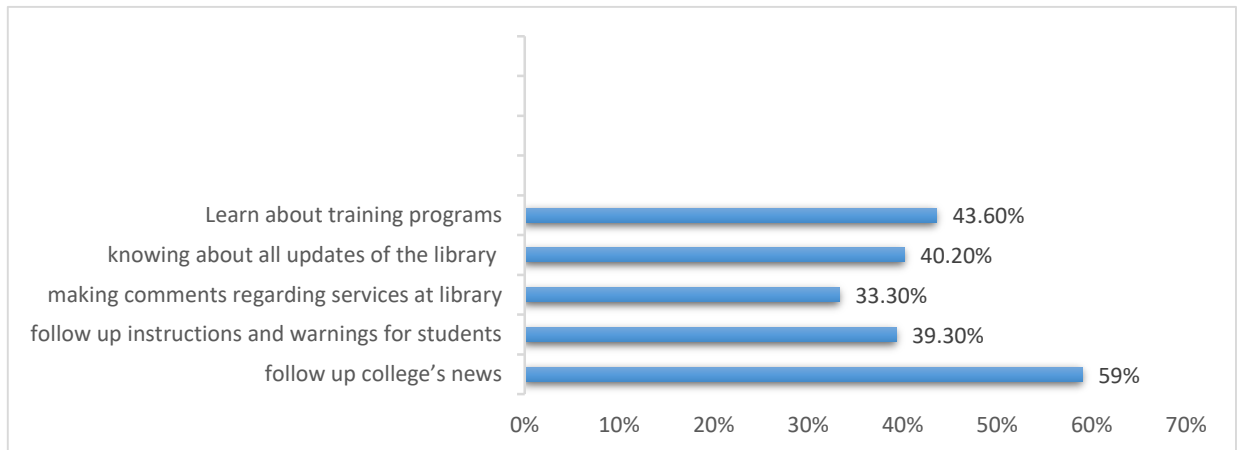
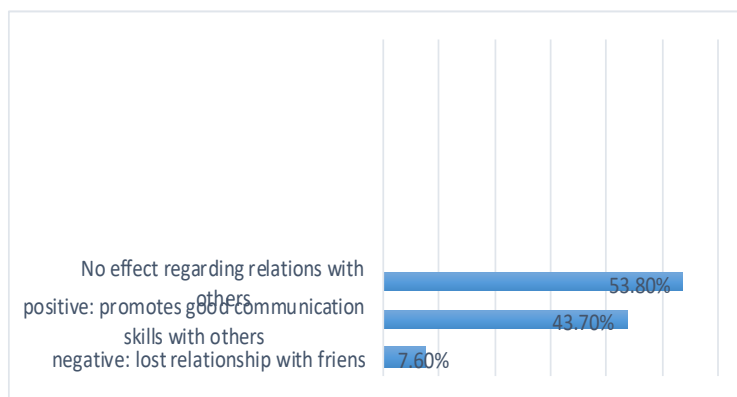


Table (5) shows the responses of students on the topic of activities and services that are used through the library's social media accounts. It is highly focused on following up the library's news and effectiveness by 59% and their interest in commenting and expressing opinion on the services provided by the library is 33.3%. Despite the library is keen and interested in the reactions of the users regarding the services provided to them on social media, but it is a somewhat satisfactory rate.

Table (6) the effect of using social networks in reality

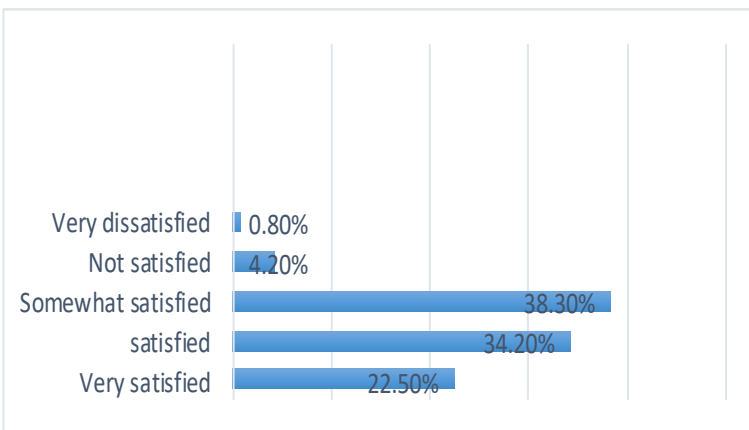


students		how do you evaluate using social media upon the relationship with others?
percentage	responses	
7.6%	9	negative: lost relationship with friends
43.7%	52	positive: promotes good communication skills with

		others
53.8%	64	No effect regarding relations with others

Table 6 indicators show that college students have a degree of awareness and knowledge of using social networks as (52) of responses (43.7%) indicate that students' use of social networks is positive in honing the skill of communicating with others, and that (64) of the responses by (53.8%) did not affect the way they communicate with others, while only the number of (9) responses (7.6%) said that the use of social media was negative and their relationships with their friends were lost and this percentage is considered small. This study will contribute in raising awareness for the right direction of exploiting social networks.

Table (7) the extent of student satisfaction with the library's social media

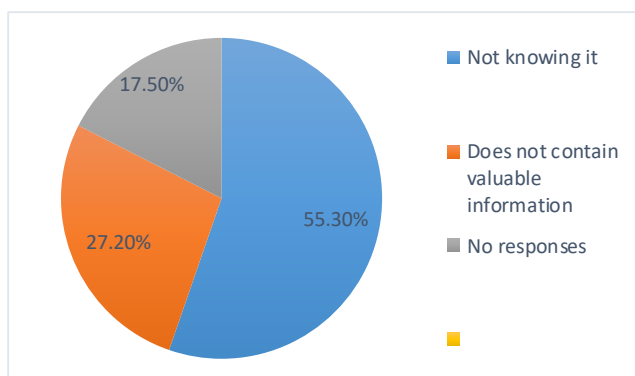


students		students satisfaction on personal social media communication
percent age	responses	
22.5%	27	Very satisfied
34.2%	41	satisfied
38.3%	46	Somewhat satisfied
4.2%	5	Not satisfied
0.8%	1	Very dissatisfied

Table (7) shows that 95% of the sample is convinced about the importance of following up on the library's social media accounts, and the satisfaction rate varied between (Very Satisfied 22.5% - Satisfied 34.2 - Somewhat Satisfied (38%) and this gives indicators of the importance of these accounts that are better developed and presented to students, and the percentage (4.2%) was only about those who were dissatisfied, and the reasons will be explained in Table (14).

Table (8) Reasons for not following up on the library's social media accounts

percentage	responses	Reasons why students don't use social media
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55.3%	57	Not knowing it
27.2%	28	Does not contain valuable information
17.5%	18	No responses
	4	Other reasons (mention it) not interested in it - a waste of time - not enough time

Table (8) shows that one of the reasons why students are not using the library's social networks is because they did not know about them, as the number of responses (57) was (55%) than what is required for specialists at the Learning Resources Center to market the center's accounts more in the future. The second reason was it does not contain valuable information with a number of responses of (28), which is (27%). Therefore, the digital content that is presented on these accounts must be developed to suit the needs of the students, which were clarified in the study in Table (8). The third reason was the failure to obtain responses : (18) which is (17%). This is because supervising these accounts is an additional burden for professionals to advertise their work, which is important to have a specialist follow up on these accounts and respond directly to student inquiries.

The students also mentioned other reasons that were (a waste of time - not interested - not having enough time).The researchers believe that if the results of this study are taken and the quality of the content presented on these accounts is improved and good supervision is made, it will attract students to use and interact through them.

Recommendations:

- Proposing a policy under the name (social media networks for learning resource centers at the Colleges of Applied Sciences at the Ministry of Higher Education) with the aim of codifying procedures for their use and organizing work in them.
- Improving the quality of digital content that is displayed through social networks, with the aim of motivating students to increase participation and interaction with them.
- The necessity of using social media networks as platforms for creativity and talent cultivation.
- Qualifying the specialists supervising these accounts to provide them with the skills of dealing with these techniques developed in these centers.
- Implementing courses and training workshops for students with the aim of increasing information awareness in dealing with social networks.

- To suggest teaching a course on developing informational awareness among students.
- Carrying out a marketing campaign to promote the Learning Resource Center accounts at the college level, which includes introductory and educational activities with the services provided by the Learning Resource Center.

Conclusion:

Most of the learning resource centers suffer from a decrease in the number of visitors and users of their services despite the diversity of the services they provide, and even the high cost of providing these services compared to the extent of benefit from them. The electronic data base service at the College of Applied Sciences provides an annual contract whose cost must be paid only by the center's specialists. Statistics show that the number of users of them is few despite marketing them. For example, this is one of the services that the researchers noticed that there is a problem that needs to be studied and identified.

The Learning Resource Center of the College of Applied Sciences in Ibri has benefited from the technological revolution, so the specialists working in this center have employed social media networks as one of the solutions to address existing problems that have resulted in optimal use of these centers.

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About the Researchers

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Section A: General Information
Please select the appropriate option:
1. Gender: <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female
2. Academic Year <input type="radio"/> First year <input type="radio"/> Second year <input type="radio"/> Third year <input type="radio"/> Fourth year <input type="radio"/> Fifth year
3. Major <input type="radio"/> Foundation year <input type="radio"/> the design <input type="radio"/> information technology <input type="radio"/> Business Management
Section B: Skills
4. How would you describe your skills in dealing with social networking sites (social networks)? <input type="radio"/> Very high <input type="radio"/> high <input type="radio"/> Average <input type="radio"/> Weak <input type="radio"/> Very weak
5. Do you have social media accounts (social networks)? (you can choose more than one option). <input type="radio"/> Twitter <input type="radio"/> Facebook <input type="radio"/> The YouTube <input type="radio"/> Instagram <input type="radio"/> Other (mention it):
6. Determine how often you use to continue social media (social networks) per day: Less than an hour hour Two hours Three hours More than three hours <input type="radio"/> Twitter <input type="radio"/> Facebook <input type="radio"/> Youtube <input type="radio"/> Instagram
7. What are the technical means you use to access social networking sites (social networks): (you can choose more than one option). <input type="radio"/> Smartphone <input type="radio"/> Computer device <input type="radio"/> Laptop <input type="radio"/> Other devices (mention them)
8. Determine why you use social networking sites (social networks): (you can choose more than one

<p>option).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Connect with family and friends' news <input type="radio"/> To meet new friends <input type="radio"/> Follow the current events <input type="radio"/> Amusement and entertainment <input type="radio"/> An appropriate way to gain knowledge <input type="radio"/> An easy and fast way to share opinions <input type="radio"/> good means for scientific communication <input type="radio"/> can follow up issues related to my major <input type="radio"/> communicate with work colleagues
<p>9- Did you add your personal information (name and other data) correctly on social media sites (social networks):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<p>10. Does social media help you to create and refine your talents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> very much <input type="radio"/> Much <input type="radio"/> Little bit <input type="radio"/> Little <input type="radio"/> A little bit
<p>11. 8- Identify the activities and services that interest you, by using social networks in the library: (you can choose more than one option).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> follow up college's news <input type="radio"/> follow up instructions and warnings for students <input type="radio"/> making comments regarding services at library <input type="radio"/> knowing about all updates of the library <input type="radio"/> Learn about training programs <input type="radio"/> Other (mention it):
<p>12.how do you evaluate using social media upon the relationship with others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> negative: lost relationship with friends <input type="radio"/> positive: promotes good communication skills with others <input type="radio"/> No effect regarding relations with others
<p>13. Determine the extent of your satisfaction with using social media sites with the library:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Very satisfied <input type="radio"/> satisfied <input type="radio"/> Somewhat satisfied <input type="radio"/> Not satisfied <input type="radio"/> Very dissatisfied
<p>14- What are the reasons for not using the library's social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Not knowing it <input type="radio"/> Does not contain valuable information <input type="radio"/> No responses <input type="radio"/> Other reasons (mention it)