

The Role of Social Media on Environmental Awareness of Undergraduate Students in University of Sulaimani in Iraq

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ABSTRACT

Social Media has been grown rapidly as a type of online communication tool wherever users make comments, shares, and put videos, photos and posts on social network at a remarkable rate. Environmental issues are progressively getting to be concern of the worldwide. Contribution of media generally and social media particularly in the raising environmental awareness in the target group is important because of produce greater environmental influence on growth of world population and standards for high lifestyle of our communities. The aim of our project was conducted in the University of Sulaimani at Media Department to investigate the role of social media on environmental awareness of undergraduate students as an example of students at higher education institutions. The result shows that mostly students uses social media (Facebook) more than four times daily that uses at night on mobile device continuously to get News and information as a number one as priority for them. The participants were used the social media to get news and information as number one, increase their knowledge as number two, raise awareness about science and education as number three, and finally increase environmental awareness as number four. In addition, the majority of students were intentioned sometimes to environmental awareness post; also the majority of them have tried to care social media in order to get environmental awareness, and in part, they have tried to post or publish the environmental awareness posts on social media as individual activity. Furthermore, Facebook has number one, YouTube number two, Instagram number three, and Twitter number four consecutively as level of priority of environmental interest to students.

Introduction

There are an excess of Internet facilities that can be sorted as social media [2]. Social Media has been grown rapidly as a type of online communication tool wherever users make comments, share, and put videos, photos and posts on social network at a remarkable rate [3]. Therefore, The definition of Social Media is “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” [4]. According to [5] social media can be separated into different types, which are making content and distributing in social media; sharing the content in social media; cooperative creating in social media; computer- generated worlds; supplements and social networks. The most common kinds of web-based social media are the social networks[6]. One of the most popular social networking sites in the world today is Facebook; according to [1] the active users of Facebook are more than 1.5 billion (Figure 1). Other social media involves You Tube over 1.0 billion users, Instagram 400 million users, and Twitter 320 million users [1, 7, 8] (Figure 1). Facebook delivers some services for users when compared with other social media for instance the user can share different types of their content on Facebook for example; video, photo, links and text while other social media for example Twitter offers limited services for inserting photo and sending short text [2].

Environmental issues are progressively getting to be concern of the worldwide Groups[2]. Also, awareness of environment has become one of the issues that all countries and major organizations working on it at International level[9]. Because of countries are facing environmental crisis, some of them are local problems while others are global, therefore working to solve these problems need a different ways. The environmental awareness and education are two ways to solve these problems. Contribution of media generally and social media particularly in the raising environmental awareness in the target group is important because of produce greater environmental influence on growth of world population and standards for high lifestyle of our communities [2, 9].

Social Media has some benefits such as broader spread, easy availability, speed, immediacy and usability that are appropriate for environmental awareness.[10]. Furthermore, John (2012) said that there are several ways can be used to raise environmental awareness in social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and YouTube. Environmental awareness and environmental knowledge have positive correlation; by increasing environmental knowledge the environmental awareness will increased[2]. The universities are places that have a serious role in the development of student knowledge and environmental awareness[2]. Therefore, the aim of our project was conducted in the University of Sulaimani at Media Department to investigate the role of social media on environmental awareness of undergraduate students as an example of students at higher education institutions.

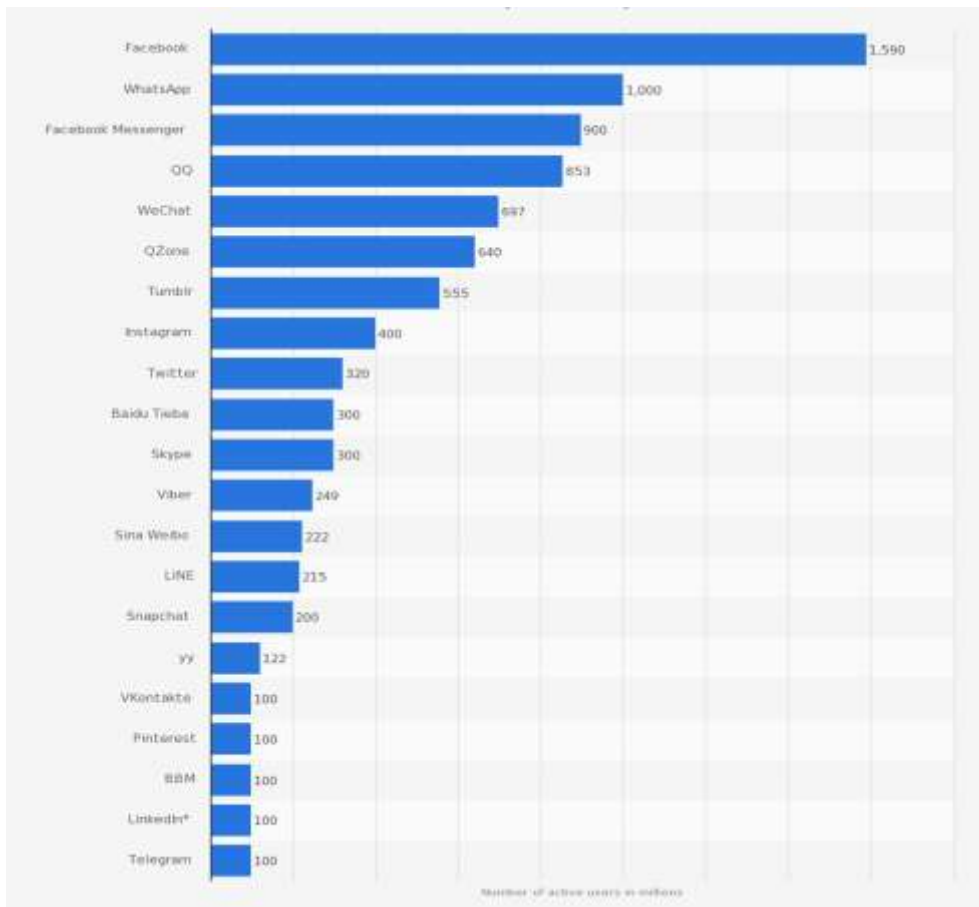


Figure 1. Leading social networks worldwide as of April 2016, ranked by number of active users (in millions) Source: [1]

Materials and Method

The methodology that have been used in the study was purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method[11]. The structure of the study was made as semi-structure close-ended questionnaires' interview on paper; the face validity was used to valid of the questionnaires[12]. It was conducted from 09/05/2016 to 16/05/2016. The sample groups of the study were chosen of the undergraduate students of Media Department at University of Sulaimani because of they have studied the social media as a module during their study in the university and they have been as a higher education institution representative. The sample was taken randomly in different stages of media department from stage one to stage four, the total numbers of students in all stages in media department were 296 students and the sample was taken 30% of the total number of students as sample group regardless of age and gender[11].For each stage the 25 questionnaires' forms were distributed randomly, in total 100 forms were distributed. But 96 forms were available to data analysis (n=96) because the first

two of them were not returned to the researchers and the other two forms were withdrawn because of the answers of the questions were wrong and we have ignored them. To analysis the data were conducted using SPSS version 16.0[13] and Microsoft Excel 2011 for Macintosh .The descriptive statistics were used to examine the data.

Result and Discussion

1- the demographic characteristic result

The result of study shows that the percentage male participants were(66) 69.0%, which is more than the percentage female participants, were (30) 30.31% as gender participants (Figure 2). In addition, the age distributions divided into four groups, the age group (22-25) years old are maximum respondents 48.0% but the age group (30-morethan) years old are the minimum respondents 3.3% (Figure 3).

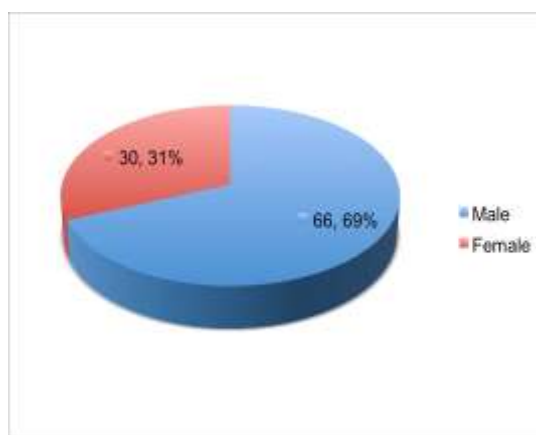


Figure 2. Gender distribution

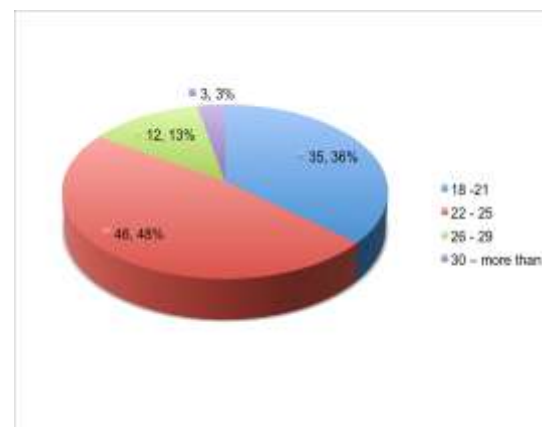


Figure 3. Age distribution

About the participants permanently residency, also there were differences between them, the percentage of urban resident of the respondents 59% more than the suburban which is 41% (Figure 4). Moreover, the students stage groups were divided into four groups; the completed forms that returned and filled by the respondents correctly were located in the stage two which is 26%, but the forms that one of them was ignored and the other was not returned located in the stage three which is the 24%, also 25% of the stage one and stage four have filled the forms, the stage one has not returned one form and the stage four also has ignored one form (Figure 5).

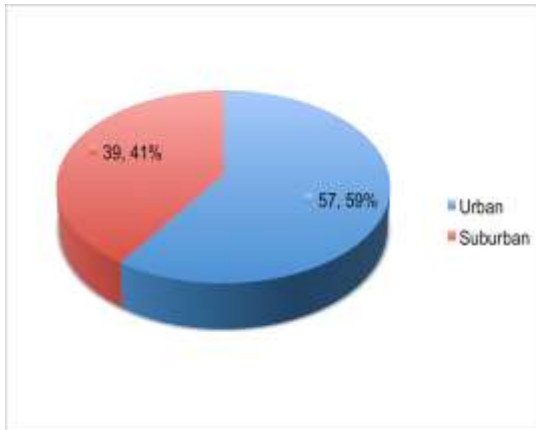


Figure 4. Resident distribution

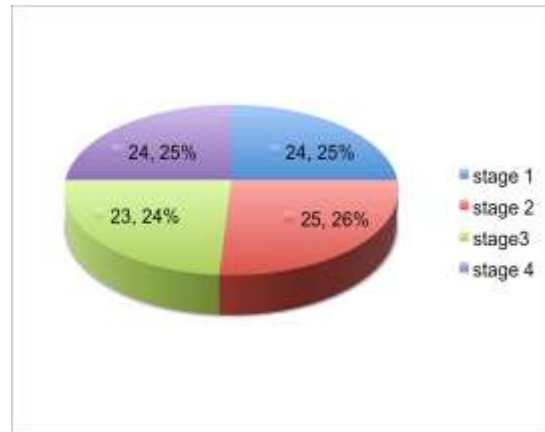


Figure 5. Stage distribution

The answer of the question that about the spending of amount of Iraqi Dinar (IQD) by participants were divided into four classes between (less than 100.000 and 200.000) IQD. The majority of the students 42% were spending the maximum amount of Iraqi Dinar, which is 200.000 IQD, but the minority students 15% were spending the middle amount of money that is the 100.000 IQD (Figure 6).

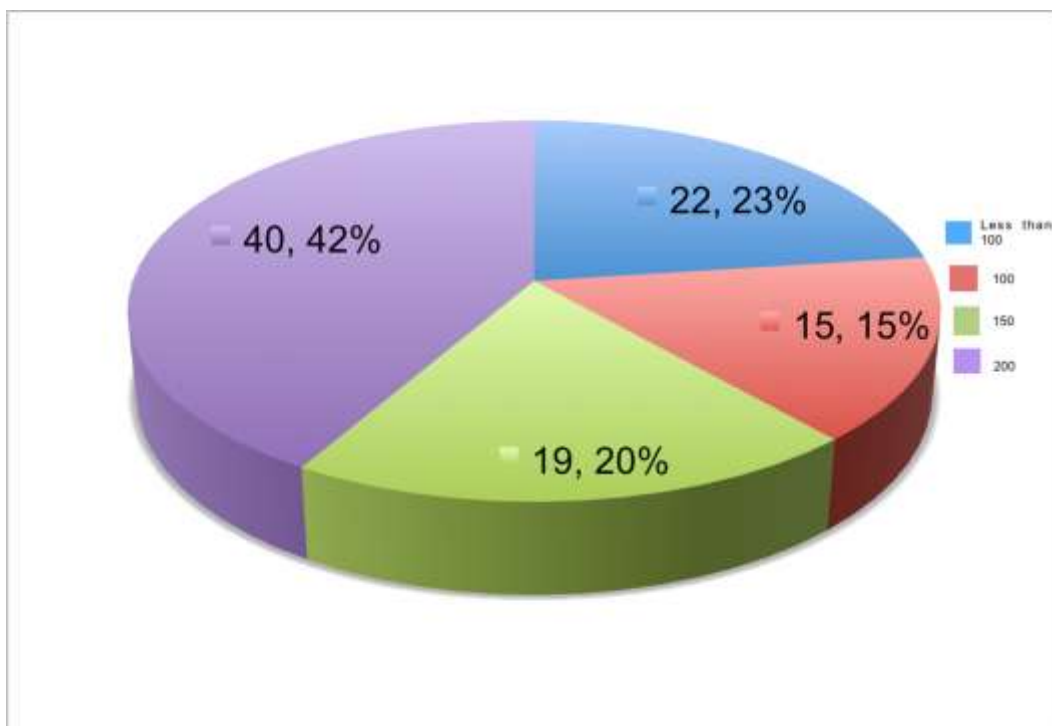


Figure 6. Monthly Spending Money (Iraqi Dinar (IQD))

2- Usage of social media result:

The result of question one (Q1) shows that the (61 students) 63.5% of participants uses social media continuously while the (2 students) 2.1% of them uses it rarely. For question Three (Q3), which is about using social media on different device, it shows that the (81 students) 84.4% of students uses social media on mobile; but (1 student) 1.0% uses it on etcetera device. About question four (Q4), which is about time spending on using social media daily; it shows that the (58 students) 60.4% of the respondents uses social media four times and more daily, in another hand (11 students) 11.5% of the respondents uses social media three times daily. The question five (Q5), which is about the time using of social media; the maximum students (73 students) 76% uses social media at night otherwise the minimum students (4 students) 4.2% uses it at morning (Figure 7 and Table 1).

Succinctly, the result shows that mostly students uses social media (Facebook) more than four times daily that uses at night on mobile device continuously to get News and information as a number one as priority for them. It is normal that the majority of students use Facebook on mobile device because it has the major user and very common social media at worldwide level. The Statista (2016)[1] stated that the number of active mobile phone Facebook users worldwide was 0.71 billion at 2013, and it is predicted to extend 1.34 billion in 2018. In addition, in my opinion night is a free time for students therefore they have been used at night.

Table 1. Usage of Social Media Questions

Q1: Do you use Social Media?
Q3: In which device you used social Media Mostly?
Q4: How many times you spend on Social Media daily?
Q5: In which time you used social media mostly?

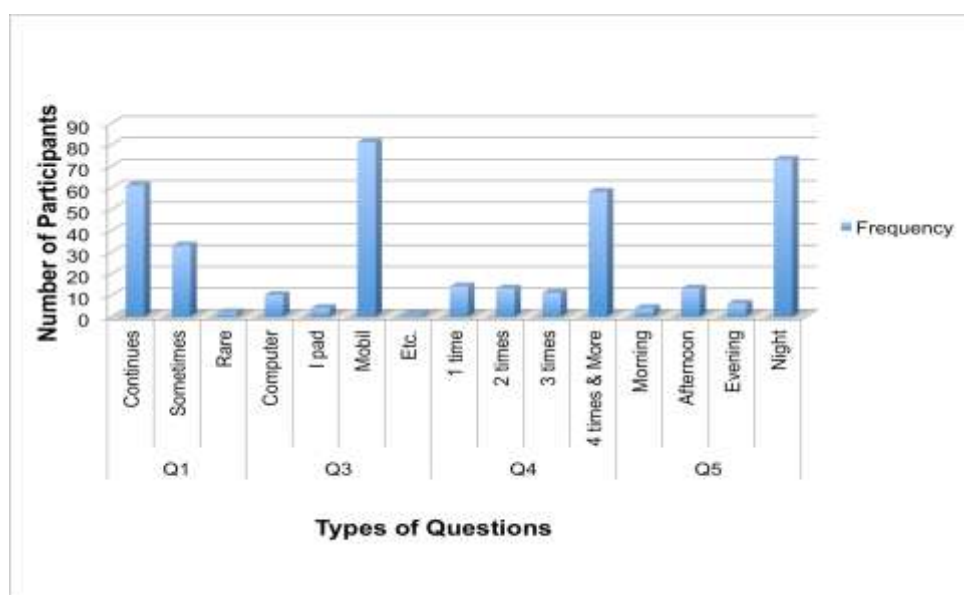


Figure 7. Usage of Social Media

The answer for question two (Q2), which is about frequency usage of Social Media. It shows that the maximum user of social media continuously is a Facebook (67students) 69.8%, but the minimum user is a Twitter user, which is (5 students) 5.21% (Figure 8).

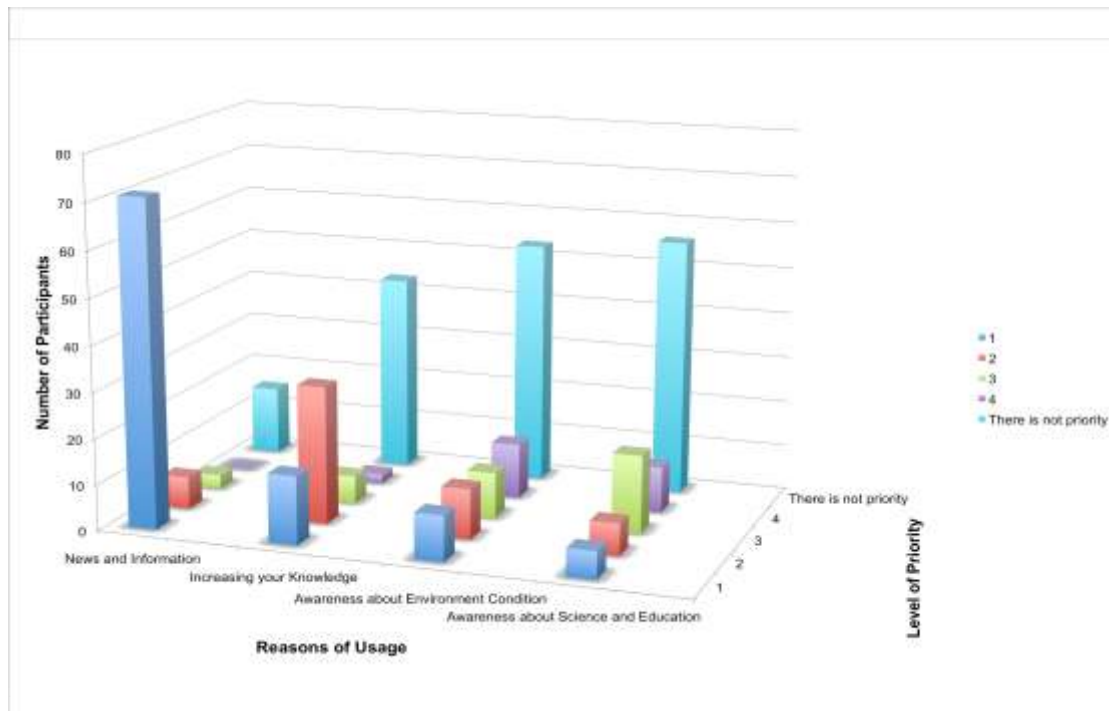


Figure 9. Reasons usage of Social Media

The answer of question six (Q6), which is about the purpose of using social media. It shows that the maximum students uses social media to get information and news which is (71 students) 74% as a number one as priority with them, (30 students) 31.2% of student uses social media to increasing knowledge as number two as priority, (17students) 17.7% of them uses to increase awareness about science and education as number three, and the minimum student percentage (12students) 12.5% uses social media to raise awareness about environmental condition as a number four as priority for them which is undesirable result. As, John (2012) stated that there are several ways can be used to raise environmental awareness in social media and environmental awareness and environmental knowledge have positive correlation; by increasing environmental knowledge the environmental awareness will increased [2].Therefore it is indicated that they did not have very high environmental awareness because of the students have used the social media to get environmental knowledge as number four as priority.

In conclusion, the participants were used the social media to get news and information as number one, increase their knowledge as number two, raise awareness about

science and education as number three, and finally increase environmental awareness as number four (Figure 9).

3- Social media and environmental awareness result:

The result of relationships between using social media and raising environmental awareness of the students; for question one (Q1), which is about students care attention about the environmental posts in the social media shows that the majority students (53 students) 55.2% are sometimes care about the environmental posts, but the minority students which is (17 students) 17.7% are continuously care attention about it. The question four (Q4) which is about the student's attention to social media in order to get environmental awareness shows that the highest number of respondents (61 students) 63.5% were attention continuously and the lowest number of respondents (12 students) 12.5% were sometimes attention to environmental awareness. In addition, the question five (Q5) which is about the posting environmental post in the social media, it shows that (40 students) 41.7% of the participants post it in part but the (9 students) 9.4% of them post it oftentimes.

In brief, the majority of students were intentioned sometimes to environmental awareness post; also the majority of them have tried to care social media in order to get environmental awareness, and in part, they have tried to post or publish the environmental awareness posts on social media as individual activity (Figure 10 and Table 2).

Table 2. Environmental Awareness and Social Media

<p>Q1: Did you care attention Environmental Awareness's posts in the Social Media?</p> <p>Q4: Did you try to care Social Media in order to get Environmental Awareness?</p> <p>Q5: Did you try to post or publish the Environmental Awareness in the Social Media as individual in any time?</p>

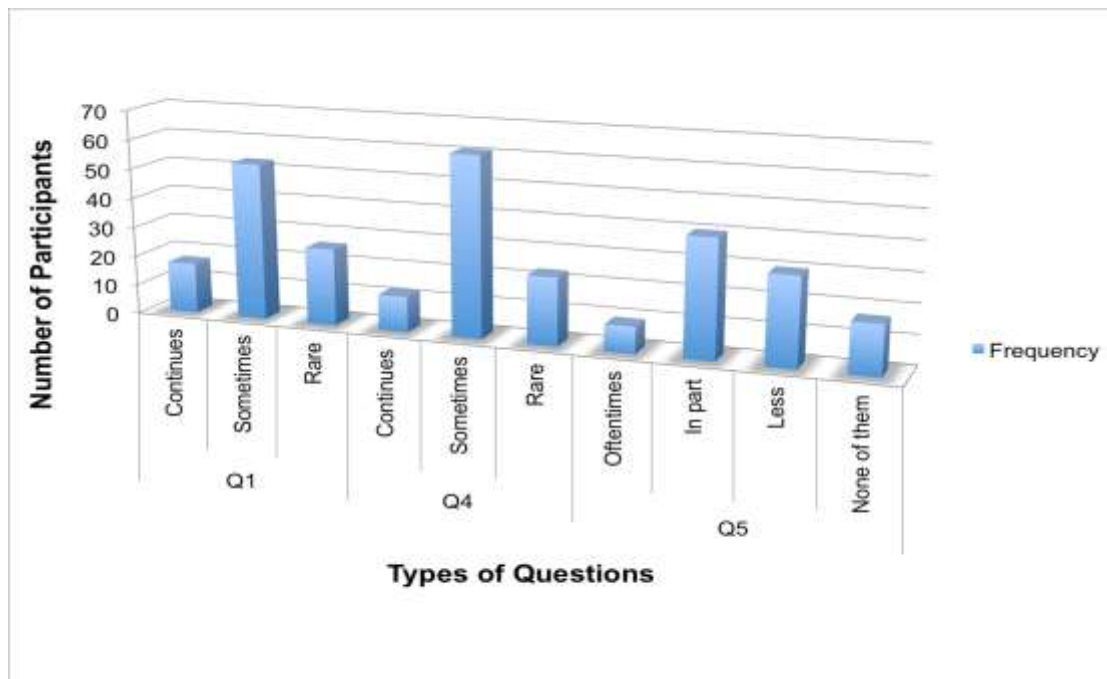


Figure 10. Environmental Awareness and Social Media

The question two (Q2) which is about the types of social media and its environmental awareness interest to students, the result shows that the Facebook social media has the maximum attention to the students as number one as priority which is (77 students) 80.2%, while the minimum attention to the students is (1 student) 1.04% which is the Twitter as a number one as a priority to the respondents, in addition the YouTube and Instagram have number two and three as priority to the students' attentions successively. However, the Twitter has the number four as priority to the students' attention, which is mean that there is not attention to the students (i.e. the majority of students have attention to Twitter as number four as priority).

Briefly, Facebook has number one, YouTube number two, Instagram number three, and Twitter number four consecutively as level of priority of environmental interest to students (Figure 11). Because of the social media users were different in number and its approved that there is differences between them as a priority to the students and also in the worldwide level [1, 7, 8] (Figure 1).

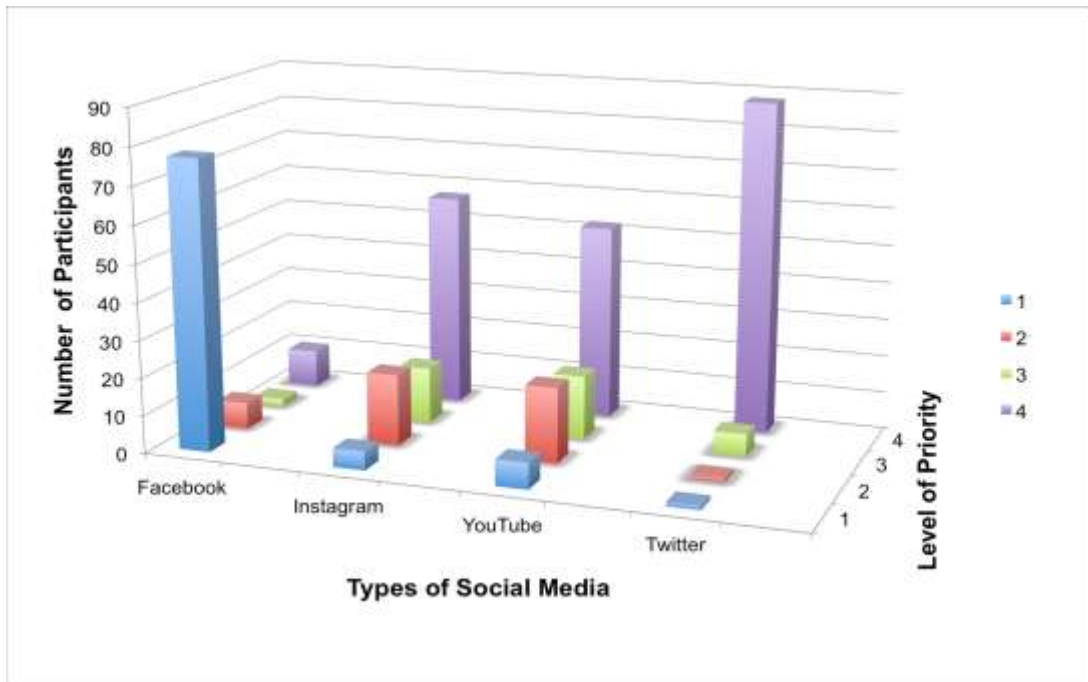


Figure 11. Environmental Awareness Interest on Social Media

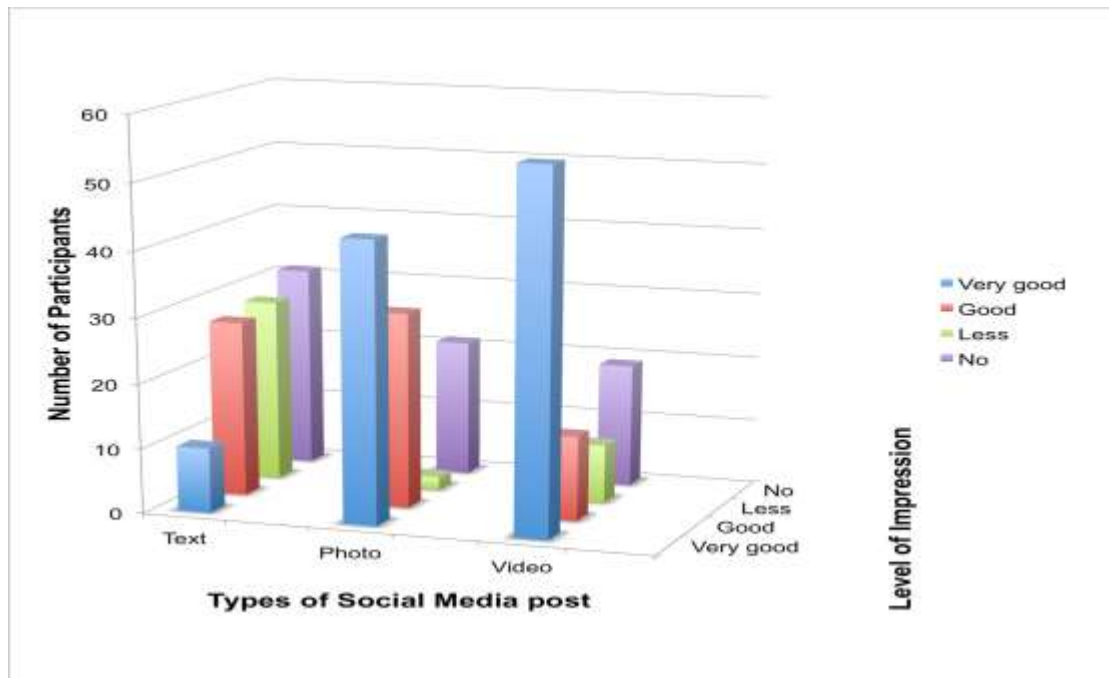


Figure 12. Types of Social Media Environmental Awareness post and its impression on participants

The question three (Q3) which is about the environmental posts on social media and it's impression on the students, the result shows that the majority students were very good impressed by the video post which is about (55 students) 57.3% and the minority students were very good impressed by the text post which is about (10 students) 10.4% (Figure 12).

The question six (Q6) which is about students' attention care of publishing the environmental awareness post in the social media, the large number of students (43 students) 44.8% used like button continuously in the social media to the environmental post as they are like it or care about it, but the minimum students (7 students) 7.3% used share button continuously to share the environmental post.

Concisely, the majority respondents used like button continuously, sometimes used comments and post but rarely they have used share button to share the environmental post (Figure 13).

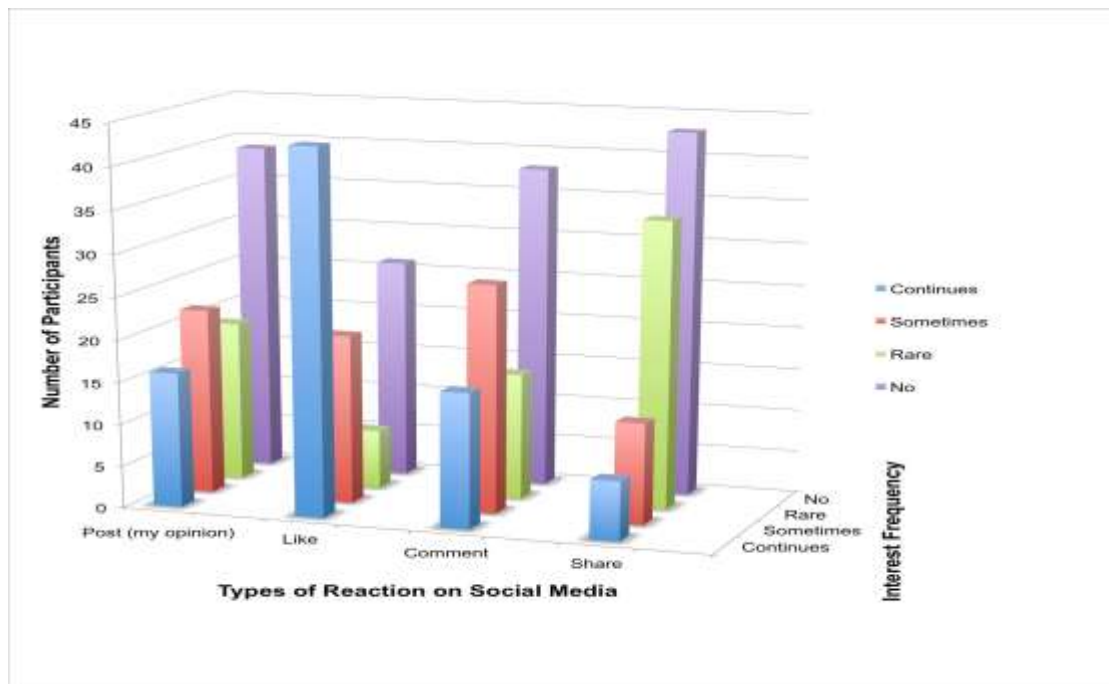


Figure 13. Reaction of Participants on Environmental Posts on Social Media

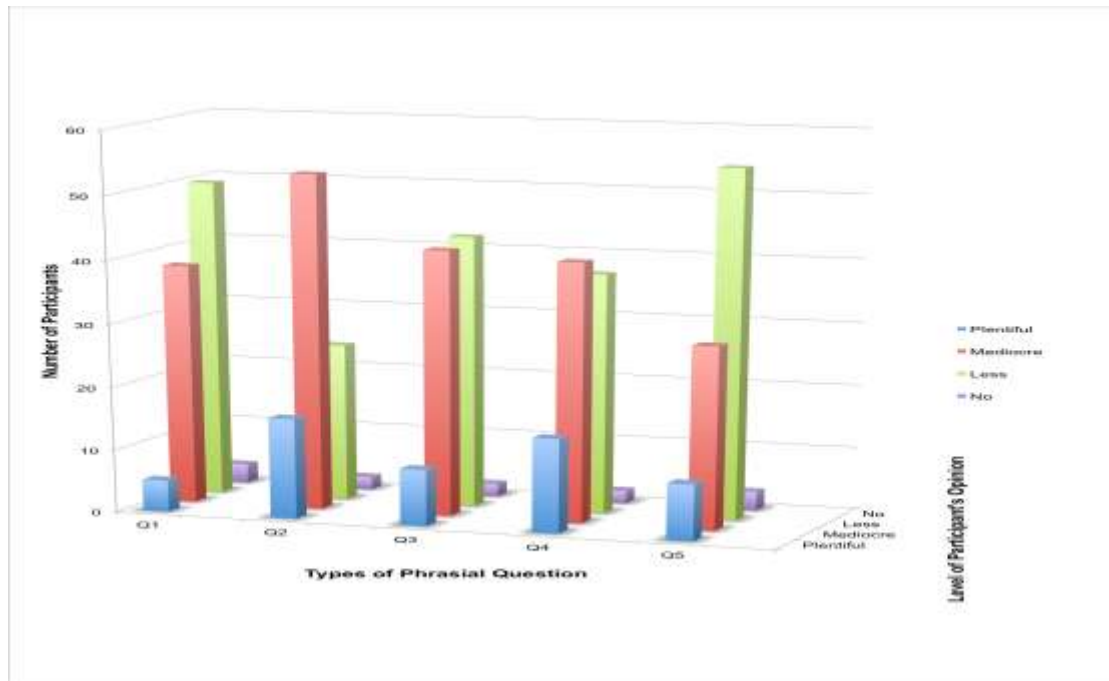


Figure 14. Participant's opinion about some phrase that related to Social media and Environmental Awareness

In the question seven there are another five phrasal questions about the student's opinion, social media and environmental awareness; the first question (Q1) is about exchange environmental awareness between the students, the result shows that (50 students) 52.1% of the students were less exchange the information and (3 students) 3.1% of the students did not exchange the information. The second question (Q2) is about the student's opinion about the intention of social media to increase the environmental awareness; it shows that (53 students) 55.2% of the students thought that the social media has mediocre effect to raise environmental awareness while (2 students) 2.1% of them thought that it has not effect to increase the environmental awareness. In addition, the third question (Q3) is about the students' emphasis on environmental issues as social media user, and the result shows that the maximum numbers of the students (43 students) 44.8% were less focus on environmental issues on social media while (2 students) 2.1% of the students were no focus on the environmental issues. The fourth question (Q4) is about motivation of social media and its environmental issues on the students; the result shows that (41 students) 42.7% of the students have mediocre effect to pursuit the environmental issues; otherwise (2 students) 2.1% also have not effect. The fifth question (Q5) which is about the manifestation of the different environmental issues on social media by the students, it shows that (55 students) 57.3% of the students have less manifest environmental

issues on social media but (3 students) 3.1% of them have no manifest the environmental issues on social media (Table 3 and Figure 14).

Table 3. Q7: What is your opinion about the following phrases?

Q1: Did you have exchanged the Environmental Awareness with your friends?
Q2: Did you think that the Social Media is the reason to increase the Environmental Awareness?
Q3: Did you focus on the Environmental issues as a Social Media user?
Q4: Did the Social Media have motivated on you to pursuit the Environmental issues?
Q5: Did you manifest the different Environmental issues on Social Media?

Conclusions

In conclusion, the result of the study shows that the male participants with 22-25 years old age range that living in the urban place with spending 200.000 IQD per month were dominated in the research. It shows that mostly students uses social media (Facebook) more than four times daily that uses at night on mobile device continuously to get News and information as a number one as priority for them. The participants were used the social media to get news and information as number one, increase their knowledge as number two, raise awareness about science and education as number three, and finally increase environmental awareness as number four. In addition, the majority of students were intentioned sometimes to environmental awareness post; also the majority of them have tried to care social media in order to get environmental awareness, and in part, they have tried to post or publish the environmental awareness posts on social media as individual activity. Furthermore, Facebook has number one, YouTube number two, Instagram number three, and Twitter number four consecutively as level of priority of environmental interest to students. Also, the video post very good impressed the majority students and the text post very good impressed the minority students. The majority respondents used like button continuously, sometimes used comments and post but rarely they have used share button to share the environmental post. The majority students were less exchange the information and the minority did not exchange the information. Also they have thought that the social media has mediocre effect to raise environmental awareness while the minority of them thought that it has not effect to increase the environmental awareness. The maximum numbers of them were less focus on environmental issues on social media while the minimum was no focus on the environmental issues. The highest number students have mediocre effect to pursuit the environmental issues; otherwise the smallest of them also have not effect. In addition, the majorities of them have less manifest environmental issues on social media but the minorities of them have no manifest the environmental issues on social media.

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