



## **Relation between Social Network and Da'wah to Islam A case study on Jordanian students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Social network is one of the most crucial used communication media between individuals, and organizations across the world nowadays. In the Islamic world the use of social network continues to grow every year. Most Muslims use them just to take information about Islam instead of using them to publicize (Da'wah) and serve Islam. This study, focuses on the social network factors which affect serving, and publicizing Islamic information. The main purposes included are: how to make the Islamic information accessible over the world for Muslims, and non-Muslims, how to clarify the Islamic issues, how to clarify misunderstanding, and wrong thoughts of non-Muslims about Islam and to find out the effect of the social network system and information quality, and user satisfaction on publicizing Islamic information. This was done using a survey spread over 500 students. The results indicate that 97% of students use Facebook 97%, and those using Islamic information are 78%. This means that social network is highly used as a way for Da'wah. On the other hand, religion, and Da'wah workers must be effective members on social networking to get better results in publicizing, and serving Islam. In the part of the social network system and information quality, 70% of the students answered the survey think that information from social network needs correction which influenced the overall user satisfaction on social network quality by 23%.

**Keywords:** Social Network, Muslim Students, Facebook, Da'wah

### **1. Introduction**

In recent years, the interaction between people changed totally with the appearance and development of computers and networks. Social relations started to be online with the beginning of the web. People communicate, and build relationships using social networks. (Bandura, 2007). Social Networks are sets of social entities where people, organizations, etc.

are connected by a set of social relationships friendship, co-working, information exchange, etc.. They are like virtual clubs.

Whenever you are a member, you can create a profile, interact and connect with family members, friends, and strangers all over the world via chat, email, photos, events and status updates.

In 1997, SixDegrees.com was the first recognizable social network site which allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and in 1998 began to surf the Friends lists. (Boyed, D, et al., 2008) Social networks like: Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Plaxo, Orkut, Hi5, and others started later.

According to Alexa site, Facebook is the most popular social network site. It is site No. 1 and Google is No.2

The importance of research into social network sites has been growing due to their ability to attract a huge number of people; socialbaker.com shows that Facebook has attracted more than 21.31 million users across the Arab countries at the beginning of 2011. It is working as information Push-Pull at the same time.

On one hand, social networks can be utilized to push information to a target group, e.g. “when a Company put advertisements, blogging, tweeting at Twitter ... etc..”. On the other hand, it is used to pull information about people from social networks.

Beside what was mentioned before, these social media are centered on sharing the cultural view, religious belief, and regional among others (Ashitari, et al., 2009)

Today, the adoption and use of social media has widespread in every sense of human life. Muslims are not different from other societies in which the trend of social media adoption and use has increased all the times over the past few years. It has brought changes that have considerable implications for the ways of Muslim society interact at the personal and group levels. Social media offers the ability for individuals to communicate through the perceived ease of use, easy to learn, speed and ubiquity. (Davis, 1989)

One of the most popular social networking platforms is Facebook. (Bosch, 2009) (Calvi, et al., 2010) (Hew, 2011) (Mazman, et al., 2010) (Roblyer, et al., 2010)

In 2010, Facebook has been chosen as the leader in the world of social networking. It has over 500 million active users in six years. (Helms, 2010) Indeed, the popularity of social networks was demonstrated by the number of people who use them. (Cheung, et al., 2010) In particular, by the beginning of 2011, Facebook has attracted more than 21.31 million users across the Arab countries. By October, 2011, Facebook has spread to more than 33.07 million Arab users. In 2012, numbers of Facebook users were one billion users. (Smith, et al., 2012)

In the global attitude project, research done in 14 countries it was demonstrated that cultural sensibilities are reflected on social networks. Percentages of users of social networking were in Tunisia (63%), Egypt (63%) and Jordan (62%). (Global attitude project, 2012)

Socialbaker.com made another research to show the number of monthly active users on Facebook in different countries. In Jordan; statistic for 2013 showed that there are 2,571,100 monthly users active on Facebook.

More recently, there has been an increasing interest in studying the use and the effects of Social networks. Current research focuses on studying why, how much, and how people (especially students) use social network (Many of them concentrate on Facebook). These

research were conducted to understand social networks effects on education and social interaction. (Akyıldız, et al., 2011)(Jefferson, 2009)

In the Islamic world, some researchers concentrated on Islamic impacts of social networks, and others started to study the factors that affect publicizing Islam. The use of social networks is increasing every year. Most Muslims use them just to take information about Islam, or for fun instead of use them to publicize (Da'wah) and serve Islam. (Nurdin, et al., 2012)

This study is expected to be of benefit to Muslims and Da'wah men to evaluate the use of social network in serving Islam, for the future enhancement. It should give a view of how people; especially students in different levels; deal and benefit from social networks. It is aimed to answer these questions; to what extent Muslim students are aware of the actions that they use social network in serving Islam? And to what degree could the social network benefit in spreading and understanding Islam using social networks? What are the factors that affect using social networking and be satisfied?

The rest of this research paper is organized as follows: what is a social network, then Islam and technology, third section comes with exploring research methods, followed by results found. The last sections provides conclusions.

## **2. What is Social Network?**

Social network sites are communication nodes, which ties between individuals, groups, organizations, and related systems with different types of interdependencies. It has included shared values, visions, ideas and group participation events, among numerous other aspects of human relationships. (Serrat, 2009) These sites allow individuals to present to others using different formats, including text and video (Hernandez, 2010), allowing individuals to get a visible list of connections with others. (Coyle, et al., 2008)

Social networking are described as a technological media, which allows individuals to communicate, build online communities, build in discussions, encourage contributions, feedback and replies, and share information about things that everyone likes which enable users to find like-minded. (Maoz, et al., 2009) (Wu, et al., 2009) (Ruben, 2010)

Once users discover and find like-minded who have the same mutual interest, and are satisfied by using social networks, members can form ad hoc communities. These communities may become the new power to publish and serve Islam.

Social networks facilitate unmanaged and untapped online conversations. This helps religion workers to get closer views, and concentrate on Islamic topics which people need. (Maoz, et al., 2009)

People use social network to keep up with friends, to upload an unlimited number of photos, and to learn more about people whom they meet online. (Elder-Jubelin, 2009) On the other hand it has allowed users to create and to customize their own profile with photos and with miscellaneous information, namely, basic information, personal background, contact information, and education history.

### **3. Islam and Technology**

In the past, Islamic topics were found in audio tapes, books, and booklets which are available in libraries, Islamic schools, and mosques. Non-Muslims, and also Muslims cannot benefit from these resources unless they are near to them.

Nowadays, Muslims realized and used an information technology in serving and publishing Islam around the world. (Adam, et al., 2009)(Ashraf, 2010)

Different efforts in different Islamic topics, (Quran, Hadith, Sunnah, Tafseer, Seerah, Fiqh, Translation, etc.) are available in different forms (Audio, Video, Text,..etc.) on the internet. These days, the most used media has become the social networks. Millions of Muslims and non-Muslims in different countries around the world use the social networking sites to conduct an online discussion on different topics. Islam all the time is present in all these social networks. This is reflected on the social attitudes of people in general and Muslims in special. (Ashraf, 2010)

### **4. Methodology**

This research focuses on the effects, and factors of social network on serving, and publicizing Islam. Participants were chosen from different student level schools, undergraduate, and graduate students.

In this study, the main purposes are to see how much Islamic literature are accessible over the world for Muslims, and Non-Muslims which play a very important role in spreading Islam and also to clarify the misunderstanding and wrong thoughts of non-Muslims about Islam. This was measured using a survey spread over 500 students. The survey contains three parts. The first part is about student's demographic information (sex, and age). The second part is about the use of social network (number of social networks used, the social network name used, duration of using, duration of membership). On the other hand, the third part concentrate about the purpose of usage of the social network. 11 modified and revised statements that consisted of social networking usage purposes were adapted from Ahmer Iqbal (Iqbal, et al., 2010), Sacide Güzin (Mazman, et al., 2010), and Asimina (Vasalou,2010)

The final part of the survey is about the Islamic effects on member (discussed topics, the existence of religion workers as a members, the discussed Islamic topics; percentage of Islamic topics discussed, and effects on behavior).

## 5. Results & Discussion

### 5.1 Demographic Characteristics of Students

A total of 500 surveys were received after all the efforts of data collection. Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of the study respondents who have a social network account.

Table 1: Characteristics of the sample

Characteristic	Percent
Gender	
Male	50%
Female	50%
Age	
15-20	27%
21-26	56%
27-32	8.3%
33-38	5.6%
39 and over	2.8%
Educational Type	
School student	40%
Undergraduate	30%
Graduate	30%

Demographically, gender of the respondents was equally distributed between male and female with 50% male (250 students) and 50% female (250 students). Groups of student's age were, 27% in 15-20, 56% is in 21-26 age, 8.3% is in 27-32 age groups, 5.6% is in 33-38, and 8.2% are 39 and over group.

### 5.2 Social network Usage

In this section, students use more than one social network such as Facebook, Twitter, Hi5, LinkedIn, and others. The students using Facebook were 97%, compared to 20% Twitter, 11% use Hi5, and 5% for LinkedIn. Table 2 shows the statements asked and the percentages for social network usage.

In response to a question about membership duration, 66% of students had been on social network for 2 years or more. The students' behavior was measured by asking students the frequency of visits, and staying length on social networks. About frequency, 36% of students visit social network once a day and the same percent of students visit them several times a day. On the other hand, most students (64%) spent from one to two hours a day and 14% spent less than 15 minutes on social networks. Moreover, (39%) of the students have friends less than 100 friends and similar percentage for those between 101-300 friends. Those who prefer using social network with their friends and family were (63.8%) (see Table 2).

Table 2: Social Network Usage

Statement	Percent	Statement	Percent
The social network I use		Frequency of visits on social network	
Facebook	97%	Few times in a year	2.8%
LinkedIn	5%	Once in a month	8.3%
Twitter	20%	Several times in a month	16.7%
Plaxo		Once in a day	36%
Orkut		Several times in a day	36%
MySpace			
Hi5	11%		
Others			
Membership Duration		Length of stay in Social Network	
Less than 6 months	11%	Less than 15 min	13.8%
Between 6 months and 1 year	5.6%	Approximately 15 min	5.6%
More than 1 year, less than 2 years	16.76%	Between 1 or 2 hours	64%
2 years or more	66.6%	Between 2 or 3 hours	5.4%
		More than 3 hours	5.6%
Number of friends		On social network, I prefer to talk with	
100 friends or less	39%	My friend only	22%
Between 101-300 friends	39%	My family only	8.3%
Between 301-500 friends	8.3%	Friend and family	63.8%
501 friends, or more.	13.8%	Foreigner people	0%
		Others	5.6%

### 5.3 Purposes of Using Social Network

Different purposes were stated for using social network by students. These purposes are related to social and daily activities like: Get more information, look for friendships, learn how to do things, contribute to a pool of information, generate ideas, negotiate topics, solve problem, make a decision, lectures, asking someone to do something for me, and enjoy leisure or time when I'm alone. Multiple choice of purposes was allowed. The largest percentage of purposes was 78% for getting more information, 47% for enjoying leisure or time. The percentages for all purposes are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Purpose of Social Network usage

Purpose	Percent
Social Network attract me, to:( more than one option)	78%
Get more information.	19%
Look for friendships.	39%
Learn how to do things	38.87%
Contribute to a pool of information	33%
Generate ideas	41.6%
Negotiate topics	22%
Solve problem	16.7%
Make a decision	27%
Lectures	30.5%
Asking someone to do something for me	47%
Enjoy leisure or time when I am alone.	

### 5.4 Social network success factors

Different researches were done in social network success factors. In this study, success factors applied are system quality, information quality, and user satisfaction. Different

perspectives for each factor are taken in consideration. For system and information quality related perspectives are: social network is easy to learn, easy to use, includes necessary features and functions, information available from social network importance, information from social network often needs corrections, social network improvement of the communication between people,

The question about social network allows me to spend more time on my favorite topics is also stated. On the other hand, user satisfaction was studied using different perspectives like: Overall, I prefer using the social network than the old communication ways (telephone, mobile, e-mails, etc.), Overall, The social network quality is satisfactory, overall, social network related Islamic knowledge satisfactory, the social network is enjoyable to use, and social network facilitates communication with religious persons.

In table 4, the percentages of these questions and its responses were shown. On one hand, 80% of students stated that the social network is easy to use and easy to learn by 60%. On the other hand, 70% of them think that information from social network needs correction, which influence the overall user satisfaction on social network quality by 23%.

Table 4: Social network Success Factors

Purpose	Percent
Social Network system and information quality	
Social network is easy to learn	66%
Social network is easy to use	80%
Social Network includes necessary features and functions	35%
Information available from the social network is important	42%
Information from social network often needs corrections	70%
Social network improves the communication between people	77%
Social network allows me to spend more time on my favorite topics	60%
User Satisfaction	
Overall, I prefer using the social network than the old communication ways (telephone, mobile, e-mails, etc.).	46%
Overall, The social network quality is satisfactory	23%
Overall, social network related Islamic knowledge satisfactory.	35%
Social network is enjoyable to use	70%
Social network facilitates communication with religious persons.	69%

## 5.5 Social network and Islam

This part of the study concentrates on different indicators: type of discussed topics, type of Islamic topics, percentage of Islamic topics discussed, effects of social network on increasing Islamic information, Islamic sites introduced, creation of Islamic groups, introducing Islam for non-Muslims, the existence of religion workers and the its effect on the member.

In table 5, the percentages of these questions and the responses were shown. Students discuss different type of questions while using social network like: social, religious, political, economic, scientific, and others. In this survey, 50% of social topics discussed, on the other hand, 40% of the topics were Islamic topics. Many Islamic topics discussed like: Quran, Sunnah, Profit Mohammad life, Fatawa (asking about Islamic opinion in some cases), Tafseer (asking about the meaning of ayah or word in the Quran), asking about Islamic sites, and asking about proof from Quran or Sunnah. The percentage of students asking about Prophet Mohammad was 27%. The topics discuss there were about Quran, Sunnah (Hadith), Prophet

Mohammad, Tafseer, Feqih (explain all life issues and Islamic opinion on various aspects of life), and mix between all types. The most attractive sites to members of social networks were Quran and Sunnah 30.5% for each, then Prophet Mohammad, and Tafseer 27% for each. The study found that the Islamic information increased by 78%, and the respondents think that the existence of the religious workers within groups is very important for members by 91.6% but they do not think to send an invitation to one of them (80.5%).

Table 5: Social Network &amp; Islam

Statement	Percent	Statement	Percent
Type of topics discussed (more than one choice)		Type of Islamic topics discuss	
Social	50%	What is Islam?	19%
Religious	40%	Quran	19%
Political	30%	Sunnah	25%
Economic	13.8%	Profit mohamad	27%
Scientific	39%	Fatawa (asking about Islamic opinion in some cases)	25%
Others	17%	Tafseer (asking about meaning of ayah or word in Quran)	11%
Social networks add new Islamic information		Asking about Islamic sites	13.8%
Yes	78%	Asking about proof from Quran or Sunnah	8.3%
No	22%	Others	2%
Islamic sites introduce by social network		The percentage of Islamic issue explore and discuss in the social network is:	
Quran	30.5%	Less than 10%	11%
Sunnah (Hadith)	30.5%	10%	11%
Profit Mohamed	27%	20%	8.3%
Tafseer	27%	30%	16.7%
Fekah (explain all life issue and Islamic opinion on it)	8.3%	40%	22%
Mix between all types.	8.3%	50% and over	19%
Others	2%	A Known religious persons are a member with us:	
Trying to connect with a non-Muslim:		Yes	55%
Yes	30%	No	45%
No	70%	The existence of religious person have a big influence on the members	
		Yes	80.5%
		No	19.5%

The study found that the majority of students from age wise were on social network users from 21-26 years old. In response to a question about membership duration, 66% of students had been on social network for 2 years or more.

Islamic topics like Quran, Sunnah, Prophet Mohammad, Fatawa (asking about Islamic opinion in some cases), Tafseer (asking about the meaning of ayah or word in the Quran), asking about Islamic sites, and asking about proof from the Quran or Sunnah were discussed. These topics discussed were increasing the student Islamic information by 78%. This is an indicator that the social network is one of the best ways to serve and publicize Islam. Beside that, students stated that the existence of a religious worker is very important as a resource of Islamic information. Therefore, Da'wah persons must take care about social network and be active members there because they do have great effect on the members as the respondents mentioned ( 80%).



On the other hand, the study considers three success factors like social network system quality, information quality, and user satisfaction. Whenever there is an individual satisfaction, the use of the social network will increase, and serving and publicizing Islam will be easy.

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