

*Original Research*

## **The Audience's Use of Social Media to Obtain Health Information and Gratification / Field Study**

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Received: 26 January 2021

Accepted: 30 March 2021

### **Abstract**

The research is concerned with studying the audience's use of social media in obtaining health information and their satisfaction. It aims to determine the hours of public use of social media, know the level of information, and know the level of health knowledge of the audience from social media. An intended sample of (200) members of the University of Baghdad employees and professors who use social media were chosen. The search reached results, the most important is that the audience always uses social media. Social media for long hours, the results indicate that the use of social media is linked to the achievement of gratifications with a significant relationship, which indicates that social media sites achieve what users want from them.

**Keywords:** audience, networks, social media, health information, use, satisfaction, communication.

### **Introduction**

Social media These are websites and applications that use the Internet, allowing users to share content and display contact lists (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), Social media has become of great importance in our daily life as it provided the possibility of communication and communication remotely and was able to penetrate barriers, limits and time, and with the spread of modern technical means, it became easy to obtain various information, including health information, as medical and health sites are widely spread through social communication. It also provided direct contact with doctors and health centers, just as medical professionals are using it to promote themselves and their work. The importance of research comes from addressing the public's use of social checks in searching for and obtaining health information. Therefore, the research investigates the extent to which the audience uses networks to obtain health information and benefit from it through theory; the audience is the recipient of the communication message, translating and interpreting it to respond to it. It may be an individual or a group of individuals or millions of people (Hijab, 2010).

### Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature

The theory of uses and gratifications that appeared in the forties of the twentieth century revealed a new perspective on the relationship of the audience to the means of mass communication, so the perception of the mass media audience changed from the passive audience to the active and active audience, which gives the audience a positive character. From the perspective of uses, the audience is no longer a negative future for the media. Instead, individuals choose the media's information and content they are exposed to (Makkawi & Al-Sayed, 2009). The theory of uses and gratifications assumes that the mass media voluntarily exposes media messages and aims to fulfill its desires and needs through exposure. The theory also specifies that there are motives for exposure to the media. The motives are divided into utilitarian motives aimed at recognizing oneself and acquiring knowledge, information, and experiences. Ritual motives include relaxation, spending time, promotion, friendship, and escaping from reality through movies, series, etc. (Ibrahim, 2012). Social media is one of the essential tools for communication between people, and it includes Facebook, blogs, Twitter, Instagram, and others, and individuals use it to obtain or exchange information (Fayad, 2015). It is also a tool for social change, the rapid exchange of ideas and information, and the ability to influence public opinion at present, which has transcended boundaries and censorship (Saleh, 2020). Social media are a means of communication between individuals, friends, and institutions through which information and instant messages are transmitted. Institutions can use them to communicate with their audience to promote their products as a means of marketing (Mubarak, 2012). Social media are characterized by the combination of traditional media and modern technological means using advanced technologies (Mustafa, 2020), and also with flexibility, participation, and asynchronous spread outside the boundaries of time and place and interaction through the exchange of content, information, images, focus, and attention regardless of people, place and time (Ayashi, 2019). The interactive processes include individuals interacting socially and interactively and include messages of various forms, e-mails, forums, chatting on Facebook, Twitter, and applications for other social sites (Shaban, 2016).

Social media are used to obtain health information in the spirit of health education and health awareness for the public by intensifying efforts for media and communication to follow up and develop health information and form a healthy community away from false and harmful information. Health awareness is people's awareness of sound health information and facts, their sense of responsibility for that, and avoiding harmful and unhealthy practices (Badah, 2009). Individuals use social media sites with multiple motives from the perspective of uses and gratifications, as they are a substitute for personal communication, obtaining various information, and learning positive behaviors. Their use is less expensive, and through which they can exchange opinions with others, and they are used for entertainment and entertainment or forming relationships with others and learning. Its ease of use has led to its widespread to various segments of society. It provides ease of acquaintance between people and the freedom to choose to browse pages and sites, spread awareness, ease information circulation, and self-expression (Al-Suwaidi, 2014).

Social media aims to spread health awareness to the following: (Kim & Kawashi, 2020) They familiarize individuals with health information in their community, health statuses in times of disease and epidemics, and infection rates. Furthermore, Developing a sense of responsibility for individuals that maintain their health and society's health is their

responsibility in cooperation with government agencies, which is what social media calls for in spreading health awareness.

### **Research problem**

the research problem is determined the extent of the audience's use of social media to obtain health information and their satisfaction. Social media occupies a large part of people's daily lives because it has many and varied possibilities to obtain different topics, and for its multiple uses, including obtaining health information, especially at a time of the spread of diseases and epidemics, and the importance of the topic in the use of social media sites according to the theory of uses and the gratification for obtaining health information and the extent of its gratifications, and the importance of research is to develop the role of social media in the health field and the possibility of employing it in health institutions to spread important informative information and awareness of disease risks, as it is an addition in the field of scientific research and studies in social media sites.

### **Research objectives**

The research aims to achieve the following:

- Determining the extent to which the audience uses social media to obtain health information and satisfaction.
- Determine the hours the audience uses social media.
- Knowing the level of health information among the public from social media.
- Determine the motives of the audience's use of social media.
- Identifying differences in demographic characteristics towards the use of social media.
- Determine the nature of the relationship between hours of social media usage and increased health information.
- Knowing the relationship between the use of social media and the satisfaction achieved.

### **Hypotheses**

The first hypothesis: There are no differences in the sample's demographic characteristics towards the use of social media.

The second hypothesis: A significant correlation relationship between hours of use of social media sites in increasing health information.

The third hypothesis: There is a significant correlation between the use of social media and the satisfaction achieved.

### **Materials and Methods**

The research is descriptive, and the survey method is used as it is the most appropriate method for descriptive research. The sample survey method is used to obtain the research community sample's characteristics (Al-Qayyim, 2012). An intentional sample of employees at the University of Baghdad was chosen from social media users of (200) male and female individuals who differ in social and cultural characteristics. Baghdad University's employees and professors determined the research community, and an intentional sample of social media users was chosen. The sample consisted of (200) male and female individuals to whom the maintenance form was distributed, and incomplete answers were excluded. The researcher found that this number is sufficient to obtain answers from an intentional sample. The questionnaire was used as a research tool and included demographic data questions for the sample, and the second axis of questions on social media use was (4) questions. The third axis

included measuring arithmetic averages and standard deviation for social media sites to obtain information. It included the fourth axis on the satisfaction achieved from using social media for the sample and used a triple Likert scale (agree, neutral, disagree) with weights (1,2,3). The time limits for research extended from 1/1/2020 to 31/12/2020. The spatial boundaries of research at the University of Baghdad are represented in some colleges and centers of the university. Use the apparent validity to test the research tool and its applicability in proportion to the objectives and hypotheses of the research by presenting it to the experts, taking their observations. Use the SPSS statistical program to unload the questionnaire data and extract the results by calculating frequencies, percentages, arithmetic means, standard deviation, Pearson correlation coefficient, Spearman's coefficient, Cronbach's *alpha* coefficient, and chi-squared.

### Results

Table 1 shows the percentage of females (58.5%), while the percentage of males (41.5%). The age group (22-25) got the highest percentage among the other groups (36.5%), followed by the group (30-33) with (18%). The highest percentage of the sample is of their undergraduate academic achievement (46.5%), followed by postgraduate studies (26.5%). The marital status of the sample members varies, so the married group got a forgetfulness (47.5%), followed by the single group (23.5%).

Table 1

*The demographic variables of the sample*

Details	Categories	Number	Percentage
Type	Males	83	41.5
	Female	117	58.5
Age categories	18-21	29	14.5
	22-25	73	36.5
	26-29	27	13.5
	30-33	36	18
	34 or more	35	17.5
Educational level	undergraduate academic	93	46.5
	Postgraduate	53	26.5
	diploma	27	13.5
	Junior high	12	6
	Medium	15	7.5
Social status	Unmarried	47	23.5
	Married	31	15.5
	absolute	27	13.5
	Widower	93	46.5

The results show (Table 2) the extent of using social media that a percentage of (68.5%) answered that they always use social media sites, while they sometimes answered they use social media by (31.5%).

Table 2

*The extent of the sample's use of social media*

The extent of social media use	Number	Percentage
Always	137	68.5
Sometimes	63	31.5
Total	200	100

The hours of using social networking sites show (table 3) that the majority of the sample use social media for more than two hours (59.5%), while those who use social media from one to two hours are (28.5%).

Table 3

*The hours of using the sample for social media*

Sample use hours for social media	Number	Percentage
More than two hours	119	59.5
From one to two hours	57	28.5
Less than an hour	24	12
Total	200	100

Table 4 depicts 51% of respondents responded with more health information using social media, and 49% answered that sometimes more receive health information using social media.

Table 4

*The increase in the health information of the sample through the use of social media*

Increase health information through the use of social media	Number	percentage
Always	102	51
Sometimes	98	49
Total	200	100

The motives for the sample's use sample for social media, as (54.5%) answered that they use social media sites for the motive of obtaining information. In comparison (28%) of the sample answered that they use social media sites for the motive of relaxation, and indicated (10.5%) of the sample, they use social media to communicate with others (Table 5).

Table 5  
The motives for using the sample for social media

The motives for using the sample for social media	Number	percentage
getting information	109	54.5
Relax	56	28
Communicate with others	21	10.5
Pass the time	4	2
Make friends	4	2
Gaining experience	6	3
Total	200	100

It is evident from the results of Table 6 that the mean value of the phrase (social media contributes to raising the level of health education) (2.390) is greater than the value of the hypothesis (2) and the standard deviation (0.889), which indicates the strength of agreement. The value of the arithmetic mean of the phrase (Social media provide health information in all areas) (1.990) is smaller than the value of the hypothesis (2) and the value of the standard deviation (0.982). As for the phrase (social media provide detailed and accurate information), the value of the arithmetic mean is (1.510), which is smaller than The value of the hypothesis (2) and the value of the standard deviation (0.850). The value of the arithmetic mean of the phrase (social media are a good alternative to the doctor) (1.905) is smaller than the value of the hypothesis (2) and the value of the standard deviation (0.982). Health information in social media with confidence) The mean value of the phrase (social media is a good alternative to the doctor) (1.685) is smaller than the hypothesis value (2), the standard deviation value (0.899), the standard deviation value (0.850), and the value of The mean of the term (characterizes the available information on social media in scientific (1.850) which is smaller than the hypothesis mean value (2) and the standard deviation value (0.734), while the arithmetic mean value of the phrase (it is incorrect to rely entirely on social networks in obtaining health information) (2.190) is greater from the value of the hypothesis (2) and the value of the standard deviation (0.725), as for the expression (health information on social media contributes to reducing the spread of epidemics and diseases), the value of the arithmetic mean (2.410) is greater than the value of the hypothesis (2) and the value of the standard deviation (0.594) ).

Table 6  
The used sample for social media to obtain health information

The exams	Mean	standard deviation
Social media contributes to raising the level of a healthy culture	2.390	0.889
Social media provide health information in all fields	1.990	0.982
Social media provides detailed and accurate information	1.510	0.850
Social media is a good alternative to a doctor	1.905	0.927
Health information on social media is trusted	1.685	0.899
The information on social media is scientific	1.850	0.734
It is not correct to rely completely on social networks for health information	2.190	0.725

The exams	Mean	standard deviation
Health information on social media contributes to reducing the spread of epidemics and diseases	2.410	0.594

It is evident from the results of Table (7) that the mean value of the phrase (I was able to obtain a lot of health information that I did not know) (2.435) is greater than the value of the hypothesis (2) and the value of the standard deviation is equal to (0.614). The arithmetic mean of the phrase (browsing the websites and pages of doctors and health institutions) is (2.540) which is greater than the value of the hypothesis (2) and the value of the standard deviation is equal to (0.616), and the mean value of the phrase (following the health instructions that benefit me in my daily life) is (2.460) which is greater From the value of the hypothesis (2) and the value of the standard deviation equal to (0.624), as for the phrase (making friends through groups that follow the health and medical pages), the arithmetic mean is (2.565) which is greater than the value of the hypothesis (2) and the value of the standard deviation is equal to (0.597) The value of the arithmetic mean of the phrase (interacting with others and providing opinions and writing to others on their pages) is (2.290) which is greater than the value of the hypothesis (2) and the value of the standard deviation is equal to (0.563), and the value of the arithmetic mean is equal to (the possibility of communicating with the treating physician across websites, especially Facebook) (2.225) and the mean value My hypothesis (0.697), and the mean value of the phrase (tracking health topics and news of interest to me across sites with ease) (2.480), which is greater than the hypothesis value (2), and the value of the standard deviation is equal to (0.601).

Table 7

*The satisfaction achieved from the use of social media*

The exams	Mean	Dstandard deviation
I had access to a lot of health information that I was completely unfamiliar with	2.435	0.614
Browse the websites and pages of doctors and health institutions	2.540	0.616
Follow the health tips that benefit me in my daily life	2.460	0.624
Make friends through the groups that follow the health and medical pages	2.565	0.597
I was able to interact with others, provide opinions and write to others on their pages	2.290	0.563
The possibility of communicating with the treating doctor through websites, especially Facebook	2.335	0.697
Follow up on health issues and news that interest me across the sites with ease	2.480	0.601

### Hypothesis test

The first hypothesis: There are no differences in the demographic variables of the sample towards the use of social media.

Table 8

*Differences in the demographic variables of the sample towards the use of social media*

Variables	Chi-Square test value	Degree of freedom	Indication level	Indication level	Level of morale
Type	54.315	1	0.000	0.05	Function
Age	6.963	4	0.023	0.05	Function
Academic achievement	10.022	5	0.075	0.05	Not a function
Social status	22.851	3	0.00	0.05	Function

Shows the first hypothesis test that there are differences in the demographic variables of the sample towards the use of social media. It is clear from the results that the gender variable constitutes differences, as the chi-square test value is equal to (54,315) with a degree of freedom (1). The level of significance (0.000), which is smaller than the level of the significance (0.05), and the age variable formed differences with the value of the chi-square test equal to (6.963) with a degree of freedom (4) and the level of significance (0.023), which is smaller than the level of significance (0.05). As for the academic achievement variable, it did not constitute any differences with the value of the chi-square test equal to (10.022) With a degree of freedom (5) and the level of significance (0.075), which is greater than the level of significance (0.05), the marital status variable constitutes differences as the value of the chi-square test are equal to (22.851) with the degree of freedom (3). The significance level is (0.000), which is smaller than the level of significance ( 0.05).

The second hypothesis: A significant correlation between hours of use of social media and increased health information.

Table 9

*The relationship between hours of social media usage and increased health information*

The value of the Pearson correlation coefficient	Significance value	Level of morale	Relationship type
-01210-	0.385	0.05	Not a function

It is evident from the results of Table (9) that there is no significant correlation between hours of social media use and increased health information, as the value of the Pearson correlation coefficient is equal to (-0210-). The significance level is (0.385), which is greater than the level of significance (0.05), which indicates that rejecting the hypothesis that there is a correlation function and accepting the null hypothesis that there is no correlation between hours of using social media increasing health information.

The third hypothesis: There is a significant correlation between the use of social media and the satisfaction achieved.

Table 10

*The relationship between the use of social media and the satisfaction achieved*

The value of the Pearson correlation coefficient	Significance value	Level of morale	Relationship type
0.248	0.00	0.05	function



The results of Table (10) show the relationship between the use of social media and the satisfaction achieved, as the value of the Spearman correlation coefficient is equal (248.0) with the level of significance (0.000), and it is smaller than the level of significance (0.05), which indicates the existence of a significant correlation relationship between the use of social media. The audience achieves social and gratifications.

### Discussion

The results of the research show the importance of social media in obtaining health information and its importance in people's lives, which is consistent with the results of the Al-Faram (2017) "The use of social media in health awareness of Corona disease in the results reached in its use to obtain information, which has become the forefront of the means The other traditional in this field, as the research objectives are evident in knowing the level of awareness and health information that they obtained from social sites, which has been achieved in the objectives of Abdel Nour (2018) "The role of social networking sites in promoting health awareness among young people." The study results show the multiplicity of applications that people use through social media and that individuals have different motives for using them, most notably the motives for obtaining information and relaxing to get rid of stress. The results agree with Abu Talib's study(2013) "Social media networks as a source of health information for the Saudi public", revealing the gratifications achieved from their use in the search for awareness and health information and came to the conclusion that social media is a wide space for obtaining information. It is in agreement with Al Sanjari's findings (2018). "The gratifications achieved from the Iraqi women's use of social networks in the field of health awareness, Facebook as a model" through the dissemination of information, photos and videos, and individuals are turning to modern social means to obtain what they want from the information, and this is indicated by Al-Ghanim (2009). Social media has become an important part of the work of people and institutions, especially health, which can publish awareness information to people.

### Conclusion

Social media occupy a large space in people's lives, and this is evident through the sample answers that they always use social networking sites. People use social media for long hours, as the sites provide advanced modern applications that provide fun and information to users through modern technologies. They do not need effort and the possibility of using it at any time and any place, as the public's motives for using social media differ. The most motives for use are to obtain information and relax. We conclude from this that these methods are no longer only a means of conversation and communication with others or exchanging pictures and writing messages, but rather search methods of research and obtaining the information that different users need, which is due to the ease of use, abundance and low cost, in addition to being a means of recreation and relaxation by following other people's sites or watching movies or various programs and others. Social media is a means of obtaining health information, which is indicated by the percentage of agreement for the arithmetic averages of the sample. Social media has achieved gratifications for its users, whether by obtaining information or communicating with the doctor or others and the person who is aware of what is going on around them in terms of information. It becomes clear that the demographic variables of the sample have differences towards social networking sites, except academic achievement, which

indicates that their use requires modern technologies and practice for applications to learn and search for sites that users want. Despite the high percentage of users' hours on the sites, this was not linked to increased health information. This also indicates the multiplicity of motives for their use and the various gratifications users seek to achieve. In the results, the use of social media is linked to achieving gratifications with a significant relationship, which indicates that Social media achieve what users want from them.

### Acknowledgment

This research was supported by the University of Baghdad and the Center for Market Research and Consumer Protection through approval of the proposed research

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