

November 2017

## Traversing Privacy Issues on Social Networking Sites Among Kuwaiti Females

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Traversing Privacy Issues on Social Networking Sites Among Kuwaiti Females

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
The Zimmerman School of Advertising and Mass Communications  
College of Arts & Sciences  
University of South Florida

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Date of Approval:  
October 25, 2017

Keywords: privacy, Instagram, Twitter, Kuwait

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## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative descriptive study explores privacy issues on social networking sites among young Kuwaiti females and their behavior when protecting their information. In this study, two of the most prominent social networking sites in Kuwait were selected to investigate Kuwaiti females' privacy concerns. These platforms are Instagram and Twitter. The research was guided by two questions: What information do Kuwaiti females disclose on Instagram and Twitter? How do Instagram and Twitter differ in managing privacy?

Participants of this research are 15 young Kuwait females studying at Kuwait university in different educational fields. The data collection method used was semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. This method helped gaining a deeper understanding of their privacy views and SNS use. The findings revealed many issues voiced by young Kuwaiti females, such as the type of information shared on both platforms, their privacy concerns, cultural beliefs, and other influences that shaped their Instagram and Twitter use.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is undeniable that the digital revolution altered the way we live our lives. Since the launch of the Internet introduced a tool for communication and information. Over the years, this tool has developed to introduce web-based services, such as blogs and applications, which are also identified as social networking sites (SNS) and microblogs. Boyd and Ellison (2007), as well as Boyd (2015), define social networking sites as a computer-mediated technology that allows individuals, groups, and organizations to share and view information, ideas, and other expressions via virtual networks. Smith (2009) notes that every SNS incorporates features that enable users to connect and share content, publish opinions, as well as network.

These platforms allow users to connect with others, post opinion-based comments, and explore individual interest and activities in various forms of user-generated content by uploading audio, video, and visuals in addition to important personal data that is abundant on social networking sites (Kim, Lee, & Elias, 2015). Similarly, with the help of the Internet, social networking sites became a global communication tool to interact and seek information conveniently with the use of mobile devices. Examples of well-known social networking sites include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and more recently, Snapchat. Thanks to these platforms, we can now contact our online friends and provide updates as we engage in our offline lives simultaneously.

It is worth mentioning that social networking sites are largely embraced by young users, and they spend most of their time socializing online (Soffer & Cohen, 2014). When Facebook was introduced in 2004, it was devoted to college students at Harvard, until it was



expanded to other colleges and high schools (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). According to Kim, Lee, and Elias (2015), this demographic is the most active on SNS when compared to other age groups. Moreover, the young have a higher technological literacy rate and are known as digital natives as they have opened their eyes in a technology infused world (Ramzan, 2012). With the aid of smart devices, it has become easier to access and share information on multiple social networking outlets at any time and from anywhere in the world. In this view, social networking sites are compelling and possess innovative ways to keep users interacting and willingly sharing information about themselves and what is going on their lives.

Chbeir and Al Bouna (2013) asserted that “Information available on these networks commonly describes persons along with their personal information (e.g., what they like, where they live, and who they know) and interactions (e.g., with whom they exchange messages, what comments they post, and how often they update their personal status)” (p. 4). Much of what young users blindly post online has been deemed compromising to their privacy. This is especially true when users use these platforms, such as Twitter, to share personal stories or chat about interesting and fun things that are taking place in their life (Bruns & Stieglitz, 2012; Small, 2011; Smith et al. 2012). While the underestimation of privacy threats is common, the more revealing the information is that serves to identify a user, the bigger the threat to their privacy (Razman, 2012; Trepte & Reinecke, 2011). Nonetheless, there is an imbalance between privacy and publicity; to maintain this balance is a complex task and requires the attention of SNS users as changing privacy settings are introduced and self-protection strategies in virtual environments evolve.

Since privacy has been a primary discussion topic, it is best to understand the concept of privacy in this digital era. To better address this issue, the objective is to discuss it in the context of an Arab Islamic country. Abokhodair et al. (2016) asserted that privacy is valued and respected in many cultures, thus understanding privacy depends on the context and how

it is practiced. For this research, we will look at privacy issues on social networking sites and what it means to Kuwaiti female students. It is important to interrogate their perception of privacy and whether they have full awareness about this concept in the social networking environment.

### **Purpose**

The aim of this research was to explore Kuwaiti female students' perceptions of privacy on social networking sites and their behaviors to protect their information. This investigation shed light on the beliefs that are maintained pertaining to privacy issues as well as overall awareness. Lareau (2011) states that “the mediated nature of SNSs enables information to spread quickly, and in ways difficult to accurately anticipate” (p. 27). Indeed, social networking sites present challenges for managing privacy, and thus managing privacy could be attributed to the platform used as well as individual connections on that network. The major issue here lies between disclosure of information and privacy mechanisms.

For this research, two social networking sites will be selected based on their pervasiveness in Kuwait. According to Aladwani and Almarzouq (2016), social networking sites' penetration rate has been high for years. In 2014, 92% of Internet users were using social networking sites (ICT Landscape Kuwait, 2015). In the same report, Instagram and Twitter were the two most used social networking platforms, comprising 75% and 69% of the Kuwaiti population, respectively. Only 41% noted using Facebook. In addition, Instagram and Twitter were chosen because they possess similarities in some of their features. Both provide a space for writing a 'Bio' in the profile, include a display picture, and offer a searching option to browse for users and posts either by name or hashtag (keywords), as well as the use of visuals—either images or video. Moreover, findings of this research will bring new understandings that will contribute to the existing literature, as some researchers such as

Al-Saggaf (2011) have indicated in their work. He noted that many studies primarily pay attention to privacy on social networks in Western countries, focusing less on the Arab region.

### **Study Significance**

Many studies in the Arab world and the Gulf Cooperative Countries (GCC) revolve around the general use of social networking sites. Some of the research assessed the frequency and purpose of using SNS (Al Jenaibi, 2011, Hamade, 2013; Karuppasamy et al. 2013). While others investigated the use of SNS within the academic field (Al-Menayes, 2015; Sharma, Joshi, Sharma, 2016). However, little research has been completed that investigated online privacy concerns. One research study examined privacy in social networks with regard to Arab culture (Abbas & Mesch, 2015). While other studies dedicated their scholarly work to focusing on privacy on social networking sites in the Gulf region (Aboukhodair et al. 2016; Al-Saggaf & Islam, 2014; Al-Saggaf 2011; Mohamed, 2010; Vieweg & Hodges, 2016).

Still, there is no comprehensive research that has addressed privacy issues on SNS in Kuwait. Therefore, this research will fill the literature gap and inform Kuwaiti society and countries in the GCC region that hold similar cultural values about the underpinning notions of privacy as perceived by Kuwaiti Arab Muslim females, as well as how they go about protecting themselves on social networking sites. Certainly, this research will help explain privacy concerns and raise the awareness level.

## **Study Overview**

This qualitative descriptive study aimed to explore young Kuwaiti females' perceptions of privacy on SNS and their behaviors to protect their information. Two platforms were chosen to be investigated further; Instagram and Twitter. This research was conducted in Spring 2017, and fifteen students at Kuwait University were selected to participate in this research. The data source used in this study was semi-structured face-to-face interviews, this method helped gaining deeper insights about the topic being studied. To analyze the data, a thematic analysis was implemented (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The following research questions guided this research.

### **Research Questions**

1. What information do Kuwaiti females disclose on SNS?
2. How do Instagram and Twitter differ in managing privacy?

The following chapter will delve into the literature review. It will address major issues of privacy in Western and Arab nations. Also, the chapter will present privacy definitions in addition to important privacy theories.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **The State of Kuwait**

Kuwait is a small Arab state that is smaller than New Jersey comprising approximately 7,000 square miles (Interlink, 2011). It is located in the Arabian Peninsula surrounded by Saudi Arabia and Iraq (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). The total population is about 4.3 million with 31.5% designated as Kuwaiti and 69% are non-Kuwaiti (Public Authority for Civil Information, 2016). Kuwait is a conservative society and Islam is its religion. Though the country is not strictly Islamic, religion defines the norms and values practiced (Al-kandari & Hasanen, 2011). Furthermore, Hofstede (1980) confirms that Kuwaiti, as a collectivist culture, maintain close relations and commitments to its group members, such as extended families. Hofstede (1983) describes Kuwaiti culture in his work as having a cultural structure that depends on the group members or extended relationships of family. Some societal rules are focused on “avoiding shame” either for a person or a family in the group, and male members of the society make sure that shame will not affect any one in their family. Unlike Americans, where “avoiding guilt” is primary, members are independent and self-sufficient, which is the expected norm in this Western culture.

Economically speaking, Kuwait has one of the highest incomes. Moreover, Kuwaiti students in public and private universities receive a monthly allowance of \$700 (Al-Kandari et al. 2016; Hamade, 2013). That is reflected in the acquisition of the latest smart devices, computers, and Internet subscriptions (Al Nashmi, 2007). Al Nashmi (2007) further notes, “Culturally, Kuwaitis like to show off their social status by being the first to own the latest

trend” (p.25). Also, Kuwaitis are tech-savvy when it comes to technology and up-to-date with the latest phone apps (Alkandari & Hasanen, 2012).

### **The Launch of the Internet**

Internet access was first offered in 1994 (Al-Ansari, 2006). Generally, the media is closely monitored in Kuwait and controlled by the government. The Ministry of Communication regulates Internet Service Providers and filters specific Internet content, blocking nudity and pornography as it is against the teachings of Islam. In the Holy Quran, it is stated:

Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: and Allah is well acquainted with all they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof. (The Quran, 24:30)

Thus, there is censorship of all forms of pornography, and this seems to be accepted by Kuwaiti Internet users (Abbas & Fadhli, 2008; Kaposi, 2014; Wheeler, 2006).

Wheeler (2006) says, Kuwaiti Internet users demonstrate a unique Internet culture guided by its conservative nature and curious people who want to experiment with this technology. She adds that Kuwaitis consider the Internet a social sphere where they can interact with the opposite gender where gender boundaries are lifted online. She discovered that females, more than males, use the Internet to chat and meet men in-person, developing long-term relationships. Since this is not preferred in conservative culture, Kuwaitis have found a way to bend and challenge these rules without being cautious not to be exposed publicly (Hashem, 2009). Meeting with the opposite gender in public does not happen easily. Wheeler (2001) describes it as “these gender boundaries are policed by the eyes of a curious public” (p. 191). There is a feeling of fear that people could be watching and it has bigger consequences that could tarnish a woman and a family’s reputation.

In addition, taking part in discussions with the opposite sex is a personal choice (Kaposi, 2014). Her observation pertaining to Kuwaiti culture corroborated with earlier findings of Wheeler's (2001), albeit were discussed eight years apart. Both scholars are Westerners who have spent a fair amount of time in the country. Kaposi (2014) describes Kuwaiti context as exceptional for discovering Internet use and social change "because of its mixed heritage of democratic and authoritarian rule, and the ongoing tensions of cultural openness and its narrowing (also referred to as Saudi Arabianisation) that shape contemporary life in Kuwait" (p.2).

### **Social Networking Sites in Kuwait**

As of 2014, Kuwait's Internet penetration rate stood at 89% (Ipsos Report, 2014). The appreciation toward the Internet has opened doors to adopting newer technologies. It was not very long ago when social networking sites had their share in Kuwait. When these were first introduced, Kuwaitis showed enjoyment and excitement for the new sites and what they could offer. According to Kaposi (2014), "As more social networking sites came along, Internet users from Kuwait were finding their way to them" (p.3). These SNSs have become an integral part in many Kuwaitis lives, and Hamade (2013) found that Kuwaiti college students are heavy users of Twitter and Facebook, with 89% and 62% of the demographic using them, respectively. Moreover, Mocanu et al. (2013) analyzed 380 million tweets that were gathered between October 2010 and May 2012. However, the study only used tweets that were sent from smartphones with GPS locations enabled. Although the data is old, it is an indication that these tweets were generated from the country's population and not limited to university students.

Al-Menayes (2014) found that the most social networks used among Kuwaiti college students included: WhatsApp (49.7%), Instagram (27%), followed by Twitter (14%), and

Blackberry Messenger (6%). Also, political figures, including Kuwaiti Members of Parliament (MPs) use Twitter as a means of extending offline interactions and engagement with the public.

In a recent study, Al-Kandari et al. (2016) focused on the use of Instagram among college students at Gulf University of Science and Technology and Kuwait University. Findings showed that visual self-expression, social interaction, the providing of opinions, experimentation with photography, and entertainment were predictors for self-disclosure on Instagram. Also, the study found that males disclosed more information than females. Although females were selective in their level of self-disclosure, they were more honest and preferred to protect their Instagram accounts. As females in a conservative culture, these choices are expected. The researchers explained that posting personal information and photos on Instagram could be troubling for Kuwaiti females due to cultural values and the possibility of facing the fact that they “ruin their reputation and may bring shame to their family and tribe. Therefore, females may feel the need to be more reserved in their self-disclosure that involves sharing photos and disclosing intimate personal information.” (p. 15).

Al-Kandari et al. (2016) studied the influence of culture on Instagram use. The study surveyed university students in Kuwait, and it examined the influence of gender. The findings showed that males are more likely to post personal photos on Instagram, disclose their personal information, and have unprotected Instagram accounts. Researchers affirm that the female image is vital to her family, “Father, brother, and husband probably will allow females to have Instagram accounts, but would probably not prefer that their sisters, wives, and daughters to post their personal pictures especially if they have public accounts or disclose personal information.” (p. 56).



## **Cybercrime Law**

Amid advancements in the virtual world, as well as the rise of political turmoil that began 2011, street protests against the Kuwaiti government have been setup by opposition groups and activists. Most of these protests were organized on Twitter; while Kuwait is ranked as partly free it has a high freedom of speech when compared to other Gulf countries (Freedom House, 2016). After these events, some measures were taken to combat threatening situations against the country. Therefore, a new cyber law became necessary in Kuwait; this became effective in January 2016. The law regulates all electronic media, including news services online and social networks, to protect the safety and security of the nation. However, opinions about this new cyber law differed greatly especially among human rights activists and organizations. One voiced opinion stated that the law “will add a further layer to the web of laws that already restrict the rights of people in Kuwait to freedom of expression and must be urgently reviewed” (Amnesty International, 2016).

To this end, the Internet has transformed communication within Kuwaiti society (Wheeler, 2006). As more people use SNS, there is a growing concern of losing Arab and Islamic values; thus, it has become harder to control online content. Also, most of Kuwaitis lack online security awareness and may be poorly educated about privacy and entailed risks, therefore they are more susceptible to online threats. It is necessary to maintain their privacy as social networking outlets advance to mitigate risk.

## **Privacy in the GCC Region**

It was necessary to search literature for studies conducted in the Gulf region as this area is considered homogeneous and shares many characteristics such as geography, traditions, culture, and religion (At-Twajiri & Al-Muhaiza, 1996). The search resulted in finding few studies, most of them conducted about a decade ago, that addressed privacy on

the Internet; however, they specifically dealt with commercial and government websites. For instance, Shalhoub (2006) looked at privacy policies of commercial websites. She selected 183 commercial websites on AMEinfo Business directory in all six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to analyze their privacy policies using the Standard Industrial Classification/North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Her findings show that out of the 183 websites, only 49 had a privacy statement, while 22.9% of the websites had a link posted on their website that included some type of privacy policy. She recommended that companies should develop privacy policies that clearly state the principles of fair information practices so that businesses show their care to customers' privacy and increase their trust. Moreover, and according to Shalhoub (2006), "There are no regulations in the GCC dealing with privacy or privacy issues, in general" (p. 281).

Al Abri, McGill and Dixon (2009) studied the role of e-privacy and its impact in accepting e-government services in Oman as citizens began to be concerned about their information. Their survey tested several factors including influence of e-privacy; perceived protection and risks; trustworthiness of e-government services; and perceived usefulness on intentions to use e-government services. Findings show that risk concerns and protection influence citizens' intentions to use e-government services, and that trustworthiness is a major factor that determines the use of e-government services.

Another study was conducted in Qatar to investigate how educated Qataris use and perceive social networking sites (Vieweg & Hodges, 2016). Researchers interviewed eleven educated and working Qataris; three males and eight females aged 21-38. Two major themes that are revealed through their findings are surveillance and modesty. Females maintained cultural traditions and adjust SNS uses and features to their needs as they are expected to behave with modesty in public and comply with Islamic and cultural values. With regards to

surveillance, this is a concept that can be employed as a way to control what others see on SNS and to turn away from unacceptable behaviors such as anti-social acts.

Other scholars explored the meaning of privacy as conveyed by Qatari nationals on Twitter (Abokhodair et al., 2016). Researchers analyzed 18,000 tweets that included the word privacy in Arabic by using Twitter Application Programming Interface (API). They selected tweets that mentioned words related to privacy such as honor, reputation, and individual sanctity. Their findings show that the discourses on Twitter in the Gulf often mentioned privacy along with Quranic verses. Additionally, part of the discussions offered advice on how to protect their privacy, as well as the use of “paternalistic” language when discussing women’s privacy.

In more recent research, Abokhodair et al. (2017) studied photo sharing in the Arab Gulf, and interviewed males and females from Saudi Arabia and Qatar who used various applications. By studying photo sharing practices in nations that are governed by cultural norms and Islamic traditions, researchers identified ways participants presented themselves online. They found that when “participants engage in photo sharing, they do so with heightened awareness of how their actions and content they share will impact the collective of which they are part... extended family, tribe, entire nation, state and/or religion.” (p. 707).

While users enjoy surfing the Internet and using other social networking sites, their personal information could be collected and sold or disclosed by these services bringing some concerns to one’s privacy. According to Al-Saggaf and Islam (2012), disclosing basic information on SNS profiles such as gender, location, relationship status, or even displaying a photo, can still be accessed and used by malicious users who deliberately violate the privacy of others.

Knowing these risks, is the value of social networking sites to Kuwaiti users decreased? Or would they resort to self-regulation of their activities to ease their fears and

concerns? Before privacy issues on social networks are discussed further, the following section will present privacy and its definitions.

## **Understanding Privacy**

The discussion of issues related to privacy has existed for as long as mankind has existed. Initially stemming from protection of one's body and home, the concept of privacy has evolved gradually towards exerting control over the personal information of an individual. The historical roots of privacy are revealed in many philosophical discussions, including Aristotle's version of the distribution between life spheres; the private sphere linked with domestic life, and the public sphere linked with the political life (Westin, 1967).

To begin, let us look at how privacy evolved into a problem. Traditionally, the value of privacy was based on the strong belief that each individual deserves "the right to be left alone and the right to liberty," this notion was coined by American lawyers, Warren and Brandeis (1890). It originated in the days of the printing press. At that time photography was a troubling technology advancement that captured people's images without their permission (Nissenbaum, 2009). Warren and Brandeis (1890) argued that news articles and the press invaded people's private and domestic lives; this argument was probably motivated by Warren's distress at the publicity that surrounded his daughter's wedding. Subsequently, the 1967 publication of the Privacy and Freedom Law led to the interpretation of privacy and a self-determination for how, when, and what level of information about an individual can be communicated to other people (Bennett, 1967).

Interestingly, calling attention to the need to protect people in the past from inventions such as photography and the newspaper was viewed as problematic. Problems have continuously arisen in recent years with increasing advancements in technology. For instance, di Pietro and Mancini (2003) argued that there has been a significant change in the

way privacy violations and protection occurs with changes in technology. Multiple technological platforms today, including the Internet, have enhanced information sharing abilities, further facilitating the breach of privacy. In addition to issues of identity, problems related to damage of reputation, fraud, unintentional fame, stalking, and sexual predatory behavior are very common (Ferreyra & Schawel, 2016).

### **Privacy Definitions**

With regard to the definition of privacy, many scholars have attempted to construct what privacy means and what that entails. Considering the literature, there is not a unified definition of privacy. However, each researcher applied their own unique lens to view its notions and reflect their understanding. Holtzman (2006) provided several privacy definitions, which appeared in The Oxford English Dictionary, The American Heritage Dictionary, and Merriam-Webster. He concluded that there is no unified meaning of the word and this leads to a confusing understanding of privacy violations.

Scholars acknowledge that privacy exists in a wide variety of ways, that it exhibits universality, and has some cultural specificities (Cooley, 1880). One scholar defines privacy as “a multifaceted notion, encompassing personal autonomy, democratic participation, identity management and social coordination” (Mohamed, 2010, p.76).

Thomas Cooley describes privacy as the absolute immunity manifested in being left alone (Cooley, 1880). However, his definition does not mention the particular rights, if any, that are important in maintaining privacy. As a result, it is paramount that some authoritative institution state specifically the rights that need to be protected when one is “left alone” as contemplated by Cooley. In addition, it can be argued that his definition is so narrow that it does not account for a variety of ways in which some people could be left alone but still be denied deserved privacy.

Stephen (1967) believes privacy concepts involve secretive and personal matters. In his review of the various theories, he acknowledges two theories, the Altman and the Westin theories, as those that best support and articulate privacy, which will be discussed later in this chapter. He appropriates the ability of these theories to withstand the test of time. Ideally, Stephen believes that privacy must not be simply based on visible or tangible things, but those that are secretive as well.

On the other hand, Gavison believed that privacy entails limited accessibility. Specifically, privacy is the limitation of other people's access to an individual. She categorizes privacy as solitude, anonymity, and secrecy. In this case, secrecy touches on the personal information of one known by another; anonymity is associated with the attention that an individual receives; and solitude is linked to the physical accessibility of a person. In *Melvin v. Reid* (1931), the court acknowledges privacy as a universal right that is envisioned in the state constitution. As a result, privacy was a guarantee to a citizen to pursue and obtain happiness. This qualifies privacy as a natural right that is protected by the due process clause in the state constitution. This interpretation implies that levels of privacy are unlimited, and that privacy is thought to have been violated whenever an individual believes he or she has been barred from pursuing happiness.

### **Privacy Theories**

Western scholars' interpretations of privacy are associated with physical things such as information and property, and subscribe to notions of liberty and freedom. Some seminal work such as Westin (1967) focused on the manner in which people protect themselves through temporary limitation of others. He defines privacy as being the claims of groups, individuals, or institutions to make determinations on how, when, and to what level other people can access information about them (Westin, 1967). This conforms the interpretation

by Margulis (2011) that privacy is the temporary and voluntary withdrawal of an individual from society as a whole by psychological or physical means. Westin does not believe that privacy is self-sufficient or an end by itself. Many studies also agree that the sharing of personal information is voluntary and not permanent, and individuals, groups or institutions can choose to do so either physically or psychologically (Hayat, 2007; Livingstone, 2008; Margulis, 2011; Rustemli & Kokdemir, 2001).

There are four privacy states suggested by this theory; solitude, intimacy, anonymity, and reserve. Solitude is freedom from others' observations; intimacy is the members' small group seclusion meant to promote relaxed and close relationships; anonymity is the freedom from surveillance and identification for public acts in public places; while reserve is founded on the need to minimize disclosures to other people (Westin, 1967). One notable aspect of Westin's theory is its limitation to Western democracies due to the consistency of the sociopolitical values portrayed by these democracies with privacy.

As cultural traditions shape the way one uses new technologies, privacy too, is guided by culture. Thus, privacy should be tackled in cultural context (Rahim, 2015; Rustemli, 1993). Indeed, culture as a factor has a significant role in defining privacy and it would not be convincing enough if we left out the differences in cultures to weigh in on privacy. Altman (1977) described three important features of privacy. The first is that privacy exists as an inherently social process. Secondly, there is the belief that proper knowledge of privacy's psychological aspects should entail the people's interaction, their physical environment, social world, as well as the temporality of the social phenomenon (Jourad, 1996). The third feature portrays privacy within a cultural context where Altman argues that although privacy bears cultural universality, it has a cultural component.

According to Altman, there are numerous behavioral mechanisms that regulate privacy, such as cultural and territorial norms that operate in a comprehensible system. This

means that while privacy is universal, it has psychological manifestations that are culturally specific when it comes to controlling interactions to achieve privacy. This explains profound differences in privacy concerns for online users of social networking sites between Westernized/low context cultures and the Arab world or high context cultures (Cho, Rivera-Sanchez & Lim, 2011; Mohamed, 2010; Vasalou, Joinson, & Courvoisier, 2010). The theory has a dynamic perspective on the regulation of privacy as a process that controls interactions with other people. This implies that people change how closed or open they become as a response to the variations in the external conditions and internal states (Altman, 1977). Given his status as an environmental and social psychologist, Altman poses a theory whose core is based on social interaction, while using the environment in determining mechanisms for privacy regulations. Therefore, Altman perceived privacy as a selective controlling of how one's self is accessed. A closer look at Altman's theory reveals its comprehensiveness as a general theory that addresses the control of social interactions.

Bates (1964) argues that the most valuable theory of privacy that facilitates understanding of interpersonal computer-mediated communication, among which includes social networking sites and blogging, was the motivated dialectical privacy conception proposal by Altman, which described it as a tension between closing and opening personal boundaries to other people. According to CPM theory, privacy boundaries vary from absolute openness to absolute secrecy or closeness (Petronio, 2002). The open boundary is a reflection of willingness to give access to private information by disclosing information, which represents a revelation process. However, closed boundaries represent private and inaccessible information, which is characteristic of a process meant to protect or conceal.

Petronio's CPM theory is underpinned by five propositions that are the definition of private information in terms of ownership. Based on this, there is a tendency among people that when they believe that certain information belongs to them, they classify it as private



(Marshall, 1974). Another proposition is that since people assume ownership of private information they believe they have control over its distribution. The third, people tend to create and apply privacy rules on the basis of the criteria that are personally important in regulating how private information flows. These rules, according to Margulis (2011), influence how collective and individual privacy boundaries are managed. Individual privacy rules are based on gendered orientation, cultural values, contextual impact, and motivational needs as well as the criteria for risk-benefit. The fourth proposition is that after privacy information has been shared, there is the formation of a privacy boundary, thus making the recipient co-owner of the information (Burgoon et al., 1989). The fifth states that whenever there is lack of coordination of privacy rules between a co-owner and the original owner, boundary turbulence could occur because people fail to effectively, consistently, and actively negotiate the collective rules on privacy. This turbulence is the failure by the co-owners to effectively manage private information flow to third parties (Stephen, 1967). Therefore, CPM theory is an extension of Altman's initial proposal of regulating privacy.

There is a common ground presented by the different theories. For instance, it is noted that both Westin and Altman discuss the manner in which groups and individuals regulate and control access to themselves, and both indicate a limited access approach (Bennett, 1967). In addition, it is noted that there is a need for privacy as it is continuously dynamic and changes with external and internal conditions. In this respect people are understood to respond to these conditions by controlling their privacy to attain the desired privacy level. Also, there is a shared opinion on privacy by all three theories, which is the agreement that there could be challenges in efforts to regulate privacy as individuals may require more or less privacy.

## Privacy in the Arab Culture and Islam

As mentioned previously, privacy is considered a universal concept. El Guindi (1999) discussed the meaning of privacy in Arabic language, and surprisingly, this term has no accurate translation. Rather, “the Arabic – English dictionary translates privacy in terms that correspond with the Western notion, such as ‘personal,’ ‘secluded,’ ‘secrecy,’ and ‘solitary,’ further supporting its non-indigenous linguistic origins” (p. 82). The author argues that this absence of interpretation does not mean that privacy does not exist. On the contrary, it exists under a different meaning than that of the Western definition. She further explains that Arab privacy does not “connote the ‘personal,’ the ‘secret’ or the ‘individual space.’ It concerns two core spheres – women and the family. For women it is both a right and an exclusive privilege, and is reflected in dress, space architecture and proxemics behavior” (p. 82). Similarly, Abokhodair et al., (2016) agree that there is no word that translates privacy, “the most general Arabic word that indicates privacy is ‘khososyah’ (خصوصية). If we translate privacy from English to Arabic in Google Translate the results will include isolation (عزلة), and secrecy (سرية), as well as khososyah (خصوصية)” (p. 5). There is no doubt that privacy is valued among Arab cultures. Privacy extends to much more than the physical and digital world. In the Gulf region, for example, privacy is practiced through people’s behaviors; self-representation, such as the way they dress and talk, or in their personal spaces, like in the home where the traditional house is designed ‘inward’ with high walls (Sobh & Belk, 2011). This protects the property to keep intruders away and prevent the public from lurking.

Equally important is the notion of privacy in Islamic religion. It is therefore no surprise that many of the studies focusing on differences in privacy concerns find that Muslims are more conservative with their privacy when compared to their western counterparts. Hayat (2007) discussed the relation of privacy with the teachings of the Quran. He uses the case of Pakistan, an Islamic country, to illustrate the correlation between privacy

and religion. Islamic religion influences privacy since it places great emphasis on discreet behavior. Islam acknowledges and protects the privacy of one's home and private life. The Quran advises people to exercise privacy and not interfere in the private matters of others that affect people's lives and honor. El Shamsy (2015) asserted that "a respect for the privacy of the domestic sphere is rooted in the Quran." Furthermore, the holy book also advises people to only visit people's homes if they are certain of their consent (Hayat, 2007). In verse 24:27, "O you who believe, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you ascertain welcome and greet their inhabitants. That is best for you; perhaps you will be reminded." And 24:28, "And if you do not find anyone therein, do not enter them until permission has been given you."

Moreover, Islam recognizes the privacy of one's life—not interfering in others' affairs. Hayat (2007) stated "Islam not only condemns infringement of one's privacy, but also disallows spying or prying into other's life." The verse is as follows in 49:12, "O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other."

From the above discussion, we can draw the conclusion that privacy exists in many domains in the Muslim Arab culture. It is evident in the manner in which people behave, represent themselves, in their personal space such as their homes, and in gender spaces such as the separation of males and females. Respecting one's own and others' privacy is required by Muslims and must be practiced in their daily lives.

### **Cultural Aspects of Privacy**

Cho, Rivera-Sanchez, and Lim (2011) found that different factors affect how online users view privacy-related issues on the individual level or national level. At the individual level, there were demographic factors as well as the experiences of individuals on online

platforms while at the macro level there was national culture and the nationality of individual users. These findings are confirmed by Margulis (2011) where the more conservative the culture, the higher the level of privacy concerns among individuals. Moreover, Cho, Rivera-Sanchez, and Lim (2011) also identified strategies that users apply to enhance their online privacy including the choice to opt out of the online platform; using proactive protection methods provided by the online application; and avoidance of online platforms that are likely to breach their privacy.

Abbas and Mesch (2015) extended the research on how nationality and multicultural factors might influence privacy concerns and the experiences of social networking site users. The research indicates that privacy concerns, cultural values, and attitudes about trust play a differential and central role in determining whether individuals use social networks to sustain their relationships with others or expand them. These findings suggest that the higher the individual's concern about the disclosure of personal information to others, the higher the likelihood that they will avoid using social sites to expand their connections. Reed et al. (2016) similarly highlight that cultural dimensions are related to users' privacy awareness behavior. Therefore, understanding the correlation between culture and privacy behavior helps social networking sites customize their designs more perfectly. Being a traditional culture, individuals from the Arab community are more likely to be concerned about their privacy on an online platform compared to their counterparts from non-traditional societies (Margulis, 2011).

To illustrate further, the cultural environment in Kuwait is conservative. as noted earlier. Older traditions dictate that it is inappropriate to mingle with the opposite gender, thus morals may play into consideration here. However, Kuwaitis maintain strong connection to their culture and tweak their Internet usage to what fits their cultural values and tradition (Wheeler, 2006). Of major interest in this case is that most countries in the Gulf region are

considered conservative, despite their efforts to join the modern world. Abokhodair and Vieweg (2016) confirm that in the GCC people are required to adhere to traditional and cultural values, and they are “instructed to cover certain body parts; what is covered and when depends on the specific situation and the level of conservativeness” (p. 3). Besides, culture and religion play a very significant role in shaping the locals’ behaviors and attitudes as well as their practices, values, and norms including privacy concerns and interactions on social medial platforms (Al-Saggaf, 2011).

Rustemli and Kokdemir (2001) examined four distinct states of privacy by Westin (1970) among Turkish students namely solitude, intimacy, reserve, and anonymity. Their preferences and frequencies were used to determine the role of culture and gender. In general, intimacy among friends and solitude appeared to be the most preferred aspects of privacy, while the least preferred were isolation and reserve. The preferences were explained by the need to maintain social ties while at the same time having moments of private contemplation. Interestingly, the low preference for reserve and isolation as forms of privacy were attributed to the fact that the Turkish culture is increasingly more socially responsive compared to other cultures in the Gulf region. Another interesting finding from the study is that Turkish women were less reserved compared to their male counterparts and that their preferred intimacy was with friends as opposed to family members.

### **Between Self-disclosure and Anonymity on SNS**

According to Agosto and Abbas (2015), privacy in social networks entails the user being in charge of the personal information they make available online as well as having control over the users who can view it. As a result of the surge in SNS, researchers have endeavored to explore self-disclosure and privacy issues on social networking sites. Joinson et al. (2007) defined disclosure as the practice of making oneself known to others. Litt and

Hargittai (2014) indicated conventional factors that have influenced privacy management approaches in the past offline have continued to shape privacy approaches online, like age and gender. Self-disclosure is determined by the privacy settings and policy of social networking sites, as well as someone's willingness to disclose.

Though SNS use differs amongst people and nations, Abbas and Mesch (2015) note that young Palestinian people use the sites to maintain family relationships especially when distance and restrictions are present. Thus, the scholarly work is representative of the region with slight similarities in Arab culture.

In the UAE and Arab context, Arabs have adopted the use of novel technologies at a markedly fast rate as was the case in the Arab Spring (Al-Jenabi, 2011). Al-Jenabi (2011) says "online privacy concerns are highly sensitive issues in the Middle East, and in some cases protective actions have been taken" (p. 4). These actions can be interpreted as building on Altman's (1977) understanding of privacy and the regulatory mechanisms that individuals, societies, and institutions often engage in to enhance their right to privacy. By actively regulating online social networking users' privacy, governments in UAE and other Arab countries set the pace that regulates interaction with others. This is in accordance with Altman's understanding of privacy as the selective control of access to the self (Altman, 1975, p. 24). Nevertheless, social networking sites have contributed significantly to the development of strong social bonds across the Arab world.

In addition, many researchers have explored privacy threats related to SNS. Privacy has also transformed SNS, meaning it has impacted the choice of online environment for a user. Agosto and Abbas (2015) mention that when Snapchat was newer, students were active users. When they realized that their Snaps do not disappear as they are supposed to, they stopped using the platform. One female interviewee noted, "I just don't trust Snapchat because when you go on websites, easily your pictures can go on them. So, I just deleted my

account” (p.10). This suggests that depending on the social networking site itself, users decide where they post certain information.

In studying young people’s information sharing on social networking sites, many studies focused on covering the type of information users reveal online. Gross and Acquisti (2005) conducted a study on social network users through the analysis of 4,000 college students’ Facebook profiles. They indicate that privacy concerned people as they joined the social network and disclosed extensive personal information. Some users control their privacy by trusting their capacity of being in-charge of the information they make available and believe that unauthorized users would not have access to it. Their findings show that privacy threats lie in the personal information students post on their profiles such as birthday, hometown, address, and phone number. Consequently, this can be used to identify social security numbers, which leads to identity theft (Gross & Acquisti, 2005).

There is not much difference in cultural aspects seen in the type of information users share. Mohammed (2010) studied online privacy concerns on SNS in two Arab countries; United Arab Emirates and Egypt. Her findings show the most prominent personal information respondents include in their profile is nationality, followed by country, age, and name. Although the two are Arab nations and share similar cultures, the difference lies in protective actions taken. Emiratis were less likely to post accurate information, and this could be due to the nature of their conservative society. In addition, the two countries exhibited different perspectives, with Egyptians being more forthcoming and liberal (Al-Kandari & Hasanen; Mohammed, 2010). Generally, this type of information may seem basic to youth and to the extent that they feel comfortable sharing.

Topics and subjects shared online also varied on SNS. Hamade (2013) studied the perception and use of several SNS platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, and MySpace) among university students in Kuwait. He surveyed 300 Kuwaitis from six different colleges

and his findings show that college students use SNS to post information about several topics including arts, politics, sports, and fashion. In the same study, 70% of students reported that their SNS profiles are unprotected; 30% of users kept their privacy settings limited to friends and relatives. This suggests that SNS are gaining traction among Kuwaiti youth, while they remain unaware that their privacy is at risk. As Razman (2012) noted, users tend to show lack of privacy awareness.

Though there are users of SNS who carefully share their information on interactive sites, this is marked by gender differences. Notably, women are more guarded when it comes to their personal information on SNS. However, the trend appears to be changing, especially among young people who share their personal data easily and often with strangers (Gross & Acquisti, 2005; Ramzan, 2012). Generally, women are more concerned and aware about their privacy more than men (Al-Saggaf, 2011; Mohamed, 2012). According to Kaposi (2014), there are traditions that guide women's behavior in tribal organizations such as shame and honor, and "these concerns inform the laws intended to uphold the honor and property rights of fathers, husbands, and higher-status groups" (p.7). Furthermore, a study conducted in the GCC region has shown that women use these platforms to freely express their feelings, while keeping a consideration of their privacy.

Expanding on gender differences related to privacy concerns and the use of SNS platforms by women in Gulf countries, Al-Saggaf (2011) investigated how Saudi women use Facebook. The study reported that while women engaged in relative disclosure of their personal information, they were significantly concerned about their privacy. The findings confirm that gender is a major determinant related to privacy concerns among users. Regardless of cultural background, women were more likely to be concerned about privacy when using networking sites compared to their male counterparts (Mohamed, 2010). They are also more likely to be proactive in taking actions to protect their privacy when using



social networking platforms. For example, they know how to adjust Facebook settings to protect their profiles and prevent strangers from accessing personal information such as photos as they are afraid of information being used in ways that damage their reputations (Al-Saggaf, 2011). Additionally, women from traditional cultures in the Arab world had higher levels of privacy concerns compared to Western women (Al-Saggaf, 2011).

Nosko (2012) also discovered that females disclose less sensitive personal information when compared to their male counterparts. Nosko argued that disclosure is less when the targeted audience shares the same gender with the user, but more when the targeted audience is of the opposite sex. Agosto and Abbas (2015) indicated that older teens are more conscientious with their SNS privacy and feel uneasiness by the idea of unauthorized people viewing their personal data. Hence, they do not readily share personal information with others. These findings have similarly been supported by Livingstone (2008) and Feng and Xie (2014) in their separate studies. Acquisti and Gross (2006) added that privacy concerns people who join a social network and disclose extensive personal information. Some SNS users control their privacy concerns by trusting their capacity of being in-charge of the information they make available and believe that unintended people would not have access to it.

Woo (2006) argued that anonymity is one of the methods that people use to enhance privacy in their computer-mediated communications (CMC). Christopherson (2007) studied the importance of anonymity and how it determines how users express themselves on computer-mediated communications. While Cho, Rivera-Sanchez, and Lim (2011) and Abbas and Mesch (2015) primarily focused on individual and multicultural factors that affect privacy among users, Christopherson (2007) was interested in psychological theories to explain how, at the individual level, users experience privacy or how they use anonymity to express themselves on online platforms. In her research, she defined anonymity as a

perception of oneself as unidentifiable due to the lack of cues that can be used to characterize an individual's identity.

Furthermore, a social networking site user can be entirely anonymous while still expressing emotions and thoughts with no fear of being identified or socially evaluated. Christopherson (2007) indicates that there are gender variations in online safety perceptions as women often safeguard their anonymity in online environments more when compared to men. Women see online atmospheres as more threatening and cold, and feel a higher level of need to safeguard their identity (including their names, addresses, and phone numbers) for their personal safety (Tufekci, 2007). Moreover, the author argued that the positive side of anonymity is privacy and the role it plays enhances the privacy of social networks. Thus, psychological wellbeing is increased. For example, individuals can freely convey their thoughts on the Internet without the fear of being exposed. This idea is echoed in what Al-Kandari and Hasanen (2011) pointed out; many Arabs are reluctant to express opinions online "even if they log in anonymously" as they might be tracked down by authorities. When an unintended SNS user accesses small amounts of identity information (for instance, a person's phone number), more information could ultimately be acquired, such as home address and location (Krasnova et al., 2009). Therefore, the use of anonymity in social networks is strategic as it is meant to influence social group dynamics while serving as a vital method to self-safeguard an individual from online potential perpetrators.

When it comes to anonymity online among Kuwaiti users, relationships with the opposite sex must be discussed. Kaposi (2014) says that anonymity allows users to explore wider networks of friends in an online environment where it is safe to connect with the opposite sex freely. Ultimately, this communication experience is recognizable in "giving young people new autonomy in how they run their lives" (Wheeler, 2006, p.162).

## **Privacy Settings on SNS**

One might think of other methods to protect one's self online. For instance, configurations on SNS give users some control over their privacy. Marwick and Boyd (2014) revealed two types of SNS privacy account settings. The first is "access-control list" which is found on Facebook where users can create groups and allow or limit what they want others to see in each group. The second type is access control concerning profiles; these profiles can either be public with full access or private—this is found on Twitter and Instagram. Nonetheless, one is able to be anonymous and express their thoughts without being identified. However, configuring profile settings will not be effective unless users recognize privacy threats. The social network users who believe that they possess ample control over their privacy settings show a higher privacy value as compared to others and have more privacy concerns as well (Cheung, Lee, & Chan, 2016).

According to Nosko et al. (2010), privacy settings on social networking sites can be used in controlling access to users' personal profiles, where only intended users within a shared network can be given access to profiles. However, users who do not apply privacy settings make their profiles accessible to any user (Cheung et al., 2016). This practice is very apparent on Facebook and Twitter. Vasalou et al. (2010) indicated that users' experiences with SNS and culture have a significant effect on their motivations for using social networks as well as the time they spend on social sites.

Social networking site users are warned to take measures to disclose limited personal information or adopt identity anonymity strategies in certain SNS settings (Ma et al., 2016). As it has been established in the reviewed literature, the majority of SNS users have become aware of their safety and the privacy of their personal information online. As a result, they are increasingly valuing privacy and making efforts to protect their identity. More

importantly, a higher privacy value is characterized on greater levels with females and older adults as compared to males and teens.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHOD**

The previous chapter reviewed literature on topics related to this study, and showed the need for further research for the phenomenon of interest. This chapter restates the research questions and presents the research design as well as the participants of this study. Data collection approach and analyses are also discussed.

The objective of this study was to explore Kuwaiti females' perceptions of privacy on social networking sites among Kuwaiti females and their behavior related to protect their information online. To achieve this, two social networking sites were utilized for further analysis—Instagram and Twitter.

Twitter was created in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Biz Stone, and Noah Glass. Twitter is free and is considered an online news social networking service that covers different topics ranging from politics to entertainment using only 140 characters in a tweet. Users interact and converse by sending tweets. Recently, Twitter allowed users to share and upload photos and videos through the use of simple editing tools. Twitter profiles are usually public, but users can adjust the settings to protect their accounts.

Instagram is also a free social networking service that enables users to share photos and videos either with the public or privately with followers. Also, users can upload visuals and do basic editing by adding various filters to their images or videos. Instagram was created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and released six years ago in 2010.

As mentioned previously, the selection of these two platforms was based on several reasons. Both platforms are widely used by Kuwaitis of all ages and provide similar

interfaces where a user writes a description in the biography section and displays a profile picture. One important feature is the user account settings; it can either be public or private. Also, users can upload various media files such as photos and videos. Furthermore, both provide a search feature that allows a user to find people, places, and hashtags. These two platforms are comparable to each other as they provide a great opportunity to examine user's privacy behaviors. This is based on whether users decide to protect or unprotect their profiles, accept or follow other users they do not know, as well as the type of posts they share on either platform.

Clearly, privacy discussion is essential in this communal society that is guided by the Islamic religion. According to Al-Saggaf (2011), "Religion and culture shape people's attitudes and behaviors and define their norms, values, and practices" (p.3). Therefore, this research will not only investigate privacy views, but also the cultural beliefs that might impact the way privacy is perceived.

In order to fulfil these goals, face-to-face interviews were conducted with each participant to investigate their own experiences using the platforms in question. This research not only investigated privacy views, but also the cultural beliefs that might impact the way privacy is perceived and/or applied. The following questions guided this research.

### **Research Questions**

1. What information do Kuwaiti females disclose on Instagram and Twitter?
2. How do Instagram and Twitter differ in managing privacy?

### **Research Design**

To address the questions of this research, a qualitative descriptive study was conducted (Berg & Lune, 2012; Creswell, 2013). The data collection method used in this study was a semi-structured, face-to-face interview. This method enabled the researcher to

interrogate participants' perceptions as the research aimed to investigate their interpretation of privacy on SNS and how they protected themselves. Also, the semi-structured, face-to-face interviews provided the researcher with flexibility pertaining to the interview questions, wording, and order, as well as with the interviewees (Creswell, 2013; Rubin & Rubin; 2012). In addition, it allowed the researcher to inquire on deeper and richer data by exploring interviewees' perspective (Patton, 2002); probing them for details as the questions were posed as the interview unfolded.

All interviews were conducted in Arabic, the native language of the researcher and the participants, to make it easier for both to address the issues in question more clearly. Finally, data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously as Creswell (2013) suggests. The collected data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006).

### **Participants**

Participants of this research are Kuwaiti female students at Kuwait University. For this research, a purposeful sampling approach was used to select participants to focus on their perspective and experience of the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) notes, the purposeful sampling approach enables the researcher to select "information-rich" participants for his/her study. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: Kuwaiti females, undergraduates, attending Kuwait University, should have Instagram and Twitter accounts, and willing to share their experiences with regards to privacy on these platforms.

Only students who met the criteria were selected; a total of 15 young Kuwaiti female students were selected. Their ages ranged between 18-24 years old and they majored in different fields such as Education, Engineering, Business, and Law. It is important to note

that participation was voluntary in this research; therefore, participants were chosen depending on their willingness to be part of the study. Participants were also informed that they could choose to not participate and withdraw at any time without consequences. Moreover, prior to collecting data, informed consents were obtained from each participant, and more information is discussed below.

As mentioned earlier, participation was voluntary, so any student who met the criteria and who was interested in taking part in the study was considered. All communications and information provided were in Arabic, the native language of the researcher and participants. In addition, participants were notified that the interview would be audio-recorded for analysis purposes. The process was explained, and all questions that participants had were answered prior to obtaining Informed Consent forms. Further, Informed Consent forms were in Arabic and were given to prospective participants for their review and in ample time to make an informed decision about their participation in this study. While some participants signed the consent as soon as they read the form, others spent a few days to read and review. Moreover, all 15 participants signed the consent forms after they inquired about the information they needed. Most of their concerns were focused on privacy and confidentiality; for example, some participants asked about the audio files and who would listen to these interviews. Finally, Table 1 shows the participants' demographics.



Table 1 Participants' Demographics

Participant	Age	Marital Status	Background	Education
1	24	Single	Bedouin	Sophomore College of Education - Mathematics
2	19	Single	Bedouin	Sophomore College of Education - English
3	18	Single	Bedouin	Freshman College of Education - English
4	24	Single	Bedouin	Senior College or Arts - History
5	18	Single	Bedouin	Freshman College of Education - English
6	20	Single	Bedouin	Sophomore College of Education - Arabic
7	21	Single	Bedouin	Senior College of Shariah and Islamic Studies
8	22	Single	Hadhar	Senior College of Business Administration - Marketing
9	19	Single	Hadhar	Freshman College of Arts - French Language
10	21	Single	Bedouin	Senior Chemical Engineering
11	22	Single	Hadhar	Senior College of Business – Operations Management
12	20	Single	Hadhar	College of Law
13	21	Single	Hadhar	Junior College of Law
14	21	Single	Hadhar	Junior College of Arts - French Language
15	21	Single	Hadhar	Junior College of Arts - French Language

## **Setting**

In this study, the interview took place on the Kuwait University campus. The site selection was based on some considered factors, such as relevance and quietness. Rubin and Rubin (2012) discuss the significance/importance/value relevance of the location to the research and having access to them. This was key in choosing an interview site for this research; therefore, a room was allocated on campus to conduct face-to-face interviews with the participants. This setting was relevant since participants had no trouble commuting to the site as it was on campus and where they go to class. In addition, all interviews took place in a relaxed environment; more importantly, a private and quiet room to ensure privacy and confidentiality of the participants' information as well as to assure clarity of the voice recording was key.

## **Instrument**

### **Interviews**

Data collection started after acquiring approval from the Institutional Review Board. This study was implemented in the spring of 2017 at Kuwait University, between the months of February and March. In-depth individual interview was the primary method of data collection for the purpose of this research. Furthermore, an interview protocol was used during the interview, which was adapted from Abokhodair (2016). Some of these questions were: (a) When did you start using Instagram and Twitter? (b) What do you like and dislike about these apps? and (c) Did you ask for your parents' permission to join these apps? If so, what was their reaction?

As aforementioned, interviews were conducted in a face-to-face setting and took between 19 and 50 minutes, with an average of 32 minutes. Table 2 shows the duration of the interviews with each participant. Moreover, all interviews were audio-recorded; this helped in

attaining sufficient data and detailed understanding of participants' depictions related to privacy on Twitter and Instagram. Through these interviews, the conversations were guided and allowed the participants to provide information about their use of SNS. Patton (2002) states that these interviews provide a good way to access participants' minds to examine experiences that took place and understand their opinions. Further, all audio files were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Table 2 Interview Duration

Participant	Interview Duration
1	19:53
2	41:43
3	36:35
4	36:17
5	41:40
6	23:54
7	23:59
8	44:26
9	20:02
10	33:35
11	59:18
12	18:46
13	20:22
14	21:28
15	41:59

## Data Analysis

In this study, data was collected from 15 young Kuwaiti females, and the selection of participants was based on the criteria mentioned earlier. All interviews were transcribed from the native language, which is Arabic. However, translation was intended to be done after concluding the analysis process so that the meaning would not affect the accuracy of findings. Transcripts were emailed to participants for member checking so that they could verify the representation of their experiences with SNS. This process allowed the participants to check and review the transcriptions and verify what was included while offering the chance to change, remove, or add any information (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Interview transcriptions were analyzed using thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) define this method as “identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 6). This approach allowed for organization and description of implicit meanings embedded in the data set by detecting the most prominent patterns found in the interviews. Moreover, the analysis required moving back and forth between the data set as a whole, the generated codes, and the emerged themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher followed the six phases of thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), these steps are: (1) familiarizing yourself with the data; (2) generating initial codes; (3) searching for themes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) producing the report.

It was important to investigate each participant and individually focus on their own experience with Instagram and Twitter. Consequently, each participant’s interview was analyzed separately and then cross-searched for themes. Reading the interview transcripts carefully helped create and identify potential patterns. During this stage, transcriptions were in Arabic and were not yet translated to English.

After studying the data, the second analysis step was coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Code, according to Saldana (2009), is “a word or a short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). Following Saldana’s (2009) suggestion to divide the printed text to three columns: a) the data, b) the preliminary codes, and c) the final codes, the researcher utilized this cyclical process that encompassed two cycles. The preliminary codes contained “first impression” from the data. The generated codes were in the Arabic language to assure they properly represented participants’ experiences with Twitter and Instagram. After revising preliminary codes, some have been recoded. The new codes were written on the third column as “final codes.” The following figure shows how Saldana’s (2009) three column approach was applied. Figure 1 is the original transcription in Arabic, and an English translation is in Table 3 below.

Figure 1 Arabic Codes

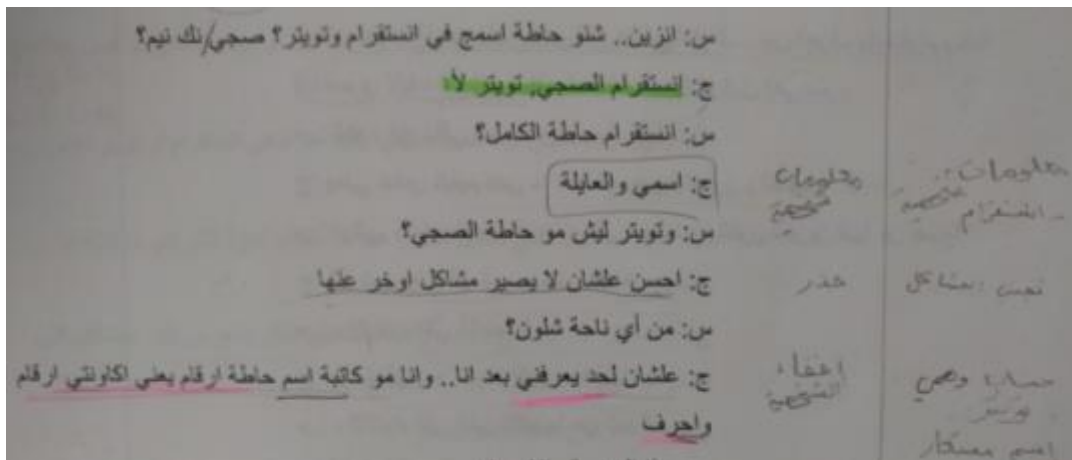


Table 3 Translated Codes and Data

Interview Data	Initial Codes	Final Codes
Q: What is the name you use on Instagram and Twitter Accounts? A: On Instagram my real name, Twitter isn't my real name.		
Q: Do you use your Full name on Instagram? A: First and Last names.	Personal information (Instagram)	Personal information (Instagram)
Q: What about Twitter, why didn't you use your real name? A: It's better that way, to stay away from problems.	Avoid problems	Cautious
Q: What do you mean? A: So that nobody would know who I a m. I'm not even using a name, I'm using numbers and letters.	Fake Account (Twitter)	In disguise

According to Saldana (2009), “Coding is not just labeling,” this process needs to be conducted carefully as it requires a deeper level of analysis. The researcher cautiously engaged in coding, remaining respectful to cultural and language considerations. Moreover, the codes were revised with a colleague from Kuwait who is bilingual and shares the same culture of the participants and the researcher. How well these codes represented the data was discussed. After coding the data, they were translated to English, and were verified with an English-speaking colleague to make sure the translation of the codes and participants’ phrases represented the meaning.

Following the coding and categorizing, the next phase was searching for themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) explain “a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (p. 10). The emergent themes were identified across all participants, then the themes were developed and named.

### **Ethical Considerations and Credibility**

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is vital. The researcher in this study had no power or authority over the participants, since the researcher is not an employee or part of the faculty at Kuwait University. This increases the participants’ level of comfort, which helps with engaging them throughout the conversation. Thus, this delivers results that reflect their true experiences on SNS as well as their beliefs, values, and attitudes. As previously mentioned, all interviews were transcribed in their original language, which is Arabic. All names mentioned in the transcripts were deleted no matter if they were the participant’s name or belonging to any other individual.

Treatment of study participants complied the Institutional Review Board guidelines (IRB). As indicated previously, participation was voluntary in this study and participants

could choose to withdraw without any negative consequences. Consent forms were collected from all participating students prior to data collection. In addition, the researcher clearly explained the process and took into consideration participants' privacy and confidentiality.

Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission. Their identity was protected in several ways. The audio recorder automatically saved all interviews on a Micro SD card. After each interview, the audio files were moved from the recording device memory card and stored on a separate encrypted hard drive, making sure that the recording device was formatted afterwards. Also, no real names were used or any other identifiable information. Instead, participants were identified by numbers throughout this research. Each interview audio file was also numbered to correspond with the participant number and the data collected was only restricted to the researcher at all times.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS**

This chapter is dedicated to the findings of the analysis of the interview data. The analysis led to the identification of three emergent themes within the data. They are (a) watching over; (b) identity on SNS; and (c) choices and decisions. The developed themes provide a thick description of participants' voices about privacy on the SNS that have been investigated, which are Twitter and Instagram.

#### **Privacy Definitions**

In order to grasp the concept of privacy, participants' definitions needed to be dissected. Participants were asked to define certain privacy characteristics [words that represent privacy]. In this section, we will look at how participants define each term: privacy, isolation, and secrecy. Found in Abokhodair et al. (2016), these definitions encompassed their perceptions of how they viewed privacy.

For the most part, participants had similar definitions for each term, and provided short answers. Privacy is something personal and no one should interfere; it is something that is kept to myself; and it is something that people should respect. Most participants agree that privacy is limiting what people should know about them or information that is limited to close friends or family. Only a few participants mentioned "family" or "close friends" as people who are privy to private information.

The definition of isolation was almost the same among participants. However, the feeling they associated with it was different. For example, they thought that isolation is a good thing, and defined it as a state of mind. Others said they do not wish to be isolated

because they are more social. This is how they defined isolation: No one can see them, and they are alone.

The final term is secrecy. Many participants said it is related to privacy, but contrary to privacy, no one included a family member nor a close friend. Secrecy is something shared with one person, it must be the right person, and every individual has the right to secrecy.

The following pages will discuss the themes in detail and what each meant in this research.

## **Themes**

### **Watching Over**

This theme depicts the alpha male of the family. Here, the man is the harbor of safety and protection. Patriarchy is one of the main characteristics of a Middle Eastern family. In a family-oriented culture like in Kuwait, it is not uncommon for the male figure to be responsible for his family and ensure their wellbeing. This social authority is not restricted to the father, who is the head of the family, it also extends to another member of the patriarchy, which is the brother. A brother can also take responsibility for and help the family.

Although most participants did not ask for their parents' permission to join Instagram and Twitter, parents were largely involved in providing advice and guidance when it came to be using these platforms. Participants revealed some of the ways in which a father or a brother supervised their online activity. The following excerpts show how participants described the roles within their family.

Participant 3 shares what her father told her when he found out that she created a Twitter account. She says:

I was young 12 years old I think, and my father didn't allow me to use Twitter. I think he felt that I might be vulnerable to strangers and might believe what they would say to me like having relationships. My father told me that I was still young to use these

apps. Also, some news account services on social media post about everything, some are inappropriate for younger users such as murder incidents and civil law suits and many other problems. So, I understand my father's concern.

Participants talked about incidents where a brother showed the need to interfere in some situations and took responsibility for protecting his sister online and warned about unsuitable behaviors.

Participant 9 discusses her family's strict rule for using Instagram. She recalls:

My father and brother do not allow me to post my pictures on Instagram or use it as a profile picture. Although my Instagram account is private, I'm only allowed to post photos of me when I was younger about 7-10 years old. Even on Snapchat, my parents didn't let me post photos of me. I recently got their permission to do so.

The participant was asked about the reason her family's refusal, she illustrates, "my father told me that he's afraid because I'm a girl and that anyone can get my pictures and videos on these apps and might use them in a bad way."

She adds:

I understand that a girl's reputation is very important, but I'm old enough and I do know my boundaries. It is not just my father also my brother talked to me about posting my pictures. He doesn't allow me to use my photo as a profile picture even though it is very small in size. He told me he's worried about me and he doesn't want my photo to appear to his friends, or anyone who tries to search for the last name on Instagram or even appear on the following suggestions.

Participant 2 is interested art and attends workshops at a center that teaches Islamic art and Arabic calligraphy and has many followers on Instagram. She talks about her brother's advices for her:

My brother always tells me to keep my relationships with the girls and to avoid guys on Instagram, because he says guys usually judge girls and he doesn't want anyone to talk about me in a bad way. Personally, I think it is fine because my followers only discuss calligraphy and drawings. I receive lots of direct messages about how to write a specific word or a letter, and to them [followers] I'm a professional artist. So, it's very common getting these types of questions frequently. On the other hand, I know that there are guys who just want to chat but I delete their messages right away.

Then she shared a conflict that took place between her brother and one of her Instagram followers. She says:

One day, my brother commented on one of my posts and said your handwriting is ugly. of course, he was just teasing me, he does that a lot. I usually don't reply to his comment, I didn't want people to think in a bad way about me after all they don't know that he is my brother. However, there was this guy who replied to my brother's comment and said, 'shut your mouth'. My brother got angry and they both fought and there was so much cursing under the post. Then, I blocked that guy to stop him from adding more comments and deleted all the bad words they said.

Participant 6 also shared an incident that took place with her brother. She reports:

I once posted a photo of me on Instagram showing part of my face; I cropped it and just kept half of my face and smile. My brother was got angry when he saw my post. He said why did you post your photo, you don't know these people [followers] and what they could do with the picture. To be honest, I received a lot of mean and offensive comments from followers, then I immediately deleted it and promised not to post any personal photo from now on.

## **Identity**

Identity in general is commonly known as what determines who we are and how we think of ourselves. Identity, in this research, refers to participants' personality, which they have created online. In other words, how they present themselves to other users on Instagram and Twitter and how this differed across both platforms.

In this section, we will look at the information they disclosed on participants' profiles such as the name and display pictures they use. In addition to the construction of the bio section and the information they provided that shaped their online presence. Further, their online identity sometimes reflects participants' true selves, and other times they prefer to remain hidden or anonymous.

### **Instagram Identity**

Many participants noted using their real names and photos on their Instagram profiles. Of the total participants, 13 stated that they use their real names while 8 use their real photos on their Instagram profiles. In the bio description, many participants kept this field empty. Others who filled it wrote varying statements such prayers, phrases and sayings that they like, and information about where they go to school and their major. The following transcription is what participants shared about their identity on Instagram.

Participant 1 uses her real name on her Instagram profile, but she was very concerned about the use of her photo. She explains:

I can't use my real photo on Instagram. I'm worried most of the time because there are people who misuse photos, I've heard so many stories that girls' photos were stolen and used online. I don't want anything like that happening to me, so I try to avoid it. Now, my profile picture is of a flower. On my bio, I like to mention prayers like 'Thank you God' or 'I ask Allah for forgiveness.' Also, I have my major, but I change it from time to time.

Participant 2 nickname when she first created her Instagram account, but then she changed it to her full name - first and last – when she got into university. She points out, “now that I’m older I felt that I should use my name.” Then, she was asked about her Instagram profile picture she shared a hobby for Arabic calligraphy art and said, “I’m using a picture of my hand holding a pen and my work of an Arabic calligraphy inscription piece. I don’t use my real photo, I don’t think I’m beautiful. Also, in a Bedouin community like ours, it does not accept that a girl should be showing her face to others especially on social media that is filled with people... random people.”

Participant 8 created her first Instagram account in 2012. She used her nickname her family call her with, but it was not familiar to her friends and could not identify her Instagram account. She notes, “I deleted the account and created a new one with my real name because my friends didn’t recognize my account. As for my display picture, I use a photo of me when I was participating in a contest and I was chosen by my department to represent the college.” The only information she disclosed on her Instagram bio description was her college and university name.

### **Multiple Instagram Accounts**

Only three of study participants revealed owning two Instagram accounts for different reasons. The first account was their personal account and the second was specified for either businesses, hobbies, or other purposes.

Participant 13 says her second Instagram account is dedicated for her own small business. She designs and sells handbags and other women accessories on Instagram, the information she provides on the profile is related to her business; name, phone number, and times of operation and delivery.

Participant 7 also has two Instagram accounts. On both of her accounts, she does not use her real name or personal photo. She talked about how she presents herself and the reason

for creating more than one account. She explains, “I don’t use my real name on Instagram, but I use a nickname my father calls me with. My second Instagram account doesn’t have my name or anything that relates to who I am because right now I don’t want my family to find out about it.” Participant 7 shared a passion for art, precisely Arabic calligraphy. She describes her second Instagram account as her art gallery, “I attend a center that offers workshops for Islamic art, my other Instagram account is for sharing my hobby. Regarding the use of my name, I might use it in the future, since at art center our instructors are getting to recognize us and our Instagram accounts and I’m starting to improve myself in calligraphy art, I want them to know me and my work.”

Participant 5 believes that owning multiple accounts is very useful, she said, “I created a fake Instagram account with my sister. There was a guy who asked my father for his permission to marry my sister. Of course, my sister didn’t know this guy, and as soon as we knew his name we searched for him on Instagram. Unfortunately, his account was private, but we followed him using the fake account...My sister took advantage of this account and went through his photos, she looked at where he went and his comments who he talked with and so on... and then she accepted to marry him.”

### **Identity on Twitter**

Many participants reveal their real names on their profiles, that is their first and last names. Others use nicknames that are known among their family and close friends. Alternatively, the use of personal photographs as their profile picture was almost never an option to participants. 12 study participants used their real names on their Twitter profiles and only two participants mentioned that they use their real photos as a profile picture.

Participant 1 says:

Although Twitter causes many problems, I still use my real name, but not my real photo. I use a picture of a flower, the same one I use on my Instagram account. Using

my real name does not scare me as much as using my real picture. Also, Twitter is meant for communicating with others using text, not sharing pictures like Instagram. On Twitter, sometimes I get into serious debates and there are people who disagree with me and I'm afraid that they would do misuse my photo, I can't risk that...I don't like anyone to know everything about me, there is nothing on my bio, I just wrote a prayer.

A few participants pointed out that using their real names on Twitter is. This is what they shared,

Participant 4 spoke at length about the usefulness of using real names on Twitter. Her Twitter interactions were largely for academic purposes, she states, "using my real name on Twitter has its advantages. At this stage [university] I deal with my professors through Twitter, I contact libraries, and participate in contests outside of Kuwait. When I reached out to them using my old Twitter account with a fake name no one responded. So, a real name has its advantages."

Participant 4 had another view about using her personal photo on her Twitter profile. She used her personal photo, but decided to use something else because of an incident, she explained, "I used to have my photo on my Twitter profile. Then, I felt uncomfortable that strangers were looking at my photo so I changed it." The reason she provided is that sometimes people comment on users' photos and insult them. She continued illustrating. "I once participated in a debate at my college, and the dean's department took photos of us and one of them was of me while I was jumping and smiling for winning the debate. Of course, many people saw it. Every time I pass by the hallways in college, I hear them talk about me in a bad way...It was annoying, especially when guys talk and say look at this girl she did this and that." She continued explaining societal rules and how these can be constraining, "it



is better for girls not to post their photos to avoid any problems. Although my sisters post their photos and my family do not mind, but for me I decided not to post it anymore.”

Participant 5 went on talking about her experience in creating her Twitter account she recalls:

The first thing I did when I created my Twitter account was to register with my real name. I started getting more followers, especially people from the branch of our tribe that are out of Kuwait, by just searching the last name. I always ask my father if he knows them and their relation to us, I really liked that I could find some relatives online.

When she was asked whether she uses her photo on her Twitter profile, she said that she only uses a photo of herself when she was a child, or a photo of her nieces and nephews. After probing deeper, she explains:

I wear the niqab (face cover) to cover myself, why would I expose myself to others? What is the use of showing a photo of a girl wearing or covered in black? To be honest, I never thought of using my photo with the niqab as my profile photo. Also, for those who wear the niqab it is expected that they don't share their photo online, it is a social obligation.

Participant 5 Twitter's bio description was about her education mostly. she notes, “I like to change my bio from time to time. I once wrote ‘teacher under construction’ when I was accepted at the college of Education and then I changed it to Kuwait University.”

Participants 6 and 13 were the only ones who reported using their real names and photos on their Twitter profile.

Participant 6 says:

I don't use a fake name on either Twitter or Instagram. Why would I hide my name? I'm also using my personal photo on my Twitter profile, I also don't think I need to

hide that. I'm aware that our culture may play a role in that, I mean a girl's reputation is important, and people might judge them if they used their names or photos. I heard from my friends that they don't use their real names or photos on social media because their parents don't allow them. In the end, it all depends on the family you come from.

Moreover, she said that her bio does not include a lot of information. She says, "I had my previous university's name on my bio, but then I changed it when I got accepted to Kuwait University and wrote a prayer, on both Instagram and Twitter."

Participant 13 reports, "on all of my social media accounts I use my first and last name. it is also fine with me using my real photo on my Twitter profile." When she was asked if her family had another opinion about using her photo she noted, "some of my Twitter followers are my mother's friend, and one day one of them saw my photo and told my mother. It is just a photo of me there was nothing wrong with it. My mother asked: me what is that app you're posting your picture on? Then, I explained to her how Twitter works because she was not familiar with it then she was relieved. Also, as long as I'm wearing decent clothing and respect our culture as Kuwaitis, then that's fine."

Unlike Instagram, most participants did not feel comfortable, rather safe, using their photo on their Twitter profile.

Participant 14 "I use my first and last name and prefer not to use other than my name. Maybe I would use a nickname, something that has a meaning or related to me. I mean a name that's known to others, but not a fake name I don't like that." She is strongly opposed to using her personal photo on her Twitter profile. She clarifies her views saying:

I don't like using my own picture on these apps. I would never use it or show my face. Never. Especially when there are strangers who can see my photos. Right now,

my profile picture is of The Eiffel Tower, because I study French and most of my pictures are related to that. As for my bio, I only wrote university name and major.

Participant 8 and 12 also shared other reasons for not using their real photograph on their Twitter profile. Participant 8 explains:

When I first created my Twitter account, I registered with my real name. I never use my personal photograph as a profile picture on my Twitter account, not even as a child. What I don't like is when you click on someone's profile picture you can enlarge it and save it. I can't control that. So, I use other pictures, mostly from google. My current profile picture is my favorite type of flower. It's not necessary to use my own photo, people would recognize me by my name.

She continued saying, "on my bio, I wrote my university name, college name, and major. I love my college and I love my major so much and I feel proud of it that's why I have it written.

Participant 12 said that she has no problem using her real name on Twitter so people would recognize her. She also shared the same concern about the ability to enlarge Twitter's profile picture. She says:

I can never use my real photo on my Twitter profile. Maybe I would only use a photo of me when I was a child. I don't like the fact that profile pictures can be enlarged if you click on them and people can save them. It would be better if Twitter changed that feature, like Instagram where you can't zoom in on the display unless you get a screenshot, but it would still be blurry.

### **Anonymity and Multiple Twitter Accounts**

Participant 3 talked about an incident with some of her relatives who did not want her using her real name because of her Twitter consumption involved discussions that were not appropriate as this participant reported. She reports, "on my previous Twitter account I used

my full name, but I've had problems with one of my cousins, then my father told me to change it, and I did."

She strongly opposed the use of a personal photograph on a Twitter profile. She says: I don't agree that girls should be using their personal photo on Twitter. I'm a Bedouin and the idea of a girl sharing her photo online is not acceptable. I've seen many guys comment about girls and their photos, sometimes resulting in admonishing them. That's why I use pictures from the internet. It's a Los Angeles street sign, and the reason I chose this picture is because I plan to pursue graduate studies after getting my bachelor's degree and I'm hoping to go to Los Angeles.

Study participants mentioned having two Twitter accounts. These accounts were either fake or represented their real identity. To illustrate, some participants created a second Twitter account specifically for university-related matters. For example, to communicate with their professors regarding class assignment submission, exam dates and sometimes topic discussions. As noted earlier, participants mentioned that they use their real names, so that professor could recognize the students and answer their queries, rather than unidentified accounts that professors may not respond to.

Participant 5 discussed an incident that took place with one of her professors. She says:

I had an 8 a.m. class and most of my tweets were about this class and how I hated getting up early...I complained about the professor but without mentioning his name. I didn't say anything bad though. One day I sent a direct message to my professor asking him about an exam we were going to have. I received a message from him telling me why did I write this about him and his class and that I should love the subject. I'm glad didn't get mad. He ignored my question and went through my tweets

and found what I wrote from weeks back. My account is unprotected and anyone can see my timeline.

She was laughing at what happened and continued saying, “I tweet about: jokes, songs, and complain about different things. I don’t feel comfortable for people like my professors see that...I don’t want them to form ideas about my personality from what I share on Twitter.” Following this incident with participant 5, said that she created another Twitter account specifically for university communications but this time using her initials and tribal last name to avoid any future incidents.

Participant 13 also shared having a second Twitter account for similar reasons; academic purposes. She states, “I created this Twitter account to contact professors, and you know other Twitter accounts that help students.” She was asked for clarifications about Twitter accounts that help students and she explains:

These accounts provide help to students. They assist with finding books, ask about classes and instructors, and look for old homework and exams. Basically, students send a tweet asking about anything related to university or their college, and in turn the owner of the account would either answer the question or retweet it so that other followers can help answering questions and direct them.

She elaborates on the need for a second Twitter account:

These are strangers. I know many students just like me who use their second Twitter account to contact these accounts. I also share my second account with friends, sometimes my friends tell me we don’t to use our own accounts...they don’t want their names to be visible to these strangers and they might scroll through our tweets. So, I only use my second account when I need to contact these accounts and ask about class.

Participant 11 was hesitant when she discussed her reasons for creating two Twitter accounts. She states, “when I created two Twitter accounts, the second one became more personal and I felt attached to it.” She was asked to elaborate about her purpose:

The first Twitter has my real name and my family are following me, but I mostly retweet news updates, and I can’t express what I want to say. On the second account, I only added my close friends and we talk and share many things. it’s like our chatting space. But, I don’t use my real name because I don’t want my family to find out about it. As I said they are following me on my first account.

Speaking of personal space and freedom to express oneself, participant 10 shared a similar notion. She explains, “I used to have a fake Twitter account that I created recently, but I forgot the password and the email address I used to register. Since it was a fake account, the username was random alphabets that’s why I forgot the login information.”

She seemed irritated when she discussed her reason for creating an anonymous account, she notes, “I created that account so I can share and write anything I want. I want to express my feelings and what I go through and I can’t do that on my personal account.”

When she was asked about the difference between expressing herself on both accounts she explains:

I can’t do that on my personal account. My friends interfere a lot and tell me why did I say that or sometimes they ask me who I meant in that tweet. I don’t understand why if anyone tweeted then it is meant for someone. Other times if I expressed a feeling I’m going through, my friends don’t like it, they tell me don’t show your weakness to others. I consider Twitter as my private space, I want to share anything I want and I could only do that with a fake account so no one would interfere.

Many participants had the same notions about Twitter, that is: you can freely write whatever you want. However, expressing their feelings has led others to judge them and

misunderstand what really meant. One participant states, “I don’t like when people judge me by what I tweet about.”

Another participant notes:

sometimes I tweet about things that is not related to but people think something else. For example, if I tweeted part of a song and it talks about love or missing someone, people ask me who is that guy? Who are you talking about? this is wrong. When I tweet, I like to I say whatever I want without having people to think that I mean someone.

### **Choices and Decisions**

This theme signifies the technical aspect of managing Instagram and Twitter accounts and the participants’ selection between having a public or a private account, as well as choosing and accepting followers.

Joining Instagram or Twitter is simple and effortless. Similarly, the options for managing profiles are easy to navigate. One topic of discussion was selecting between public or private accounts and how they manage these settings.

Participants stressed that it was essential for their Twitter accounts to be public. Thirteen participants said that they chose to keep their tweets public; their reasons behind this selection differed. However, most participants agreed that allowing their thoughts to be visible and sharing them with the public was permissible. On the other hand, most participants maintained private Instagram accounts, simply because they were sharing their personal photos and did not want strangers to see this.

For participants who have public Twitter accounts, all followers can directly interact with them without approval. However, participants carefully selected who can follow them on Instagram, regardless of the account setting they kept track of their followers. Participants

almost shared the same behavior in allowing strangers to follow them; avoiding obscene content.

Participant 3 explains choosing between public and private accounts. She says: my twitter account is public. I hate private Twitter accounts, it is useless. No one would be able to see my tweets and share if my account were private. The whole idea of Twitter is to share your thoughts. How would I reach people and get retweeted on something I wrote? I enjoy it a lot when people forward my tweet.” Then, she talked about the types of followers she allows on her accounts:

I have no problem with people following me, as long as they respect the boundaries. Most of my followers are strangers...I rarely check who follows me, but the first thing I see is their display pictures. If it is not offensive then I will keep them. Sometimes, I read a tweet and I would love to forward it, but their photo is inappropriate and I don't want it to appear in my timeline.

Participant 10 has a similar view, she says:

I kept my twitter account public because I don't share personal photos like I do on Instagram. On twitter, you interact with the words you are typing you share your ideas so if any of my followers saw my tweet they won't be able to retweet it if the account was private. Then what's the point of tweeting in a private account?

When it comes to her followers, this participant said she makes sure her followers are good people. She meant, “there are people who show their bodies especially guys, and I don't like to see these kinds of pictures. I also like to check if the name they are using is suitable, if not then I will block them.”

Participant 11 reports the use of two accounts and how she manages their settings:

The main Twitter account is public and the second account is more personal which is why I set it to private and no one can follow me except the people I want. I created it



for me and my close friends, we chat a lot in the timeline, I share daily events, and it helped me reach out to my friends, and I don't allow my family here.

She continued talking about the public Twitter account, "I never thought of changing the account settings...people would only follow me if we share similar interests. I mostly follow political news...I don't write anything personal on this account, I always do on my private account." When she was asked about her followers she said, "if I noticed new followers, I first look at their display picture is the most important thing. For example, I once saw a photo of a girl but she wasn't wearing decent clothes so I immediately delete her."

Participant 15 always had a public Twitter account, but she just changed this setting. She initially explained the feeling of being embarrassed that her professors can see her conversations with her friends. She recalls an incident that involved two of her professors who had a disagreement and students were defending one of them on Twitter. She explains:

Our professor commented about our tweets in class in disfavor about our opinion, but he never mentioned our names. Also, he blocked one of the students for defending the other doctor! I don't follow him but that made me uncomfortable so I decided to make my account private.

This participant keeps her Instagram account is private, she notes, "Instagram is kind of personal it has my family photos. I only add who I want, but there are some home business accounts I accept them to follow me."

Participant 2 is one of the few participants who have a public Instagram account. She proudly spoke about the number of her followers and she hopes to be famous on Instagram and known as a calligraphy artist. She says "I kept my account public to share my artwork and gain more followers. Right now, I have over 6000 followers, but I want to get more than that."

Participant 7 has two Instagram accounts and she explains the account settings on both. She says, “my personal Instagram is private, I can’t allow strangers on this account. Although I don’t share my own photos, but I share photos of my family; siblings, nieces, and nephews. It is hard to keep it open to the public.” Then was asked to elaborate the settings of her second account. She explains:

This is my art gallery and I my artwork in calligraphy. I attend workshops and learn new things and share them with people who have the same interest. So, there is nothing personal in that account. It is just that my family do not know that I created this account.

She provided an explanation for that, “to be honest I didn’t want anyone to interfere and I’m not doing anything wrong with the Instagram account. My discussions with others are limited to art. Also, at this age of our lives, parents should expect us to have some privacy.

Participant 8 shares her decisions for accepting followers she says:

I don’t randomly add people on my Instagram account, it’s only for my family and relatives. I try to choose who follows me carefully, I hardly accept female acquaintances; at college, I don’t add them right away before knowing them very well because I share personal and private pictures, and I only like to add people I can trust.

This participant chose to unprotect her Twitter account. She says:

I don’t post much things about myself, or any personal information. So, it doesn’t really matter who follows me too. I only use my account to follow professors at college, ask them about assignments or exams, and class announcements...I think Twitter is for communicating with people all over the world and read what they say their opinions, and this is what makes Twitter special.

Participant 4 has a public Twitter account and shares some of its disadvantages. She reports, "...it caused me so much trouble...I get a lot of comments that bother me. I usually ignore them or sometimes block them." This participant shares another incident that took place with her step-mother, she says:

My step-mother also keeps watching what I post, she spies on me and tells my father about it. But there was nothing wrong with my tweets, she is just trying to cause problems. This is what I don't like about having a public account. If someone wants to follow me I have no problem with that and it doesn't matter if it was a guy or a girl as long as they are respectable. I mean I can discuss things on Twitter, but if a guy kept chatting pointlessly with no reason, I would block them.

Participant 1 also has a public Twitter account and she accepts strange followers, but she has few criteria for that. She explains:

I have about 400 followers. My decision to keep or delete my followers is based on their profile. If their display picture is not acceptable and offensive then I will delete them. Another thing is their bio. I remember one follower who wrote that he is a hacker. I was frightened then I blocked him. I also look at their content, what do they say and how they talk to other followers. On Instagram, it is different. My account is private because it is not just my photos, it has my family photos too, when we're at home, places I went to, so it is not acceptable to share these with strangers.

The next chapter will analyze and discuss the findings of this research. It will explain the connections of the results in light of the literature addressed. Also, it will highlight implications and finally propose suggestions for future research paths.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION**

This research aimed to explore young Kuwaiti females' perceptions of privacy on social networking sites and their behaviors in protecting their information on Instagram and Twitter. This research was conducted in the spring of 2017 through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with 15 female students. The semi-structured, face-to-face interviews provided deeper understanding of privacy and how cultural norms guided their SNS use.

This research was guided by two research questions: What information do Kuwaiti females disclose on Instagram and Twitter? How do Instagram and Twitter differ in managing privacy? The analysis of the data emerged themes: 1) Watching over; 2) Identity; and 3) Choices and decisions.

Further, this chapter analyzes and discusses the findings of this research and explains the connection of the results in light of the literature addressed. Also, it highlights implications, and finally proposes suggestions for future research.

#### **Discussion and Implications**

##### **What Information do Kuwaiti Females Disclose on SNS?**

The overall results showed that young Kuwaiti females' disclosure of information differed in depth on Instagram and Twitter. Disclosure of information was not limited to what was posted on their Twitter timeline and Instagram feed, it was also important to include the information they provided in their profiles. Although Instagram and Twitter have similar features, the form and function are quite different. Instagram is designed to communicate through visual content, such as photos and videos. Interaction on Twitter is text-based but can

also use photos and videos. To understand the type of information these young Kuwaiti females provided, we will look at each platform separately.

The information these young Kuwaiti females disclosed on Instagram was more “personal” and “private” related to photos and videos, as they described it. These photos and videos showed their face, as well as other family members, relatives, and close friends. In addition, the photos shared information on events and gatherings that took place at their homes or at relatives’ homes. Some examples of these events include weekly family gatherings, hang out with friends, birthdays and holiday celebrations, and other social occasions. Moving on to Instagram profiles, the information in the bio field varied. Some young Kuwaiti females chose to keep the description empty and did not include any information. Others revealed their university name and major or college. While others still preferred to write prayers or their favorite quotes.

Moreover, revealing their identity on Instagram was acceptable to most young Kuwaiti females. They did not think it was a “problem” using their real names and real photos as their profile picture. However, there were a few who did not use their real photos because of some cultural influences. As mentioned in the findings, Kuwaiti culture is family-oriented and usually the male figure (father or brother) takes care of his daughters or sisters and ensures their safety. In Arab culture, it is necessary for females to protect themselves and above all, their reputation, to avoid hurting the image of the family. Also, many young Kuwaiti females constantly referred to Instagram with praise using words such as “nice,” “pleasant,” and “joyful.” It seemed that these females placed much of their trust in Instagram. This could be attributed to the fact that Instagram has a distinctive experience in Kuwait and it has become an important entrepreneurial mobile platform for shopping and selling items, products, and services.

Young Kuwaiti females made a clear assertion of their awareness of their Kuwaiti cultural values. Therefore, any personal photos and videos disclosed on Instagram are not shared with the public. Rather, these females managed to protect their Instagram accounts by setting their profiles to private. They affirmed that strangers do not have access to their profiles and their followers list is tightly managed; only family, relatives, and close friends are their followers. This is aligned with several studies that mentioned Arab cultural values influence the use of social networking sites as it relates to sharing personal information, with females, specifically, preferring to set their accounts to private (Abokhodair et al., 2017; Al-Kandari et al., 2016; Al-Saggaf, 2011).

Considering Twitter account settings, most young Kuwaiti females had unprotected Twitter profiles, meaning anyone has the capability of viewing their profiles. Interestingly on Twitter, the disclosure of information was deeper given the nature of this platform and relates to exchanging ideas and sharing opinions. It could be inferred from the results that young Kuwaiti females are heavy Twitter users and some of them love using this platform. They referred to it as “my home,” “my diary,” and “my chatting space.”

As far as the information they share in their timeline, young Kuwaiti females used this platform to chat with their friends. Also, they were interested in posting about different topics. For instance, some of these are found in Hamade (2013) and related to fashion and entertainment (poems, music, movies, and TV shows). In addition, other information such as jokes, trending hashtags, and where they are (i.e. travel location). The most prominent theme among these females on Twitter was the ability to express their feelings, their state of mind, the things they liked and do not like. Most was related to university, classes, traffic congestion, engaging in activities, and incidents that happened to them.

It is worth mentioning these that young Kuwaiti females shared photos and videos on Twitter; however, none of this content showed their faces or who they are. They attached

photos or videos to what they tweet about. To illustrate, if they were complaining about exams, they would take a picture of the book they were studying and tweet about it, or they would shoot a video of the road while music played in the background, except they showcased their own voices. In addition, only a few mentioned using third-party apps such as Swarm to share their location, as well as ASKfm and Saraha, where users can anonymously comment or ask questions and post them on Twitter. Remarkably, young Kuwaiti females were not involved in politics, even though they follow local news and know about recent events in the country. They preferred to avoid political discussions.

Most young Kuwaiti females disclosed their real names (first and last) on Twitter. Their own explanation behind this selection is that they felt that are grown up and responsible. It could be that these young females did not feel that disclosing names as harmful as sharing a personal photo. It was very troubling and unacceptable to share personal photos on their Twitter profiles. However, they preferred to use photos of landscapes, cartoon characters, flowers, drawings, and paintings, or sometimes pictures they took with their smartphones of coffee cups and street signs, some of these were similar to what Hamade (2013) uncovered.

Culturally speaking, young Kuwaiti females all agreed that their photos should be concealed and not be presented to strangers. Secondly, Twitter display pictures can be enlarged and saved. This technical issue was of much concern to these females because photos may be spread around and used to harm these females. Another important finding to point out is the bio section of the profile. Besides providing their real names, young Kuwaiti females included their university name and/or major, prayers, and favorite quotes. This is somewhat similar to their Instagram profiles. Moreover, one's birthday was among the most disclosed field; but they did not consider their date of birth to be private information or harmful to share.

Location was another interesting point to consider—young Kuwaiti females were willing to provide information on location in their profiles as well as in the tweet itself. Their perceptions of sharing their location were varied. Only a few felt that if they disclosed their location information, other users would locate their precise location (where they are at the moment). In addition, they were more conversant with the technology itself and did not enable the location settings on their smartphones. Only when they decide to change that option will they be able to post visual content.

On the other hand, young Kuwaiti females disclosed the country location in the bio; however, most of them did not show their location in their tweets. They identified the location depending on if the place was worth sharing, if it had been somewhere they liked, or when traveling. Though they did not provide additional explanation for that selection, nonetheless, location settings did not seem to be a major concern for these females. It could be a preference that they occasionally chose to share in an effort to let others know where they are the moment they tweeted.

Some of them revealed owning two Twitter accounts. The type of information that these young Kuwaiti females shared depended on the purpose of the account created. As discussed in the previous chapter, they mentioned that they created a second Twitter account specifically for the university. Although they used their real names on their profiles, they were not active on this account and the type of information they shared was limited to academic content such as communicating with professors, inquiring about classes, and searching for books. Also, this way they can avoid curious strangers who will not find any of their personal tweets on their timeline.

Another important reason for creating this account is based on the fear of being surveilled. Young Kuwaiti females complained about being surveilled by their professors. Several have mentioned that sometimes their professors go through their tweets and read



what they have tweeted about. They expressed feeling uncomfortable that their professors read everything they have posted on Twitter. Moreover, they were more concerned about their self-image and feeling embarrassed because of the language they use when communicating with their friends on Twitter. Furthermore, young Kuwaiti females mentioned that some professors were sarcastic when they found a tweet about them, but others told stories about professors who took actions against students who commented on coursework or instructional practices, though not in a negative way.

Another type of Twitter account mentioned is the anonymous account. these females kept their accounts completely anonymous; they did not include any identifiable information. Instead, they used random letters and numbers and fake photos. To these young Kuwaiti females, hiding their identity on Twitter served different purposes. One was based on the expression “Freedom to Tweet.” Using their anonymous account gives them the feeling that they can express themselves explicitly and away from their friends’ surveillance. Surveillance here means the act of inspecting the tweets of other people by followers. young Kuwaiti females often complained about judgement and misinterpretation of their tweets. For example, some shared song lyrics, poems, or famous quotes to convey how they felt. However, their friends or relatives would believe that their words were meant to be about someone. Other times, if they expressed an opinion, they would be judged for their own thoughts. Just as Christopherson (2007) summarized, “One can be completely anonymous within the Internet, but still express thoughts and emotions without fear of being identified and socially evaluated and examples can be found on individual blogs throughout the Internet” (p. 3041).

Further, young Kuwaiti females admitted that they kept their identity partially hidden from family and relatives, only allowing them to access their first Twitter account. This split identity on Twitter offered them feelings of freedom. If we looked at the definitions of

privacy that they provided earlier, this concept included family and friends. However, secrecy did not include interference from any family member—and they asserted secrecy is a fundamental right. Also, they did not speak about engaging in relationships with male counterparts, which was found with Kaposi (2014) and Wheeler (2003).

### **How Do Instagram and Twitter Differ in Managing Privacy?**

The literature discussed adjusting privacy settings and the management of these options on social networking sites. Research findings show that young Kuwaiti females are conversant about technology, specifically Instagram and Twitter. Moreover, females were aware of the ways to protect their profiles on both platforms and adjusted their privacy settings accordingly. However, it is important to note that there were considerable distinctions on Instagram and Twitter concerning account restrictions and the choice of a private or public account.

The first difference was deciding between a public or a private account. This decision is associated with the social networking site itself. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), “The visibility of a profile varies by site and according to user discretion” (p.213). On Twitter, females preferred to keep their accounts public (unprotected), as opposed to Instagram where they maintained private accounts (protected). Their decision behind this selection was mainly based on cultural values. From the interview data, young Kuwaiti females justified having a private Instagram account simply because, as mentioned earlier, they disclose personal photos and videos of their family, relatives, and friends as well as the places they go. Therefore, these are considered private and cannot be shared with the public online.

Drawing from the literature, privacy of an individual does not only mean protecting information about oneself, but it extends to their behaviors and personal space as well, which

in this case is their home. This is also a value found in Islamic religion—that one must be discreet and protect their private lives.

Unlike Western cultures, Kuwait as an Arab collectivist society depends on its group members or extended family relations. Also, it is governed by cultural norms, which means that there are certain behaviors that one must adhere to; for instance, avoiding shame because what falls on one family member will impact the rest of its members. According to Vieweg and Hodges (2016), females, in particular, are expected to behave appropriately and within cultural guidelines. They must protect their reputation so that shame will not reach the rest of the family.

Certainly, sharing personal photos or videos on SNS could have negative consequences on a female's reputation and family honor. It was apparent in the interview data that when these young Kuwaiti females reiterated the idea that if this content fell in the wrong hands it would be passed around, and everyone would see it. Vieweg and Hodges (2016) explained, "There is a sense that photos of one's face are not meant to be seen or shared among strangers" (p. 532). Furthermore, these concerns also stemmed from witnessing real-life situations: Incidents regarding rumors and photos of girls were widely spread along with their names on Instagram and Twitter. Therefore, females chose to protect their personal photos and videos by creating a private Instagram account and avoiding posting personal information on unprotected Twitter accounts.

As explained previously, young Kuwaiti females believed it was acceptable to share personal photos on their Instagram profile; however, on Twitter, display pictures can be enlarged and this made them feel uncomfortable about posting personal photos.

The amount of information shared in bios differed between these platforms. Most these females had more personal information on their Twitter bio than they did on their Instagram profile. One interpretation of this could be due to the platform itself. To illustrate,

on Twitter at the time of registration, users are asked to provide specific profile information along with a statement from Twitter, i.e. name, photo (have a favorite selfie?), bio (what makes you special? Don't think too hard), location (find people in the same location as you), website, and birthday. This field provides more options to choose from and allows the adjustment of visibility of the date of birth and/or year. On the other hand, Instagram is straightforward; it offers the same fields, but in a simpler way by listing them under each other (name, username, website, and bio). It is up to the user to fill in the fields they desire.

The amount of information young Kuwaiti females shared could also be associated with their followers. They kept their Twitter accounts public and open to a wider audience. This means they had to introduce themselves to those who do not know them. While on Instagram their accounts were protected, so they had a smaller and limited circle of friends and relatives, therefore it might not be necessary to tell more about themselves because their followers know them very well.

### **Conclusion**

The literature review addressed the importance of privacy in many Western countries, but very little is known about this issue in the Arab nation, specifically Kuwait. This research investigated Kuwaiti females' perceptions of privacy on social networking sites and their behaviors in protecting their information on Instagram and Twitter. The data collection method used was semi-structured face-to-face interviews with fifteen Kuwaiti female students at Kuwait University. These interviews provided a much deeper understanding of privacy concerns held by young Kuwaiti females. Interviews also uncovered cultural influences and how these steered their way when consuming the social networking sites in question. While both platforms offer unique experiences, privacy settings and the type and depth of information these young Kuwaiti females disclosed differed across them.

Though functionality of Instagram and Twitter were modified according to their use, there were some influences and concerns. This study showed, the disclosed information that young Kuwaiti females shared was influenced by social and technical concerns. The technical influence, though it was not investigated in depth, showed that young Kuwaiti females considered this feature when structuring their use of SNS. For example, the display picture on Twitter was problematic to females because of its ability to be enlarged, saved, and shared. Furthermore, female photos are meant to be private and should not be accessed by strangers. While on Instagram, display pictures cannot be enlarged and they felt that it was safer to share their personal photo on this profile.

The social influence was obvious through the supervision of male figures in these females' lives, such as the father and the brother. They were involved not only in providing advice and guidance but also acted as a shield to protect these females and their honor from any harm that might come their way. It has been established that women are more concerned and aware about their privacy when compared to men (Al-Saggaf, 2011; Mohamed, 2012; Tufekci, 2007). This concern rises due to the fact that females are expected to behave according to their culture and tradition; most important is avoiding shame and safeguarding their reputation.

Additionally, Kuwaiti females appreciate their cultural values and are concerned about their personal information. They fear for their reputation and are aware that if their photos fell into the wrong hands it will affect their reputation. Personal photos were of more concern to young Kuwaiti females. They refused sharing their personal photo on Twitter, and this was obvious in their feelings towards Twitter as a political platform that causes problems. Although females showed major concerns toward Twitter, they insisted on using this platform and calling it "my home."

It is interesting how these platforms can be challenging to these Kuwaiti females. This challenge lies between maintaining cultural values and utilizing the platform itself.

According to Al-Kandari et al. (2016) “some Kuwaiti Instagram users may find in this social medium a conduit for opinion exchange and self-expression about the self while others will be less prone to be open or frank about providing honest opinions of what they...” (p.14).

This was clearly related to how Kuwaiti females applied privacy mechanisms to protect their identity on Twitter. Further, anonymity seemed to be desirable among Kuwaiti females as it gave them more space to share anything on their minds without being surveilled. This is consistent with Altman’s (1977) notion discussed earlier, that privacy is a cultural factor affected by cultural behavioral mechanisms to regulate privacy.

This study also showed that Young Kuwaiti females maintained control over their personal information. In fact, they were able to demonstrate their awareness of the type of information they allowed other users to view. This means that the disclosure of information incorporates a process of selecting pieces of what to be revealed and concealed as a form of regulating privacy, this what Altman calls “selective controlling of how self is accessed” (p.11). This technique is also found in previous research Al-Kandari et al., (2016), researchers assert that Kuwaiti females are selective in the depth of self-disclosure and show more reserve in sharing personal information which might affect their reputation.

### **Future Research**

This research explored the perceptions of Kuwaiti female students about privacy on Instagram and Twitter, the information they shared, and the cultural aspects. Future research may extend by broadening the scope to include males’ perspectives on privacy. Moreover, and as of late, the rise of influencers on social networking sites have been prominent in Kuwait. It could be helpful to find out what influencers’ notions of privacy are given that most of what they share is considered private; however, where do they draw the line? And

how do Kuwaiti cultural norms guide them in using SNS?

Also, at some point during the interview process, young Kuwaiti females mentioned other platforms such Snapchat. The idea of Snapchat is sharing self-destructed content with other. This feature may seem entertaining to some users, additional research must be completed to study the type of content and information users share in relation to privacy.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Guide**

Interview questions were borrowed and adapted from Norah Abokhodair (2016).

1. When did you start using social networks [Twitter – Instagram]?
2. What do you like and dislike about them?
3. Have you asked for permission from you family to use Twitter and Instagram? How do they feel?
4. How many accounts do you have?
5. Let's talk about friends, how many friends do you have on [Twitter – Instagram]?  
Do you know all of them?  
How do you decide whether or not to approve friends?  
Do you ever add strangers? What do you look for in people's profiles that determine whether you add them or not?
6. How do you feel about people who use fake user names or pictures?  
Do you use a fake pictures or pseudonyms?  
Do you have friends who do that?  
Why do they use fake pictures or pseudonyms?  
Would you friend them?
7. What concerns do you have when using [Twitter – Instagram]?
8. How have [Twitter – Instagram] in general changed you and your lifestyle?
9. How do you express yourself on [Twitter – Instagram]?
10. What factors do you think of when you are constructing your profile?
11. Was there a time when you regretted a post?
12. What do you know about privacy policy of [Twitter – Instagram]?
13. Have you noticed the apps [Twitter – Instagram] permission to access camera, or photo gallery, etc.? How did you feel?
14. Let's talk about cybercrime law, what do you know about it? What do you think of this about?

## Appendix B

### Informed Consent



إقرار بالموافقة على المشاركة في دراسة بحثية  
مقترح رقم: 00028934

هذه الدراسة البحثية تتضمن فقط الأشخاص الذين يتم اختيارهم للمشاركة، ويسمى هذا المستند "نموذج إقرار بالموافقة على المشاركة في بحث" لذا يرجى التفضل بقراءة هذه المعلومات أدناه بعناية وأخذ الوقت الكافي لـ اتخاذ قرارك، يمكنك طلب مناقشة هذا الإقرار مع الباحث أو طاقم البحث معك لـ توضيح أي كلمات أو معلومات غير مفهومة تماماً لك. كما يمكنك اخذ رأي أسرتك أو أصدقائك قبل اتخاذ قرارك بالموافقة على المشاركة في هذا البحث. المعلومات الخاصة بطبيعة الدراسة والمعلومات الأخرى حول الدراسة موجودة أدناه.

في هذا الإقرار نحن نطلب منك المشاركة في دراسة بحثية عنوانها:  
مشاكل الخصوصية في مواقع شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي للإنترنت

الشخص المسئول عن هذه الدراسة البحثية هي شهد شهاب، وتسمى بـ الباحث الرئيسي. مع العلم أن هناك طاقم بحثي قد يشارك ويشرف على الشخص المسئول، وهي تخضع في هذه الدراسة البحثية لإشراف الدكتور سكوت ليو في جامعة جنوب فلوريدا. وسوف يتم إجراء هذا البحث في حرم جامعة الكويت أو في أي مكان يفضله المشاركون طالما تم الحفاظ فيه على السرية المطلوبة.

#### الغرض من الدراسة

إن الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو بحث مفهوم الخصوصية لدى الكوئيتيات على مواقع شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي وكذلك سلوكهم في حماية معلوماتهم المتاحة على الانترنت وسوف يتم استخدام مواقع شبكتي للتواصل الاجتماعي وهما إنستغرام وتويتر. لذا فإننا في هذه الدراسة سوف نقوم بالتسجيل الصوتي للمقابلة لكل مشاركة من أجل إجراء تحليل أعمق مع العلم أنه سيتم مراعاة مخاوف الخصوصية وكذلك التحديات التي تعوق تحقيق فهم أفضل للمعتقدات الثقافية والدينية والتي قد تؤثر على حماية الخصوصية و/أو التي تطبق في مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي هذه.

#### لماذا طلب منك المشاركة؟

إننا نطلب منك المشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية نظراً لأنك أنثى كويتية في جامعة حكومية وخصوصاً أنك في مرحلة الحصول على درجة البكالوريوس أو الدراسات العليا، وتمتلكي حسابين في إنستغرام وتويتر. إجراءات الدراسة

في حال مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة، سيطلب منك ما يلي:

- المشاركة في المقابلة التي يجريها الباحث، وهذه المقابلات سوف تسجل صوتياً ويتم تحليلها. وقد يختلف مكان إجراء المقابلة وفقاً لتفضيلاتك أنت، حيث قد تعقد في الحرم الجامعي أو مكان آخر تفضليه طالما يمكن المحافظة فيه على الهدوء والخصوصية.
- في هذه المقابلة، ستسألين عن استخدامك لبرامج إنستغرام وتويتر، ومنى كانت أول مرة استخدمتي فيها شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي، وكيف تختاري أصدقائك على الانترنت، والمعلومات المتاحة على صفحتك الشخصية وعن

حساباتك على مواقع شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي، علماً بأن مدة المقابلة غير محددة ، ولكنها ستستغرق ما بين 30-60 دقيقة اعتماداً على الأسئلة التي ستطرح عليك.

- كافة المعلومات المتاحة في المقابلة محفوظة بسرية تامة، وهذا يعني أن أي معلومات تعطىها عنك لن يتم الإفصاح عنها في التقرير النهائي، ولن يستخدم أي معلومات تعريفية، وسوف يستخدم اسم مستعار في حالة اقتباس شيء من إجاباتك، وسوف يكون الوصول إلى التسجيل الصوتي مقتصرًا على الباحث فقط، وقد تستخدم المعلومات التي يتم جمعها في أغراض تعليمية، بالإضافة إلى ذلك سوف تقدم في المؤتمرات المحلية.

#### إجمالي عدد المشاركين

عدد المشاركين في البحث تقريبا 10 إناث كويتيات في مراحل الدراسة الجامعية والدراسات العليا في هذه الدراسة البحثية.

#### البدائل / المشاركة التطوعية / الانسحاب

يلزمك المشاركة فقط في هذه الدراسة إذا كنت ترغب في أن تكون متطوعة. ولا ينبغي أن تشعر بالحرَج إذا كان هناك أي ضغط بمارس عليك للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة، فأنت حرة للمشاركة في هذا البحث أو الانسحاب في أي وقت. ولن يكون هناك أي عقوبة أو خسارة لمنافع كان من المقرر منحها لك إذا توقفت عن المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

#### الفوائد:

ليس هناك أي فوائد مباشرة تعود عليك من هذه الدراسة. لكن قد يضيف هذا البحث إلى المعرفة المتاحة في مجال الإعلام الرقمي، حيث لم يتم إجراء بحوث كثيرة عن أمور الخصوصية في شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي في قليم الدول العربية، وخصوصا في دول مجلس التعاون الخليجي، حيث تتيح هذه الدراسة تحقيق فهم أكبر بشأن أمور الخصوصية على شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي، كما أن قضايا الخصوصية نادرا ما تناقش في السياق الكويتي ومن ثم فهناك حاجة إلى أبحاث جديدة في هذا المجال، وبتقديم هذه النتائج سوف تساعد في شرح مخاوف الخصوصية وزيادة مستوى وعي الخصوصية بالمستخدمين لشبكات التواصل الاجتماعي.

#### المخاطر وعدم الراحة

يتضمن هذا البحث الحد الأدنى من المخاطر، وهذا يعني أن المخاطر المصاحبة لهذه الدراسة تشابه تلك التي تواجهك في حياتك اليومية، حيث لا يوجد مخاطر معروفة قد تواجه الأشخاص الذين قد يشاركون في هذا البحث.

#### الدفع

لن تحصل على أي مدفوعات أو تعويضات نظير المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

#### التكاليف:

لن تكلفك المشاركة في هذه الدراسة أي شيء

#### الخصوصية والسرية

كل البيانات والتسجيلات ستحفظ بشكل سري وآمن. الاطلاع على تسجيلات الدراسة مقتصر على:

- فريق البحث وهذا يتضمن الباحث الأساسي ومنسق الدراسة ومساعدتي الدراسة وكافة طاقم عمل الدراسة الآخرين
- بعض من الأشخاص المسؤولين في الحكومة أو الجامعة الذين يلزمهم معرفة الكثير عن هذه الدراسة ، وكذلك الأشخاص الذين يشرفوا على الدراسة لضمان أنها تتم بالشكل الصحيح.
- هيئة المراجعة المؤسسية لجامعة جنوب فلوريدا (Institutional Review Board) وطاقم العمل المصاحب الذين لهم حق الإشراف على مسؤوليات هذه الدراسة وهذا يتضمن فريق عمل الالتزام والتكامل البحثي لجامعة جنوب فلوريدا

وقد يتم نشر ما تم تعلمه من هذه الدراسة، وفي حالة القيام بذلك، فلن يتم تضمين اسمك، ولن يتم نشر أي شيء قد يسمح لأي شخص بالتعرف على هويتك.

يمكنك الحصول على إجابات على أسئلتك ومخاوفك وشكاويك

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة أو مخاوف أو شكاوى بشأن هذه الدراسة، أو تعرضت لأي مشاكل غير متوقعة، يمكن الاتصال بالاستاذة شهد شهاب على رقم 99277771 (965+)

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة بشأن حقوق المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، أو لديك أي شكاوى، أو مخاوف أو أمور ترغب في مناقشتها مع شخص خارج البحث، يمكنك الاتصال على هيئة المراجعة المؤسسية لجامعة جنوب فلوريدا على رقم (813)

974-5638 أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني على [RSCH-IRB@usf.edu](mailto:RSCH-IRB@usf.edu)

### الموافقة على المشاركة في هذا البحث

أقر أنا الموقع أدناه ب موافقتي على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة وبمطلق حريتي. وأنفهم أنني بموجب توقيع على هذا النموذج فإنني أوافق على المشاركة في هذا البحث، وقد حصلت على نسخة من هذا النموذج لي.

التاريخ

توقيع المشارك في الدراسة

اسم الشخص المشارك في الدراسة

### إقرار الشخص الحاصل على الموافقة

أقر بأني قد أوضحت بعناية للشخص المشارك في هذه الدراسة كافة إجراءات البحث وما هو متوقع من مشاركتهم. وأكد على شرح أن شرح الإقرار وكذلك إجراءات البحث قد تمت باللغة الأساسية التي يتحدث بها المشارك في هذا البحث وهي اللغة العربية. كنا أن المشارك الموقع أعلاه قام بتقديم موافقة فعالة على المشاركة في البحث وبشكل قانوني.

التاريخ

توقيع الشخص الحاصل على إقرار الموافقة

اسم الشخص الحاصل على الموافقة

## Appendix C

### IRB Letter of Approval



RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE  
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669  
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799  
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

January 9, 2017

Shahad Shihab  
School of Advertising and Mass Communications  
Tampa, FL 33612

RE: **Expedited Approval for Initial Review**  
IRB#: Pro00028934  
Title: Traversing Privacy Issues on Social Networking Sites Among Kuwaiti Females

**Study Approval Period: 1/9/2017 to 1/9/2018**

Dear Ms. Shihab:

On 1/9/2017, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

**Approved Item(s):**

**Protocol Document(s):**

[Study protocol version 1](#)

**Consent/Assent Document(s)\*:**

[Student Arabic.docx.pdf](#)

[Student English.docx.pdf](#)

\*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,



Kristen Salomon, Ph.D., Vice Chairperson  
USF Institutional Review Board

## Appendix D

### Letter of Support

مكتب العميد المساعد للشؤون الطلابية  
Vice Dean Office for Students Affairs

كلية الهندسة والبتروك  
College of Engineering & Petroleum

جامعة الكويت  
Kuwait University



University of South Florida  
Media Studies

December 14, 2016

#### To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter of support for Shahad Shihab, a graduate student in Media Studies at the University of South Florida. I give my permission to Shahad Shihab to conduct her study related to (Traversing Privacy on Social Networking Sites among Kuwaiti Females).

Sincerely,

  
Prof. Khaled A. Al-Hazza  
Vice Dean For Student Affairs  
College of Engineering & Petroleum  
Kuwait University

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