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YOUTH IN THE ARAB WORLD

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Media Habits of MENA Youth:

A Three-Country Survey

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Research and Policy Forum on Youth in the Arab World
With a foundation of 30 faculty members at AUB, the Research and Policy Forum on Youth in the Arab World acts as a meeting point, catalyst and central repository for Arab-international research and policy on Arab youth.

Rami G. Khouri — *IFI Director*
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Muneira Hoballah — *Program Research Assistant*

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Principal Investigator: Jad Melki

Jad Melki, the research director of the International Center for Media and the Public Agenda (ICMPA) and a faculty member at the Salzburg Academy, is an assistant professor of journalism and media studies at the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the American University of Beirut. Previously, he was a visiting professor at Johns Hopkins University teaching courses in research methods, media and society, media literacy, and media, war and terrorism. Melki has been a broadcast and online journalist for over 12 years working with American and Arabic media. He was part of the Webby award and Press Club award winning Hot Zone team (Yahoo! News), covering the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon. He received his Ph.D. in journalism and media studies from the Phillip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, College Park.

This study has undergone rigorous blind peer reviewing by international scholars.

Foreword

We are very pleased to sponsor Jad Melki's significant work in the field of youth media habits. This kind of empirical research is critically important at a time when there is a lot of public rhetoric about Arab youth that is not always supported by credible research. With new insight into how this segment of surveyed young Arabs use new media we are happy to contribute to filling this gap.

This kind of policy-relevant research is very much in line with IFI's mission to conduct research across the region from all sectors of society. High school and university students were surveyed from three Arab countries. Phase 2 of this project will be to expand this survey to other Arab countries offering policy makers and researchers a wider view across the Arab world. We hope that this project will be useful to policy-makers, bureaucrats, the mass media, scholars, business and civil society leaders, opinion molders, and finally young people throughout society.

Rami G. Khouri
Director
Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs
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Acknowledgments

Summary of Findings

This pilot study surveyed 2,744 university and high school students in Jordan, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates. It asked about their media consumption and production habits, and about their attitudes towards certain media.

Among the significant findings, the survey found the participants highly adept at using new media. They spent considerable time consuming new and traditional media, but much less time producing media content. For instance, the vast majority of participants indicated that they had never blogged. In addition, those who did produce media content, through blogging or otherwise, tended to do it in a language other than their native language. Indeed, with the exception of news, the majority of surveyed youth consumed and produced media in English, rather than Arabic. In addition, the participants used media predominantly for entertainment, for connecting with others, and for work or schoolwork, but less often for current affairs, for expressing their opinions, or for political activism.

Participants trusted new media to alarming levels, and had little concern about privacy or surveillance threats. They viewed the web as a place for freebees and frequently downloaded media content without paying for it. In addition, most did not click on online ads. Traditional news media, especially print, were among the least used, and the preference was primarily for TV and some new media, but not blogs, which were used least as news sources. Across all media uses, TV remained king followed by some new media like mobile texting, online social networking and emailing. The findings indicated weak levels of media literacy and news literacy across all groups, but high levels of new media adoption and technology savviness, especially among the younger and more affluent participants.

Differences did emerge across countries, genders, age groups, and education and income levels. These were too numerous to state here, but the following are three highlights: U.A.E.'s participants and those of mid-to-upper income mainly used English across all media, while those from Jordan and those of lower-to-mid income used Arabic. Males, older participants and those of higher education level followed the news more often than females, younger participants and those of lower education level. U.A.E.'s participants and those of mid-to-upper income reported higher usage levels of entertainment media.

The study used a purposive cluster sampling technique and a self-administered questionnaire. It focused on nine areas:

(1) Language use with various media

(2) Online social networking and blogging habits

(3) News consumption

(4) Entertainment and leisure-related media activities

(5) Television habits

(6) Work- or schoolwork-related media activities

(7) Internet use, speed and cost, and computer skills

(8) Attitudes toward the Internet, online restrictions and privacy

(9) Online purchasing and downloading habits

What follows is a brief summary of the major findings:

(1) Language Use With Various Media

The study asked participants a series of questions about which languages they primarily used for certain media-related activities. By far, English emerged as the dominant language used across all media activities except news, where Arabic had a slight edge. Almost all participants blogged in English, and the majority used English for entertainment, work/schoolwork, and watching television. With the exception of news consumption, Arabic came in second rank, while French landed a distant third position—even among participants who indicated they spoke French fluently and studied French primarily at school.

Which language do you mainly use with the following?
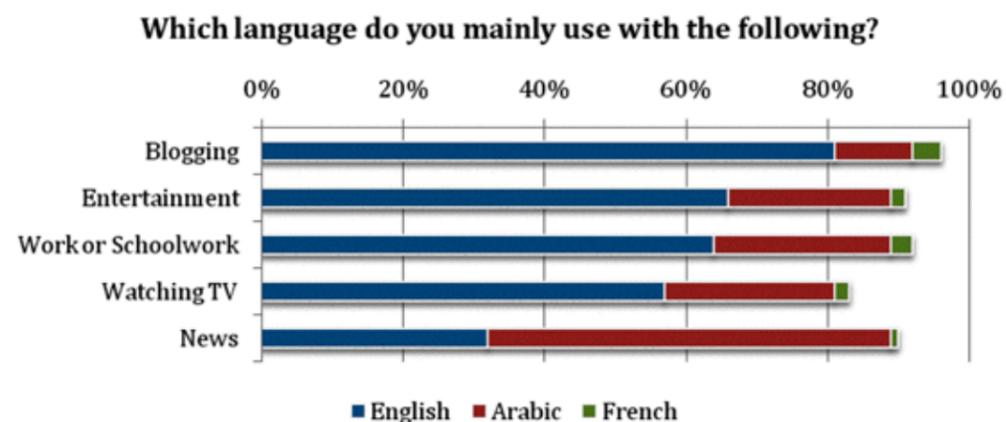
(2) Online Social Networking and Blogging Habits

Almost all surveyed participants had used online social networking (e.g., Facebook), and most used it for fun, to connect with family as well as both existing and new friends. A sizeable minority used it to express their opinions, but less than 10% used it to conduct business and even less so for political activism (e.g., organizing political events).

For what do you mainly use online social networks?
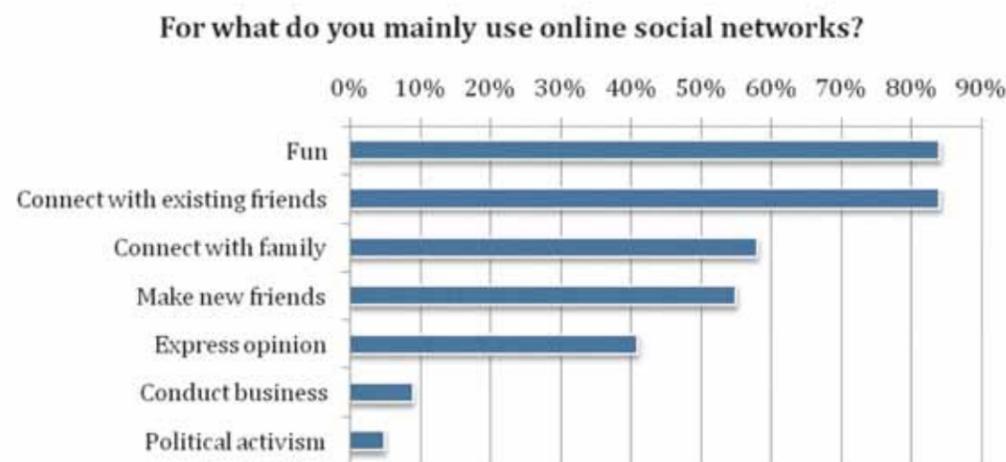
The study found that very few of the surveyed participants had ever blogged (written weblog entries). Among those who did blog, the vast majority wrote about music and entertainment news, followed by arts and culture, sports, travel, science and technology, international news, health news, and religion. Only few bloggers wrote about local political news, Arab political news, and economic and financial news.

How often do you blog (write web logs)?
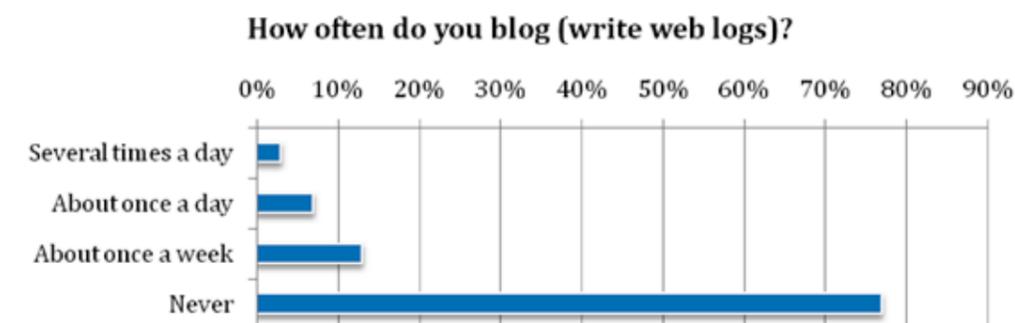
(3) News Consumption Habits

Most interviewed participants followed the news sometimes or often, with a majority saying they spent an hour or less per day on news. The vast majority received most of their news from television and word of mouth (friends and family). Following these sources were professional web sites, Internet videos, emails, mobile phone texting, and online social networks, in that order. Fewer participants received their news from newspapers, magazines, and radio, and fewer still mentioned blogs—70% of participants said they never received news from blogs.

Which of the following do you most frequently use for news?
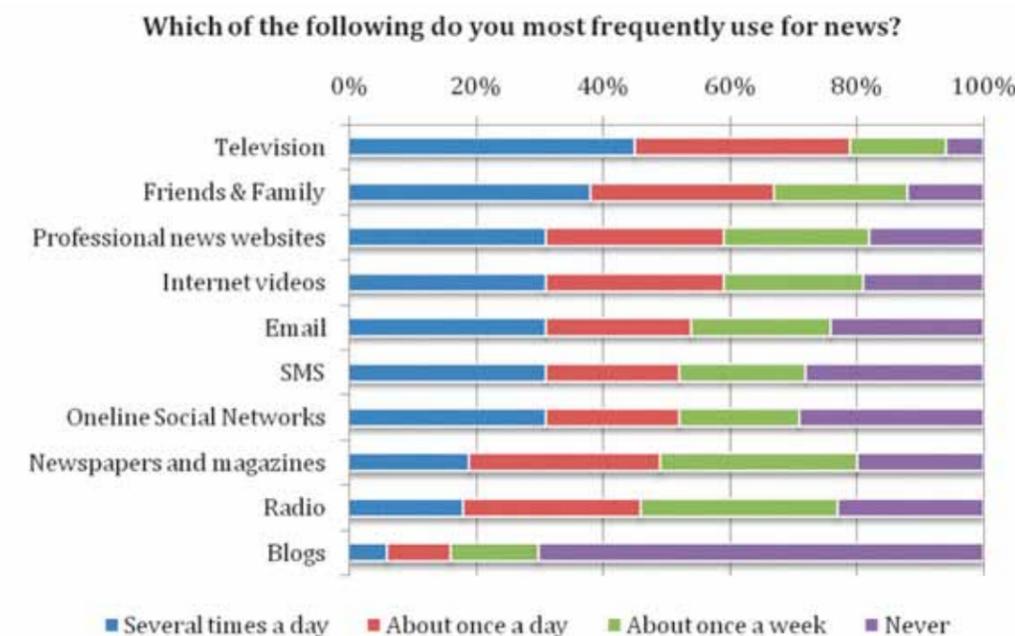
As for the news genre they mainly followed, the majority chose music and entertainment news. Distantly following these were international news, sports news, science and technology news, health news, local political news, arts and culture, Arab political news, travel, religion, and economic and financial news, in that order. The most closely followed news stories were the Lebanese, Palestinian, and Iraqi wars/conflicts. Distantly following these were the Iran elections and nuclear power controversy, the Afghanistan war, the Yemen war, and lastly the Sudan conflict.

What news genre do you mainly follow?
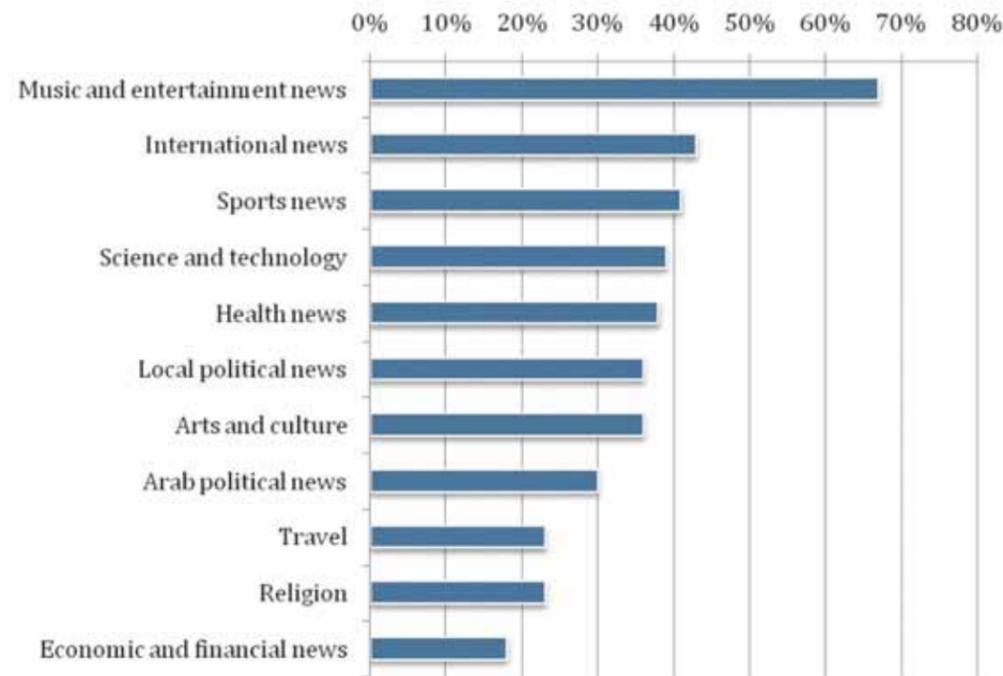
(4) Entertainment and Leisure Related Media Activities

Participants spent many hours a day on entertainment-related media activities. More than half said they used media for over three hours per day for entertainment purposes. Television topped the list of most frequently used media for entertainment, followed closely by mobile phone texting, listening to music on a PC, talking on a mobile phone, and listening to music (on other devices). Following these were online social networking, online chatting, watching videos, playing video games, and talking on Skype or other VOIP service. At the bottom of the list came playing sports or board games, reading books, magazines, or blogs, watching movies at a theater[1], reading e-books, and watching live theater plays (see chart below for unmentioned details).

How often do you use the following media for entertainment?

■ Never   ■ About once a week   ■ About once a day   ■ Several times a day

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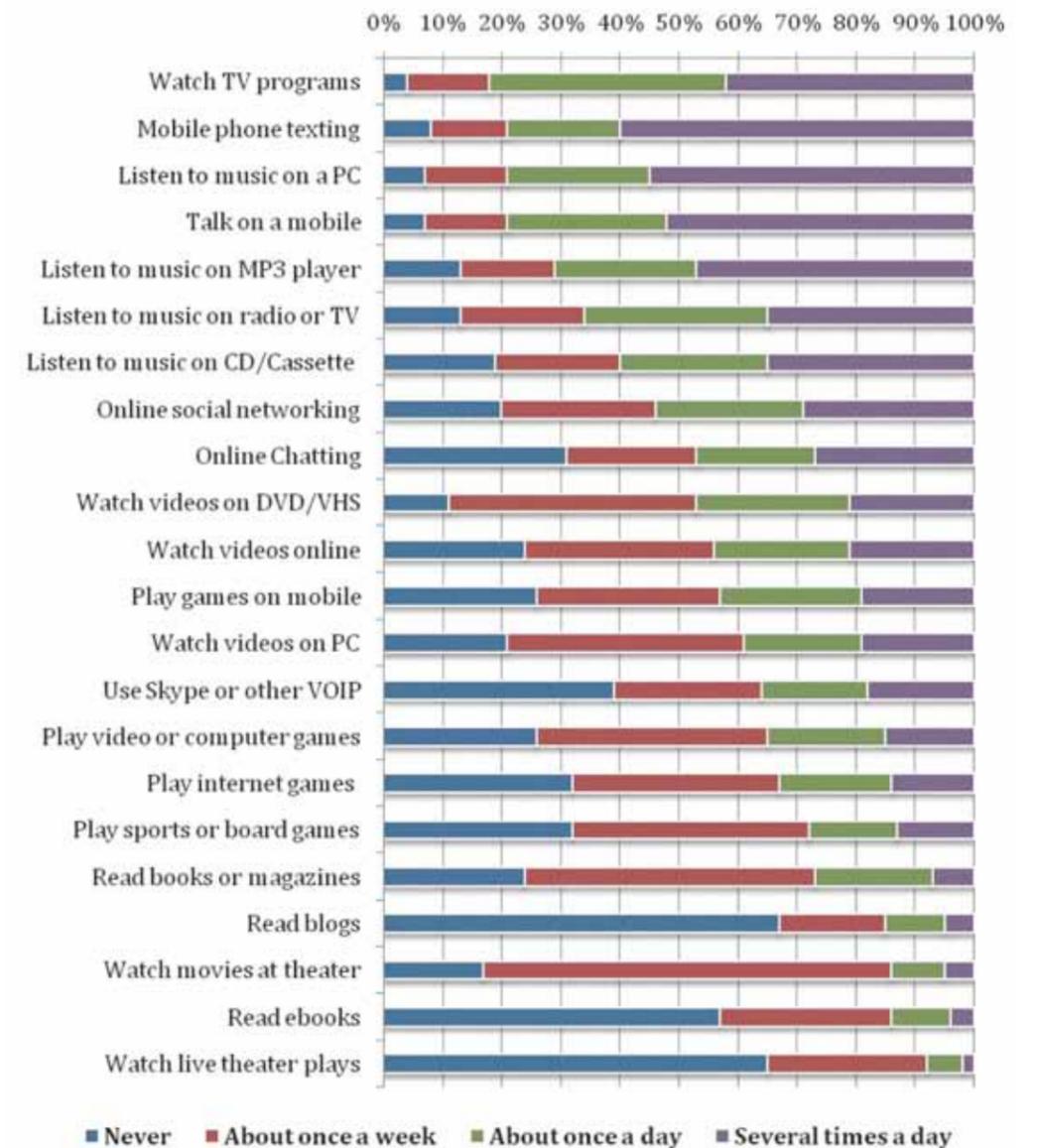
1   Although watching movies and plays at theaters makes more sense to be ranked on a weekly basis, the ranking for all categories here was based on usage "once a day," and that applied to movies and plays for consistency.

(5) Television Habits

The overwhelming majority of participants (almost 90%) had at least two TV sets at home, and while the vast majority indicated that they watched TV at home in a room other than their bedroom. Almost half the participants also said they watched TV in their bedroom. In addition, most participants mainly watched TV with their parents, with their siblings, or alone.

Where do you usually watch TV?
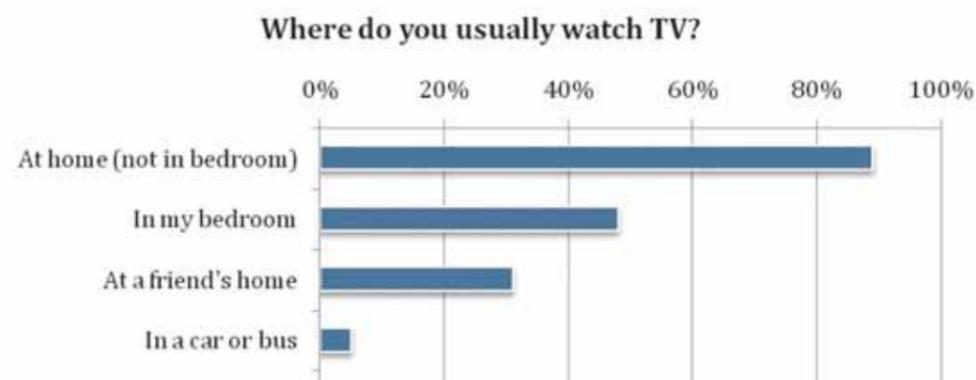
When asked what other activities they engaged in while watching TV, eating topped the list, with over 85% of participants indicating so. Following this activity in order were: talking with people in the room, mobile texting, talking on the phone (see chart below for the rest). When asked about the programs they mainly watched on TV, a majority chose movies, comedy series, music videos and drama series. A sizeable minority chose cartoons, sports, documentaries, and game shows. Only few selected newscasts and political talk shows.

What else do you do while watching TV?
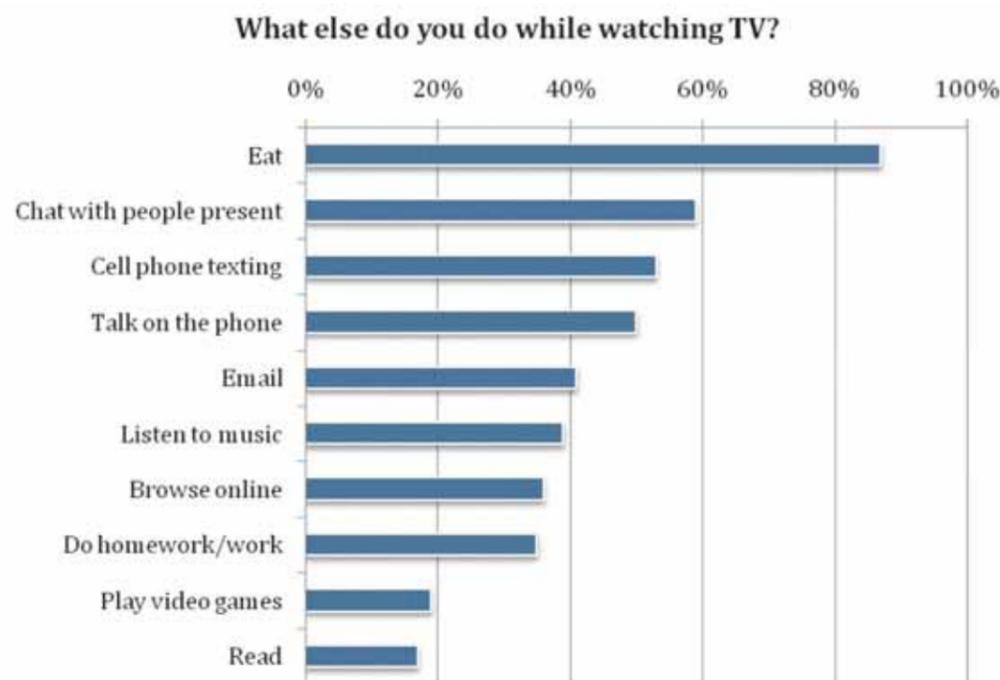
(6) Work- or Schoolwork-Related Media Activities

The majority used (any) media at least once a day for work or schoolwork. When it came to which specific medium they used most frequently for work or schoolwork, mobile phone texting ranked first. Websites came in second, followed in order by emails, online social networks, search engines, online chatting, and computer applications. The usage of blogs for work or schoolwork ranked last.

How often do you use these media for work or schoolwork?

(7) Computer Skills as well as Internet Use, Speed, and Cost

The vast majority of participants said they had used the Internet before, and a slight majority considered Internet connection in their country both fast and expensive. Almost all participants considered themselves and their oldest siblings as possessing intermediate or expert level computer skills, and most also rated their fathers accordingly, but a majority rated their mothers as beginners or "cannot use computers." Google, followed by MSN/Hotmail, Facebook, and Yahoo!, were the most common homepages on participants' browsers.

What is Your Browser's Homepage?

(8) Attitudes Toward the Internet, Online Restrictions, and Privacy

The vast majority of participants believed that information acquired through the Internet is very or somewhat trustworthy, and most used their real names as opposed to a fake profile for various online activities. However, they were split when asked about restrictions on Internet content. Slightly more than half believed there should be less or no restrictions, while almost half selected "more restrictions" or "Internet content should be fully restricted or banned."

The Internet should have/be:
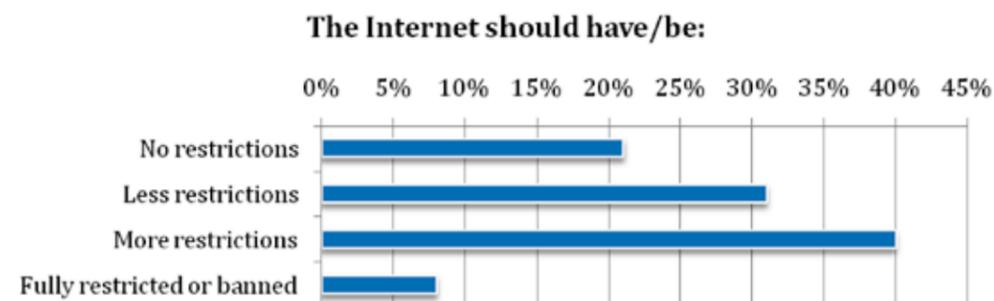
The vast majority also did not view the Internet as a tool that can help them influence government or gain political power, and only a minority believed the Internet helps governments monitor them or "helps corrupt them." They were split when it came to viewing the Internet as a threat to their privacy but tended to slightly agree that it distracts them from work. On the other hand, the vast majority believed the Internet helped them advocate their causes and beliefs, and express their opinions. Almost all agreed that it helped them with their work or schoolwork and that it offered them "great entertainment opportunities."

The Internet:

(9) Online Purchasing and Downloading Habits

Participants extensively downloaded music, software, games, and videos, but very few indicated that they paid for these downloads. Simultaneously, barely any participants used credit cards online, and most did not click on online advertisements.

Which of the following have you done in the past 30 days?
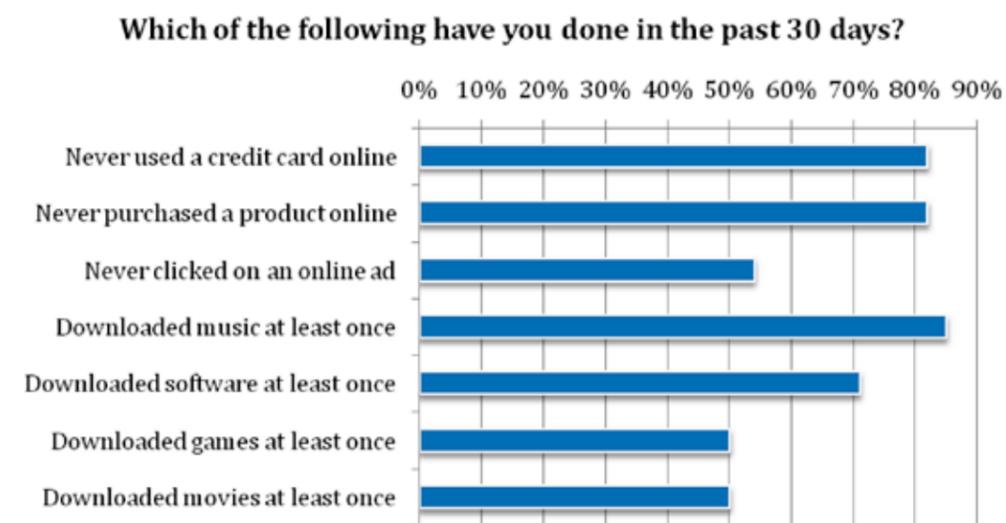
While this section summarized the general findings across all groups, several significant and interesting differences emerged between countries, genders, age groups, education levels, and income levels. Please see the results section below for details on these differences.[2]

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2 A comprehensive literature review was also conducted but not included in this report.

Introduction

New media has encroached into the lives of Middle Eastern youth in ways unimaginable just ten years ago. Upon visiting any Middle Eastern city, observers are struck by the number of satellite dishes covering the diverse landscape, spanning the impoverished as much as the affluent neighborhoods. Internet penetration rates across the region continue to grow exponentially, while governments in panic acknowledge this growth with hasty policies and regulations. On almost every winding street of a Cairo, Beirut, or Damascus old town, a plethora of Internet cafes serve and entertain a vibrant youthful population. Cell phone ringtones have become as familiar as calls to prayer. Signs of youth increasingly succumbing to a culture satured with global information attract heated debates across the political, commercial, cultural and religious spheres, with predictions about its impact ranging from an acceleration in democratization and development, to a facilitation of Western cultural colonization and a breakdown in social norms and traditions. Despite this intense interest in how, why and what media do Middle Eastern youth consume and produce and with what potential effects, there remains a dearth of scientific data critically needed to inform this topic.

Given the horizons this issue continues to unceasingly open up in various fields of study, this proposed project aims to examine media consumption and production habits among Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) youth. It derives its justification from the pressing need for reliable information about media habits, a topic that has recently attracted massive funding and research across the world. As more studies link media habits to political, economic, health—both physical and mental—and social issues, both negative and positive, the study of media habits will likely dominate research and policy circles in the foreseeable future.

Most studies about media habits focus on Western countries, especially the U.S., with no comprehensive scholarly research dealing with MENA countries. Therefore, this study aims to map trends and developments in media habits among MENA youth, focusing in its first phase on three countries: Jordan, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates.

Sponsored by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the study aims to generate a status report on what media do these surveyed youth use to access and generate news, information, and entertainment material, through print, broadcast, satellite, mobile, online, and Web 2.0 media. The study looks for indicators of such consumption and production habits, including gender, education level, socio-economic status, country of residence, and age. In addition, the study evaluates the level of trust and engagement and the type of information accessed and generated through the various media used.

This pilot project surveyed 2,744 teens and young adults, aged 13 to 28, living or studying in the three mentioned countries. The study sample focused on a predominantly affluent, mostly urban, and literate sample of youth. While this pilot study does not claim the generalizability of its findings to youth living the MENA region, its findings do reflect valid trends among an important segment of Arab school and university students who tend to be literate urban dwellers of middle class income (see methodology for details).

By analyzing the media consumption and production habits that predominate youth cultures and democgraphics in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the findings of this project will contribute to a better understanding of the direction in which the region is moving towards. Having an accurate picture about what media content MENA youth consume and produce and which old and new media technologies they interact with contributes to the understanding of political, social and commercial trends and shifts that have important policy, business, educational, and cultural implications. The findings will help guide development, ground social and educational policies, serve as a bellwether to important trends and behaviors, and offer a basis for the actions of youth-focused MENA institutions and NGOs.

This document represents a pilot study for a larger project that will examine media consumption and production habits among youth living in the MENA region. The larger project will expand the number of MENA countries considered from three to twelve, to include in its final results Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian, Tunis, and the U.A.E.

Results

This section delineates the results of the survey. It includes nine sub-sections, each starting with a brief summary, followed by general descriptive data, and ending with a comparison of the variables across countries, genders, age groups, education levels and income levels. As mentioned in the methodology section below, age groups, education levels and income levels each included only two age groups (18-28 vs. 17 or younger; those with a high school degree or higher vs. those with some high school education or less; those of mid-to-upper income vs. those of lower-to-mid income, respectively). The first section focuses on language use with various media. Section two deals with online social networking and blogging habits. Section three tackles news consumption, followed by a section on entertainment-related media activities, and another on television habits. Section six focuses on work- or schoolwork-related media activities, and section seven analyzes Internet use, speed and cost. The next section deals with computer skills, attitudes towards the Internet, online restrictions and privacy, and the last section tackles online purchasing and downloading habits.

(1) Language Use With Various Media

The study asked participants a series of questions about which languages they primarily used for certain media-related activities. By far, English emerged as the dominant language used across all media activities except news, where Arabic had a slight edge. With the exception of news, Arabic came in second rank, while French[3] landed a distant third position. Almost all participants blogged in English and the majority used English for entertainment, work and schoolwork, and watching television.

Figure1: Language and Blogging
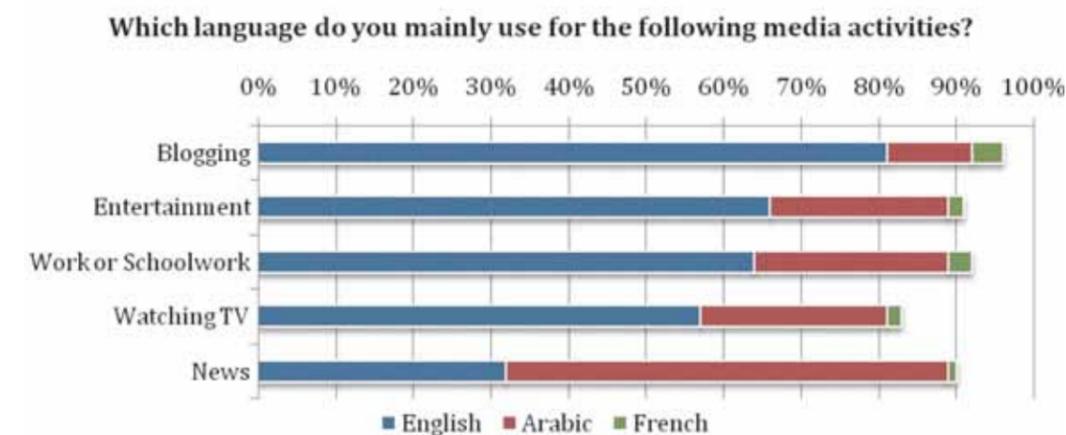
1.1 Language and Blogging

The vast majority of participants (81%) primarily used English for blogging (writing). Only 11% selected Arabic, and 4% chose French (Figure 1). In addition, 4% chose both Arabic and English. No significant differences emerged when comparing across countries, genders, age groups, education level or income level, but it is important to note that more than three-quarters of the participants (77%) had never blogged at all.

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3   The researcher further investigated this and found that even in Lebanon (considered a Fracophone country) and even among participants who said they spoke French fluently and those who studied in schools that taught primarily French, the majority of them still used English in their various media activities—except for news.

1.2 Language and Media for Entertainment

Similar to the above, the majority of participants (66%) said they primarily used English for entertainment-related media activities, followed by Arabic (23%) and French (2%). In addition, 7% selected Arabic and English equally, and 2% selected Arabic, English, and French equally.

When comparing across countries, U.A.E.'s participants (79%) were more likely to choose English compared to Lebanon's (72%) and Jordan's (67%). On the other hand, Jordan's participants (32%) were more likely to choose Arabic compared to Lebanon's (25%) and U.A.E.'s (21%) participants. Comparing genders, males (77%) were slightly more likely than females (70%) to use English for their entertainment-related media activities, while females (28%) were slightly more likely than males (22%) to use Arabic. More substantial differences emerged across income levels. Participants of mid-to-upper income (87%) were much more likely to choose English compared to those of lower-to-mid income (68%). In contrast, the lower income group (31%) was three times as likely to choose Arabic as the higher income group (10%). No significant difference emerged when comparing between age groups or education levels.

1.3 Language and Media for Work or Schoolwork

English also ranked the highest (64%) for work- or schoolwork-related media activities, compared to Arabic (25%) and French (3%). In addition, 6% said they used Arabic and English equally, and 2% chose Arabic, English, and French equally (Figure 10).

When comparing across countries, U.A.E.'s participants (77%) were more likely to choose English compared to Lebanon's (70%) and Jordan's (62%). Conversely, Jordan's participants (38%) were more likely to choose Arabic compared to Lebanon's (25%) and U.A.E.'s (22%). Furthermore, participants between the ages of 18 and 28 (77%) were more likely to use English than those 17 or younger (67%). On the other hand, the latter group (30%) was more likely to use Arabic than the former (21%). When comparing education levels, those who had completed a high school degree or higher (78%) were more likely to use English compared to those with less than a high school degree (66%). In contrast, the latter group (31%) was more likely than the former (18%) to use Arabic. Differences across income levels again were more substantial. Participants of mid-to-upper income (87%) were more likely to choose English compared to those of lower-to-mid income (64%). On the other hand, the latter group (34%) was more than four times more likely to choose Arabic than the former (8%). No significant difference emerged when comparing between genders.

1.4 Language and Television

English also dominated when it came to watching television. The majority (57%) primarily used English for TV watching, while 24% used Arabic, and 2% chose French. In addition, 14% selected Arabic and English equally, and 2% chose Arabic, English, and French equally.

When comparing across countries, U.A.E.'s participants (75%) chose English more than Lebanon's (70%) and Jordan's participants (62%). Conversely, Jordan's participants (37%) chose Arabic more than Lebanon's (27%) and U.A.E.'s (25%). In addition, more males (75%) than females (65%) chose English for TV watching, while more females (33%) than males (23%) selected Arabic. As for age groups, slightly more participants aged 17 or less (72%) than those aged 18-28 (65%) chose English. The opposite was true for Arabic, where slightly more older (33%) than younger (27%) participants chose Arabic. Again, more pronounced were the differences across income levels. Substantially more mid-to-upper income participants (85%) chose English than lower-to-mid income participants (64%). Conversely, three times more lower income (35%) than higher income (12%) participants chose Arabic. No significant difference registered for education levels.

1.5 Language and News

The one exception for language and media use was in the realm of news. Unlike the previously mentioned media, the majority of participant (57%) said they used Arabic for news, compared to English (32%), and barely anyone used French (1%). In addition, 7% selected Arabic and English equally, and 1% chose Arabic, English and French equally.

However, when comparing across countries, almost half of U.A.E.'s participant (49%) chose English compared to one third of Lebanon's (32%) and one quarter of Jordan's (26%). On the other hand, the vast majority of Jordan's participants (73%) chose Arabic compared to Lebanon's (66%) and the U.A.E.'s (50%). Again, more substantial differences were registered between the two income levels. Substantially more participants of mid-to-upper income (53%) than those of lower-to-mid income (30%) chose English for news. Contrarily, the lower income group (70%) was much more likely to choose Arabic than the higher income group (44%). No significant differences emerged for genders, age groups, or education levels.

(2) Online Social Networking and Blogging Habits

Almost all participants had used online social networking, and most used it for fun, to connect with family and existing and new friends. A sizeable minority used it to express opinions, but barely anyone used it for conducting business and even less so for political activism. Furthermore, very few participants had ever blogged. Among those who did blog, the vast majority wrote about music and entertainment news. That was followed by arts and culture, sports, travel, science and technology, international news, health news, and religion. Fewer bloggers wrote about local politics, Arab political news, and economic and financial news.

2.1 Online Social Networking

Overall, the vast majority of participants (87%) said they used online social networking sites, such as Facebook and MySpace (Figure 2). No difference emerged for use of online social networks when comparing across countries, genders, age groups, or education levels. However, mid-to-upper income participants (92%) were slightly more likely to have used online social networking compared to lower-to-mid income participants (85%).

Among those who have used online social networking, 84% said they mainly use it for fun, 84% to connect with existing friends, 58% to connect with family, 55% to make new friends, 41% to express opinion, 9% to conduct business, and only 5% for political activism.

Figure 2: Main Use of Online Social Networking

Figure 2: Main Use of Online Social Networking

For what do you mainly use online social networks?

■ Percent of those who use online social networking for:
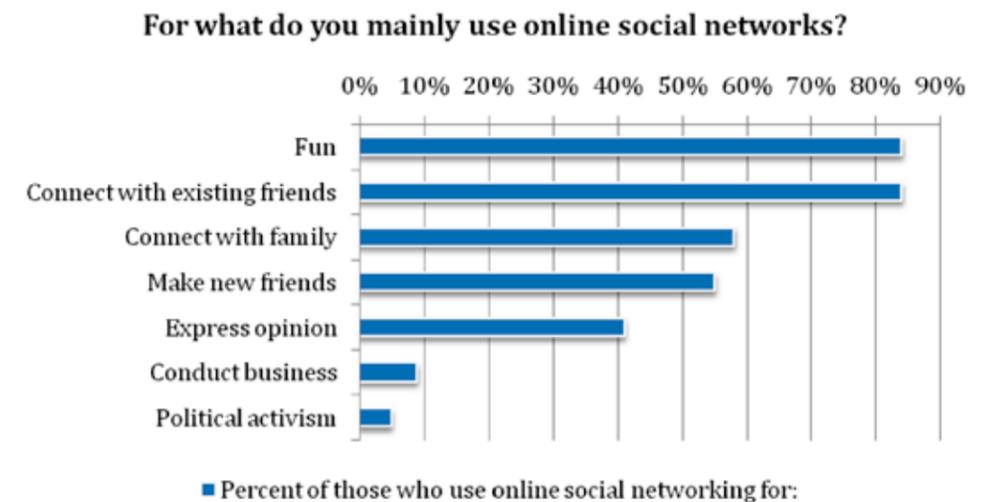
Comparing countries. Some differences emerged between the three countries. Jordan's participants were more likely than Lebanon's and U.A.E.'s to say they used online social networks to connect with existing friends (89%, 83%, 81%, respectively), to express their opinions (48%, 37%, 42%), and for fun (89%, 81%, 86%). However, Jordan's participants (50%) were least likely to say they used online social networks to make new friends compared to Lebanon's (55%) and U.A.E.'s participants (57%), while Lebanon's (7%) and Jordan's participants (5%) were more likely than U.A.E.'s (1%) to say they used it for political activism.

Comparing genders. Compared to 63% of males, only 48% of females said they have used online social networks for making new friends. No other significant differences registered for other uses.

Education Levels. Those who have not yet graduated from high school were more likely than those who have finished a high school degree or higher to use online social networks to make new friends (56%, 50%, respectively) and to have fun (86%, 79%). Aside from that, no significant differences appeared.

Comparing income levels. Compared to 56% of lower-to-mid income participants, 65% of mid-to-upper income participants used online social networks to connect with family. However, lower-to-mid income participants were more likely than mid-to-upper income participants to say they used online social networks to make new friends compared (59%, 41%, respectively) and to express their opinion (43%, 35%). No significant differences emerged for the other categories. No significant differences between age groups emerged.

2.2 Blogging Habits

The vast majority of surveyed participants (77%) had never written a blog entry. Even among those who had, only 3% said they blogged several times a day, 7% blogged about once a day, and 13% blogged about once a week (Figure 3). No significant differences for blogging emerged when comparing across countries, genders, age groups, education levels or income levels.

Figure 3: Frequency of Blogging

How often do you blog (write web logs)?
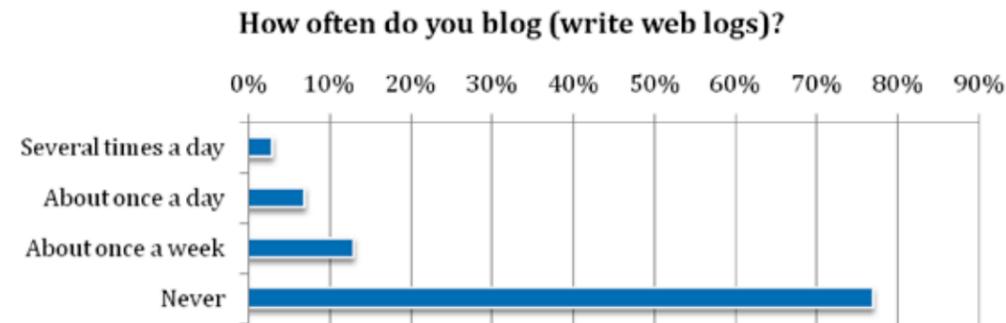
When asked about what they blogged (Figure 4), 68% of those who blogged at least once a week answered music and entertainment news. This was followed by arts and culture (37%), sports news (33%), travel news (25%), science and technology news (23%), international news (20%), health (18%), religion (17%), local political news (15%), Arab political news (14%), and economic and financial news (11%).

Figure 4: What Participants Blog About

What do you blog about?
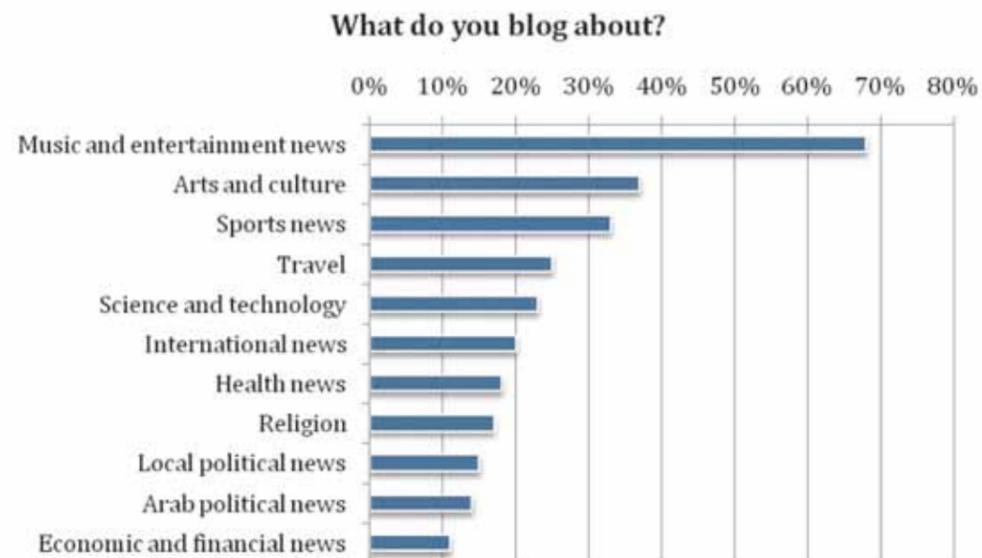
Because only few participants said they blogged, the study did not compare these topics across countries, genders, age groups, education levels, or income levels.

(3) News Consumption Habits

Most interviewed participants indicated that they followed the news sometimes or often, with a majority saying they spent an hour or less per day on news. The vast majority received most of their news from Television and word of mouth (friend and family). Following these sources were, in order, professional web sites, Internet videos, emails, mobile phone texting, and online social networks. Fewer participants received their news from newspapers and magazines and from radio. And at the bottom of the list came blogs with a majority of participants saying they never received news from this source. As for news genre, the majority indicated they mainly followed music and entertainment news. Following these distantly were international news, sports news, science and technology news, health news, local political news, arts and culture, Arab political news, travel, religion, and economic and financial news. Finally, the most closely followed news stories were the Lebanese, Palestinian, and Iraqi wars/conflicts. Following these distantly were the Iran elections and nuclear power controversy, the Afghanistan war, the Yemen war, and lastly the Sudan conflict.

The study asked participants how often they followed the news. A majority (60%) answered sometimes or often; 19% chose often. On the other hand, 31% said they rarely followed the news, and 9% said never (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Following News

How often do you follow the news?
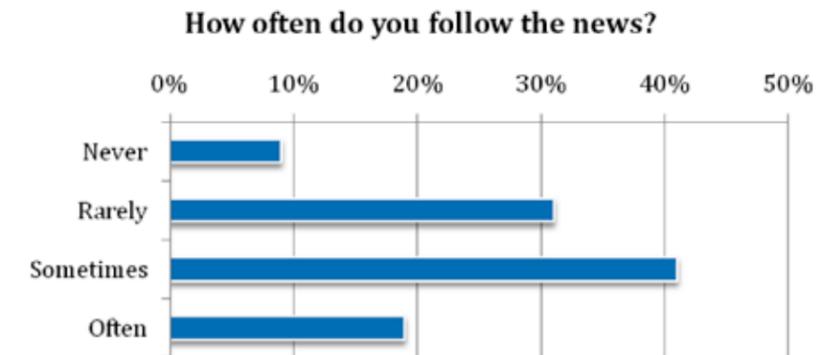
When comparing this general question, males, older participants and those of higher education level tended to follow the news more often. Compared to 68% of males, 50% of females said they followed the news sometimes or often. Similarly, 68% of those 18 to 28 followed the news sometimes or often compared to 56% of those 17 or younger. Finally, 67% of participants with a high school degree or higher compared to 57% of those with some high school education or less chose the same options. No significant differences registered when comparing countries or income levels.

More specifically, participants rated how much time per day they spent reading, listening, or watching news. One-fifth (20%) chose no time at all, 44% selected less than one hour per day, 17% said about one hour per day, 10% picked about two hours per day, and 10% said three hours or more (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Daily Time Spent on News

How much time daily do you spend on news?
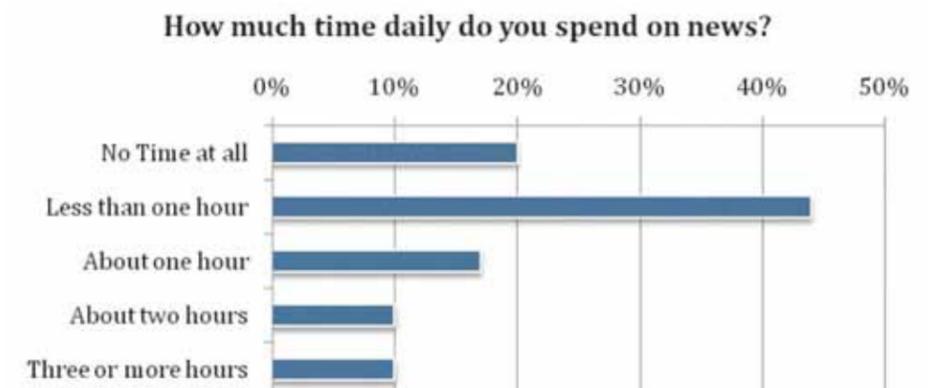
When comparing this more specific variable, once again, males, older participants, and those of higher education level tended to follow the news more often. Still, no significant differences registered between countries or income levels.

3.1 News Sources

Participants rated which media sources they used most frequently for news. Figure 7 lists those sources in order based on the responses of following news once a day or more.

Which of the following do you most frequently use for news?
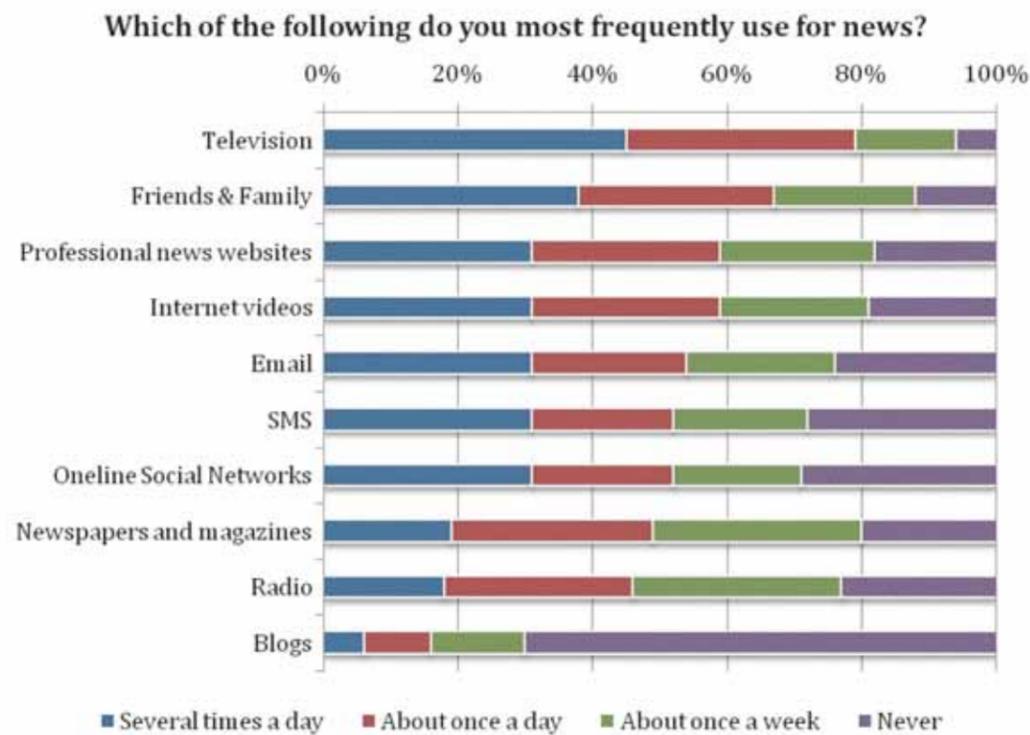
Television. Television landed the top spot. Almost half (45%) the participants said they used TV for news several times a day, 34% chose about once a day, 15% selected about once a week, and 6% picked never. No significant differences emerged when comparing across countries, genders, age groups, income levels, or education levels.

**Talking to friends and family.** Getting news from talking to friends and family ranked second, with 38% of participants receiving news through this source several times a day, 29% selected about once a day, 21% chose once a week, and 12% chose never. When comparing, female participants and those of higher income levels tended to choose this method more frequently. In fact, 42% of females compared to 34% of males said they get their news several times a day in this manner. Similarly, 46% of mid-to-upper income participants compared to 36% of lower-to-mid income participants said the same. Otherwise, there were no differences across countries, age, or education level.

Websites, Internet videos, email, mobile texting, and social networks. Professional news web sites (e.g. aljazeera.com) came in third, followed closely by Internet videos (e.g. YouTube, Google Videos), email, SMS and cell phone texting, and online social networking. First, 31% of participants said they used professional news websites several times a day, 28% selected about once a day, 23% chose once a week, and 19% chose never. Participants registered almost the same choices for Internet videos (31%, 28%, 22%, 19%, respectively), email (31%, 23%, 22%, 24%), SMS and cell phone texting (31%, 21%, 20%, 28%), and online social networking (31%, 21%, 19%, 29%).

With the exception of professional news web sites, no significant differences emerged when comparing these news sources across any of the categories. However, older participants, those of higher education level, and those of higher income registered more frequent useage of professional news web sites. In fact, 35% of participants 18 to 28 years old compared to 27% of those 17 years old or younger said they used this news medium several times a day. Similarly, 34% of those with a high school degree or higher compared to 27% of those with some high school education or less, and 35% of mid-to-upper income participants compared to 28% of lower-to-mid income participants said the same. No other difference emerged.

Newspapers and magazines, radio. Following these media forms came, in order, newspapers and magazines (print media), followed closely by radio. Nineteen percent of participants said they used newspapers and magazines for news several times a day, 30% selected about once a day, 31% chose once a week, and 20% chose never. As for radio, 18% chose several times a day, 28% selected about once a day, 31% chose once a week, and 23% chose never.

Some significant differences emerged when comparing the use of print news media across countries and between income levels, but none appeared between genders, age groups, and education levels. Compared to 23% of U.A.E.'s participants, 19% of Jordan's and 16% of Lebanon's said they used newspapers and magazines several times a day. In addition, compared to 23% of mid-to-upper income participants, 17% of lower-to-mid income participants said the same.

When comparing radio, older participants and those of higher education level registered higher use. Compared to 23% of participants 18 to 28 years old, 16% of those 17 years old or younger said they used radio for news several times a day. Similarly, 22% of those with a high school degree or higher compared to 16% of those with some high school education or less said the same.

Blogs. Blogs ranked at the bottom of the list. Only 6% of participant said they received their news from blogs several times a day, 10% selected about once a day, 14% chose once a week, and 70% chose never. No significant difference emerged across any of the compared categories for blogs.

3.2 News Genres

Participants selected which news genres they mainly followed (Figure 8). Again, music and entertainment news ranked first with 67% of participants. In second place came international news (43%), followed by sports news (41%), science and technology news (39%), health news (38%), local political news (36%), arts and culture (36%), Arab political news (30%), travel (23%), religion (23%), economic and financial news (18%).

What news genre do you mainly follow?
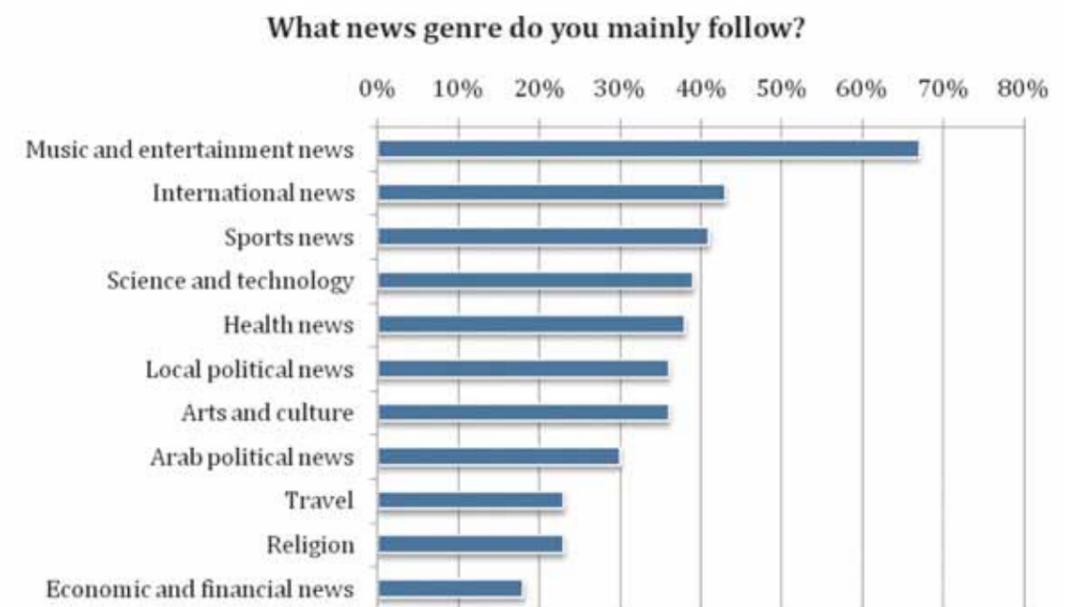
Country. Participants from Jordan were more likely than those from the U.A.E. and Lebanon to say they followed international news (50%, 48%, 36%, respectively) and Arab political news (42%, 29%, 24%). Those from Jordan were also more likely than those from Lebanon and the U.A.E. to choose health news (46%, 36%, 36%), arts and culture news (43%, 35%, 31%), and science and technology news (41%, 40%, 34%). In addition, those from Lebanon and Jordan were more likely to follow local political news compared to those from the U.A.E. (39%, 36%, 29%). Finally, participants from U.A.E. (49%) were more likely to say they followed sports news compared to 39% of those from Jordan and 36% of those from Lebanon. No significant difference appeared between countries for economic and financial news, religion news, or travel news.

Gender. When comparing genders, males were almost three times more likely than females to follow sports news (64% vs. 22%). Similarly, more males than females followed science and technology news (50% vs. 31%), local political news (42% vs. 31%), Arab political news (33% vs. 26%), and economic and financial news (23% vs. 15%). On the other hand, more females than males followed music and entertainment news (76% vs. 56%), health news (46% vs. 28%), and arts and cultural news (44% vs. 26%). No differences emerged for International news, religion news, or travel news.

Age group. Older participants (18-28 years old) were more likely than their younger counterparts (17 or younger) to follow local political news (45% vs. 31%), Arab political news (36% vs. 27%), international political news (51% vs. 39%), economic and financial news (26% vs. 15%). Conversely, a larger number of younger participants compared to older participants followed sports news (43% vs. 35%) and music and entertainment news (69% vs. 62%). No significant differences registered for health news, science and technology, religion, travel, and arts and culture.

Education level. Participants with a higher education level (completed a high school degree or higher) compared to those with a lower education level (completed some high school education or less) followed local news (44% vs. 32%), Arab political news (36% vs. 27%), international news (48% vs. 40%), and economic and financial news (24% vs. 16%). In contrast, the lower education group was more likely than the higher education group to follow entertainment news (69% vs. 62%), and science and technology news (41% vs. 34%). No significant difference for health news, religion, travel, and arts and culture.

Income levels. Participants of mid-to-upper income followed international news more closely than those of lower-to-mid income (55% vs. 39%). No other differences emerged for income level across news genres.

3.3 Stories in the News

Participants chose which news stories they followed most closely from a list of current regional conflicts that make the Arab news agenda (Figure 9). The Lebanese, Palestinian and Iraqi conflicts topped the list as the most closely followed news. In fact, 61% of participants said they (sometimes or often) followed the conflicts in Lebanon, 51% selected Palestine, and 35% chose Iraq. The Iran elections and nuclear power controversy (Iran conflict) came in next at 28%, followed by the Afghanistan war (17%), the Yemen war (13%), and the Sudan conflict (12%).

Figure 9: Following Major News Stories
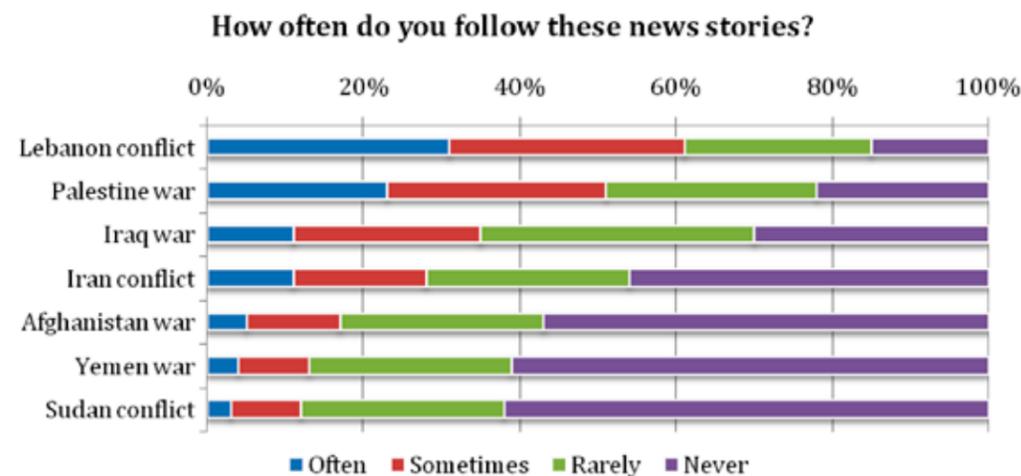
Comparing Countries. When comparing countries, Jordan's and U.A.E.'s participants followed the Iraq wars more closely than Lebanon's participants (48%, 34%, 28% followed the Iraq war sometimes or often, respectively). Similarly, Jordan's and U.A.E.'s participants followed the Palestine war more closely than Lebanon's participants (70%, 52%, 40%). Predictably, Lebanon's participants followed the Lebanon conflicts more closely than Jordan's and U.A.E.'s participants (77%, 53%, 39%). No significant differences between countries appeared for the rest of the conflicts.

Comparing genders. With the exception of the Lebanon conflict, males more closely followed all the listed wars and conflicts than females: The Iraq war (42% vs. 29% followed this war sometimes or often, respectively), the Palestine war (54% vs. 48%), the Iran conflict (38% vs. 21%), the Afghanistan war (23% vs. 13%), the Yemen war (20% vs. 8%), and the Sudan conflict (17% vs. 7%). No significant difference registered for the Lebanon conflict.

Comparing ages. Similarly, older participants (18-28) more closely followed all the listed wars and conflicts than younger participants (17 or younger): The Lebanon conflict (67% vs. 58% followed this war sometimes or often, respectively), the Iraq war (45% vs. 31%), the Palestine war (59% vs. 47%), the Iran conflict (37% vs. 25%), the Afghanistan war (25% vs. 14%), the Yemen war (18% vs. 12%), and the Sudan conflict (17% vs. 10%).

Comparing education level. Again with the exception of the Lebanon conflict, participants with a higher education level (completed a high school degree or higher) more closely followed all the listed wars and conflicts than those with a lower education level (completed some high school education or less): The Iraq war (41% vs. 32% followed this war sometimes or often, respectively), the Palestine war (58% vs. 47%), the Iran conflict (37% vs. 25%), the Afghanistan war (24% vs. 14%), the Yemen war (18% vs. 11%), and the Sudan conflict (17% vs. 10%). No significant different registered for the Lebanon conflict.

Comparing income levels. No significant differences registered for any of the wars and conflicts across income levels.

(4) Entertainment and Leisure-Related Media Activities

Surveyed participants spent many hours of their day on entertainment-related media activities. More than half said they used media over three hour per day for entertainment purposes. Television topped the list of most frequently used media for entertainment, followed closely by mobile phone texting, listening to music on a PC, talking on mobile phone, listening to music on an MP3 (portable digital) player, on radio or TV, and on a CD or cassette player. After these, in order, came online social networking, online chatting, watching videos or movies on DVD or VHS, watching videos or movies online, playing games on a mobile phone, watching videos or movies on a computer, and talking on Skype or other similar VOIP service. At the bottom of the list came, in order, playing video or computer games, playing Internet games, playing sports or board games, reading books or magazines, reading blogs, watching movies at a theater, reading e-books, and watching live theater plays.

4.1 Frequency of media use for entertainment purposes

When asked how often they used media as part of their daily leisure- and entertainment-related media activities, the majority (62%) answered "several times a day," 26% said "about once a day," 10% chose "about once a week," and 2% selected never (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Frequency of Media Use for Entertainment and Leisure
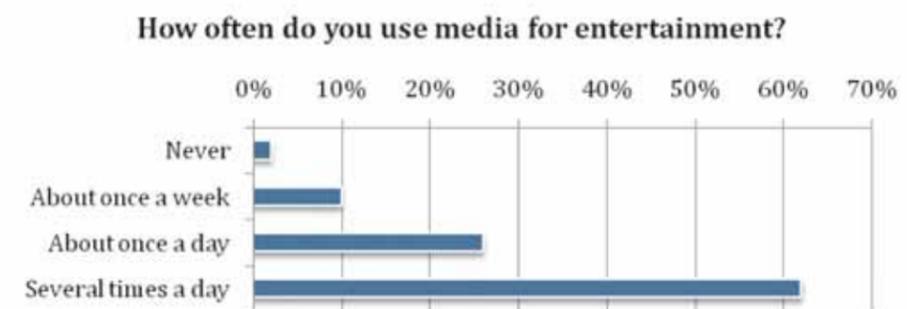
More specifically, 55% said they spent three or more hours a day on entertainment-related media activities (35% said four hours or more, and 24% said five hours or more), while 22% chose about two hours per day, 13% said about one hour per day, 9% selected less than one hour, and 2% chose no time at all (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Time Spent Daily on Media for Entertainment Purposes
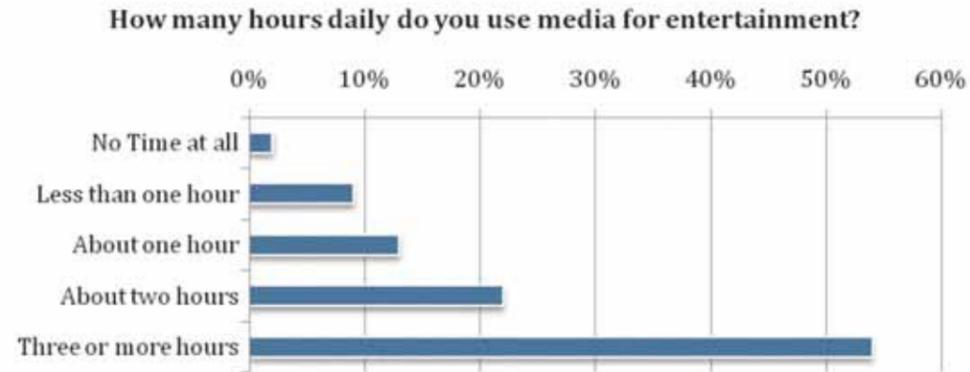
When comparing across countries and between income levels, participants from the U.A.E. and those of mid-to-upper income reported higher levels of media use for entertainment purposes. In fact, 69% of U.A.E.'s participants said they used media for entertainment purposes several times a day compared to 63% of those from Jordan and 58% of those from Lebanon. Similarly, 62% of U.A.E. participants said they spent three or more hours using media for entertainment purposes compared to 52% of those from Lebanon and 51% of those from Jordan. In addition, 71% of participants of mid-to-upper income said they used media for entertainment purposes several times a day compared to 59% of lower-to-mid income participants. Consistently, 59% of mid-to-upper income participants said they spent three or more hours using media for entertainment purposes compared to 52% of lower-to-mid income participants. No significant differences emerged when comparing genders, age groups, or education levels.

4.2 Use of specific media for entertainment purposes

Participants revealed how often they used specific entertainment-related media activities (Figure 12). Watching TV programs ranked as the top media activity for entertainment purposes, as 82% indicated they used it at least once a day (although only 42% chose several times a day). TV was followed by cell phone texting, listening to music on a computer, and talking on a cell phone, with 79% of participants saying they use each of these media at least once a day for entertainment purposes (although these three media activities ranked higher than TV for media use "several times a day": 60%, 55%, 52%, respectively). Following in order came listening to music on an MP3 of portable player (71% use it at least once a day), listening to music on TV or radio (66%), and listening to music on a CD or cassette player (60%).

Figure 12: Use of Specific Media for Entertainment Purposes
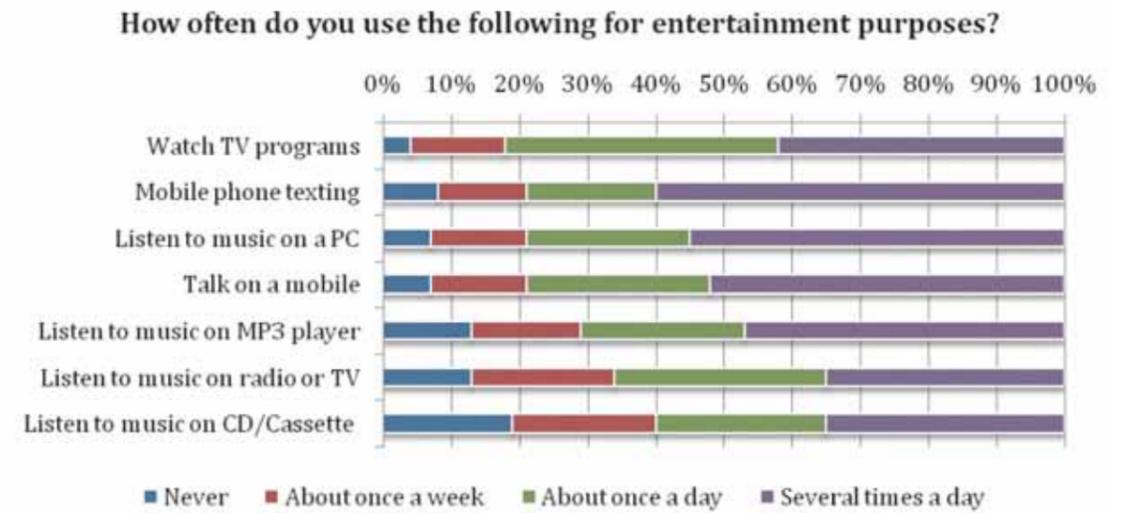
After these entertainment-related media activities (Figure 13) came online social networking (54% use it at least once a day), online chatting (47%), watching videos or movies on DVD or VHS (46%), watching videos or movies online (44%), playing games on a mobile phone (43%), watching videos or movies on a computer (39%), and talking on Skype or other similar VOIP service (36%).

Figure 13: Use of Specific Media for Entertainment Purposes
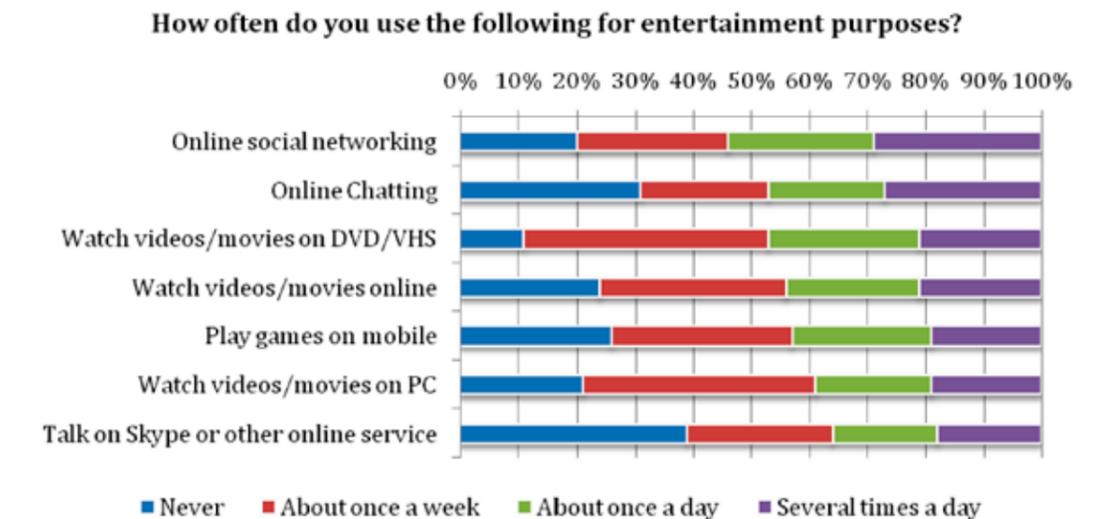
At the bottom of the list (Figure 14) came playing video or computer games (35%), playing Internet games (33%), playing sports or board games (28%), reading books or magazines (27%), reading blogs (15%), watching movies at a theater (14%), reading e-books (14%), and watching live theater plays (8%).

How often do you use the following for entertainment purposes?

Play video or computer games
Play internet games
Play sports or board games
Read books or magazines
Read BLOGS
Watch movies at theater
Read E-BOOKS
Watch live theater plays

■ Never ■ About once a week ■ About once a day ■ Several times a day
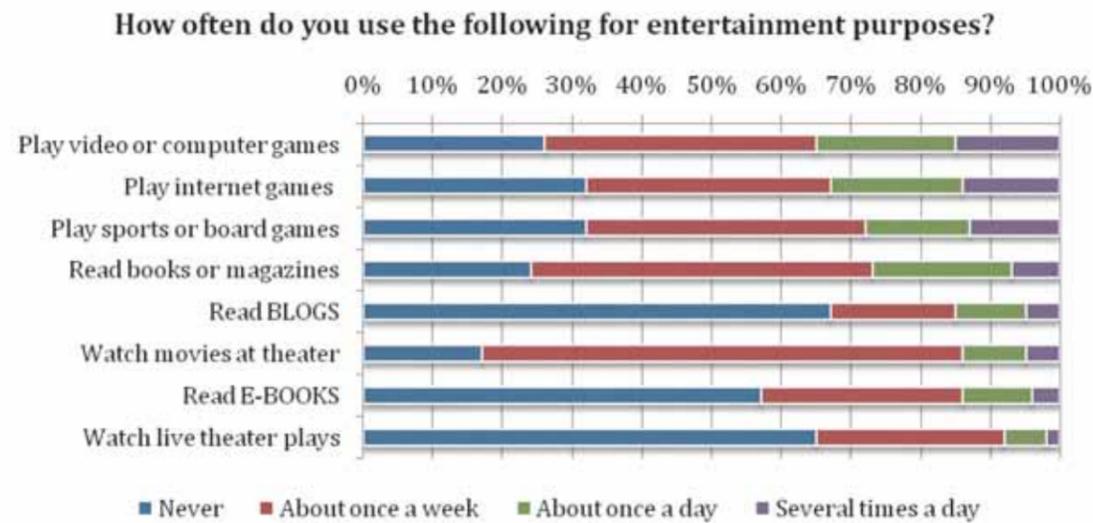
Country. When comparing the categories above across countries, participants from the U.A.E. often ranked highest in frequency of use, with the exceptions of listening to music on TV or radio, listening to music on a CD or cassette player, watching TV programs, playing Internet games, playing games on a mobile phone, talking on a cell phone, using SMS or cell phone texting, reading books or magazine, reading e-books, reading blogs, and Skyping. The differences for these categories were not significant.

Gender. Most categories registered no significant differences for gender with some exceptions. Males registered higher usage for all gaming categories (sports or board games, Internet games, video or computer games). Males also watched videos or movies online more frequently. However, females more frequently listened to music on radio or TV and they used cell phones both for SMS and for talking more often than males.

Age. Most categories also had no significant differences across age groups, with the exception of watching TV programs, talking on the cell phone and cell phone texting, where the older age group (18-28) registered higher usage. On the other hand, the younger age group (17 and younger) reported higher rates of watching TV programs.

Education. Only five categories conveyed differences between the two education levels. Participants of higher education levels (completed high school or higher) were more likely to talk on cell phones, use SMS and read books or magazines, while participants of lower education levels (some high school education or less) were more likely to watch TV programs.

Income level. The most pronounced differences appeared across income groups. Participants of mid-to-upper income level more frequently chatted online, talked on cell phones, used SMS, watched videos and movies online, and listened to music on a PC and on an MP3 player. On the other hand, participants of lower-to-mid income watched TV programs and played games on cell phones more frequently.

(5) Television Habits

The overwhelming majority of participants had at least two TV sets at home, and while the vast majority indicated that they watched TV at home in a room other than their bedroom, almost half the participants also said they mainly watched TV in their bedroom. In addition, most participants mainly watched TV with their parents, with their siblings, or alone. When asked what other activities they do while watching TV, eating topped the list with a vast majority indicating so. Following this activity in order were: talking with people in the room, mobile texting, talking on the phone, emailing, listening to music, browse online, doing homework or work, playing video games, and a small minority said reading. When asked about the programs they mainly watched on TV, a majority chose movies, comedy series, music videos and drama series. A substantial minority cartoons, sports, documentaries, and game shows. Only few selected newscasts and political talk shows.

5.1 TV sets at home.

The majority of survey participants (56%) said they had three or more TV sets at home. One-third (33%) said they had two sets, 11% said one TV set, and 0.2% said they did not have any TV sets at home (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Number of TV Sets at Home

How many TV sets do you have at home?

Zero
One
Two
Three
Four
Five or more
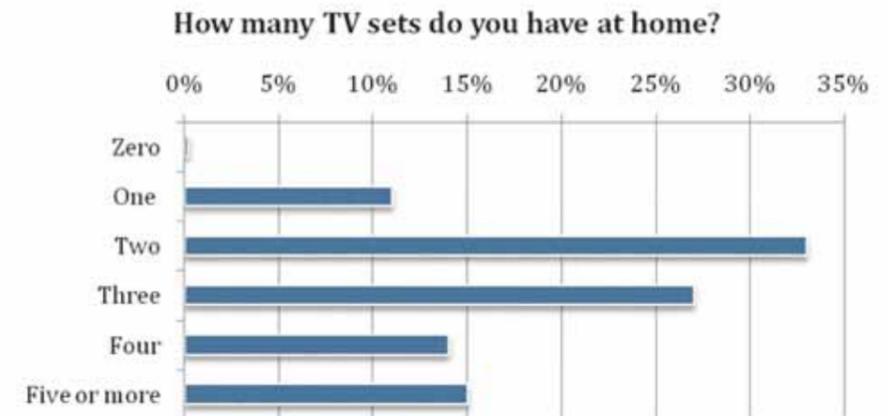
When comparing across countries, 68% of U.A.E.'s participants said they had three or more TV sets at home compared to 53% of Lebanon's and 47% of Jordan's participants. In addition, younger participants (17 or younger) were more likely to report having three or more TV sets than older participants (18-28) (59% vs. 50%, respectively), and the lower education group (some high school or less) was also more likely to report having three or more TV sets than the higher education group (high school degree or higher) (59% vs. 50%). No significant differences appeared between genders or income levels.

5.2 Where do you usually watch TV?

The study asked participants about the places in which they usually watched TV (Figure 16). The vast majority (89%) answered at home in a room other than their bedroom. Almost half (48%) said they watched TV in their bedrooms, 31% at a friend's home, 5% in a car or bus, and 4% at school, university or work (see chart below).

Figure 16: Main Place Where Participants Usually Watch TV

Where do you usually watch TV?

At home (not in bedroom)
In my bedroom
At a friend's home
In a car or bus
At school, university or work
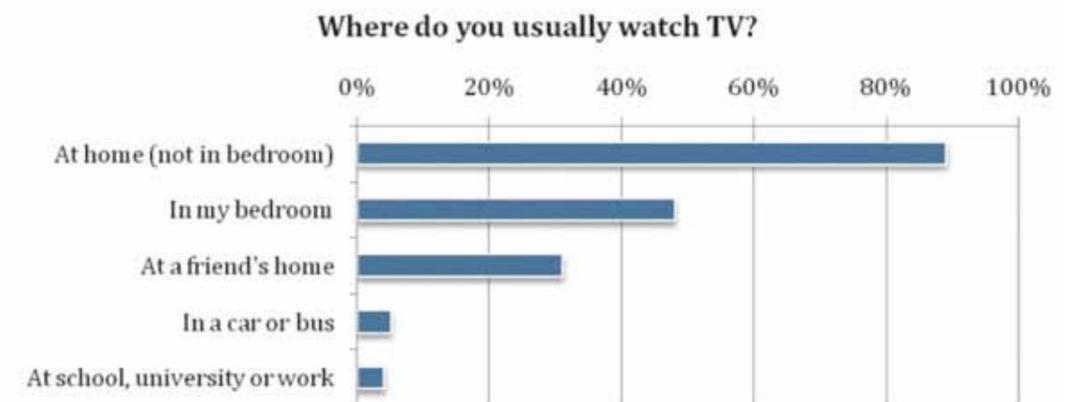
When comparing across countries, Jordan's participants (94%) watched TV in a room other than their bedroom more often than U.A.E.'s (87%) and Lebanon's participants (87%). Conversely, Lebanon's (54%) and the U.A.E.'s participants (53%) watched TV in their bedroom more often than Jordan's participants (31%). As for gender, males (57%) watched TV in their bedrooms more often than females (42%). No other significant differences emerged across countries, genders, age groups, education levels, or income levels.

5.3 With whom do you watch TV?

Participants mainly watched TV with their parents, siblings or alone. The vast majority (77%) said they mainly watch TV with their parents. Similarly, 69% of them said they watched TV with their siblings, 63% alone, and 58% said with their friends, and 25% said with other relatives (Figure 17).

Figure 17: TV Watching Habits
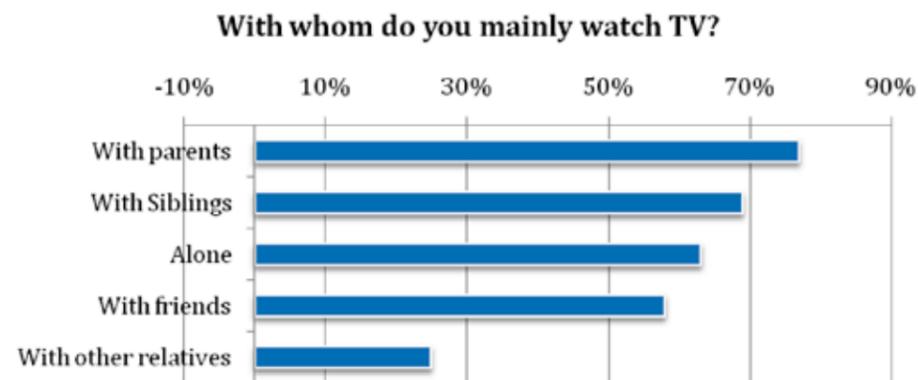
When comparing across countries, Jordan's participants (83%) emerged as more likely than Lebanon's (76%) and U.A.E.'s participants to watch TV with their parents (83%, 76%, 74%, respectively) and with other relatives (31%, 24%, 21%). Also, Jordan's (73%) and U.A.E.'s participants (72%) watched TV with siblings more than Lebanon's (66%), while Lebanon's (61%) and Jordan's participants (58%) watched TV with their friends more than U.A.E.'s participants (52%). No significant difference registered for watching TV alone.

As for gender, females watched more TV than males with parents (82% vs. 71%), with siblings (74% vs. 63%), and with other relatives (27% vs. 21%). On the other hand, males watched more TV than females alone (66% vs. 60%) and with their friends (60% vs. 56%).

When it came to age, education, and income, first, younger participants (17 or younger) were more likely than older participants (18-28) to watch TV alone (65% vs. 58%), with siblings (71% vs. 64%), and with other relatives (27% vs. 20%). Second, participants with lower education levels (some high school or less) were more likely than those with higher education levels (completed a high school degree or more) to watch TV alone (66% vs. 57%), with their siblings (72% vs. 64%), and with other relatives (19% vs. 27%). Finally, participants of lower-to-mid income were more likely than those of mid-to-upper income to watch TV with their parents (78% vs. 72%). No other significant differences emerged.

5.4 What do you usually do while watching TV?

Participants chose what other activities they usually engaged in while watching TV. The vast majority (87%) said they usually eat while watching TV. More than half (59%) talk with people in the room, 53% send and receive cell phone text messages, 50% talk on the phone, 41% email, 39% listen to music, 36% browse online, 35% do their homework or work, 19% play video games, and 17% read (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Activities That Accompany TV Watching
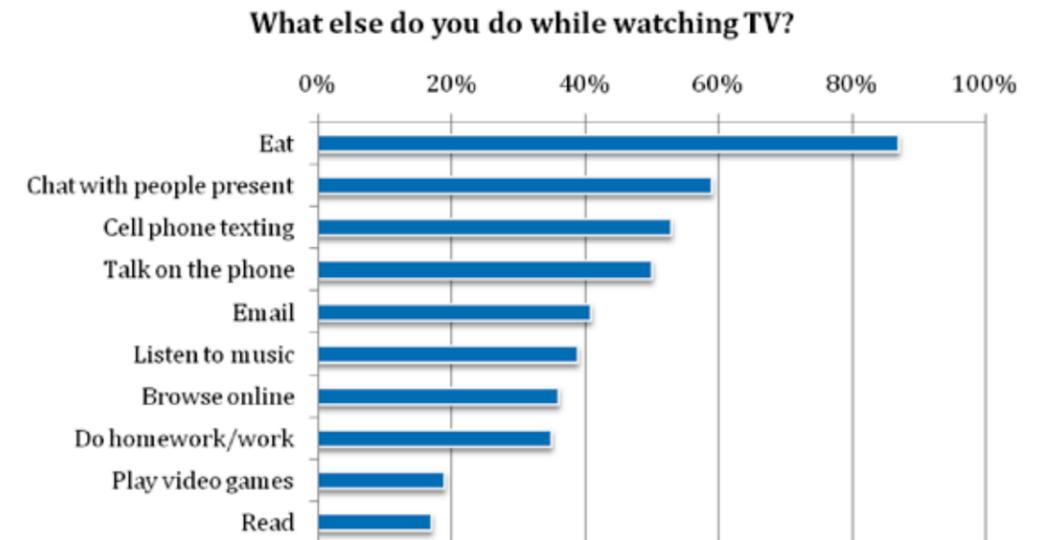
When comparing countries, Jordan's participants (63%) were more likely than Lebanon's (58%) and U.A.E.'s participants (56%) to chat with people in the room while watching TV. U.A.E.'s and Jordan's participants were more likely than Lebanon's to mobile phone texting (59%, 58%, 48%, respectively), talk on the phone (57%, 57%, 43%), browse online (45%, 40%, 30%), and read (22%, 20%, 14%). Also, U.A.E.'s participants were more likely than Jordan's and Lebanon's to email (47%, 38%, 39%), play video games (28%, 16%, 15%), and to listen to music (45%, 33%, 38%). No other significant differences emerged.

Some significant differences appeared when comparing genders, age groups, education, and income levels. First, females were more likely than males to chat with people present in the room (63% vs. 53%), mobile texting (60% vs. 46%), talk on the phone (53% vs. 47%), and do their homework or work (39% vs. 30%). Males were more likely than females to browse online (40% vs. 34%) and play video games (27% vs. 12%) while watching TV. Second, younger participants (17 or less) were more likely than their older counterparts (18-28) to listen to music (42% vs. 34%) and play video games (21% vs. 14%) while watching TV. Third, lower education participants (some high school education or less) were more likely than higher education participants (completed a high school degree or higher) to listen to music (42% vs. 33%) and play video games (22% vs. 13%) while watching TV. Finally, mid-to-upper income participants were more likely than lower-to-mid income participants to mobile texting (60% vs. 52%) and browse online (45% vs. 34%) while watching TV. No other significant differences emerged.

5.5 What do you usually watch on TV?

The study asked participants to choose the main TV genres they watched (Figure 19). Movies topped the list with 87% of participants choosing it. Comedy series came second (78%), followed by music videos (62%), drama series (55%), cartoons (43%), sports (43%), documentaries (38%), game shows (29%), newscasts (26%), and political talk shows (21%).

What do you mainly watch on TV?
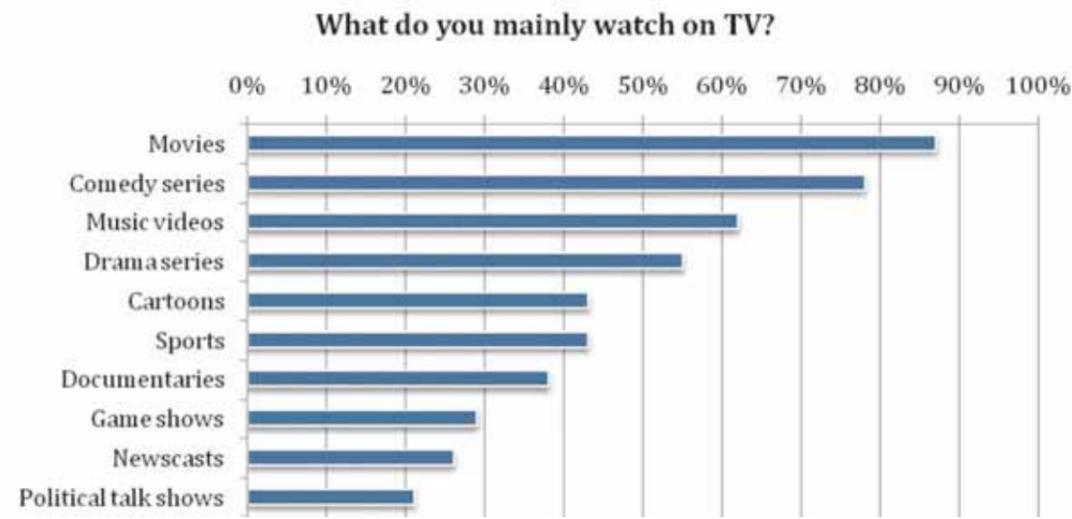
When comparing what participants mainly watch on TV across countries, U.A.E.'s and Jordan's participants were more likely than Lebanon's participants to watch movies (90%, 91%, 83%, respectively), drama series (59%, 58%, 51%), and cartoons (50%, 46%, 38%). Similarly, U.A.E.'s participants were more likely than Lebanon's and Jordan's participants to watch sports (49%, 41%, 40%). However, Jordan's and Lebanon's participants were more likely than U.A.E.'s participants to watch documentaries (45%, 39%, 31%), newscasts (36%, 23%, 22%), and political talk shows (23%, 25%, 14%). No significant differences appeared for other TV genres.

Some significant differences emerged between genders, age groups, and education and income levels. First, males were more likely than females to watch sports (68% vs. 24%), documentaries (44% vs. 32%), game shows (34% vs. 25%), newscasts (30% vs. 22%), and political talk shows (25% vs. 18%), while females were more likely than males to watch music videos (70% vs. 52%), drama series (67% vs. 39%), and cartoons (47% vs. 37%). Second, younger participants (17 and younger) were more likely than older participants (12-28) to watch music videos (64% vs. 57%) and game shows (32% vs. 23%), while older participants were more likely to watch documentaries (45% vs. 35%), newscasts (33% vs. 23%), and political talk shows (29% vs. 18%). Third, higher education participants (with a high school degree or higher) were more likely than lower education participants (some high school education or less) to watch documentaries (44% vs. 35%), newscasts (31% vs. 24%), and political talk shows (28% vs. 19%), while the lower education group was more likely to watch music videos (64% vs. 56%) and game shows (32% vs. 23%). Finally, mid-to-upper income participants were more likely to watch movies on TV than lower-to-mid income participants (93% vs. 85%). No significant differences emerged for the other TV genres compared.

(6) Work- or Schoolwork-Related Media Activities

The majority of participant indicated that they used media at least once a day for work or schoolwork. When it came to which specific medium they used most frequently for work or schoolwork, mobile phone texting ranked first. Websites came in second, followed by emails, online social networks, search engines, online chatting, and computer applications, successively. The usage of blogs for work or schoolwork ranked last.

The study asked participants generally how often they used media as part of their work or schoolwork. Almost half (49%) answered several times a day, 23% selected about once a day, and 21% chose about once a week. Only 7% said never (Figure 20).

How often do you use any media for work or schoolwork?
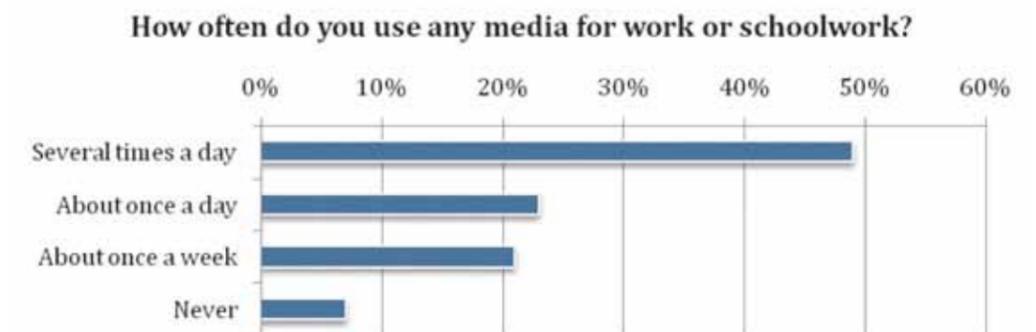
Comparing countries, U.A.E.'s participants (61%) were slightly more likely to choose several times a day compared to Jordan's (47%) and Lebanon's (43%). No significant differences registered for gender, age, education, or income.

In addition to general media use, participants rated how frequently they used specific new media for work or schoolwork-related activities. Below are the results for each (Figure 21). When comparing across the three countries, participants from the U.A.E. followed by those from Jordan tended to be more frequent users of these media technologies for work or schoolwork. Similarly, females, participants 18-28 years old, those with a high school degree or higher, and those of mid-to-upper income level ranked higher in frequency of use.

How often do you use these media for work or schoolwork?
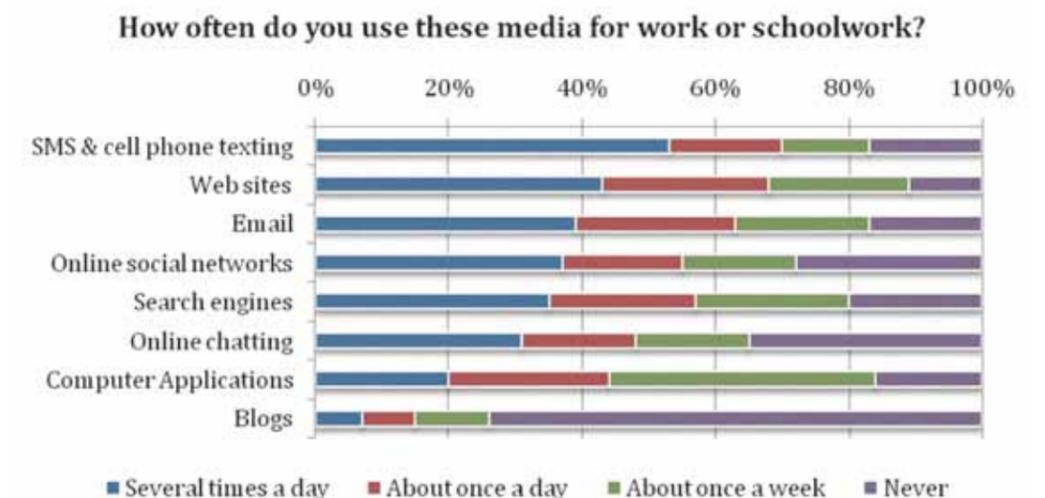
Mobile Phone Texting for Work or Schoolwork. Mobile phone texting ranked highest in frequency of use. Over half the participants (53%) said they used mobile texting for work or schoolwork several times a day, 17% indicated about once a day, 13% chose once a week, and 17% selected never.

When comparing genders, age groups, education levels and income levels, females, 18-28 year olds, those with a high school degree or higher and mid-to-upper income participants reported higher frequency of mobile-texting use for work or schoolwork. Compared to 58% of females, 47% of males used mobile texting several times a day. Also, compared to 61% of those 18-28 years old, 49% of those 17 or less chose several times a day. Similarly, 60% of those who had completed a high school degree or higher said they used mobile texting several times a day compared to 49% of those who have not completed a high school degree. Finally, 58% of upper-to-mid income participants chose the same option compared to 51% of lower-to-mid income participants. No significant differences emerged across the three countries.

Websites for Work or Schoolwork. Using websites for work or schoolwork ranked second highest, where 43% percent of participants said they used web sites several times a day, 25% indicated about once a day, 21% chose once a week, and 11% selected never.

When comparing, U.A.E.'s participants, those 18-28 years old, those with a high school degree or higher, and mid-to-upper income participants reported higher frequency of website use for work or schoolwork. Compared to 57% of U.A.E.'s participants, 48% of Jordan's and 33% of Lebanon's said they used web sites several times a day for work or schoolwork. Also, compared to 49% of those 18-28 years old, 41% of those 17 years old or less chose several times a day. Similarly, 49% of participants who had completed a high school degree or higher said they used websites several times a day compared to 41% of those with some high school education or less. Finally, 52% of upper-to-mid income participants compared to 40% of lower-to-mid income participants chose the same option. No significant differences emerged between genders.

Emailing for Work or Schoolwork. Using emails for work or schoolwork ranked third highest in frequency of use. In fact, 39% said they used email several times a day, 24% indicated about once a day, 20% chose once a week, and 17% selected never.

When comparing, again U.A.E.'s participants, those 18-28 years old, and those with the higher education level reported higher frequency of email use for work or schoolwork. Compared to 47% of U.A.E.'s participants, 39% of Jordan's and 35% of Lebanon's participants said they used email several times a day. Also, compared to 46% of those 18-28 years old, 37% of those 17 or younger chose several times a day. Finally, 48% of those who have completed a high school degree or higher said they used websites several times a day compared to 36% of those with some high school education or less. No significant differences appeared between genders or income levels.

Online Social Networks for Work or Schoolwork. Online social networks ranked fourth, where 37% of participants said they used them for work or schoolwork several times a day, 18% indicated about once a day, 17% chose once a week, and 28% selected never. No significant differences emerged when comparing across countries, genders, age groups, education levels, or income levels.

Search Engines for Work or Schoolwork. Using search engines for work or schoolwork ranked fifth. Thirty-five percent of participants said they used search engines several times a day for work or schoolwork, 22% indicated about once a day, 23% chose once a week, and 20% selected never.

When comparing, as before, U.A.E.'s participants, those 18-28 years old, those with a higher education level, and those with a higher income level reported more frequency of search engine use for work or schoolwork. Compared to 47% of U.A.E.'s participants, 44% of Jordan's and 22% of Lebanon's said they used search engines several times a day. Also, compared to 43% of those 18-28 years old, 31% of those 17 years old or younger chose several times a day. Similarly, 45% of participants who had completed a high school degree or higher said the same compared to 30% of those with some high school education or less. Finally, 45% of upper-to-mid income participants said they used search engines several times a day compared to 31% of mid-to-lower income participants. No significant differences appeared between genders.

Online Chatting for Work or Schoolwork. The frequency of use of online chatting for work or schoolwork ranked sixth, where 31% of participants said they chatted online for work or schoolwork several times a day, 17% indicated about once a day, 17% chose once a week, and 35% selected never.

When comparing, participants from U.A.E. and those of a higher income level reported more frequency of online chatting use. Compared to 37% of U.A.E.'s participants, 32% of Jordan's and 22% of Lebanon's said they chatted online several times a day for work or schoolwork. Also, 36% of upper-to-mid income participants said the same compared to 30% of mid-to-lower income participants. No significant differences surfaced between genders, age groups and education levels.

Computer Applications for Work or Schoolwork. Interestingly, computer applications ranked seventh. Only, 20% of participants said they used computer applications for work or schoolwork several times a day, 24% indicated about once a day, 40% chose once a week, and 16% selected never.

When comparing, U.A.E.'s participants, those 18-28 years old, those of a higher education level, and those of mid-to-upper income level reported slightly higher frequency of computer applications use for work or schoolwork. Compared to 27% of U.A.E.'s participants, 20% of Lebanon's and 13% of Jordan's said they used computer applications several times a day for work or schoolwork. Also, compared to 25% of those 18-28 years old, 18% of those 17 or younger chose several times a day. Similarly, 28% of participants

who have completed a high school degree or higher said the same compared to 22% of those with some high school education or less. Finally, 27% of upper-to-mid income participants compared to 18% of lower-to-mid income participants chose the same option. No significant differences emerged between genders.

Blogs for Work or Schoolwork. Finally, using blogs (reading or writing) for work or schoolwork activities ranked last. Only 7% of participants said they used blogs for work or schoolwork several times a day, 8% indicated about once a day, 11% chose once a week, and the vast majority (74%) selected never. No significant difference emerged when comparing across any of the categories.

(7) Computer Skills as well as Internet Use, Speed, and Cost

The vast majority of participants said they had used the Internet before, and a slight majority considered Internet connection in their country both fast and expensive. Almost all participants considered themselves and their oldest siblings as possessing intermediate or expert level computer skills, and most also rated their fathers accordingly, but a majority rated their mothers as beginners or cannot use computers. Google followed by MSN/Hotmail, Facebook, and Yahoo! were the most common home pages on participants' browsers.

7.1 Internet Use

The study asked participants whether they had ever used the Internet before. Almost all (98%) answered positively. Among those who said no, the most common reason was "I do not have time for the Internet" (43%), followed by "I don't know how to use the Internet" (23%) and "I don't have a computer" (16%). No significant differences registered across countries, genders, age groups, income levels, or education levels.

7.2 Internet Speed and Cost

The study asked participants about Internet speed and cost in their respective countries. For speed, 37% said the Internet was somewhat or very slow, while 62% felt it was somewhat or very fast. For cost, 46% chose somewhat or very cheap, while 54% selected somewhat or very expensive (Figure 22).[4]

Figure 22: Perception of Internet speed and cost

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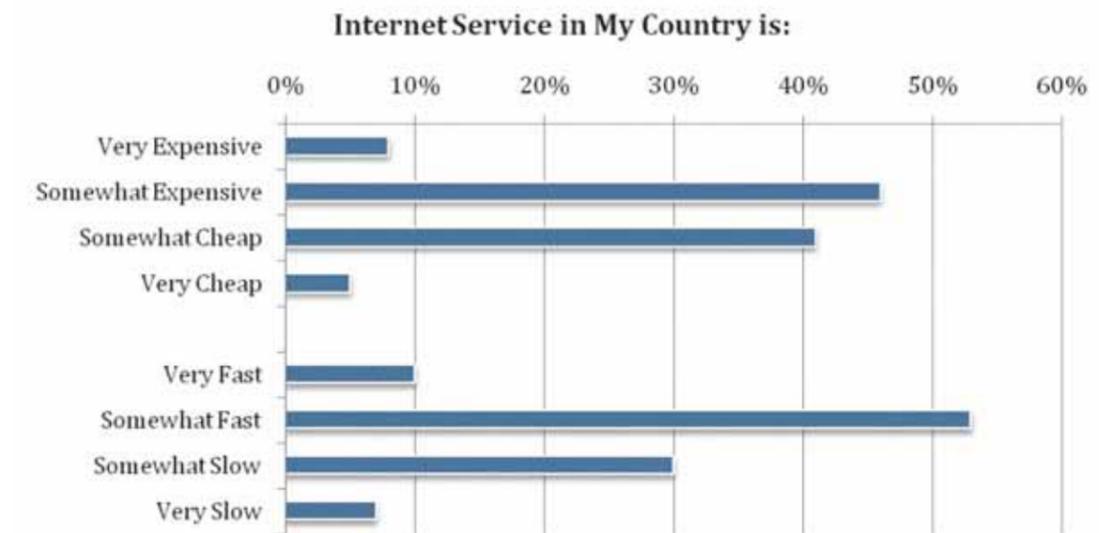
4   Sum of percentages sometimes may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Comparing countries. When comparing across the three countries, Lebanon's participants (54%) were more likely to choose somewhat or very slow compared to Jordan's (30%) and U.A.E.'s (16%). Similarly, Lebanon's participants (61%) were more likely to select somewhat or very expensive, compared to Jordan's (49%) and U.A.E.'s (47%).

Comparing age and education levels. Both education levels and age groups had negative correlations with perception of Internet speed. Younger participants (17 or less) were more likely than older participants (18-28) to perceive Internet connection in their country as somewhat or very fast (68% vs. 51%, respectively). Also, the lower education group (has not yet completed high school) was more likely than the higher education group (completed high school or a higher degree) to perceive the Internet as fast (68% vs. 51%). No significant differences between genders or income levels registered for Internet speed, or between genders, age groups, education levels, or income levels for Internet cost.

7.3 Computer Skills

Participants rated themselves and their siblings as more knowledgeable about using computers than they rated their fathers and mothers. Figure 23 shows 0.2% of participants said they cannot use a computer, and 3% rated themselves as beginners, while 97% rated themselves as having intermediate or expert knowledge. Similarly, participants rated their oldest siblings as: 0.8% cannot use computers, 5% beginners, and 94% intermediates or experts. However, they rated their fathers at 16%, 23%, and 61%, respectively, and their mothers at 19%, 39%, and 42%, respectively.

Figure 23: Evaluation of Computer Skills
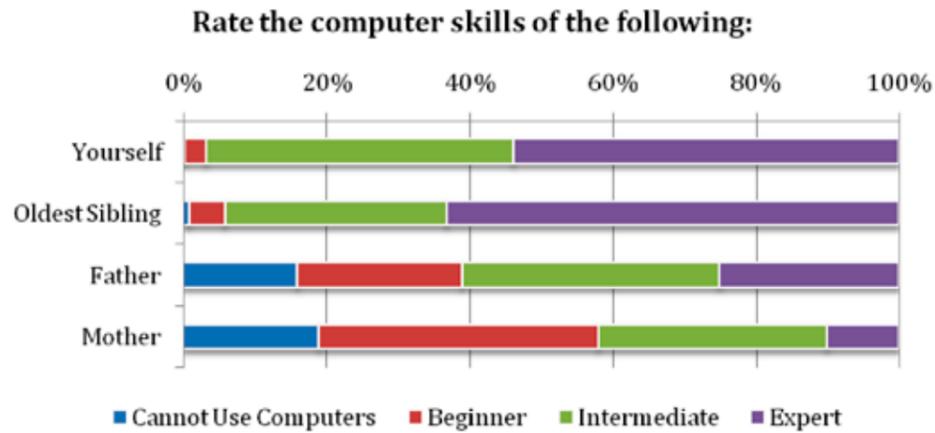
Comparing countries. When comparing the results across the three countries, no significant differences appeared for participants' rating of themselves or of their oldest siblings. However, participants living in the U.A.E. followed by those living in Jordan rated both their parents' computer skills higher than those living in Lebanon. In fact, 80% of U.A.E.'s participants rated their fathers and 51% rated their mothers as intermediates or experts, compared to 67% and 46% of Jordan's, and 47% and 35% of Lebanese's participants, respectively.

Comparing ages. When comparing computer skills ratings between the two age groups, younger participants (17 or less) were more likely to rate both their fathers (65%) and mothers (45%) as intermediates or experts compared to the older (18-28) age group (54% and 36%, respectively). No significant difference appeared when they rated themselves or their oldest siblings.

Education level. Similarly, when comparing between the two educational levels, participants who have not yet graduated from high school (lower education levels) were more likely to rate both their fathers (64%) and mothers (42%) as intermediates or experts compared to the higher education level (completed a high school degree or higher) (56% and 39%, respectively). No significant differences appeared for self or oldest sibling rating.

Finally, no significant differences registered when comparing computer skills rating across gender or income level.

7.4 Browser Homepage

An open-ended question asked participants which Internet page appeared when they first opened their browsers. Almost half (47%) answered Google, 17% said MSN and/or Hotmail, 13% said Facebook, and 11% answered Yahoo! In addition, 0.9% answered Apple's web site, 0.7% said Youtube, and 0.5% said their school or university web site (Figure 24).[5]

Figure 24: Participants' Homepages
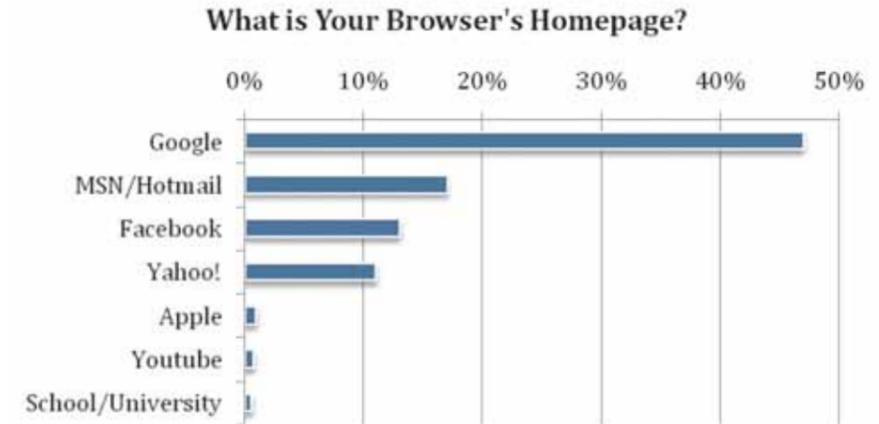
When comparing across countries, significant differences appeared for Facebook, Yahoo!, and MSN/Hotmail. U.A.E.'s participants (21%) were more likely to answer MSN/Hotmail compared to Lebanon's (16%) and Jordan's (15%). Jordan's (18%) were more likely to say Yahoo! compared to U.A.E.'s (11%) and Lebanon's participants (7%). Finally, Lebanon's participants (18%) were more likely to write Facebook compared to Jordan's (12%) and the U.A.E.'s (7%). No significant differences registered between genders, age groups, education levels, or income levels.

(8) Attitudes Toward the Internet, Online Restrictions, and Privacy

The vast majority of participants believed that information through the Internet is very or somewhat trustworthy, and most used their real name as opposed to a fake profile for various online activities. However, they were split when asked about restrictions on Internet content. Slightly more than half believed there should be less or no restrictions while almost half selected more restrictions or "Internet content should be fully restricted or banned." The vast majority did not view the Internet as a tool that can help them influence government or gain political power, and only a minority believed the Internet helps governments monitor them or "helps corrupt them." They were split when it came to viewing the Internet as a threat to their privacy but tended to slightly agree that it distracts them from work. On the other hand, the vast majority believed the Internet helped them advocate their causes and beliefs, and express their opinions. Almost all agreed that it helped them with their work or schoolwork and that it offered them "great entertainment opportunities."

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5   10% of participants listed other web sites.

8.1 Internet Restrictions

Slightly more than half (52%) chose there should be "less" or "no" restrictions on Internet content. On the other hand, 48% said there should be "more" restrictions or "Internet content should be fully restricted or banned" (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Attitudes Toward Internet Restrictions

Internet content should have/be
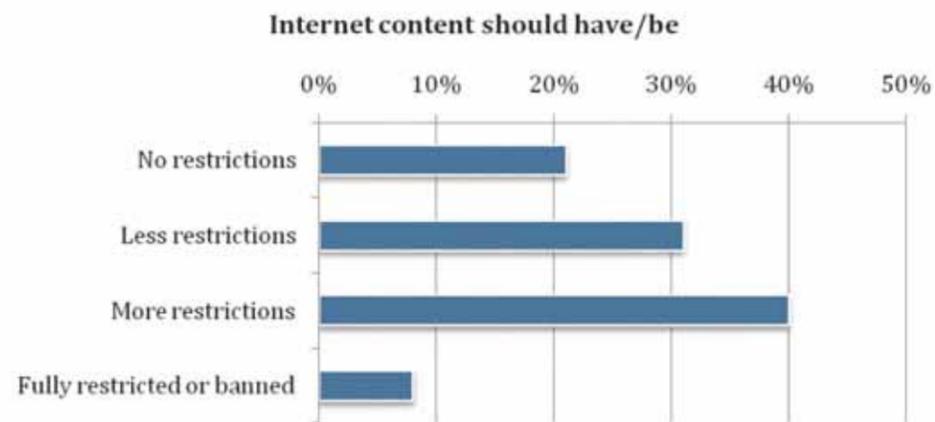
When comparing across countries, U.A.E.'s participants were twice as likely to choose "less Internet restrictions" (51%) compared to those from Lebanon (24%) and Jordan (25%). Also when comparing between genders, females (13%) were less likely than males (32%) to call for "no Internet restriction," while males (29%) were less likely than females (48%) to advocate "more Internet restrictions." In addition, participants of lower to middle income compared to those of middle to upper income were less likely to support "no Internet restrictions" (18% vs. 29%) and more likely to call for "more Internet restrictions" (43% vs. 28%). No significant differences registered for age groups and education levels.

8.2 Trusting Internet Content.

The vast majority of participants trusted information acquired from the Internet. Almost 83% of participants deemed most information they acquire from the Internet as somewhat or very trustworthy (71% chose somewhat trustworthy). U.A.E.'s participants registered the highest levels of trust with 88% selecting somewhat or very trustworthy, followed by Lebanon's (81%) and Jordan's participants (77%). No significant differences registered across genders, age groups, or education, or income levels.

8.3 Real Name or Fake Profile.

When asked whether they used their real name or a fake profile for various online activities, 53% said they used their real name for blogging, 61% for tweeting, 69% for online chatting, 82% for emailing, 86% for online social networking, and 90% for sending SMS and text messages via mobile phone (Figure 26).

Those who use their real name when:
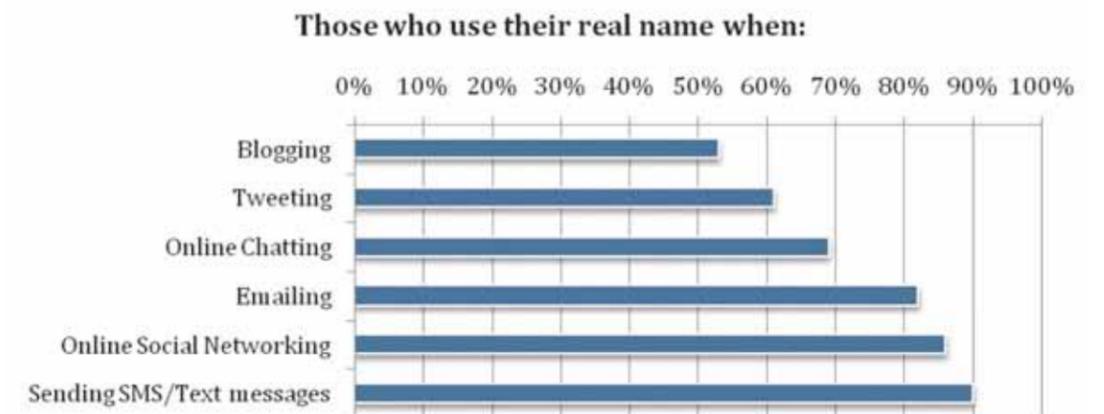
When comparing across countries, U.A.E.'s participants compared to Lebanon's and Jordan's registered the lowest level for using real names for Blogs (41%, 56%, 60%, respectively), Twitter (57%, 61%, 68%), online chatting (56%, 42%, 18%), emails (72%, 85%, 89%), online social networks (75%, 88%, 91%), and mobile phone texting (85%, 91%, 95%). As for income level, more mid-to-upper income participants compared to lower-to-mid income participants said they used their real name for blogs (68%, 47%, respectively), Twitter (78%, 56%), online social networks (95%, 82%), email (90%, 79%), online chatting (81%, 65%), and mobile texting (95%, 88%). No significant difference appeared when comparing between genders, age groups, or education levels.

8.4 Attitudes Toward the Internet

Participants answered general attitudinal questions about the Internet. Thirty percent (somewhat or strongly) agreed that the Internet helps them "gain political power," and 35% agreed that it helps them "influence the government." At the same time, 39% agreed that the Internet "helps governments monitor" them, 40% agreed that it "helps corrupt" them, and 46% agreed that the Internet "threatens their privacy" (Figure 27).

Figure 27: General Attitudes Toward the Internet

Those who agree/disagree that the Internet:
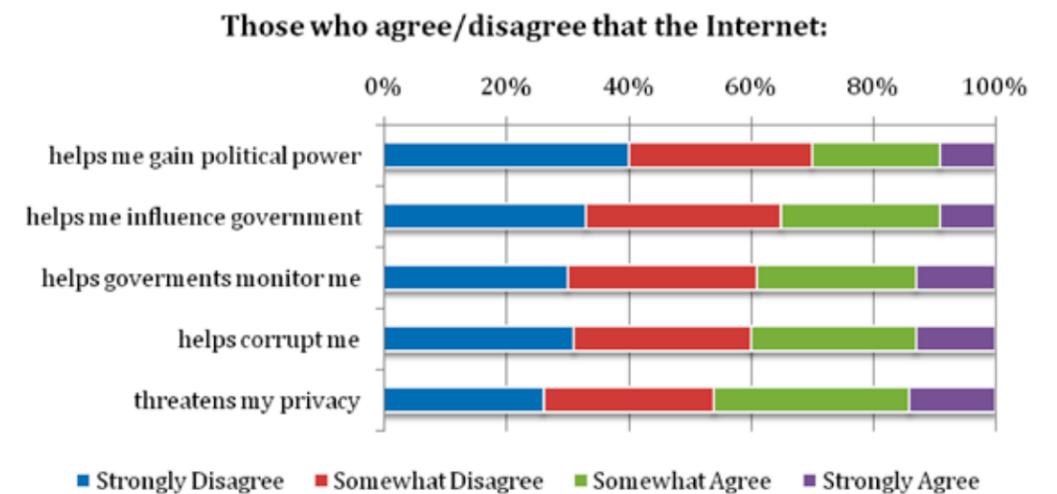
However, the majority (55%) somewhat or strongly agreed that the Internet distracts them from work or schoolwork. Similarly, 70% agreed that it helps them advocate their causes and beliefs, 82% agreed it helps them express their opinions, 93% agreed it helps them with their work or schoolwork, and 94% agreed that it offered them "great entertainment opportunities" (Figure 28).

Figure 28: Attitudes Toward the Internet
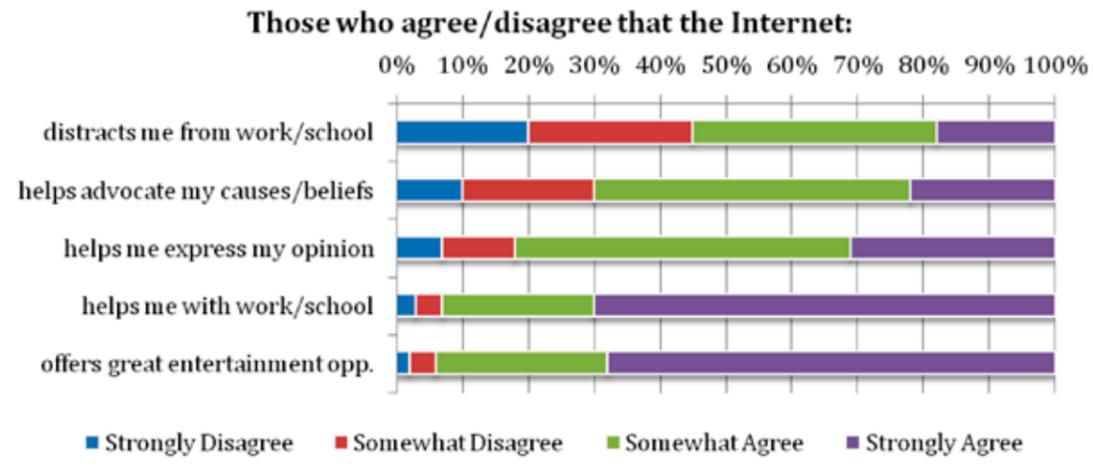
There was no significant difference between males and females for most of the rated statements, with two exceptions. More females (65%) than males (56%) tended to disagree that the Internet helps governments monitor them. Similarly, more females (65%) than males (54%) disagreed that the Internet helps corrupt them. When comparing between income levels, several statements registered significant difference. Lower-to-mid income participants (63%) were more likely to disagree than mid-to-upper income participants (55%) that the Internet helps governments monitor them. Similarly, lower-to-mid income participants (48%) were more likely to disagree than mid-to-upper income participants (38%) that the Internet distracts them from work or schoolwork. The latter (56%) were also more likely than the former (47%) to disagree that the Internet threatens their privacy. However, Lower-to-mid income level participants (67%) were less likely to disagree than mid-to-upper income level participants (75%) that the Internet helps them gain political power. No significant differences registered for these opinions across countries, age groups, or education level.

(9) Online Purchasing and Downloading Habits

Participants extensively downloaded music, software, games, and videos, but very few seemed to pay for these downloads. Simultaneously, barely any participants used credit cards online, and a majority did not click on online advertisements.

The vast majority of participants said they had never used credit cards online (82%) or purchased a product or service online (82%) in the past 30 days (Figure 29). Similarly, a slight majority (54%) said they had never clicked on an online advertisement in the past 30 days. Simultaneously, 85% said they had downloaded music online at least once in the past 30 days (57% chose more than 5 times). Similarly, 71% said they had downloaded software online at least once (29% more than 5 times), 50% said they had downloaded games at least once (20% more than 5 times), and 50% said they downloaded movies at least once (22% more than 5 times) in the past 30 days.

Figure 29: Online Purchasing and Downloading Activities
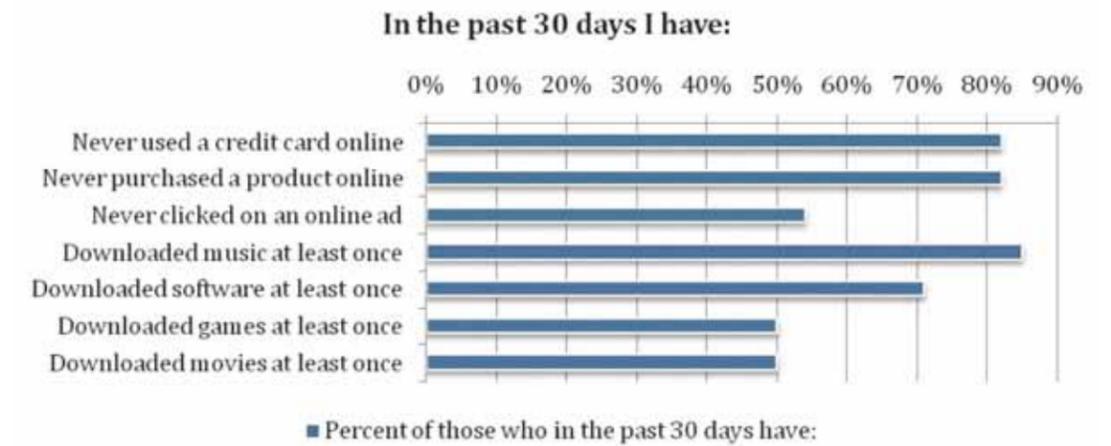
Comparing countries. Lebanon's participants were least likely to have used a credit card or purchased a product or service online, and Jordan's participants were most likely to have clicked on an online ad, while U.A.E.'s participants emerged as most likely to have used a credit card online. Compared to 86% of Lebanon's and 84% of Jordan's participants, 73% of U.A.E.'s participants said they had never used a credit card online in the past 30 days. Almost identically, 73% of U.A.E.'s participants said they had never purchased a product or service online (in the past 30 days) compared to 84% of Jordan's and 85% of Lebanon's participants. However, 52% of Jordan's participants said they had clicked on an online ad at least once in the past 30 days (20% said more than 5 times), compared to 56% of U.A.E.'s (16% said more than 5 times) and 42% of Lebanon's participants (16% said more than 5 times). Moreover, U.A.E.'s participants ranked highest for downloading music, software, games and movies online, while participants from Lebanon ranked the lowest. Compared to 92% of U.A.E.'s participants, 88% of Jordan's and 78% of Lebanon's participants said they had downloaded music at least once in the past 30 days. The ranking of countries was the same for downloading software (84%, 78%, 60%, respectively), games (57%, 52%, 45%), and movies (69%, 51%, 38%).

Comparing genders. Males used credit cards, shopped online and downloaded online content more often than females. Compared to 85% of females, 77% of males said they had never used a credit card online in the past 30 days. Similarly, 87% of females compared to 76% of males said they had never purchased a product or service online, but no significant difference registered between genders for clicking on online ads. In addition, 87% of males and 83% of females said they downloaded music online at least once in the past 30 days (64% and 52% said more than 5 times, respectively). More significantly, 80% of males compared to 64% of females said they had downloaded software online (41% and 19% said more than 5 times), 58% of males and 43% of females said they had downloaded games online (26% and 14% said more than 5 times), and 61% of males compared to 41% of females said they had downloaded movies online at least once in the past 30 days (31% and 15% said more than 5 times).

Comparing income levels. Participants of lower-to-mid income were slightly less likely to use credit cards and almost as likely to shop online and click on online ads compared to mid-to-upper income participants. Compared to 23% of mid-to-upper income participants, 17% of lower-to-mid income participants said they had used a credit card online at least once in the past 30 days. Consistently, mid-to-upper income participants compared to their lower-to-mid income counterparts were slightly more likely to download music (89% and 83%, respectively), software (75% and 70%), and games (46% and 51%). No significant difference emerged for downloading videos, for making purchase, or for clicking on online ads. In addition, no significant difference emerged across age groups or education level.

Methodology

This pilot study surveyed 2,744 university and high school students in Jordan, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates, using a purposive cluster sampling technique and a self-administered questionnaire. Due to the nature of non-probability sampling and the priorities set by the objectives of the pilot study, the final sample skewed the results in favor of urban, middle-income, literate inhabitants of the three countries. This section details the research design, method, and processes used.

Survey Methodology

This pilot study used a self-administered cross-sectional survey. Surveys are the most effective way to assess the opinions and track the behavioral and attitudinal trends among a large population (Shoemaker and McCombs, 2003, p. 231). "The survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (Creswell, 2003, p. 153). The researcher chose a self-administered survey approach because it saves time and expense, avoids interviewers' biases, and offers respondents more privacy (Shoemaker and McCombs, 2003). These priorities are appropriate for a pilot study, but tend to skew the results by over-representing certain segments of the target public. See limitation below for details.

Because survey methodology deals with human subjects, the researchers sought permission from the Internal Review Board at the American University of Beirut. The IRB granted the study "exempt" status permission. The research team ensured confidentiality and anonymity of the participants following the standard techniques of ethical research conduct.

Sampling Technique

The study surveyed 2,744 high school and university students in Jordan, Lebanon, and the U.A.E., using a purposive cluster sampling technique. In cluster sampling, researchers draw groups rather than individuals (Patten, 2007, p. 51). The sampling technique improves the response rate, allows for efficient surveying, and saves time and cost. However, using a non-probability selection technique introduces sampling biases that may be partly ameliorated through careful selection of a diverse sample of clusters that includes a representative demographic of the broader population (Poindexter and McCombs, 2000).

The study defined a cluster as a high school or university classroom. Researchers first assembled together a list of most of the schools and universities in the three countries, and gathered information about each school using the help of local students and researchers. They then categorized the institutions according to tuition costs (lower-, middle-, upper-income), location (urban, rural), gender, (male-only, female-only, mixed), orientation (religious/missionary, secular), language (Arabic/English, Arabic/French, Other), and whether they were privately owned or public/state operated. Next, the researchers attempted to contact via both e-mail and telephone at least two schools from each category in each country to ask permission to survey two-to-three classes from each. Unfortunately, most of the public, lower-income, and rural schools did not respond or were not reachable despite multiple attempts. Moreover, many of the institutions from these categories that did respond declined to participate in the study. This skewed the sample in favor of urban middle-to-upper-income private schools and universities. However, through careful selection of classes from the institutions that responded favorably, the respondents represented a diverse sample for gender, language, and orientation, with a slight skew in favor of schools that taught Arabic and English (as opposed to Arabic and French) due to their dominance in Jordan and the U.A.E. In addition, Lebanon was slightly over represented due to the relative ease in getting access to Lebanese schools. For details about participating institutions, please see Appendix A.

From the final list of forty-two schools and universities, researchers selected purposively two to four classes, taking into consideration gender, age, and language diversity. The research team ensured an equal number of classes for each gender from schools that segregated female and male students. Similarly, male-only schools were balanced with their female-only counterparts. The study followed the same balance in selection for schools that taught more than one curriculum and offered more than two main languages. In the U.A.E, a country that has roughly five times more expatriates than citizens, researchers assigned higher priority for schools and universities that had majority Emirati citizens.

Although 2,744 filled the paper questionnaires, the study included only 2,477 in the final analysis due to various reasons discussed in the Analysis section below. The (un-weighted) demographics of the final sample ended up as follows: [6]

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6   Percentages sometimes do not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing values.

>> Most participants lived in Lebanon, followed by the U.A.E, followed by Jordan.
>   48% (1074) lived in Lebanon.
>   28% (752) lived in the U.A.E.
>   24% (651) participants lived in Jordan.

>> The study included more female participants.
>   56% female.
>   44% male.

>> Participants' ages ranged from 13 to 28.
>   15% were 13 to 15 years old.
>   54% were 16 to 17 years old.
>   25% were 18 to 21 years old.
>   6% were 22 to 28 years old.

>> The majority selected Sunni Muslim as the religion in which they were raised, which reflected the majority Sunni population in the Jordan and the U.A.E.
>   Christian Catholic: 3%
>   Christian Maronite: 9%
>   Christian Orthodox: 6%
>   Christian: Protestant: 1%
>   Muslim Alawi: 1%
>   Muslim Druze: 3%
>   Muslim Shia: 15%
>   Muslim Sunni: 62%
>   Atheist, agnostic or no religion: 1%
>   Other: 1%

>> Most participants were high schools students.
>   1% some middle/intermediate schooling or less.
>   6% completed middle/intermediate school.
>   63% some high school education.
>   16% completed high school or an equivalent degree.
>   9% some college or special schooling after high school.
>   5% completed a bachelor or equivalent university degree.
>   0.3% completed a graduate or higher degree.

>> When asked about the main languages their high school taught, the majority answered Arabic and English, followed by Arabic, English, and French.
>   62% chose Arabic and English.
>   19% chose Arabic, English, and French.
>   11% chose Arabic and French.
>   4% chose English only.
>   2% chose Arabic only.
>   1% chose French only.
>   1% chose other.

>> Similarly, when asked what language they fluently spoke, Arabic followed by English ranked higher than French. Compared to 15% of participants who said they spoke French fluently, 70% chose English, and 88% chose Arabic.

>> The vast majority of participants said they were not employed.
>> 84% said they were currently not working.
>> 7% said they had a part-time paying job.
>> 5% said they had non-paying or volunteer work.
>> 3% said they had a full-time paying job.
>> 2% said they were a stay-at-home person (caring for family).

>> Most surveyed claimed an income or an allowance of $250 or less per month.

    > 63% claimed an income or allowance of less than $250 per month.

    > 23% claimed $251 to $500 per month.

    > 7% claimed $501 to $1000 per month.

    > 4% claimed $1001 to $2000 per month.

    > 3% claimed more than $2000 per month.

Although the sample was skewed in favor of urban middle-to-upper-income private schools and universities, it nevertheless represented much of the youth demographics of the three countries. First, the vast majority of inhabitants of these three countries live in cities: 78% for Jordan, 87% for Lebanon, and 78% for U.A.E. (Jordan, 2010; Lebanon, 2010; U.A.E., 2010). Second, Jordan, Lebanon, and the U.A.E. have lately had relatively high literacy rates (90%, 87%, and 78%, respectively) and high school-life expectancy (13 years, 13 years, and 11 years, respectively) (Jordan, 2010; Lebanon, 2010; U.A.E., 2010). This suggests the sample skew contributes to the representativeness of the sample for these three countries. However, the main missing demographics are teenagers and young adults who were not studying at school or university.

Instrument and Measures

The survey questionnaire comprised fifty-nine close-ended questions and one open-ended question, required 15-25 minutes to complete, and generated 370 variables. During the instrument development phase, the research team based much of the questionnaire on concepts addressed in former academic and commercial studies, taking into consideration local factors, cultures, and languages (e.g., Center for Digital Future, 2009; Ofcom, 2009; Pew Internet, 2009; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2007; Gentile and Walsh, 2002). The research team developed the first questionnaire in English. Before reaching the final English version, they pretested the questionnaire four times, and revising it after each pretest. After this rigorous pretest period, a professional translated the questionnaire into Arabic, and later a different translator reverse-translated the Arabic questionnaire back into English. Reverse translation is commonly used to ensure translation reliability (Poindexter & McCombs, 2000).

The final (Arabic and English) version of the questionnaire included six sections. Section one asked general demographic questions. Section two dealt with new and digital media use, including general Internet habits and use of e-mail, blogs, social networks, mobile phones, portable digital music players, and video games. Section three focused on Television consumption habits. Section four asked about media use for work and school or university work. Section five dealt specifically with news media habits, while the last section focused on media use for entertainment and leisure purposes.

All habits and attitudinal questions used a four-point ordered response scale measured at the ordinal level, while some frequency-of-use questions for specific periods used a seven-point ordered response scale, also measured at the ordinal level. Questions that measured media use for general or specific purposes used the following ordered response scale: 1 = "Never," 2 = "About once a week," 3 = "About once a day," 4 = "Several times a day." Questions that asked how closely the respondent followed a certain issue used the following ordered response scale: 1 = "Never," 2 = "Rarely," 3 = "Sometimes," 4 = "Often." Questions that dealt with attitude towards a certain medium followed a four-point Likert-type scale: 1 = "Strongly disagree," 2 = "Somewhat disagree," 3 = "Somewhat agree," 4 = "Strongly agree." Questions that asked about frequency of use in the past 30 days used a seven-point ordered response scale: 1 = "Zero," 2 = "One time," 3 = "Two times," 4 = "Three times," 5 = "Four times," 6 = "Five times," and 7 = "More than five times." Those that measured the time participants spent on a certain medium in a one day period used a seven-point ordered response scale: 1 = "No time at all," 2 = "Less than one hour per day," 3 = "About one hour per day," 4 = "About two hours per day," 5 = "About three hours per day," 6 = "About four hours per day," and 7 = "About five or more hours per day."

The questionnaire was developed online using surveymonkey.com, a web-based survey application. The researchers only used it for questionnaire development and later for data entry, but not for gathering information from participants. All participants filled the printed version of the questionnaire. Using a hardcopy version of the questionnaire instead of the online version limited sampling bias against participants who were not web or computer literate.

Process and Analysis

The survey was deployed during the period of October 15 and November 31, 2009. In most cases, the primary investigator, accompanied by one or more research assistants, entered the classroom, and explained the research purpose and important procedural instructions, including the voluntary, anonymous, and confidential conditions of the study. Participants received 45 minutes to fill the

questionnaire, but most completed it in 15 to 25 minutes. The researchers remained in the classroom during that period answering any questions that arose. Once finished, participants handed the questionnaire to the researchers, who gave each questionnaire a unique number (for tracking purposes), and stored it along with the other questionnaires from the same institution. The research team at all times made sure that class instructors did not interfere with the process or influence the participants. To insure confidentiality and reliability, the instructors were explicitly asked not to answer questions from the participants and not to read their answers nor handle the questionnaires.

After completion of the fieldwork, the primary investigator distributed the completed paper-questionnaires among research assistants for data entry. The PI explained the protocol for data entry beforehand, and tested its reliability by having five percent of the questionnaires entered by all research assistants and compared statistically. Reliability varied from 96.9% to 100%, with a mean of 99.6%. Almost all inconsistent entries pertained to insignificant differences in entering the open-ended questions.

After completion of data entry, the PI downloaded the data into MS Excel and systematically reviewed the entries, searching for major inconsistencies and eliminating participants who either did not complete more than 30% of the questionnaire or those who entered inconsistent answers to questions that measured the same concept. The PI then imported the dataset into SPSS.

Because of the sample skewness in favor of higher income participants, the researcher implemented a data weighting procedure. First, participants were divided into two categories based on the school or university they attended: "lower to middle income" and "middle to higher income." Then a weight of 1.5 was given to the first group, and a weight of 0.5 was given to the second group. Finally, the weighted dataset was analyzed using frequency tables, cross-tabulations, and correlation tests (Cramer's V and Spearman's Rho). A chi-squared inferential test of significance ($p \leq 0.05$) determined whether two compared variables showed a statistically significant difference. The researcher decided that in addition to a statistically significant value for p, the difference between any two compared variables needed to be more than 5% for this difference to be meaningful. Therefore, in the results section, when the comparison is deemed not significant, this means either $p > 0.05$ or the difference between two variables is less than 5%, or both.

The independent variables used for comparison were: country of residence, gender, age group, education level, and income level. For simplicity, age groups, education levels and income levels each included only two groups: 18-28 years old vs. 17 or younger, those with a high school degree or higher vs. those with some high school education or less, those of middle-to-upper income vs. those of lower-to-mid income, respectively. These groups were determined after calculating correlation values across multiple variables and finding positive correlations between components of the constructed groups.

Limitations

Surveying university students in the Arab world comes with its own difficulties, and using cluster sampling has some significant limitations. First, the researchers faced difficulties in securing permission from the selected universities and students. These difficulties varied from non-responsiveness and rejection to participate, to refusal to allow certain questions, especially those relating to religion, in the survey questionnaire. Some of these difficulties contributed to skewing the study sample. In addition, the purposive sampling used did not allow for statistical generalization. However, the researchers made sure to include a diverse and mostly representative sample of the population under study. Finally, survey methodology does not allow for the rich information that can be gathered through qualitative methods, such as depth interviews or focus groups. Most of the limitations addressed are acceptable for a pilot study and will be addressed in the next phase of the research project, which will include both surveys and focus groups, use probability sampling, and cover more Arab countries.

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Appendix A

A List of Schools and Universities Who Participated in the Study.
Total number of students filling the survey: 2,744

Lebanese Schools and Universities	Number of participants
International College	50
Beirut Arab University	90
National Evangelical School - Saida	60
Grand Lycée Achrafieh	49
American Community School	33
American University of Beirut	48
Lebanese American University	60
Jubran Andraos Tueni Public High School (public)	46
Zahiya Kaddoura High School (public)	62
Université Saint-Joseph	50
Hassan Kamel El Sabbah School/ Nabatieh (public)	46
Khalil Salem (Bterram) High School (public)	69
Al-Saydeh School Beirut (+ 2 affiliated schools)	198
Amioun High School (public)	49
Kafer Akka High School (public)	95
University of Balamand	29
Notre Dame University	20
Lebanese University (public)	55
Total participants from this country	**1109**

U.A.E. Schools and Universities	Number of participants
Al-Maali School	53
Al Rashed Al Saleh School	79
Jumeirah College	28

American University in Dubai	47
Al-Khaleej National School	100
American University of Sharjah	60
International School of Choueifat - Sharjah	49
Kustar Khalifa University	31
Abu Dhabi International School	44
Nahda National Schools for Girls - Abu Dhabi	47
Nahda National Schools for Boys - Abu Dhabi	54
Al Dhafra Private Schools - Abu Dhabi	92
International School of Choueifat - Abu Dhabi	77
Total participants from this country	**761**

Jordanian Schools and Universities	Number of participants
Arab Model Schools – Amman (public)	84
Rosary Sisters School	53
Al Quds College	55
Modern American School	36
Jordan University	84
Jordan International School	61
Sands National Academy	60
Modern Montessori High School	46
Applied Private Science University	72
German Jordan University	48
National School of Jordan	75
Al Zaytounah University	200
Total participants from this country	**874**