



Full Length Research Paper

Between Lebanon and UAE: principals' usage of social media what, where, when and why?

Khalil Al-Jammal and Norma Ghamrawi*

Faculty of Education- Lebanese University

*Corresponding authors e-mail: dr.norma_ghamrawi@hotmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was the degree private school leaders from Lebanon and the UAE were using social media in their schools. The study addresses the frequency school leaders used social media sites, purposes for using and the problems they encountered while using it. 150 school principals from each country participated by completing a survey. Data was analyzed using SPSS 21.0. Results indicate that the usage of social media by principals from both countries was limited. However, the Lebanese image was even darker than that of their UAE counterparts. The study provides recommendations for practice and future research.

Keywords: School leadership - social media- communication by technology.

INTRODUCTION

Several studies indicate that citizens of the most developed countries are spending more free time connecting with one another through social media (Ferriter 2011). It is easy to dismiss social media as a fascination of young people but doing, so one would be neglecting one of the fastest growing trends in technology. Ferriter(2011) revealed that 61% of adults who regularly go online - and 73% of online teens - interact with one another via social networking websites.

The Pew Internet and American Life Project recently found that over 71% of teens have a Facebook profile versus 75% of adults (Williamson, 2012). People spend 500 billion minutes per month on Facebook. The average Facebook user spends 55 minutes per day on the site ((Ferriter, 2011; Hepburn, 2010). 50 million messages (or 600 messages per second) are daily posted on Twitter, a microblogging site with 145 million users (Beaumont, 2010; Ferriter, 2011; Hepburn, 2010; Ionescu, 2010). Regarding YouTube, it surpassed 2 billion video views daily in 2010 (Ferriter, 2011; Hepburn, 2010; Parr, 2010). Two years later, YouTube reached 4 billion views per day (Perez 2012).

Similarly, educators are now increasingly taking advantage of social media services and tools. A recent study (Ferriter, 2011) showed that 61 % of teachers,

principals, and librarians are active in at least one social media space. Many use those spaces for professional development - attending webinars, watching YouTube videos, listening to podcasts, or participating in blogs (Ferriter, 2011).

Under the title "Transforming Education in the Arab World: Breaking Barriers in the Age of Social Learning", the 5th edition (2013) of the Arab Social Media Report series was launched by the Dubai School of Government's Governance and Innovation Programme. According to this report, Facebook registered an increase of 10 million users between June 2012 and May 2013. The number of active Twitter users in the Arab World has also grown exponentially from just over 2 million to 3.7 million in the past year. In March 2013, Arab Twitter users generated 336 million tweets - almost double the number of tweets generated in March 2012. The report additionally states that the number of LinkedIn users in select Arab countries stands now close to 5 million.

Moreover, the report revealed that the UAE continues to score the highest amongst all Arab countries in terms of Facebook penetration at 41%, while Egypt claims around 25% of Arab Facebook users and Saudi Arabia has more than half 50% of the Arab active Twitter users.

The report stated that the continued growth of social

media in the Arab region has facilitated innovations by individuals, created new horizons for government entities and new social trends by Arab societies.

Fadi Salem, co-author of the report, said, "With more than 55 million active Arab users of Facebook and 3.7 million of Twitter, social media is already playing a growing role in formal and informal education, on-demand training and in capacity building. Education in the Arab World suffers from extensive challenges in terms of quality and access. However, education is one domain where social media has become widely institutionalized with a critical mass of Arab users. The emergence of new concepts like 'social learning', 'intelligent decision making networks' and 'massive open online courses', is enabling educators, students and educational institutions to rely on social media tools to create innovative approaches to education, capacity building and knowledge transfer in the Arab region" (p.3).

In terms of technology and social media use in the classroom, the report revealed that 55% of the teachers who responded to the survey said they use social media as a classroom resource, while 10% of the parents surveyed indicated that their children have access to social media platforms in the classroom, and more than half said their children's classrooms do not incorporate technological tools.

RachaMourtada, co-author of the report, said, "With such growth, educators, parents and students viewed the role of social media in education positively, whether for enhancing student competencies or reducing the time and costs associated with traditional educational practices. For example, 82% of the respondents agree that social media could be useful for the integration of students with special needs, enabling them to better express themselves and interact with teachers and other students as peers" (p.17).

The literature related to social mediasites shows that many authors and practitioners including Eric Sheninger—Principal of New Milford High School in New Jersey who is widely recognized for his innovative approach to using social media in educational leadership – encourage the school principal to use these sites to be a better manager and leader. In addition, this literature provides the school principal many tips for using social media for professional purpose. Moreover, the literature related to social media sites argues that their benefits are clear when educational leaders look with an open mind. According to this literature, a shift toward incorporating social media into education provides the school principal a "golden opportunity" to build relationships, enhance communication, improve professional development of staff and improve student learning.

With this growing usage of social media networks, the authors were interested in examining the status quo in Lebanon (their home country) versus that of the UAE (a country they served in terms of providing educational

consultations, participating in conferences, and training teachers and school principals.)

Purpose of the Study

There are hundreds of social media websites, with various technological tools, supporting a wide range of interests and practices (Farzana et al., 2010). A tremendous increase in the use of social media websites in both developed and developing countries has been mentioned in the resources cited above.

Concerning education, these resources argued that educators in both developed and developing countries are now increasingly taking advantage of social media services and tools. According to Farzana, the social media websites are becoming popular among students and professionals and help them in connecting with each other, their local and the global community at large. Numerous efforts have been made particularly to understand the use of social media in education and how it can elevate the quality of learning in higher learning institutions (Farzana et al., 2010).

However, some educators, even in developed countries, continue to believe that social media is useless and has no place in education (Nies, 2013; Sheninger, 2012). For them, it is a distraction to the teaching and learning process. The hypothesis being, if students are allowed to use social media in school they will stay off tasks or exhibit inappropriate behavior. Worse than that, teachers will spend countless hours 'socializing' instead of educating." (Sheninger, 2012)

According to Sheninger (2012), there are a growing number of passionate educators who have embraced social media as a powerful tool for learning.

Three years ago, New Milford High School principal Eric Sheninger himself believed there was no place in education for social media. The conversion from social media doubter to believer was not hard. In fact, he read an article that convinced him to try Twitter. Quickly he saw this was a must-have tool for education (Sheninger 2012, 2013).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the degree to which private school leaders in Lebanon and the UAE were utilizing social media and for what purposes they did that. Researchers also attempted to gain deep understanding of the viewpoints of respondents as to the problems they encountered while using those sites and hence invite them to suggest recommendations in this regard.

The research questions guiding this study were:

1. What is the frequency of using of social media websites by private schools principals in Lebanon and the UAE?
2. What are the objectives for using social media by school leaders?

3. What are the problems encountered by school leaders while using social media websites?

Review of Related literature

Types of Social Media Platforms

According to Myers (2012), there are 13 types of social media platforms:

1. Social networking sites(e.g., Facebook, Google Plus, CafeMom, Gather, Fitsugar)
2. Micro-blogging sites(e.g., Twitter, Tumblr, Posterous)
3. Publishing tools(e.g., WordPress, Blogger, Squarespace)
4. Collaboration tools(e.g., Wikipedia, WikiTravel, WikiBooks)
5. Rating/Review sites(e.g., Amazon ratings, Angie's List)
6. Photo sharing sites(e.g., Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest)
7. Video sharing sites(e.g., YouTube, Vimeo, Viddler)
8. Personal broadcasting tools(e.g., Blog Talk radio, Ustream, Livestream)
9. Virtual worlds(e.g., Second Life, World of Warcraft, Farmville)
10. Location based services(e.g., Check-ins, Facebook Places, Foursquare, Yelp)
11. Widgets(e.g., Profile badges, Like buttons)
12. Social bookmarking and news aggregation(e.g., Digg, Delicious)
13. Group buying(e.g., Groupon, Living Social, Crowdsavings)

Many Uses of Technology and Social Media in School

There are a number of ways that technology and social media can be used by schools. Here are 15 ways to do so:

1. A Class Webpage

A school can create a class webpage that provides contact/biographical info, updates on class activities, a calendar, and a space to communicate with teachers(Steiner, 2013).

2. E-mail List

A teacher can e-mail his entire class and their parents at the prick of a finger(Steiner, 2013).

3. iPass, Rediker, Edmodo, Moodle

These help provide ongoing access to grades by parents. Teachers can use turnitin.com to manage student papers

and check for plagiarism(Steiner, 2013).

4. Class Newsletter

Rather than relying on occasional e-mail updates to parents, teachers can create a class newsletter that is sent home regularly. This could be created using a word processing or publishing program and include photos of students, examples of student work, or upcoming assignments (Steiner, 2013).

5. Blogger: Blogging in the Classroom

Having students participate in a classroom blog can be an excellent way to get them to map out their thoughts and practice writing. Teachers often assign students to take care of blogging after providing guidelines and demonstrating how to follow them at the beginning of the year (Harper, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Steiner, 2013).

6. Skype, iChat

School may not restrict parent/teacher meetings to the narrow intersection of the teacher workday and the parents' availability. Educator can set up video enhanced meetings online using Skype, iChat, or other video services (Steiner, 2013).

7. Twiddla, Zoho

There are a few free tools out for live online collaborative sessions. All of these allow multiple participants to communicate with one another and share ideas. A couple of options include Twiddla and Zoho(Steiner, 2013).

8. Facebook

It is a social networking site that has become an icon for social media. Having a school Facebook page establishes the school as one that is up-to-date, with a more transparent environment and capable of disseminating information quickly (Britland, 2012; Harper, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Sheninger et al., 2011; Steiner, 2013; Williamson 2012).

Facebook can be used as a "broadcast" account; a one-way communication from the school to parents. It is quick, easy, cheap, and most parents do have accounts on (Britland, 2012; Harper, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Sheninger et al., 2011; Steiner, 2013; Williamson 2012).

An increasing number of educational institutions are using Facebook pages for promotional reasons, primarily to market themselves (Britland, 2012; Harper, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Sheninger et al., 2011; Steiner, 2013; Williamson 2012). Schools are beginning to use Facebook groups to communicate with students. Members of the groups can exchange files, links, information, polls and

videos very quickly (Britland, 2012; Harper, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Sheninger et al., 2011; Steiner, 2013; Williamson 2012).

Facebook pages can also be used to create a central page for students and teachers to share information (Britland, 2012; Harper, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Sheninger et al., 2011; Steiner, 2013; Williamson 2012). These would serve as valuable tools to post homework assignments, share updates or even humorous stories from the day. The practice of posting homework assignments each day can save students and their parents a lot of frustration, and discourage excuse-making for assignments that aren't completed (Harper, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Sheninger et al., 2011; Sheninger, 2013; Steiner, 2013).

9. *Twitter*

It is a micro-blogging site that is, like Facebook, also being used as a broadcast account. This often links to a Rich Site Summary (RSS) feed from the website that automatically tweets a news article when it is published on the website.

A short, 140-character Tweet is often sufficient for giving parents and students a head's up that there's a test scheduled or assignment due the next day. These quick reminders can be lifesavers for busy families that spend the late afternoon and early evening running from one activity or errand to the next. School can use them for field trips, conferences or general reminders of supplies needed (Britland, 2012; Harper, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Sheninger et al., 2011; Sheninger, 2013; Steiner, 2013; Williamson, 2012).

10. *Tumblr*

It is a micro-blogging site. It can be used as a tool for students to be stakeholders in their education. On the site, students post artwork they have created, videos of performances and presentations, stories they have written, game instructions and much more. This is a great way to let parents see the work their kids are doing. (Nielsen 2013)

11. *YouTube*

YouTube is a video sharing site which provides tools for schools to post videos of school events. This site is free and provides a quick and easy way to share information about school. With parent permission, educator could shoot video of particular interest to class and then upload the video content to a video sharing website. Educator can build links between this account and Facebook or Twitter (Nielsen, 2013; Steiner, 2013; Williamson, 2012).

12. *Flickr*

It is a photo sharing site which provides tools for schools

to post pictures of school events. Also, this site is free and provides a quick and easy way to share information about school. Educator can build links between this account and Facebook or Twitter (Nielsen, 2013; Steiner, 2013; Williamson, 2012).

13. *DropEvent*

Educator can create a photo gallery for parents to view. Better yet, he can give parents the opportunity to share their own photos of school events. Drop Event is a great new website that allows for such collaboration (Steiner, 2013).

14. *Pinterest*

It is a social media venue that caters to those who are visually oriented. If teacher takes pictures in his classroom of the students working or of classroom projects, pinning them on Pinterest can be an excellent way to share the photos with parents (Harper, 2013).

15. *LiveStream*

It is a personal broadcasting tool that allows principals to connect and coordinate with parents. Parents can see school activities through live-streaming (Nielsen 2013).

In addition to the social media websites listed above, there are hundreds of other websites, such as: CiteULike, Technorati, Connotea, Picassa, Furl, Shelfari, Delicious, Wikis, Jumper 2.0, LinkedIn, My space, RSS Feeds, Windows Live Spaces, My Opera, ResearchGATE, Windows Live Favorites, LibraryThing, Orkut, Knowledge iN, Yahoo Directory, Yahoo! Personals, Answer.com, Skype/Google, Yahoo groups, Google Notebook, Yahoo Answers, Geo TV (online), Google Buzz, Google Bookmark, Google groups (Farzana et al., 2010).

Social Media: No Overbearing Rules

Sheninger (2013) said: "to make things clear, there is no guidebook out there that educators must abide by when it comes to using social media" (p.37). According to him, social media do not impose overbearing rules, and that's why school principals should be encouraged to use it. Principals can be brief, post or tweet, share, follow or unfollow, at any time.

Many Things Educators Should Never Do in Social Media

When an educator is operating within the realm of social media, there are many things he should never do and there are certain rules that he must follow them.

1. *Expect Very Much to Happen without a Plan*

School principals need a plan that starts by setting out

what they hope to achieve through engaging with social media. This may then lead them to experiment with one form of social media at a time. Each requires a different strategy. An approach that works with one may not work with the others (Lee, 2013).

2. Forget How Much Time Social Media Can Consume

Social media consume time. Principals need to consider whether focusing on social media is likely to be of more value than other ways in which they might spend his time (Lee, 2013).

3. Put Someone Inexperienced at the Reins

It's important for school principals to think thoroughly whom they would want to delegate to the task of managing school social media participation (Greene, 2013).

4. Fail to Understand Confidentiality

School principals should not forget that social networks are extremely public forums. As such, there are certain things that should not be discussed through them, such as chatting about staff meetings, discussing private conversations. They need to be cautious so as not to break parent or school confidentiality (Greene, 2013).

5. Involve Yourself in Politic or Religion

There are issues that might be offensive to others whatever caution is taken by school principals. Politics and religion are among them. Principals are encouraged to avoid discussing related issues via social media (Greene, 2013).

6. Misunderstand the Mechanics

School principals need to fully understand the mechanics of a given social media tool so as not to commit mistakes that could put them in unpleasant situations with end users (Greene, 2013).

7. Neglect Security

Principals should control access to their social media accounts, by make sure their passwords are secure (Greene, 2013).

8. Insult People

Principals should keep things courteous, professional, and friendly on their accounts. They should not freak out, and should not, under any circumstances, insult others (Clay, 2013; Greene, 2013).

9. Ignore Your Users, or Reply Too Much

Social media moves fast, and is quite an active forum, to boot. Failure to respond could end up alienating his users. Conversely, replying too much is just as bad as not replying at all (Clay, 2013; Greene, 2013).

10. Do Not Learn When to Walk Away

When facing unwelcome feedback on social media, it is important to know when to walk away. Principals should be aware that not every mention deserves a response, not every blog post needs a comment, and not each point within a thread needs an explanation (Clay, 2013).

11. React Right Away

If a principal feels the need to respond to a critical comment, he/she should wait. He/She may be fuming, defensive, and angry that someone has insulted his hard work or thoughts. Critical comments are personal and understandably can hurt feelings. However, prompt responses could make the situation worse. Principals should wait for some time before responding (Clay, 2013).

12. Lie

Transparency is very important and people are very good at determining when they are being lied to. As such, educators should remain as transparent as possible with their readers (Clay, 2013; Greene, 2013).

13. Talk like a Salesperson

A school principal needs to remain professional while online. He/She needs to be personable, relate-able, and most of all, human. Talking like a salesperson will inevitably lead to his users becoming bored, which will ultimately damage his page (Greene, 2013).

Benefits of Social Media for School Principals

Social media has until recently been regarded as a student/teen domain. Schools and educators have been ignoring social media – mostly wishing it would go away. They have been losing out in the process. Now schools and educators are learning that social media can play an important and cost effective role in several areas. According to Sheninger (2013), principals can use social media as an educational administrator and learner. He can use it to:

1. Acquire, share, and curate resources.
2. Engage in conversations of professional interest.
3. Elicit feedback on ideas and initiatives he launch at his school.

4. Support the others.
5. Ask questions and receive answers.
6. Track conferences.
7. Connect with practitioners as well as experts in the field of education.
8. Build, cultivate, and interact with a Personal Learning Network (PLN) to grow professionally and does what he does better.
9. Promote his work and the work of others.
10. Share the great things his students and teachers are doing.
11. Build public relations.
12. Enhance communications

These 12 positive points could be grouped into five functions related to social media: building relationships, enhancing communication, improving professional development, improving student learning and leading to real opportunities (Sheninger et al. 2011).

Social Media - Enhancing Communication and Building Relationships

Parents, teachers and other stakeholders, are often all on Facebook or Twitter. Sheninger (2011) argues that schools should take advantage of that, stating that: "Why not connect with them in real time and give them information? The majority of principals still sends traditional newsletters and email blasts, but now they can back up that with information on social media" (Sheninger et al. 2011, p.47).

Likewise, Williamson (2012) assures that a principal is responsible for maintaining the school's image. Hence, using social media to interact with parents and community is a big asset. It can provide a way to detect rumors and allow the principal to respond quickly (Williamson, 2012).

Robinson (2013) makes it bluntly by stating that school principals, who choose to ignore social media, fail to capitalize on one of the most powerful communication tools in the 21st century. Creating relationships is important for school leaders and social media is a new and effective way to build support among stakeholders (Williamson, 2012).

Social Media- Improving Professional Development

Educators can find a huge number of useful websites for their professional development. For example, Schreefel (2012) cited 101 websites addressing evaluation and assessment, technology across the curriculum, environmental and global education, second language instruction, conflict resolution, school leadership and school-based research. (Fisher, 2012; Forte, 2012; Frank, 2011; Fryer, 2013; Hendrick, 2013; Jensen et al., 2012; Keengwekyei-Blankson, 2012).

Because social media enables learners to learn anywhere and anytime, it allows them to create their own professional learning path (Sheninger et al. 2011). It

allows educators to participate in a new era of professional development - an era of idea exchange that is accessible anywhere, anytime and that connects the field's brightest minds. These tools are real-time, cost-effective, and accessible around the world, and they are driven by practitioners, not just consultants (Fisher, 2012; Sheninger et al. 2011).

Technology and Social Media- Increasing Parent Participation and Strengthening Students Engagement

Social tools and technology help learners of all kinds. The challenge for school principal today is the difference between the school world and the real world. Social media helps bridge that gap. That is because students can access information as they would at home and they can add to the conversation (Sheninger et al. 2011).

Social media can be a powerful tool to coordinate and connect with parents. At the school level, this is important work for everyone, from the classroom teacher to the principal. Some districts even have paid school employees called "parent coordinators" who are responsible for engaging with and involving parents in the school community. It is their job to create a welcoming environment for parents as well as to identify and address parent and related school/community issues (Nielsen, 2013; Steiner, 2013).

Technology and social media, which can be incorporated into the classroom, improve communication between teacher and parent, and provide an avenue for parents to have a more meaningful role in the learning process.

Following are 11 approaches derived from the literature, to fulfill that:

1. Create a class webpage (Steiner, 2013)
2. Create Facebook classroom page (Harper, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Sheninger et al., 2011; Sheninger, 2013; Steiner, 2013)
3. E-mail list for regular updates to the parents en masse (Steiner, 2013)
4. Parent portal to grading system so that parents can get updates regularly - iPass, Rediker, edmodo, Moodle (Steiner, 2013)
5. Class newsletter that is sent home regularly (Steiner, 2013)
6. Blogging in the classroom (Harper, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Steiner, 2013)
7. Twitter account for homework updates, projects, tests (Britland, 2012; Harper, 2013; Nielsen, 2013; Sheninger et al., 2011; Sheninger, 2013; Steiner, 2013; Williamson, 2012)
8. Make videos of class activities available online - TeacherTube, YouTube, Vimeo (Nielsen, 2013; Steiner, 2013; Williamson, 2012)
9. Live chats for meetings - Skype, iChat (Steiner,

10. 2013)
11. Virtual open house via a live collaborative session -Twiddla, Zoho(Steiner, 2013)
12. Online photo collection of class and school activities - Flickr, Drovevent,Pinterest (Harper, 2013;Nielsen, 2013; Steiner, 2013; Williamson, 2012)

METHODOLOGY

Research Instrument

The technique of data collection used in this quantitative research was the questionnaire. Based on an extensive review of the literature of social media, the researchers developed a questionnaire consisting of 72 items. The same questionnaire was sent to both private school principals in UAE and in Lebanon. The instrument was piloted on a similar sample comprised of 15 principals in the UAE and 15 principals in Lebanon. Therefore, few amendments for language and syntax were introduced.

The survey instrument consisted of three sections: A, B, and C. Section A, consisting of 33 items, requested participants to identify the types of social media sites used by them. Section B, consisting of 26 items, requested them to mention the objectives of using the social media. Section C, consisting of 13 items, requested respondents to identify the problems that are a barrier for using the social media sites.

In sections A, B, and C, a four point likert scale was used to rank respondents' opinions about using of social media sites. Response choices were: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree.

Data on Abu Dhabi and Dubai

Data on Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi is home to international and local private schools and universities. All schools in the emirate are under the authority of the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC). This organization oversees and administers public schools and licenses and inspects private schools. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Dhabi)

"As per latest figures for 2013-2014 there are 184 private schools across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, out of which 114 schools are in Abu Dhabi, 59 schools in Al Ain and 11 schools in the Western Region, with a total number of 202,215 students studying 14 different curricula across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, which include British, American, French, German, Canadian, International Baccalaureate, Ministry of Education, SABIS, Indian, Bangladesh, Iranian, Japanese, Pakistan and Philippine" (ADEC, 2013).

Data on Dubai

A report issued by the "Knowledge and Human Development Authority" in 2013 notes that 225,099 students, representing 88.7% of the total number of students in Dubai, receive their education in 153 private

schools. Regarding the number of teachers in private schools in Dubai, it reached 14,333 teachers in 2013.

The report revealed the growth of the number of students and teachers in private schools in Dubai during the academic year 2012-2013 by 8.7% compared to the previous academic year 2011-2012.

On the other hand, the 5th edition (2013) of the Arab Social Media Report series, launched by the Dubai School of Government's Governance and Innovation Programme, shows the increasing use of social media in UAE. The report notes also that UAE continues to score the highest amongst all Arab countries in terms of Facebook penetration (41%).

Data on Schools in Beirut and Mount Lebanon Governorates (Lebanon)

Lebanon is divided into six governorates (*muhafazah*): Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Northern Lebanon, Beqaa, Southern Lebanon and Nabatiye. With the exception of Beirut, the national capital, the 5 other governorates are divided into districts.

"The Bulletin of Statistics for the Academic Year 2011-2012", issued by the Educational Center for Research and Development-ECRD (2013), indicates that 35.9% of students in Lebanon are educated in private schools located in the governorates of Beirut and Mount Lebanon (6.4% in Beirut and 29.5% in Mount Lebanon). According to this bulletin, private schools in Mount Lebanon have the highest percentage of students in Lebanon (29.5%) compared with private schools in the other five governorates as well as with public schools in all Lebanese governorates. It should be noted here that the public schools in the six governorates comprising only 29% of students in Lebanon.

On the other hand, the bulletin issued by ECRD (2013) indicates that 29,811 out of 52,918 teachers in the private sector teach in private schools located in Beirut and Mount Lebanon (6,395 in Beirut and 23,416 in Mount Lebanon). According to this bulletin, private schools in Mount Lebanon have the highest percentage of teachers in Lebanon compared with private schools in the other five governorates as well as with public schools in all governorates. It should be noted here that the public schools in the six governorates comprising 39,604 of teachers, 12,298 of them are in the public schools of the governorate of Northern Lebanon, 12,409 are in the public schools of Beirut and Mount Lebanon and the rest (14,897 teachers) is in the schools of the other 3 governorates.

Moreover, the bulletin of school statistics issued by ECRD (2013) reveals that the private schools located in Beirut and Mount Lebanon constitute 25.3% of the total number of public and private schools in Lebanon (4.4% in Beirut and 20.9% in Mount Lebanon). In fact, the Mount Lebanon Governorate has the highest percentage of private schools in Lebanon compared with the percentage of private schools in the other five

governorates as well as with the percentage of public schools in all Lebanese governorates. It should be noted that private schools account for 54% and public schools 46% of the total number of schools, and the Northern Lebanon Governorate alone comprises one-third of public schools in Lebanon.

The sample

The sample of this study consisted of 300 private school principals: 150 participants from UAE (from Abu Dhabi and Dubai) and 150 participants from Lebanon (from Beirut and Mount Lebanon). Along with the survey, a cover letter and an informed consent form were attached beside the full contact information of the researchers. The cover letter detailed the purpose of the study, guarantee of anonymity, for participants and how data will be used.

Principals are invited to complete the questionnaire and return it back, along with the signed consent form, to the given address by regular mail, or as a scanned document via email or fax. Note here that the empirical work of this study was conducted between 15th September and 30th October 2013.

The decision to involve only private school principals in Lebanon had to do with several factors. First, during the academic year 2013-2014, the Faculty of Education at the Lebanese University organized a training session for 210 principals of public schools from all Lebanese Governorates. The researchers, who participated in this session as trainers, have noticed that only 5% of trainees used social media (specifically Facebook). In addition, they used it in their private lives only. Secondly, private school principals have greater powers than their peers in public schools. This might help them to use innovative methods in their schools. Conversely, principals of public schools historically complain of their reduced powers and of the bureaucratic barriers that impede their action. They claim that this problem prevents them from using of innovative methods in their schools (Al-Jammal, 2005; 2007).

As a result, the researchers decided to also limit participation of private school principals from Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Besides, as noted above, the overwhelming majority of students (88.7%) in Dubai receive their education in private schools (KHDA, 2013). Regarding the private education sector in Abu Dhabi, it "caters to more than 60 per cent of the total student population in the emirate – a quarter of whom are Emirati – and the sector is growing" (Malek, 2013).

Another issue related to the sample that also needs to be addressed is the choice of only 2 emirates from the UAE and 2 governorates from Lebanon.

In fact, Abu Dhabi is the capital and the second largest city of the UAE in terms of population and the largest of the seven member emirates of the UAE. The private schools in Abu Dhabi are recognized as developed and sophisticated ones. These schools, which

receive the majority (60%) of the total student population in the emirate, are teaching 14 different curricula across Abu Dhabi (Malek, 2013).

As for Dubai, it has the largest population in the UAE and the second-largest land territory by area after Abu Dhabi. Dubai is one of the fastest growing cities in the world in many sectors, including education (Kapur, 2012; KHDA, 2013). The private schools in Dubai are recognized as developed and sophisticated schools as well. These schools, which receive the overwhelming majority (88.7%) of students in the Emirate, offer 15 diverse international curricula (KHDA, 2013).

Concerning the private schools in Mount Lebanon, as explained before, they attract the highest percentage of students and teachers in Lebanon compared to private schools in the other five governorates. In addition, the Mount Lebanon Governorate has the highest percentage of private schools in Lebanon compared to the percentage of private schools in the other five governorates (ECRD, 2013). Some of the private schools in Mount Lebanon Governorate are recognized as developed, sophisticated and innovative schools.

Also, the sample consisted of private school principals from Beirut as it is the capital of Lebanon. In general, schools located in the capital of any country tend to be more developed and sophisticated than those located in rural areas.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS 18.0 for windows. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarize the properties of the mass of data collected from the respondents. Means scores, standard deviations and percentages were calculated per each item of the survey instrument.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section includes the following: the frequency of using of social media sites by the Lebanese school principals and their colleagues in UAE, the purpose of using the social media sites mentioned by respondents, and the problems faced by them in using these sites.

Research Question 1: *What is the frequency of using of social media websites by private schools principals in Lebanon and the UAE?*

Table 1 shows that Lebanese school principals use mainly 3 of the 33 social media sites listed in the survey: Facebook, Skype/Google and YouTube. Participants chose "agree" response when they are asked if they use these 3 sites (Mean Values are 3.11, 3.09, and 2.63 respectively).

On the other hand, Lebanese principals chose "disagree" response when they were asked whether they

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics about the Usage Frequency of Different Social Media Sites

Rank	Social Media	Lebanese School Principals (150 participants)		UAE School Principals (150 participants)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Wikis	1.69	.750	2.12	.759
2	LibraryThing	1.10	.301	1.95	.717
3	Facebook	3.11	.883	3.19	.825
4	Google Plus	1.44	.690	2.12	.759
5	Tumblr	1.87	.830	2.34	.826
6	Vimeo	1.19	.391	2.18	.696
7	Blogger	1.73	.818	3.07	.910
8	Google Bookmark	1.34	.475	2.74	.718
9	Pinterest	1.59	.697	2.57	.607
10	Yahoo Answers	2.27	.741	2.77	.837
11	Farmville	1.59	.697	2.57	.607
12	YouTube	2.63	.871	3.04	.802
13	Flickr	2.27	.741	2.74	.718
14	Google Notebook	1.69	.750	2.12	.759
15	Livestream	1.10	.301	1.95	.717
16	Yahoo groups	1.76	.757	2.67	.702
17	Google groups	1.80	.851	2.86	.777
18	Google Buzz	1.87	.830	2.34	.826
19	Yahoo Directory	1.59	.697	2.57	.607
20	Skype/Google	3.09	.874	3.47	.730
21	Knowledge iN	1.53	.662	1.96	.664
22	LinkedIn	2.47	1.041	3.04	.802
23	Twitter	2.47	1.041	3.04	.802
24	Windows Live Favorites	2.21	.678	2.13	.816
25	ResearchGATE	1.59	.697	2.57	.607
26	Twiddla	1.69	.750	2.12	.759
27	Zoho	1.87	.830	2.34	.826
28	Dropevent	1.13	.473	1.26	.561
29	CiteULike	1.13	.473	1.31	.579
30	RSS Feeds	1.81	.888	3.38	.774
31	Windows Live Spaces	1.87	.830	2.34	.826
32	Connotea	1.13	.473	1.26	.561
33	Technorati	1.13	.473	1.31	.579

used the other 21 social media sites: LinkedIn, Twitter, Yahoo Answers, Flickr, Windows Live Favorites, Tumblr, Google Buzz, Zoho, Windows Live Spaces, RSS Feeds, Google groups, Yahoo groups, Blogger, Wikis, Google Notebook, Twiddla, Pinterest, Farmville, Yahoo Directory, ResearchGATE, and Knowledge iN (Mean Values are 2.47, 2.47, 2.27, 2.27, 2.21, 1.87, 1.87, 1.87, 1.87, 1.81, 1.80, 1.76, 1.73, 1.69, 1.69, 1.69, 1.59, 1.59, 1.59, 1.59, and 1.53 respectively).

Moreover, Table 1 indicates that the Lebanese school principals chose "strongly disagree" response about the usage of the remaining 9 sites: Google Plus,

Google Bookmark, Vimeo, Dropevent, CiteULike, Connotea, Technorati, LibraryThing, and Livestream (Mean Values are 1.44, 1.34, 1.19, 1.13, 1.13, 1.13, 1.13, 1.10, and 1.10 respectively).

On the other hand, school principals of UAE, Table 1 shows that they used the following 16 social media sites: Skype/Google, RSS Feeds, Facebook, Blogger, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google groups, Yahoo Answers, Flickr, Google Bookmark, Yahoo groups, Pinterest, Farmville, Yahoo Directory, and ResearchGATE. Participants chose "agree" response when they are asked if they used those 16 sites (Mean

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics about the Usage Frequency of Different Social Media Sites

Rank	Social Media	Lebanese Principals (150 Participants)				UAE Principals (150 Participants)			
		S.D.	D.	A.	S.A.	S.D.	D.	A.	S.A.
1	Wikis	69	61	17	3	32	71	44	3
2	LibraryThing	135	15	0	0	42	73	35	0
3	Facebook	8	27	56	59	1	36	46	67
4	Google Plus	99	38	11	2	32	71	44	3
5	Tumblr	58	57	31	4	23	64	52	11
6	Vimeo	122	28	0	0	25	73	52	0
7	Blogger	69	60	14	7	10	27	56	57
8	Google Bookmark	99	51	0	0	0	57	57	36
9	Pinterest	80	52	18	0	2	68	73	7
10	Yahoo Answers	26	57	67	0	4	51	75	20
11	Farmville	80	52	18	0	2	68	73	7
12	YouTube	15	50	61	24	26	46	54	51
13	Flickr	26	57	67	0	4	51	75	20
14	Google Notebook	69	61	17	3	32	71	44	3
15	Livestream	135	15	0	0	42	73	35	0
16	Yahoo groups	65	56	29	0	5	55	75	15
17	Google groups	65	57	21	7	10	43	68	29
18	Google Buzz	58	57	31	4	23	64	52	11
19	Yahoo Directory	80	52	18	0	2	68	73	7
20	Skype/Google	8	27	59	56	4	15	51	80
21	Knowledge iN	84	54	11	1	34	90	24	2
22	LinkedIn	32	45	43	30	0	45	54	51
23	Twitter	32	45	43	30	0	45	54	51
24	Windows Live Favorites	22	75	53	0	34	69	40	7
25	ResearchGATE	80	52	18	0	2	68	73	7
26	Twiddla	69	61	17	3	32	71	44	3
27	Zoho	58	57	31	4	23	64	52	11
28	Dropevent	136	10	2	2	120	21	9	0
29	CiteULike	136	10	2	2	113	28	9	0
30	RSS Feeds	102	23	23	2	0	21	37	92
31	Windows Live Spaces	58	57	31	4	23	64	52	11
32	Connotea	136	10	2	2	120	21	9	0
33	Technorati	136	10	2	2	113	28	9	0

Values are 3.47, 3.38, 3.19, 3.07, 3.04, 3.04, 3.04, 2.86, 2.77, 2.74, 2.74, 2.67, 2.57, 2.57, and 2.57 respectively). Those 16 social media sites included the 3 media used by the Lebanese principals.

On the other hand, school principals of the UAE chose “disagree” response when they were asked whether they used the other 13 social media sites: Tumblr, Google Buzz, Zoho, Windows Live Spaces, Vimeo, Windows Live Favorites, Wikis, Google Plus, Google Notebook, Twiddla, Knowledge iN, LibraryThing, and Livestream (Mean Values are 2.34, 2.34, 2.34, 2.34, 2.18, 2.13, 2.12, 2.12, 2.12, 2.12, 1.96, 1.95, and 1.95 respectively).

Moreover, Table 1 shows that these participants chose “strongly disagree” response about the usage of

the remaining 4 sites: CiteULike, Technorati, Dropevent, and Connotea (Mean Values are 1.31, 1.31, 1.26, and 1.26 respectively).

Table 2 represents data related to the degree school principals used social media sites.

Parallel to Table 1, Table 2 shows that the majority of Lebanese school principals used the following 3 social media sites: Facebook, Skype/Google and YouTube. In fact, if “agree” responses are grouped with “strongly agree” responses, it can be concluded that the majority of these participants use Facebook (115 principals), Skype/Google (115 principals) and YouTube (85 principals).

However, Table 2 shows that none of the Lebanese school principals used the following 4 social networking

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics about the Purpose of Using Social Media

Rank	Purpose	Lebanese School Principals (150 participants)		UAE School Principals (150 participants)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	For communicating with teachers	1.10	.301	1.12	.432
2	For communicating with students	1.08	.272	1.12	.365
3	For communicating with parents	1.00	.000	1.00	.000
4	For building relationships with public figures and institutions able to help and support the school	1.00	.000	2.15	.841
5	For belonging to a specialized professional organizations	1.73	.849	3.00	.859
6	For my professional self-development (as a school principal)	1.05	.212	1.53	.792
7	For the professional development of teachers	1.00	.000	1.12	.432
8	For announcing the students' achievements	1.05	.212	1.53	.792
9	For announcing the achievements and projects carried out by teachers	1.00	.000	1.12	.432
10	For communicating with specialists and experts in education	1.36	.688	2.95	.881
11	For following-up the activities of the educational conferences	1.65	.725	2.79	.848
12	For viewing video conferencing	1.73	.849	3.00	.859
13	For my research work (as a school principal)	1.00	.000	2.15	.841
14	For research work of teachers	1.00	.000	1.76	.932
15	For helping students to complete homework	1.00	.000	1.00	.000
16	For providing guidance and support for teachers and students	1.00	.000	1.00	.000
17	For providing guidance for parents	1.00	.000	1.48	.739
18	For the involvement of parents in the educational process and in the decision-making	1.00	.000	1.19	.548
19	For enlightening students on how to use social media sites for useful educational purposes	1.00	.000	1.27	.642
20	For enlightening parents on how to use social media sites for useful educational purposes	1.05	.212	1.12	.365
21	For communicating with other schools principals to exchange views and experiences	1.00	.000	1.00	.000
22	For seeing/reading the achievements of other schools principals published on the pages of social networking sites	1.13	.360	1.89	.829
23	For seeing the achievements of teachers and students in other schools	1.05	.212	1.53	.792
24	For taking advantage of these sites in the education of students having special needs	1.00	.000	1.12	.432
25	For purchasing of certain resources	1.05	.212	1.12	.365
26	For advertisement of the different activities of the school	1.00	.000	1.00	.000

school, for my research work (as a school principal), seeing/reading the achievements of other schools principals published on the pages of social networking sites, for research work of teachers, for my professional self-development (as a school principal), announcing the students' achievements, and seeing the achievements of teachers and students in other schools (Mean Values are 2.15, 2.15, 1.89, 1.76, 1.53, 1.53, and 1.53 respectively).

According to the Table 3, the school principals in UAE chose the "strongly disagree" response for the remaining 15 purposes: providing guidance for parents, enlightening students on how to use social media sites for useful educational purposes, for the involvement of parents in the educational process and in the decision-making, communicating with teachers, communicating with students, for the professional development of teachers, announcing the achievements and projects carried out by teachers, enlightening parents on how to use social media sites for useful educational purposes, taking advantage of these sites in the education of students having special needs, purchasing of certain resources, communicating with parents, helping students to complete homework, providing guidance and support for teachers and students, communicating with other schools principals to exchange views and experiences, and for advertisement of the different activities of the school (Mean Values are 1.48, 1.27, 1.19, 1.12, 1.12, 1.12, 1.12, 1.12, 1.12, 1.00, 1.00, 1.00, 1.00, and 1.00 respectively).

The descriptive statistics of the usage of social media sites by respondents are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that all the Lebanese school principals chose "strongly disagree" response when they were asked whether they use the social media sites for the following 14 purposes: (3) communicating with parents, (4) building relationships with public figures and institutions able to help and support the school, (7) for the professional development of teachers, (9) announcing the achievements and projects carried out by teachers, (13) for my research work (as a school principal), (14) for research work of teachers, (15) helping students to complete homework, (16) providing guidance and support for teachers and students, (17) providing guidance for parents, (18) for the involvement of parents in the educational process and in the decision-making, (19) enlightening students on how to use social media sites for useful educational purposes, (21) communicating with other schools principals to exchange views and experiences, (24) taking merit from these sites in the education of students having special needs, and (26) for advertisement of the different activities of the school.

In addition, if "disagree" responses are grouped with "strongly disagree" ones, it can be concluded that all of them did not use the social media sites for other 7 purposes: (1) communicating with teachers, (2) communi-

cating with students, (6) for my professional self-development (as a school principal), (8) announcing the students' achievements, (20) enlightening parents on how to use social media sites for useful educational purposes, (23) seeing the achievements of teachers and students in other schools, and (25) purchasing of certain resources.

Moreover, if "disagree" responses are grouped with "strongly disagree" ones, this implies that the overwhelming majority of participants (their number varied between 113 and 149 respondents) do not use these sites for the remaining 5 purposes (respectively): (22) seeing/reading the achievements of other schools principals published on the pages of social networking sites, (10) communicating with specialists and experts in education, (11) following-up the activities of the educational conferences, (5) belonging to specialized professional organizations, and (12) viewing video conferencing.

Regarding the school principals in UAE, Table 4 shows that the majority of them (their number varied between 89 and 107 respondents) used social media sites for the following 4 purposes (respectively): (5) belonging to specialized professional organizations, (12) viewing video conferencing, (10) communicating with specialists and experts in education, and (11) following-up the activities of the educational conferences.

On the other hands, all these principals chose "strongly disagree" response when they were asked whether they used the social media sites for the following 5 purposes: (3) communicating with parents, (15) helping students to complete homework, (16) providing guidance and support for teachers and students, (21) communicating with other schools principals to exchange views and experiences, and (26) for advertisement of the different activities of the school.

In addition, if "disagree" responses are grouped with "strongly disagree" ones, it can be concluded that the overwhelming majority of respondents (their number varied between 106 and 148 principals) do not take merit from these sites for other 14 purposes (respectively): (2) communicating with students, (20) enlightening parents on how to use social media sites for useful educational purposes, (25) purchasing of certain resources, (1) communicating with teachers, (7) for the professional development of teachers, (9) announcing the achievements and projects carried out by teachers, (24) taking merit from these sites in the education of students having special needs, (18) for the involvement of parents in the educational process and in the decision-making, (19) enlightening students on how to use social media sites for useful educational purposes, (17) providing guidance for parents, (6) for my professional self-development (as a school principal), (8) announcing the students' achievements, (23) seeing the achievements of teachers and students in other schools, and (22)

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics about the Purpose of Using Social Media

Rank	Purpose	Lebanese Principals (150 Participants)				UAE Principals (150 Participants)			
		S.D.	D.	A.	S.A.	S.D.	D.	A.	S.A.
1	For communicating with teachers	135	15	0	0	138	6	6	0
2	For communicating with students	138	12	0	0	134	14	2	0
3	For communicating with parents	150	0	0	0	150	0	0	0
4	For building relationships with public figures and institutions able to help and support the school	150	0	0	0	43	41	66	0
5	For belonging to specialized professional organizations	78	35	36	1	6	37	58	49
6	For my professional self-development (as a school principal)	143	7	0	0	99	23	28	0
7	For the professional development of teachers	150	0	0	0	138	6	6	0
8	For announcing the students' achievements	143	7	0	0	99	23	28	0
9	For announcing the achievements and projects carried out by teachers	150	0	0	0	138	6	6	0
10	For communicating with specialists and experts in education	113	21	15	1	4	50	46	50
11	For following-up the activities of the educational conferences	74	56	19	1	6	55	54	35
12	For viewing video conferencing	78	35	36	1	6	37	58	49
13	For my research work (as a school principal)	150	0	0	0	43	41	66	0
14	For research work of teachers	150	0	0	0	87	12	51	0
15	For helping students to complete homework	150	0	0	0	150	0	0	0
16	For providing guidance and support for teachers and students	150	0	0	0	150	0	0	0
17	For providing guidance for parents	150	0	0	0	100	28	22	0
18	For the involvement of parents in the educational process and in the decision-making	150	0	0	0	133	6	11	0
19	For enlightening students on how to use social media sites for useful educational purposes	150	0	0	0	126	8	16	0
20	For enlightening parents on how to use social media sites for useful educational purposes	143	7	0	0	134	14	2	0
21	For communicating with other schools principals to exchange views and experiences	150	0	0	0	150	0	0	0

Table 4 continues

22	For seeing/reading the achievements of other schools principals published on the pages of social networking sites	131	18	1	0	60	46	44	0
23	For seeing the achievements of teachers and students in other schools	143	7	0	0	99	23	28	0
24	For taking merit from these sites in the education of students having special needs	150	0	0	0	138	6	6	0
25	For purchasing of certain resources	143	7	0	0	134	14	2	0
26	For advertisement of the different activities of the school	150	0	0	0	150	0	0	0

seeing/reading the achievements of other schools principals published on the pages of social networking sites.

Moreover, if “disagree” responses are grouped with “strongly disagree” ones, it follows that the majority of participants did not benefit from social media sites for the remaining 3 purposes: (14) for research work of teachers (99 principals), (4) for building relationships with public figures and institutions able to help and support the school (84 principals), and (13) for my research work as a school principal (84 principals).

Thus, it is evident from the results that the use of social media sites for professional purposes by school principals in Lebanon and in UAE is not advanced. However, this image is darker in Lebanon for the following reasons:

- All the Lebanese school principals or the vast majority of them do not benefit from the social media sites used by them for any of the 26 professional purposes listed above. Regarding their colleagues in UAE, the majority of them use these sites for 4 purposes.

- None of the Lebanese school principals chose “agree” response for the vast majority of purposes: 21 ones (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, and 26). Regarding their colleagues in UAE, none of them chose “agree” response for several purposes, however the number of these purposes is limited: 5 ones only (3, 15, 16, 21, and 26).

- A minority of Lebanese school principals chose “agree” response for 4 purposes (5, 12, 11, and 10 respectively); their number varied between 15 and 36 respondents. Only 1 participant chose the same response for the remaining purpose (22). Regarding the school principals in UAE, a minority of them, relatively large (their number varied between 44 and 66 participants), chose this response for 8 purposes (4, 13, 5, 12, 11, 14, 10, and 22 respectively). Moreover, a minority of the school principals in UAE (their number varied between 2 and 28 respondents), chose the same

response for the remaining 13 purposes (6, 8, 23, 17, 19, 18, 1, 7, 9, 24, 2, 20, and 25 respectively).

- None of the Lebanese school principals and the school principals in UAE chose “strongly agree” response for the vast majority of purposes: 22 ones (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26). Only 1 of the Lebanese school principals chose “strongly agree” response for the remaining 4 purposes (5, 10, 11, and 12), while the number of their colleagues in UAE who chose this response for the same purposes varied between 35 and 50 participants.

Research Question 3: *What are the problems encountered by school leaders while using social media websites?*

Data related to problems encountered by the school principals while using the social media sites are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that the Lebanese school principals “agree” that they faced 5 problems in using social media: slow Internet connection, difficult to cope with the rapid growth of such websites, people can post things which are contrary to the values and ethics, lack of time because of the intensity of routine administrative work incumbent upon me, and lack of security and privacy (Mean Values are 3.27, 2.63, 2.63, 2.50, and 2.50 respectively).

However, these respondents “disagreed” that they faced the problems such as: I am confused due to the availability of many similar websites/web services, website contents are in English and I do not master this language, the use of social media is a waste of time for the school principals, available information is not authentic, website is difficult to understand and use, and accessing information is very complicated (Mean Values are 2.27, 2.11, 2.00, 1.98, 1.77, and 1.73 respectively). The Lebanese school principals “strongly disagreed” that they faced the following 2 problems in using social media sites: lack of advanced IT skills, and

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Problems Faced by the Participants in Using Social Media

Rank	Problems	Lebanese School Principals (150 participants)		UAE School Principals (150 participants)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Website is difficult to understand and use	1.77	.942	1.00	.000
2	Website contents are in English and I do not master this language	2.11	1.053	1.00	.000
3	Available information is not authentic	1.98	.746	2.17	.784
4	Lack of time because of the intensity of routine administrative work incumbent upon me	2.50	.673	2.50	.673
5	The use of social media is a waste of time for the school principals	2.00	.897	2.03	.802
6	Accessing information is very complicated	1.73	.818	1.31	.761
7	Difficult to cope with the rapid growth of such websites	2.63	.871	2.11	.863
8	Lack of security and privacy	2.50	.673	2.50	.673
9	I am confused due to the availability of many similar websites/web services	2.27	.741	2.74	.718
10	People can post things which are contrary to the values and ethics	2.63	.871	2.43	.878
11	Slow Internet connection	3.27	.601	1.00	.000
12	Lack of advanced IT skills	1.13	.473	1.31	.579
13	User accounts can be easily hacked	1.13	.473	1.31	.579

user accounts can be easily hacked (Mean= 1.13 and 1.13).

Regarding the school principals in UAE, these participants "agreed" that they faced the problems such as: I am confused due to the availability of many similar websites/web services, lack of time because of the intensity of routine administrative work incumbent upon me, and lack of security and privacy (Mean Values are 2.74, 2.50, and 2.50 respectively).

On the other hand, these respondents "disagreed" that they faced the following 4 problems in using social media sites: people can post things which are contrary to the values and ethics, available information is not authentic, difficult to cope with the rapid growth of such websites, and the use of social media is a waste of time for the school principals (Mean Values are 2.43, 2.17, 2.11, and 2.03 respectively). In addition, the school principals in UAE "strongly disagree" that the following 6 problems are a barrier for using the social media sites: accessing information is very complicated, lack of advanced IT skills, user accounts can be easily hacked, website is difficult to understand and use, website contents are in English and I do not master this language, and slow Internet connection (Mean Values are 1.31, 1.31, 1.31, 1.00, 1.00, and 1.00 respectively).

Thus, school principals in the UAE "agreed" that there were 3 problems confronting them while using

social media sites, while their colleagues in Lebanon identified 5. 2 of the problems identified by the first are also mentioned by the second: lack of time because of the intensity of routine administrative work incumbent upon me, and lack of security and privacy. The mean value of the 2 items (problems) is the same (2.50) among respondents from Lebanon and UAE.

The descriptive statistics of problems encountered by participants while using social media are presented in Table 6.

According to Table 6, the majority of the Lebanese school principals (90 participants) "agree" that the following 2 problems are an obstacle for using the social media sites: (4) lack of time because of the intensity of routine administrative work incumbent upon me, and (8) lack of security and privacy.

In addition, if "agree" responses are grouped with "strongly agree" ones, this implies that the overwhelming of these respondents (138 principals) face the following problem: (11) slow Internet connection. Moreover, if "agree" responses are grouped with "strongly agree" ones, this indicates that the majority of participants (85 principals) face 2 other problems: (7) difficult to cope with the rapid growth of such websites, and (10) people can post things which are contrary to the values and ethics.

On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the school principals in Lebanon (136 respondents) "strongly

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Problems Faced by the Participants in Using Social Media

Rank	Problem	Lebanese Principals (150 Participants)				UAE Principals (150 Participants)			
		S.D.	D.	A.	S.A.	S.D.	D.	A.	S.A.
1	Website is difficult to understand and use	87	10	53	0	150	0	0	0
2	Website contents are in English and I do not master this language	55	43	32	20	150	0	0	0
3	Available information is not authentic	43	67	40	0	35	54	61	0
4	Lack of time because of the intensity of routine administrative work incumbent upon me	15	45	90	0	15	45	90	0
5	The use of social media is a waste of time for the school principals	60	30	60	0	46	54	50	0
6	Accessing information is very complicated	69	60	14	7	127	2	18	3
7	Difficult to cope with the rapid growth of such websites	15	50	61	24	41	58	44	7
8	Lack of security and privacy	15	45	90	0	15	45	90	0
9	I am confused due to the availability of many similar websites/web services	26	57	67	0	4	51	75	20
10	People can post things which are contrary to the values and ethics	15	50	61	24	26	46	65	13
11	Slow Internet connection	0	12	85	53	150	0	0	0
12	Lack of advanced IT skills	136	10	2	2	113	28	9	0
13	User accounts can be easily hacked	136	10	2	2	113	28	9	0

disagree” that these problems are a barrier for using social media:(12) lack of advanced IT skills, and (13) user accounts can be easily hacked. In addition, if “disagree” responses are grouped with “strongly disagree” ones, it follows that the vast majority of respondents do not consider these problems an obstacle for using the social media sites:(6) accessing information is very complicated (129 principals), and (3) available information is not authentic (110 principals).

Also, if “disagree” responses are grouped with “strongly disagree” ones, this implies that the majority of participants (their number varied between 83 and 98 principals) do not consider the remaining 4 problems an obstacle for using these sites (respectively): (2) website contents are in English and I do not master this language, (1) website is difficult to understand and use,(5) the use of social media is a waste of time for the school principals, and (9) I am confused due to the availability of many similar websites/web services.

Regarding the school principals in UAE, the majority of them (90 respondents) “agree” that they face 2 problems for using social media:(4) lack of time because of the intensity of routine administrative work incumbent upon me, and (8) lack of security and privacy. In addition, if “agree” responses are grouped with “strongly agree” ones, this indicates that the majority of participants face 2 other problems:(9) I am confused due to the availability of many similar websites/web services (95 principals), and (10) people can post things which are contrary to the values and ethics (78 principals).

On the other hand, all of the school principals in UAE “strongly disagree” that the following 3 problems are a barrier for using social media: (1) website is difficult to understand and use, (2) website contents are in English and I do not master this language, and (11) slow Internet connection. In addition, if “disagree” responses are grouped with “strongly disagree” ones, it follows that the overwhelming majority of respondents (their number

varied between 129 and 141 principals) do not consider these problems an obstacle for using social media sites (respectively): (12) lack of advanced IT skills, (13) user accounts can be easily hacked, and (6) accessing information is very complicated. Moreover, if “disagree” responses are grouped with “strongly disagree” ones, it can be said that the majority of respondents (their number varied between 89 and 100 principals) do not consider the remaining 3 problems a barrier for using these sites (respectively): (5) the use of social media is a waste of time for the school principals, (7) difficult to cope with the rapid growth of such websites, and (3) available information is not authentic.

Thus, the majority of the Lebanese school principals “agree” or “agree/strongly agree” that the following 5 problems are an obstacle for using the social media sites (respectively): (11) slow Internet connection, (4) lack of time because of the intensity of routine administrative work incumbent upon me, (8) lack of security and privacy, (7) difficult to cope with the rapid growth of such websites, and (10) people can post things which are contrary to the values and ethics.

Regarding the school principals in UAE, the majority of them “agree” or “agree/strongly agree” that the following 4 problems are a barrier for using social media (respectively): (9) I am confused due to the availability of many similar websites/web services, (4) lack of time because of the intensity of routine administrative work incumbent upon me, (8) lack of security and privacy, and (10) people can post things which are contrary to the values and ethics.

Based on the forgoing, it can be concluded that 3 of the problems identified by the first are also mentioned by the second: (4), (8), and (10).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the majority of Lebanese school principals use only 3 social media sites: Facebook, Skype/Google and YouTube. However, none of them use the following 4 social networking sites: LibraryThing, Vimeo, Google Bookmark, and Livestream. Additionally, the majority of these respondents do not use the following 26 other sites: Drovevent, CiteULike, Connotea, Technorati, Knowledge iN, Google Plus, Pinterest, Farmville, Yahoo Directory, ResearchGATE, Wikis, Google Notebook, Twiddla, Blogger, RSS Feeds, Google groups, Yahoo groups, Tumblr, Google Buzz, Zoho, Windows Live Spaces, Windows Live Favorites, Yahoo Answers, Flickr, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

Concerning the school principals in UAE, this study indicates that the majority of them use the following 16 social media sites: Skype/Google, RSS Feeds, Facebook, Blogger, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google groups, Yahoo Answers, Flickr, Google Bookmark, Yahoo groups, Pinterest, Farmville, Yahoo Directory, and

ResearchGATE. However, it was found that the majority of participants do not use the other 17 social media sites: Drovevent, CiteULike, Connotea, Technorati, KnowledgeiN, LibraryThing, Livestream, Wikis, Google Plus, Google Notebook, Windows Live Favorites, Twiddla, Vimeo, Tumblr, Google Buzz, Zoho, and Windows Live Spaces.

Thus, the private school principals in Lebanon use only 3 of the 33 social media sites listed in Part A of the questionnaire, while the private school principals in UAE use almost half of these sites, including those used by their peers in Lebanon.

On the other hand, the results of this study shows that all the Lebanese school principals or the overwhelming majority of them do not use the 3 sites used by them for any of the 26 professional purposes listed in Part B of the questionnaire. Regarding the school principals in UAE, it is evident from the results of this research that the majority of them use the social media sites for the following 4 purposes: belonging to specialized professional organizations, viewing video conferencing, communicating with specialists and experts in education, and following-up the activities of the educational conferences.

Based on the forgoing, it can be concluded that the image of using social media sites for professional purposes by school principals in Lebanon is dark. However, the results concerning their peers in UAE are not positive, even if these results are relatively better than those related to the Lebanese principals. Indeed, the social media sites are not effectively used by the school principals in UAE. The majority of the principals in UAE use the social media sites for 4 purposes, however, all these principals or the majority of them do not use these sites for any of the other 22 purposes.

The social media sites can also be used for other professional purposes such as: communicating with parents, helping students to complete homework, providing guidance and support for teachers and students, communicating with other schools principals to exchange views and experiences, for advertisement of the different activities of the school, communicating with students, enlightening parents on how to use social media sites for useful educational purposes, purchasing of certain resources, communicating with teachers, for the professional development of teachers, announcing the achievements and projects carried out by teachers, taking merit from these sites in the education of students having special needs, for the involvement of parents in the educational process and in the decision-making, enlightening students on how to use social media sites for useful educational purposes, providing guidance for parents, for my professional self-development (as a school principal), announcing the students' achievements, seeing the achievements of teachers and students in other schools, seeing/reading the achievements of other schools principals published on

the pages of social networking sites, for research work of teachers, for building relationships with public figures and institutions able to help and support the school, and for my research work as a school principal.

On the other hand, the majority of the school principals in Lebanon and in UAE mentioned 3 problems that are an obstacle for using the social media: lack of time because of the intensity of routine administrative work incumbent upon me, lack of security and privacy, and people can post things which are contrary to the values and ethics. However the majority of participants from Lebanon added 2 other problems: slow Internet connection, and difficult to cope with the rapid growth of such websites. Concerning their peers in UAE, the majority of them added 1 problem which is considered by them a barrier for using social media: I am confused due to the availability of many similar websites/web services.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The sample of this study could be one of the limitations confronting the validity of this study. This sample included only school principals. In fact, people such as the admin team surrounding the principal, supervisors, coordinators, heads of Department and teachers did not take part in the sample. Their attitudes, knowledge and skills could be a determining factor in the effectiveness of using social media sites for professional purpose. In other words, if these people have a positive attitude vis-à-vis social media sites, and if they have the necessary knowledge and skills in this area, this might encourage the principal to use these sites for professional purpose, and vice versa. It would be more valid to request them to complete surveys as well.

Moreover, the methodology could be improved. In fact, the current study has employed the quantitative method. It would be more valid to employ the qualitative method as well. In other words, the conduction of semi-structured interviews with school principals would be an added value for this study. Future research should take this point into consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study suggests, through a selected sample of school principals in Lebanon and UAE, that the use of social media sites for professional purposes are not efficient, particularly in the private schools in Lebanon. In fact, school principals are called to develop their conception about social media sites. The use of these sites should not be limited to personal activities. The problems that are a barrier for using social media sites by respondents can be avoided or resolved.

Seeing how other use the social media sites for professional purpose can be very enlightening. Sometimes, the school principal gets in a rut thinking that the way that he/she is managing is the only way to do it. However, seeing how other professionals handle the things can be a real eye opener. Moreover, school principals are called to read books and articles on the usefulness of social media in their professional life. This study could provide principals several useful references in this area.

Additionally, school principals are encouraged to receive training to get rid of their limited conception of social media and to have new knowledge, attitudes and skills in this field. This training should help them to learn how they can use social media for professional purpose. Also, school principals are encouraged to receive training so as to learn or to improve their action research skills.

Training providers and colleges of education are encouraged to make use of the findings of this study in designing their curricula related to school management (or school leadership), educational supervision and teaching diploma.

REFERENCES

- Abu Dhabi Education Council-ADEC. (2013). *ADEC Organizes the Private Schools' Orientation 2013-2014 for School Leaders Today*, Retrieved from: <http://www.adeec.ac.ae>
- Alberta Teachers' Association-ATA. (2010). *PD Activities for Professional Growth*, Retrieved from: <http://www.teachers.ab.ca>
- Al-Jammal K (2005). *Les liens de la bureaucratie libanaise avec le monde communautaire*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Al-Jammal, K. (2007). *L'administration de l'enseignement public au Liban vue d'ailleurs*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Beaumont C (2010). *Twitter Users Send 50 Million Tweets per Day*, Retrieved from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk>
- Britland M (2012). *Social Media for Schools: a Guide to Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest*, Retrieved from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk>
- Clay K (2013). *Lessons from Amy's Baking Company: Six Things You Should Never Do on Social Media*, Retrieved from: <http://www.forbes.com>
- Dubai School of Government (2013). *Transforming Education in the Arab World: Breaking Barriers in the Age of Social Learning*, The fifth Arab Social Media Report, Retrieved from: <http://www.arabsocialmediareport.com>
- ECRD. (2013). *Bulletin of Statistics for the Academic Year 2011-2012*. Beirut: ECRD.
- Farzana S, Mushahid A, Mahe B (2010). *Exploitation of Social Media among University Students: A Case Study*, Retrieved from: <http://www.webology.org>
- Ferriter WM (2011). *Digitally Speaking: Using Social Media to Reach Your Community*, in *Educational Leadership: The Effective Educator*, Volume 68, Number 4, Retrieved from: <http://www.ascd.org>
- Ferriter WM, Ramsden JT, Sheninger EC (2011). *Communicating and Connecting With Social Media: Essentials for Principals*. Bloomington: Solution Tree Press.
- Fisher C (2012). *Social Networking Transforms Professional Development*, Retrieved from: <http://www.ascd.org>
- Forte A, Humphreys M, Park T (2012). *Grassroots Professional Development: How Teachers Use Twitter*, Retrieved from: <http://www.academia.edu>

- Different Kinds of Professional Development Methods*, Retrieved from: <http://www.yuschoolpartnership.org>
- Fryer WA (2013). *Videos for PD*, Retrieved from: <http://www.speedofcreativity.org>
- Greene N (2013). *Ten Things You Should Never Do in Social Media*, Retrieved from: <http://socialmediastrategiessummit.com>
- Harper L (2013). *4 Ways to Improve School Communication Using Social Media*, Retrieved from: <http://edtechtimes.com>
- Hendrick K (2013). *Professional Development People*, Retrieved from: <http://twitter4teachers.pbworks.com>
- Hepburn A (2010). *Facebook: Facts & Figures for 2010*, Retrieved from: <http://www.digitalbuzzblog.com>
- Ionescu D (2010). *Twitter Use Explodes, Hits 50 Million Tweets Per Day*, Retrieved from: <http://www.pcworld.com>
- Jensen B, Sandoval-Hernandez A, Knoll S, Gonzalez EJ (2012). *The Experience of New Teachers*. OECD.
- Kapur S (2012). *The Amazing Growth of the Emirate of Dubai*, Retrieved from: <http://www.emirates247.com>
- Keengwe J, Kyei-Blankson L (2012). *Virtual Mentoring for Teachers: Online Professional Development Practices*. USA: IGI Global.
- Knowledge and Human Development Authority. (2013). *Private Schools in Dubai: Statistics and Figures 2012-2013*, Retrieved from: <http://www.khda.gov.ae>
- Lee M (2013). *Social Media: Ten Things Accountants Should Never Do*, Retrieved from: <http://www.accountingweb.com>
- Malek C (2013). *UAE Needs 100s of New Schools before 2020 amid Private Education Boom*, Retrieved from: <http://www.thenational.ae>
- Melton K (2009). *Schools Use Facebook, Twitter to Get Out their Message*, Retrieved from: <http://www.oregonlive.com>
- Myers A (2012). *13 Types of Social Media Platforms and Counting*, Retrieved from: <http://decidedlysocial.com>
- Nielsen L (2013). *6 Ways to Use Social Media to Connect with Parents*, Retrieved from: <http://smartblogs.com>
- Nies M (2013). *The Power of Innovation Using Positive Social Media in Schools*, <http://www.education.uiowa.edu>
- Parr B (2010). *YouTube Surpasses Two Billion Video Views Daily*, Retrieved from: <http://mashable.com>
- Perez S (2012). *YouTube Reaches 4 Billion Views per Day*, Retrieved from: <http://techcrunch.com>
- Robinson J (2013). *Transparent School Leadership: Engaging Social Media as a Strategy*, Retrieved from: <http://the21stcenturyprincipal.blogspot.com>
- Schreefel E (2012). *101 Websites That Every Elementary Teacher Should Know About*, Retrieved from: <http://www.goedonline.com>
- Sheninger E (2012). *Leverage Social Media*, Retrieved from: <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Sheninger E (2013). *Should There Be Rules for Social Media Use?*, Retrieved from: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>
- Steiner A (2013). *Ten Ways to Use Technology to Increase Parent Participation*, Retrieved from: <http://www.highdefteacher.com>
- Wikipedia. *Abu Dhabi*, Available on: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Dhabi
- Wikipedia. *Dubai*, Available on: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dubai>
- Williamson R (2012). *Social Media for School Communication*, Retrieved from: <http://gearup.ous.edu>

How to cite this article: Al-Jammal K and Ghamrawi N (2013). Between Lebanon and UAE: principals' usage of social media what, where, when and why?. *Educ. Res.* 4(11):748-767