

This is How Iraqi Youth Use Social Media Sites?

Findings of A survey



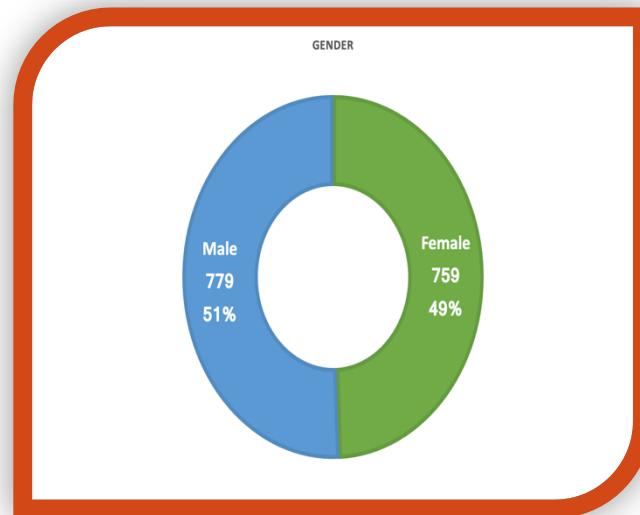
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Executive Summary

This report is based on a survey conducted in late 2019 in 20 secondary schools in Sulaymaniah City, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The survey was designed to find out effects of social media sites on students' educational attainment.

The youth's new life style is all presented on the different social media sites in Iraq. The number of users and amount of time spent on social media sites are expected to expand as smart-phone industry expands. Studies [show](#) that youth are the most represented among social media users. This report and descriptive statistics behind it is based on survey conducted to understand how Iraqi youth use social media, especially teenagers in the secondary schools.

The study looks into the time spent on the social media and the type of social media sites are used in addition to the purpose behind using it. Moreover, the survey is trying to find out the effects of parental role on the young social media users.



The Survey:

As an activity of a Social Science class, four students with the supervision of their teacher (The author of this report) surveyed 1,700 students in 9th grade classes in 20 public and private secondary schools in Sulaymaniah. 1,650 students filled out the survey-forms. Of this number, 1538 students properly filled up the survey-forms (51% female and 49% male) as the Figure above illustrates.

The schools were chosen randomly and from both types of public and private equally, trying to include all poor, middle class, and affluent neighborhoods in the city. The sample population is chosen to give an overall picture of both social and economic conditions of the students.

The Goals Behind The survey

This survey is aiming to answer the following questions;

- How the students use the social media sites?
- What are the effects of the social media sites on the students' school attainment?
- Why students use social media sites?

Methodology:

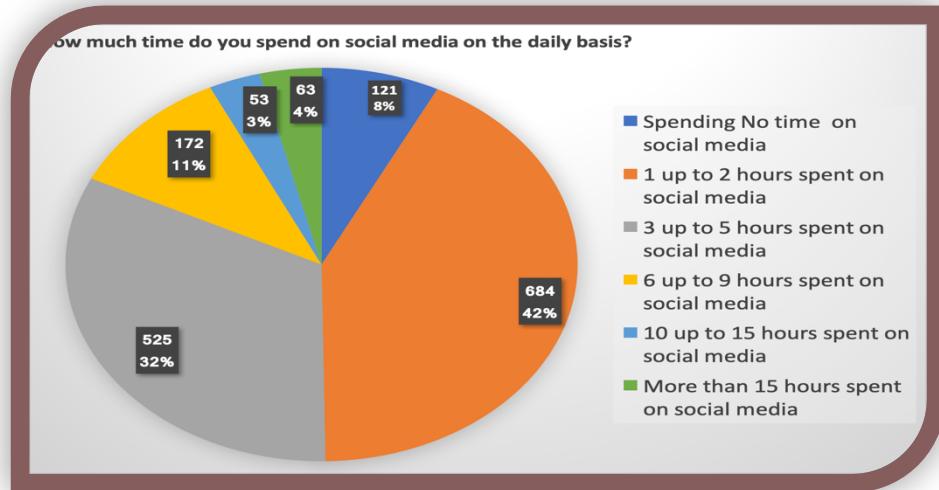
The survey was conducted based on face-to face meeting with the students and in their class-rooms right after class-time. The survey-forms were designed in Kurdish, and translation was provided for all non-Kurd students. Of 1,700 students surveyed, 1650 ones filled up the survey-forms; however, some of them left one, or more than one, questions blank for unknown reasons.

This graphic report is a basic descriptive statistic of some findings of the survey. The survey is designed in a way that captures the correlations between the amount of time spent on social media sites and grades in different classes. Plus, it also includes questions on students' social well-being, parental education, amount of money they spend on the daily basis.

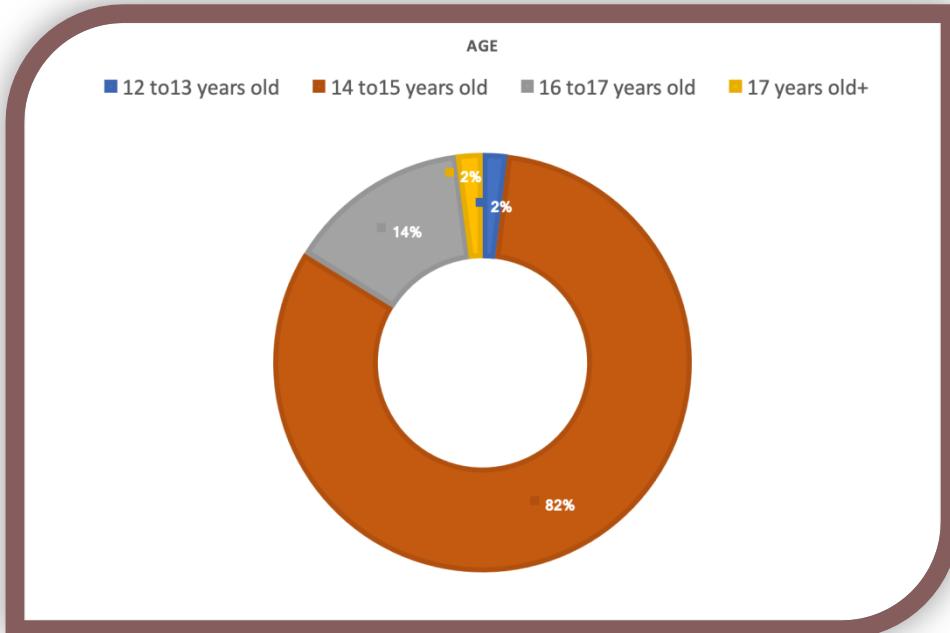
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Time Spent on Social Media & Age Population

Out 1650 students, only 121 of them do not use social media, the rest of the students use social media from one hour up to 15 hours as explained in figure 2. For this question, 32 students did not answer.

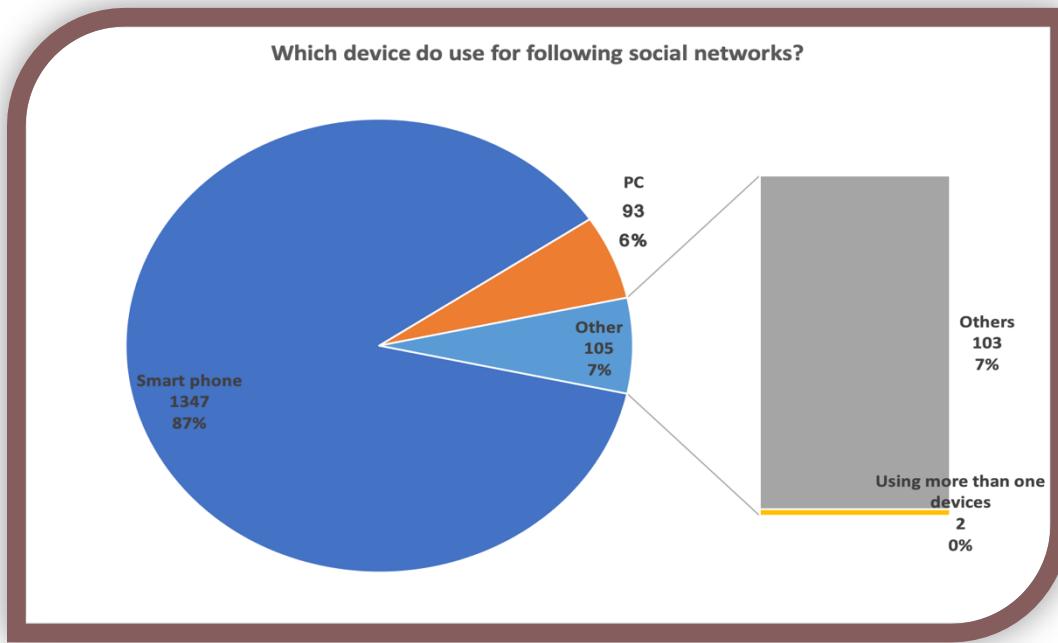


Age: only 2 percent of the participants were 12 and 13 years old, while 82 percent of the participants were 14 and 15 years old, and the rest of the participants 16 and 17-year-old. Only 2 percent of the participants were above 17 years old.



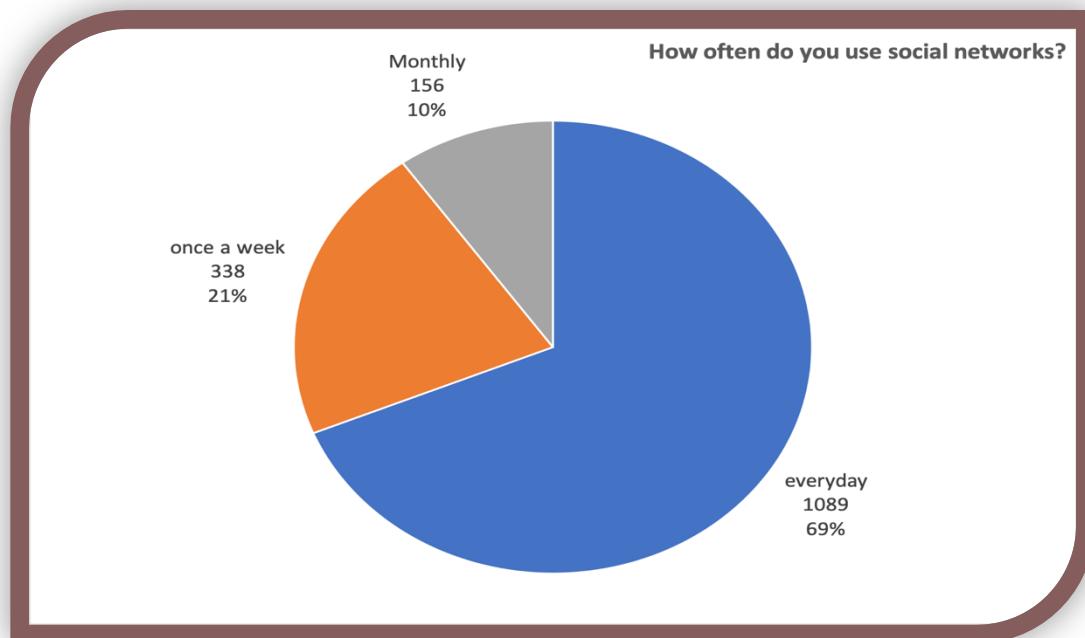
Which Device is Used? How Often is used?

Devices: 87 percent of the participants have smart phone, while the rest use personal computer or more than one device for social media sites. None of the participants were without access to social media. For this question, 105 students did not answer.



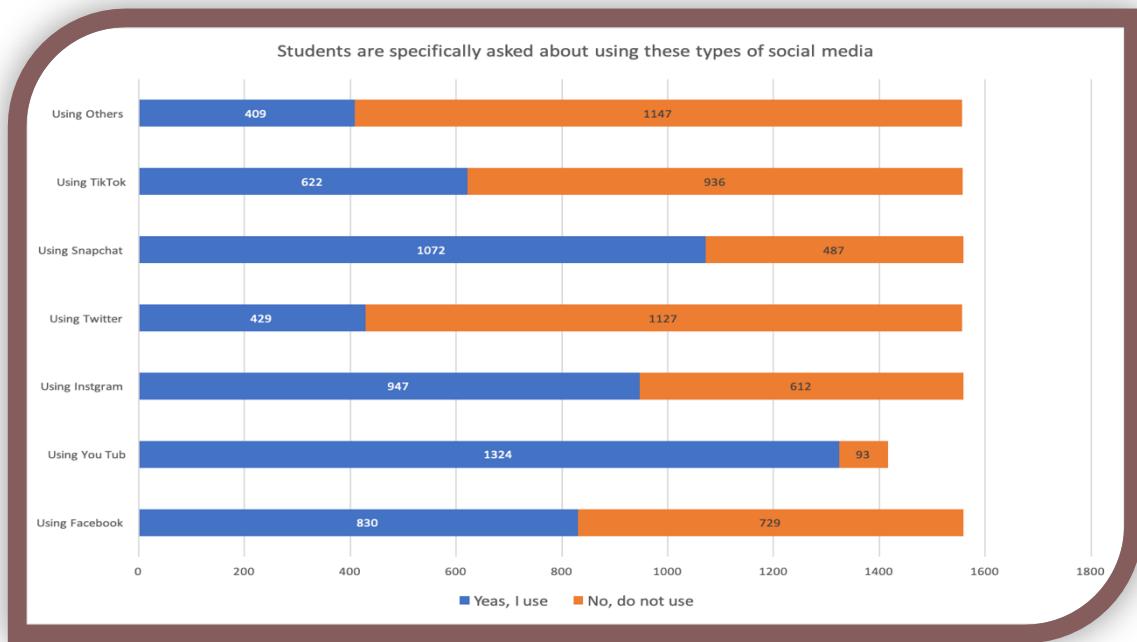
The timeline for using social media

69 percent of the students use social media sites on the daily basis. Only 21 percent are weekly users and 10 percent are monthly users. The limitation of using social media is related to the limitations put on the students. For this question, 67 students did not answer.



Which Type of Social Media is Used?

Out of the 1650 respondents, these have been the answers on the main social media platforms.

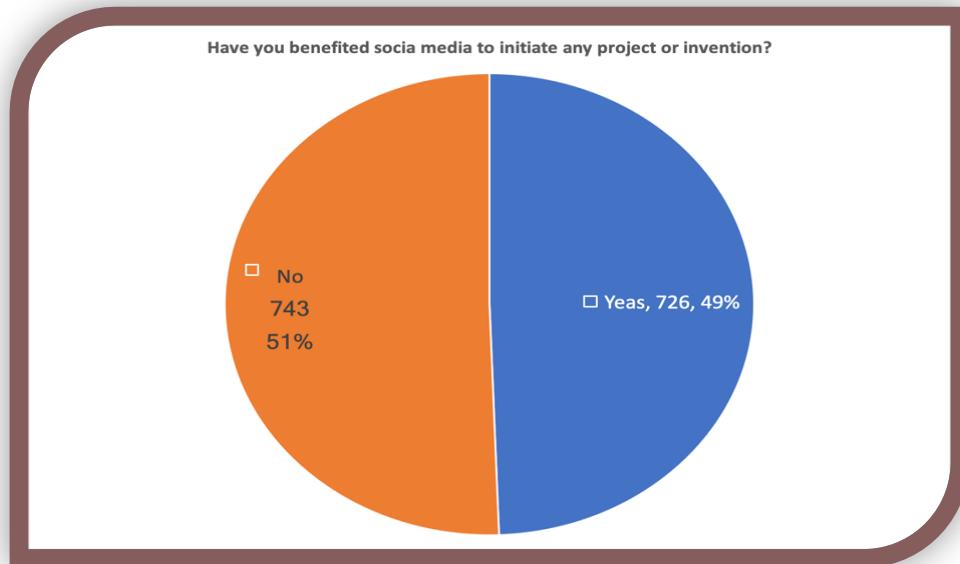


Summary Statistics: which type of social media sites are used?

Type	YES	NO	Non-respondent	Total Number of respondents
Facebook	845	743	62	1588
YouTube	1340	93	217	1433
Instagram	965	623	62	1588
Twitter	439	1146	65	1585
Snap Chat	1092	496	62	1588
TikTok	632	955	63	1587
Others	420	1165	65	1585

Students' Benefits from Social Media

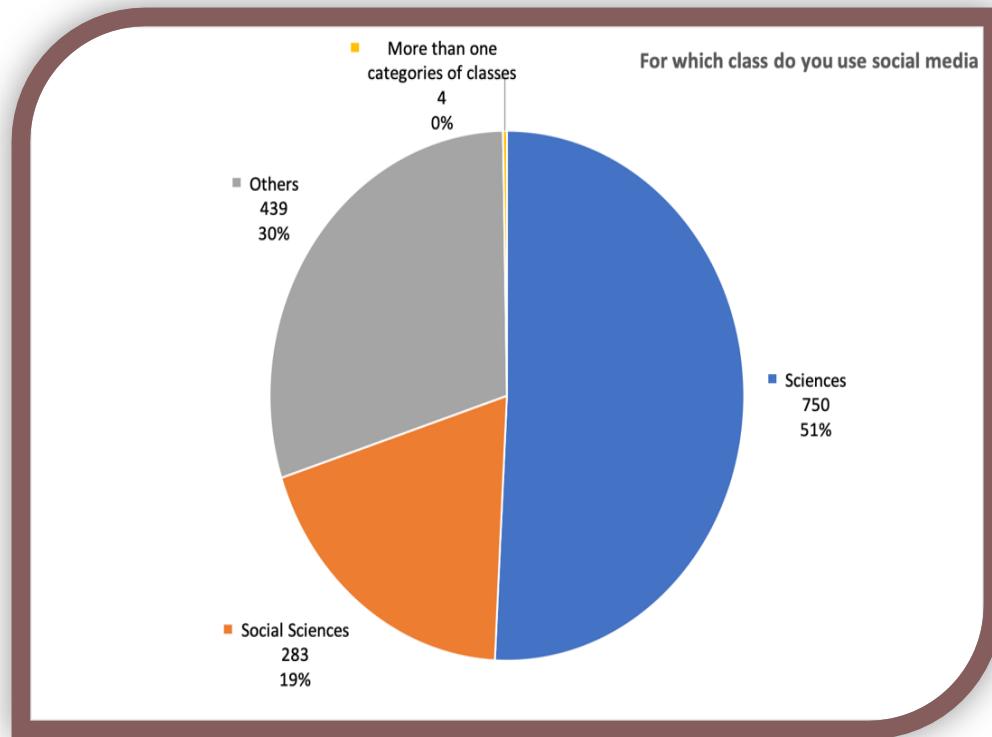
Do the social media sites inspired or helped students with their projects? Here from 1650 participants, 50 percent of them answered with yes, while the rest with no. 181 students did not answer.



Have the social media platforms helped you to understand your subjects better? For this question 131 students did not answer.

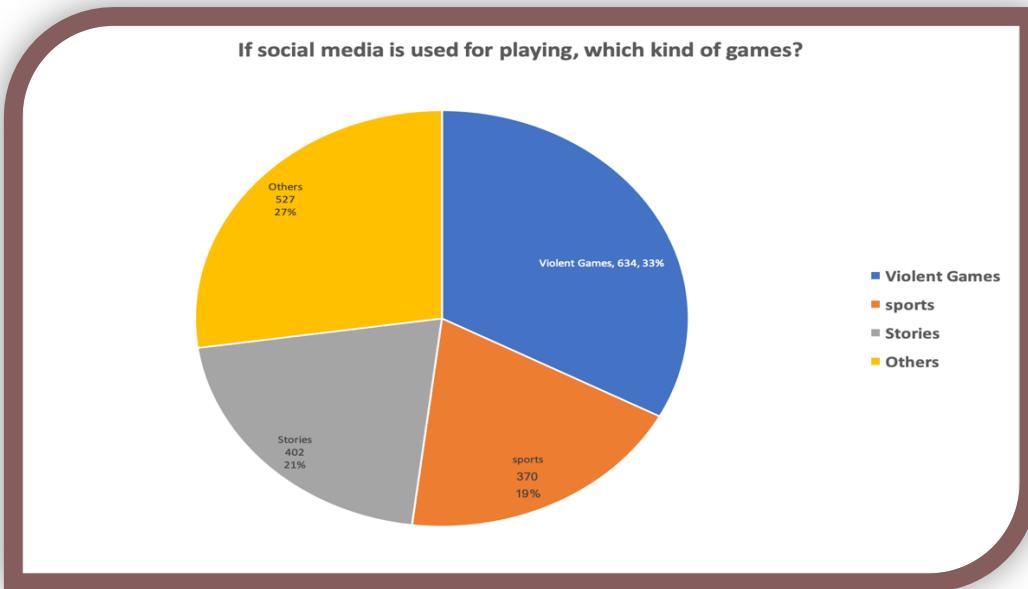


Here, the question is for which class do you use social media? For this question, 174 students did not answer.

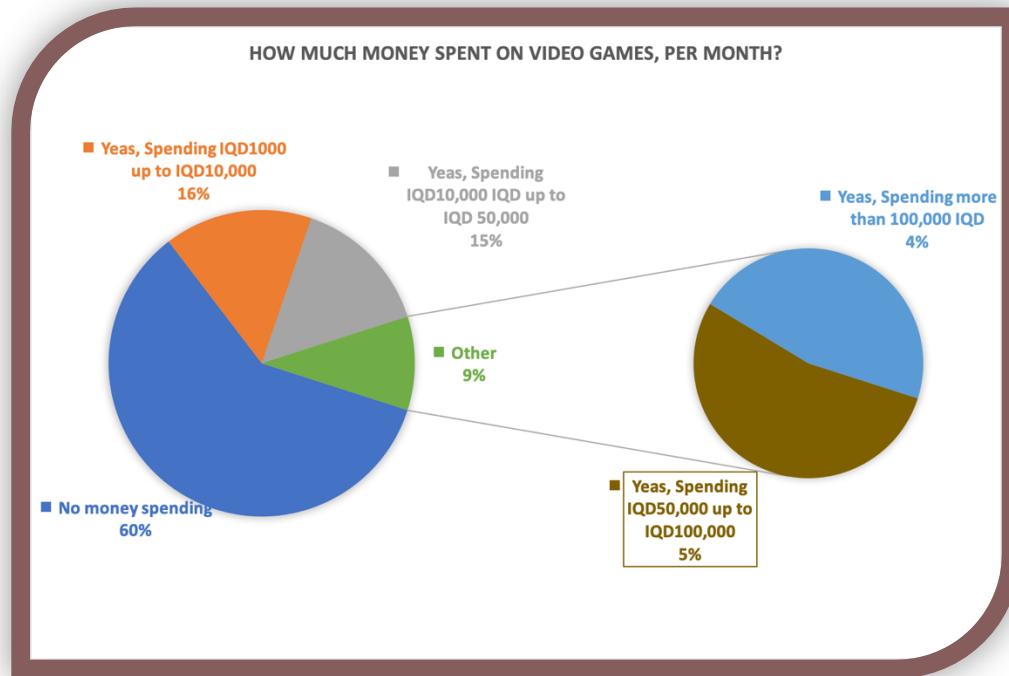


Using Social Media for Video Games

Here, the students are asked for which kind of games they use social media. For this question, 299 students did not answer.

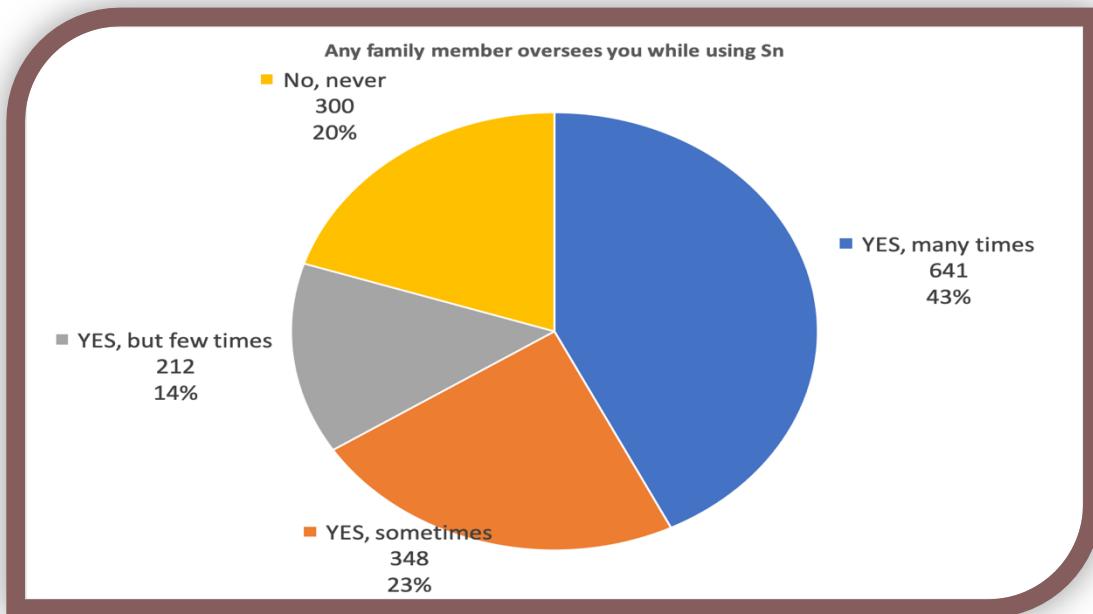


The cost of the video games: The question is how much each student spent on video games on social media sites per month.

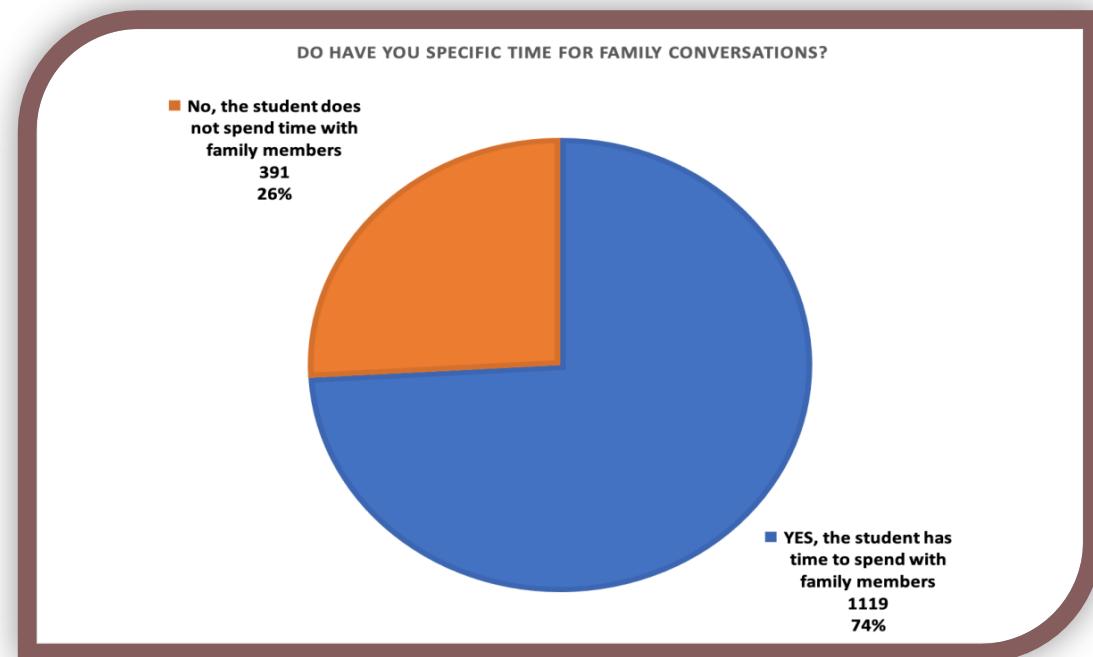


Family and Social Life

Does anyone from your family supervise you while using social media? For this question, 149 students did not answer.



Do the students have a special time for talking to their family members? For this question, 140 students did not answer.



Results and Recommendations:

This graphic report is showing basic results of a survey that was designed to find out effects of social media sites on students' school attainments. The descriptive statistics shows that only 8% of the students do not spend time on social media sites. It means 92% of the students spend some times on the social media sites for various reasons. The results demonstrate a clear need for policy actions and parental concerns over the way that teen-students spend time on social media.

For official educational institutions and governments, the following steps and policy actions are needed:

- 1- There should be practical regulatory frame to organize social media using and restrict the sites that are harmful and opposite to adopted educational goals.
- 2- The educational institutions should follow up with the relevant laws, directives and procedures that will be taken to organize social media sites in Iraq.
- 3- The current curricula in all elementary, secondary, and high schools should be renewed in a way that help students to use the social media sites in appropriate way and avoid their potential damages. They should be educated to use the social media sites according to their information needs, limited times, and educational purposes.

For families;

- 1- Students' parents could show a good example of right use of social media sites. They should have specific and limited amount of time on the sites and set a good example for the students.
- 2- The parents should follow and oversee the way the students use the social media sites and make sure that nothing is going wrong. For instance, they should make sure that the students do not spend time on the social media accounts and channels that are used to promote violence, human trafficking, and hatred-speeches that are quite common in Kurdish and Arabic social networks.
- 3- The parents' overseeing should be done in a very soft and friendly manner; otherwise, it could be counter-productive. For instance, they can show results of the studies that tell how harmful to spend too much time on video-games and other applications via electronic devices.

Acknowledgement:

This survey could have not been possible without the great efforts of Kosan Shwan, Baz Sirwan, Diwan Yahya, and Rozyar Jamal, who distributed and collected survey-forms and kept in touch with the students during the process. I also can't express my gratitude for all the school principals and teachers who helped conducting the survey in their schools and classes.