مَجلةُ أُريد الدَّوليةُ للدراسات الإعلامية وعلوم الإتصال

A Semi-Social Media Platform for Teacher-Student Communication: MyU vs. WhatsApp and E-mail

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تطبيق ماي يو كشبه منصّة تواصل اجتماعي ما بين القائم بالتّدريس والطلاب ومقارنته بوسيلتي الواتساب والبريد الإلكتروني

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ABSTRACT

In the era of digital communication, online communication has become an integral part of the teacher-student relationship. With the increasing use of online platforms, such as e-mail and instant messaging, teacher-student communication has shifted from traditional face-to-face interactions to a more virtual setting. This paper's main objective is to identify the uses and interaction of communication between university students and faculty members through the MyU application, compared with WhatsApp and e-mail. A sequential mixed-methods approach is adopted through qualitative semi-structured interviews (3 participants) and one focus group (5 participants), followed by a quantitative tool, an e-questionnaire filled by 365 university students who use MyU in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Key findings can be summarized as follows: (1) 70% have been using MyU for 1 to 4 years, 50% of which are students at Kuwait University; (2) 87% believe that one of the advantages of MyU is the ability to join the academic section group; (3) 67% stated that if they had to choose between using MyU and using WhatsApp to communicate with their teachers, they would choose MyU, compared to 92% who stated that if they had to choose between using MyU and using e-mail to communicate with their teachers, they would choose MyU; (4) 84% hope that all students and faculty members get to know about MyU; (5) there is a statistical relationship between the length of using MyU and the knowledge of MyU features, namely: choosing a profile picture, recording voice messages, blocking users, and the option of knowing if a message was read (in private chats). In conclusion, this work has broadened the scope of research on social media as a new means of teacher-student communication. Future studies should consider teachers' experiences with MyU compared to other platforms and means of communication with students.

Keywords: social media, teacher-student communication, MyU application, educational technologies, Saudi Arabia.

الملخص

في عصر الإعلام الرقمي، أصبح التواصل عبر الإنترنت جزءًا لا يتجزأ من العلاقة بين الطالب والمعلم. مع الاستخدام المتزايد لتكنولوجيات التواصل، مثل البريد الإلكتروني والمراسلة الفورية، تحول التواصل بين المعلم والطالب من التواصل التقليدي وجهاً لوجه إلى تواصل افتراضي. الهدف الرئيس لهذه الورقة هو التعرف على الاستخدامات والتفاعل في التواصل بين طلاب الجامعة وأعضاء هيئة التدريس من خلال تطبيق MyU، ومقارنة بكل من WhatsApp والبريد الإلكتروني. ويتمثل التساؤل البحثي الرئيس في: ما هي الاستخدامات وطبيعة التفاعل في التواصل بين طلاب الجامعة وأعضاء هيئة التدريس من خلال تطبيق MyU، مقارنة بكل من WhatsApp والبريد الإلكتروني؟ تم اتباع المنهج المزجي التتابعي من خلال مقابلات نوعية (3 مشاركين) ومجموعة تركيز واحدة (5 مشاركين)، يليها استخدام أداة كمية؛ استبيان إلكتروني تم ملؤه بواسطة 365 طالب جامعي ممن يستخدمون تطبيق MyU في المملكة العربية السعودية والكويت. تتلخص النتائج الرئيسية في ما يلي: (1) 70٪ يستخدمون MyU منذ 1-4 سنوات، 50٪ منهم طلاب/طالبات في جامعة الكويت؛ (2) يعتقد 87٪ أن: إحدى مزايا MyU هي القدرة على الانضمام إلى مجموعة المقرر الدراسي ؛ (3) ذكر 67٪ أنه إذا كان عليهم الاختيار بين استخدام MyU واستخدام WhatsApp للتواصل مع أساتذتهم، فسيختارون MyU ، مقارنة بـ 92٪ ممن ذكروا أنه إذا كان عليهم الاختيار بين استخدام MyU واستخدام البريد الإلكتروني للتواصل مع أساتذتهم، سيختارون MyU؛ (4) يأمل 84٪ أن يتعرف جميع الطلاب وأعضاء هيئة التدريس على MyU؛ و (5) توجد علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين طول مدة استخدام MyU ومدى معرفة مميزات MyU، بالتحديد: اختيار صورة الملف الشخصي وتسجيل الرسائل الصوتية وحظر المستخدمين وخيار معرفة ما إذا كانت الرسالة قد تمت قراءتها (في المحادثات الخاصة) أم لا. أخيرًا، وسع هذا العمل نطاق البحث على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي كوسيلة جديدة للتواصل بين المعلم والطالب، وتوصي الدراسة أن تتناول الدراسات المستقبلية تجارب المعلمين/أعضاء هيئة التدريس مع تطبيق MyU مقارنةً بالمنصات ووسائل الاتصال الأخرى مع الطلاب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، التواصل بين المعلم والطلاب، تطبيق MyU، تقنيات التعليم، المملكة العربية السعودية.

Introduction

In the era of digital communication, online communication has become an integral part of the teacher-student relationship. With the increasing use of online platforms, such as e-mail and instant messaging, teacher-student communication has shifted from traditional face-to-face interactions to a more virtual setting. Moreover, teacher-student communication has shifted due to the increasing use of social media platforms (SMPs) (Anyan et al., 2011), and the distinction between what is considered formal and informal communication has become blurred. Furthermore, the immediacy of SMPs has affected the form of communication that students now wish to have with their teachers (McAlister, 2001; Robinson & Whitemarsh, 2009) .

This work was motivated by my experience as an Assistant Professor who has been using MyU since January 2020. To date, I have more than 1000 followers, made up of my previous and current students, and I have created around 35 classes. My decision to use MyU was driven by my wish to avoid using WhatsApp with my students mainly because, in my opinion, it violates teacher privacy. I refuse to circulate my private mobile number among students and provide a means of communication available 24/7 .

This paper proposes that the MyU application is a favorable, convenient, and highly relevant SMP compared to others, including WhatsApp and e-mail, within the context of teacher-student communication. Moreover, this paper proposes MyU as a semi-SMP. It features profiles, biographies, messaging, statuses, comments, likes, and sharing media, that is, voice notes, documents, and images, all in one platform. At the same time, the private information of both teachers and students, namely, their mobile phone numbers, is not required. This paper also compares teacher-student communication practices on MyU and WhatsApp in terms of privacy, affordance, similarities, differences, and limitations. This work aims to explore how MyU facilitates teacher-student communication compared to another medium of academic communication, namely, WhatsApp .

The main objective of this work is to identify the uses and interaction of communication between university students and faculty members through MyU and compare it with WhatsApp and e-mail. Its sub-objectives are the following:

1. Learning about the advantages of using MyU for communication between university students and faculty members.

2. Learning about the similarity between MyU and some SMPs.

3. Comparing the mechanism of communication between university students and faculty members using MyU, WhatsApp, and e-mail.

The main research question is: What are the uses and interaction of communication between university students and faculty members through MyU compared to WhatsApp and e-mail?

Its sub-questions are the following:

1. What are the advantages of using MyU for communication between university students and faculty members?

2. How similar is MyU to some SMPs?

3. What are the pros/cons of communication between university students and faculty members using MyU, WhatsApp, and e-mail?

The structure of this paper is as follows. A literature review addresses the existing scholarly work around the shift in teacher-student communication to online platforms, their advantages/disadvantages, and the scarce research landscape on the MyU application. This review is followed by the methodology, findings, discussion, conclusion, and finally limitations and future work.

Literature Review

One of the important aspects of online communication is the use of digital technologies, including social media, e-mail, and instant messaging. The use of social media, for instance, has

been found to enhance interaction and engagement among students and can lead to improved learning outcomes (Madge et al., 2012). In addition, instant messaging tools like WhatsApp have been found to improve communication and support collaborative learning among students (Suh, Kim, & Cho, 2017). Moreover, social media can serve as a platform to provide real-time feedback and support for students (Zare, 2015). For example, a study by Malik and Singh (2018) found that students perceived Twitter as a more effective communication tool than e-mail. The authors noted that Twitter provided a more informal and comfortable environment for students to communicate with teachers. Another advantage of social media is its ability to promote informal learning and interaction among students. This can include sharing news stories or current events, discussions, and debates (Wozniak & Silveira, 2017). Informal learning has been suggested to be a key factor in promoting student engagement and retention (Barrett & Carney, 2015).

The current research landscape addresses the concept of the importance of teacher-student communication and its relation to teaching efficiency, which exclusively occurs inside classrooms :

- Anecdotes on teacher-student communication in general (Du & He, 2007; Tatkovic et al., 2006; Miller & Hylton, 1974).

- The beginnings of addressing the importance of implementing technologies, for example, electronic telecommunication and computer-mediated communication, in the classroom (Gibson, 2009; Robinson & Whitemarsh, 2009; Smith & Minnick, 1996; Schlegel, 1994).

- The shift in teacher-student interaction through these technologies (Anyan & Bo, 2011; Wang, 2011; Xinshao, 2011) .

Published research has also examined the following:

- Out-of-class communication (Elhay & Hershkovitz, 2019; Hershkovitz et al., 2019; Dobransky & Frymier, 2004) .

- Web 2.0 and SMPs as media for teacher-student communication, namely, Facebook (Denizalp & Ozdamli, 2019; Hershkovitz & Forkosh-Baruch, 2017; Forkosh-Baruch et al., 2015; Asterhan et al., 2013; Di Marzo, 2012; Liu & Zou, 2009) and WhatsApp (Abed, 2021; Mbodila & Leendertz, 2020; Hershkovitz et al., 2019; Mulyono et al., 2019; Carrera, 2018; Rosenberg & Asterhan, 2018; Awaf, 2015; Trenkov, 2014).

Teacher-student communication has also been examined in light of generational gaps, for example, Generation X and Millennials, and how these online practices reduce such gaps and facilitate more vibrant and active communication, aligned with these practices' pros and cons, limitations, and risks. However, research that investigates certain platforms/applications designed specifically for teacher-student communication is scarce (Nayeer et al., 2016; Dongyan, 2015). Moreover, the examined platforms/applications in the current research combine practices of teaching, schools, parents, and students, for instance, grades and feedback .

WhatsApp is a popular mobile messaging app that has potential as a communication tool for college professors and their students. However, using WhatsApp has both advantages and disadvantages as a medium of communication in higher education. One advantage of using WhatsApp is its accessibility and ease of use. The app is free and can be used on any smartphone with internet access (Keengwe & Onchwari, 2019). This ease of access can help promote real-time communication between professors and students, especially outside of regular business hours (Zukhriyah, Rohmatullah, & Suwati, 2019). Another advantage of using WhatsApp is its ability to facilitate instant messaging and group chats. This can help promote collaboration and communication among students as well as between students and professors (Ozpolat, 2020). In addition, professors can use WhatsApp to provide feedback on assignments and answer students' questions, which can promote student engagement and improve learning outcomes (Zulkefli & Ali, 2019).

Despite the many advantages, there are several concerns about using WhatsApp as a communication tool in higher education. One disadvantage is the potential for distraction and decreased productivity. Students may become overwhelmed with constant notifications and may struggle to manage their time effectively if they are constantly connected to the app (Sawant, 2020; Quiroga, 2019). Another disadvantage is the issue of privacy and confidentiality. Students may be uncomfortable sharing personal information on a platform that is not secure and may not feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues over a messaging platform (Rahimli, Yusupova, & Altun, 2020). This can lead to a breakdown in trust between students and professors and may impact the quality of communication and learning outcomes. Another disadvantage of using WhatsApp is the potential for misuse by students. Professors who use WhatsApp to communicate with their student's risk encountering inappropriate behavior, such as sending unsolicited messages or sharing inappropriate content. In a survey conducted by Aleem et al. (2021), 45% of students admitted to using WhatsApp during lectures for activities unrelated to the class.

E-mails have been a common form of communication between teachers and students for many years. A study by Kassymova et al. (2019) found that students preferred e-mail as a communication tool due to its formality and the ability to attach files. However, the study also highlighted some issues with e-mail communication, such as delayed responses from teachers and the risk of e-mails being lost in a crowded inbox. However, e-mail remains a vital tool for official communication between teachers and students. According to Strickland (2016), e-mail has remained the most appropriate mode of communication for exchanging sensitive or confidential information. In conclusion, each of these digital platforms offers unique advantages in teacher-student communication, which should be employed judiciously to maximize their benefits towards enhancing students' academic performance.

Finally, as for studies on the MyU application – to my knowledge – there are only two studies to date: Alfailakawi (2022) and Alsaffar (2019). The former (Alfailakawi, 2022) aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using MyU as a means of student-student and teacher-student interaction at Kuwait University. A quantitative descriptive method was used through an e-survey, with a total of 2005 participants. Alfailakawi (2022) found that students believed MyU to contribute positively to their interaction with colleagues and faculty members. The latter (Alsaffar, 2019) was conducted also at Kuwait University, aimed to measure the impact of MyU on university students and faculty members and explore if MyU was a preferred social network platform for students and faculty members for reading the news or information, expressing opinions, and communicating. Similar to Alfailakawi (2022), a descriptive approach was adopted with a sample of 104 students and faculty members. Alsaffar (2019) concluded that 26% of the sample used MyU. A large part of the sample showed preference and approval of using MyU to find out about module news in comparison to other traditional methods .

Methodology

To investigate MyU usage among university students, a sequential mixed-methods approach was employed, having both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative research method involved conducting open-ended, semi-structured interviews with three participants, and one focus-group with five participants, all of them had MyU accounts (Figure 1) .

To supplement the qualitative data, a quantitative survey was also administered through an online questionnaire with a total of 365 participants. The sequential mixed-methods research design is an effective way of combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to studying complex social phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In a sequential mixed-methods approach, the qualitative component is typically conducted first, followed by the quantitative

component. The qualitative component can involve data collection through methods such as interviews, focus groups, and observations (Fetters et al., 2013). This qualitative data can help to identify themes or patterns in the data and generate explanations for these patterns (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2015). The subsequent quantitative component can involve collecting data through surveys, questionnaires, or other quantitative methods (Fetters et al., 2013) and can help to test the hypotheses generated from the qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The combination of these two components allows researchers to build on each other's strengths and produce a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Fetters et al., 2013).

Study 1: Qualitative Component

In the first stage, three semi-structured interviews (one per participant) and one focus group (five participants) were conducted between September 2021 and January 2022. Between 15 September 2021 and 17 January 2022, three online interviews took place on Zoom. Semi-structured online interviews conducted through platforms such as Zoom have emerged as a valuable method for qualitative research in today's digital age. These interviews provide researchers with the flexibility to explore complex research questions while maintaining a certain level of standardization (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004). The semi-structured format allows for a balance between predetermined questions and the organic flow of conversation, enabling participants to express their experiences and perspectives in depth (Seidman, 2006). Overall, semi-structured online interviews via Zoom offer an innovative and valuable approach for conducting qualitative research, particularly in situations where in-person interviews are not feasible.

Moreover, Focus group methodology is a widely employed qualitative research technique that fosters rich data collection and analysis through group discussions and interactions. As

Krueger and Casey (2015) assert, focus groups are particularly valuable in exploring complex social phenomena, as they enable researchers to delve into the nuances of participants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes. The dynamic nature of focus group discussions, guided by a skilled moderator, promotes both individual and collective expressions, yielding a deeper understanding of the research topic (Morgan, 1996). The combination of open-ended questions and group dynamics enhances data triangulation, validating findings by comparing and contrasting participants' perspectives (Barbour, 2007). This approach, however, also presents challenges, such as potential groupthink or dominance of certain voices (Kitzinger, 1994). focus group methodology has an ability to uncover hidden dimensions of a topic through interaction, make it a valuable tool in qualitative research. The following steps of conductin focus-group were followed:

1. Define Research Objectives

2. Recruitment of Participants

3. Select an Online Platform

4. Develop a Discussion Guide

5. Conduct Online Focus Groups

6. Data Analysis

7. Report Findings

8. Ethical Considerations

As for the sampling method, Purposive sampling (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) was used to recruit eight participants from my undergraduate and postgraduate students who used MyU as a means of communication with me, their teacher. Participant consent forms (Figure 1) were sent and signed via e-mail, except for one participant (F3) who had special needs, that is, visual impairment. F3's consent was obtained online at the beginning of our interview. The justifications for choosing purposive sampling were its convenience, ease of access, and the

established relationships and trust between the teacher and the students. Moreover, since this work was in its preliminary stage, the small sample helped grasp an initial perspective of the students' experiences to later broaden the research focus, that is, using a quantitative approach and a questionnaire with a larger sample.

Participant Acronym	Medium	Social status	Educational level	Duration in minutes
M1	Zoom	Single	Undergraduate - 3rd semester	11:18
M2			Undergraduate - 4rth semester	15:00
F3			Undergraduate - 6th semester	33:47
A4		Married	Postgraduate - Masters	Focus group 29:43
A5		Single		
B6		Married		
B7				
S8		Single		

Figure 1: Interviewees' acronyms and characteristics

The interview and focus-group questions focused on three different areas aimed at (i) identifying the process of installing the MyU application, creating a profile, and so on; (ii) determining the relevance of MyU and other SMPs; (iii) comparing MyU and WhatsApp in terms of privacy and communication within the context of teacher-student communication. All the interviews were transcribed verbatim according to King & Horrocks (2018, pp. 142–174), and an inductive approach to thematic analysis was used (Alhojailan, 2012).

Study 2: Quantitative Component

Based on Study 1 findings, I designed a questionnaire divided into six parts:

1. Determining the sample and excluding those who are not within the target sample (2 questions) (Figure 2)

2. The nature of using MyU in general and the extent to which its characteristics are known (5 questions)

3. The advantages of using MyU (6 questions, Likert scale)

4. Comparing MyU and other means of communication (14 questions, Likert scale)

5. The importance of defining MyU, its limitations, and ways to develop it (6 questions, Likert scale)

6. General data, such as gender, age, educational level, and country (4 paragraphs).
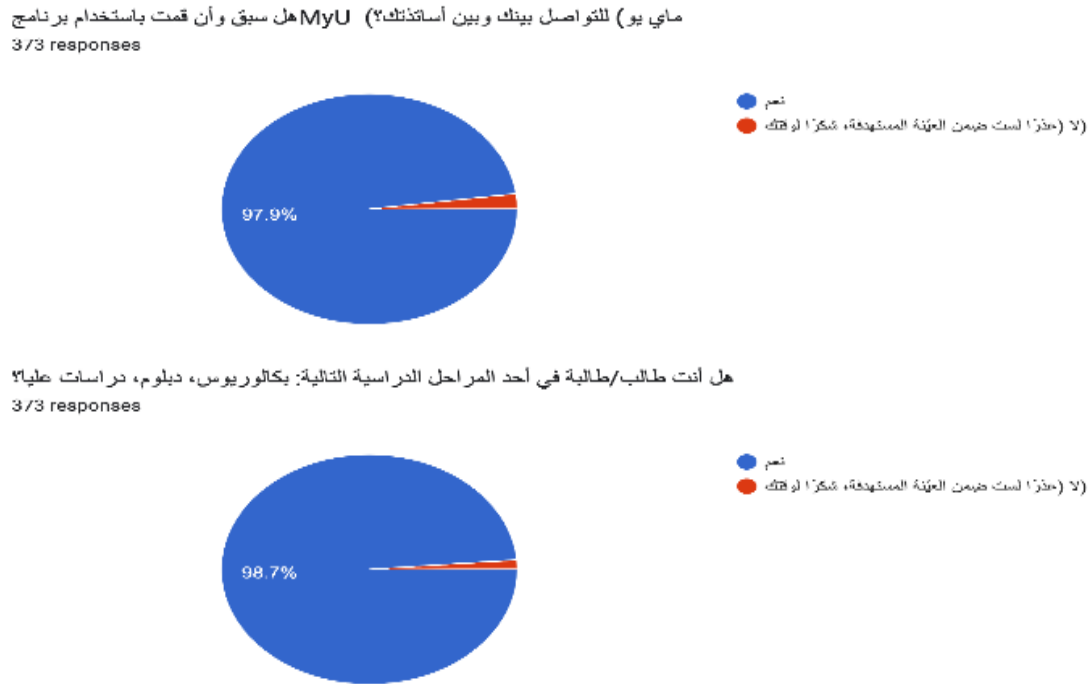
Figure 1. Determining the sample and excluding those who are not within the target sample.

The Likert scale is a commonly used measurement tool designed to assess people's attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions regarding a particular topic. The scale was developed in the 1930s by Rensis Likert and has been used in various social and behavioral research studies ever since (Likert, 1932). The Likert scale consists of a series of items or statements that individuals rate on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The responses are then totaled, and the mean score is calculated, which is used to indicate participants' overall attitudes or beliefs toward the topic in question. The Likert scale has been widely accepted and proven to be a reliable and valid measurement tool in various research studies (Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; Brunner & Deming, 1940) .

In the process of testing the reliability of my research questionnaire through assessors, I followed the guidelines proposed by DeVellis (2012) and Cronbach's alpha as a measure of internal consistency. First, I selected four assessors to review the questionnaire[1] and provide feedback on the clarity and comprehensibility of the items. After incorporating their recommendations, I administered the

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[1] Dr. Areej Alkhaldi, Associate Professor, Department of Clinical Nutrition, Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences, King Abdul-Aziz University
Dr. Mona Alsheddi, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Art and Humanities, King Saud University
Dr. Samar AlMossa, Assistant Professor, English Language Centre, Um AlQura University
Dr. Wasim Alsahafi, Assistant Professor, Department of Digital Media, Faculty of Media and Communication, University of Jeddah

questionnaire to a sample of 30 participants. I then used Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The results indicated a high level of reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.91 (DeVellis, 2012). This process ensured that my questionnaire was reliable and valid for use in my research study.

Internal Consistency Validity

Internal consistency validity is the degree to which each phrase relates to the total score of the axis to which it belongs. The results in Table 1 indicate that there is a significant correlation between each phrase and the total axis to which it belongs. Therefore, the tool has a high degree of internal consistency.

Table 1. Internal consistency validity

Items	Simple correlation coefficient			
	Knowledge of MyU features	Advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members	The similarity between MyU and some social media platforms, and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail	The limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it
Choose a profile picture	.620**			
Write about me	.757**			
Block or allow others to send me private messages	.709**			
Record a voice message	.780**			
Block or allow notifications	.712**			
Block persons	.725**			
Allow or prevent people from knowing if you have read their messages	.794**			
Enable notifications for new messages	.552**			
Control who can message you				
I had no trouble using MyU		.656**		
One of the advantages of MyU is the ability to join the academic section group		.964**		
One of the features of MyU is that all students can see the posts of the course professor		.861**		
One of the advantages of MyU is the ability for all students to participate by commenting on posts made by the course teacher		.950**		
MyU makes it easy to get my questions		.935**		

answered through comments on posts made by a subject teacher			
MyU breaks the gap between the teacher and the student		.870**	
There are a lot of similarities between MyU and social media applications			.629**
There is a great similarity between MyU and Twitter in terms of the Like and Mention buttons (@)			.859**
There is a great similarity between MyU and WhatsApp in terms of private conversations			.753**
MyU is more private than WhatsApp			.639**
One of the advantages of MyU compared to WhatsApp is that the mobile number is not recognizable			.881**
One of the advantages of MyU compared to WhatsApp is that it does not know if the user is online or not			.882**
One of the advantages of MyU compared to WhatsApp is that it is not possible to make contact through the application			.848**
One of the advantages of MyU compared to WhatsApp is the separation between what is official, for study, and what is personal			.842**
MyU is more official than WhatsApp			.712**
If I had to choose between using MyU and using WhatsApp to communicate with my teachers, I would choose MyU			.867**
Communication via MyU is faster (real-time) compared to communication via e-mail			.932**
If I had to choose between using MyU and using e-mail to communicate with my teachers, I would choose MyU			.912**
MyU can replace the need to communicate with the professor via e-mail			.890**
MyU makes it easier to refer to the posts made by the professor compared to WhatsApp			.906**
One of the difficulties of using MyU is that it does not have an Arabic interface (all icons and options are in English)				.639**

It is difficult for students with poor English to use MyU				.600**
I hope that an Arabic version of MyU will be available				.740**
MyU should be widely known				.501**
As far as I know, few students and faculty members know of MyU				.779**
I hope all students and faculty members know about MyU				.604**
*significant at 0.05 **significant at 0.01				

Reliability:

Table 2 shows the results of reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results indicate that the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the four study axes is greater than 0.7, which indicates that the tool has a high degree of reliability.

Table 2. Reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Axes	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Knowledge of MyU features	9	0.857
Advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members	6	0.934
The similarity between MyU and some social media platforms, and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail	14	0.961
The limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it	6	0.710

Statistical Methods

The study used SPSS statistical program to analyze the data. A set of statistical methods were also used: frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation, simple correlation coefficient, Spearman's correlation coefficient, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, and chi-square test.

The questionnaire was designed on Google Forms and disseminated through MyU (Figure3), conducted within one week, between 11 and 18 April 2023. Designing and disseminating an online questionnaire through Google Forms is a popular and effective method of collecting data in various fields of research. According to Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014), online surveys

have become increasingly popular due to their low cost, easy access, and immediate data collection. Google Forms, in particular, is a user-friendly and free tool that allows users to create and customize questionnaires and share them with participants via e-mail or social media (Google, n.d.). Moreover, Google Forms provides options for real-time response tracking and data analysis, making it a valuable tool for researchers in analyzing data (Gombault & Tapiero, 2021). Overall, using Google Forms for designing and disseminating online questionnaires can streamline the data collection process and produce reliable results.

What is MyU?

MyU[2] is both a desktop- and mobile-based social media application (Figure 4). The MyU FAQ page defines it as follows: "A mobile app that allows students and educators to connect via sending reminders, creating discussions, all in a social network-like experience that is safe, instant, and private. The app makes it easy to connect with anyone in the school community, makes classes more interactive, and sharing fun. We envision a better-empowered education through technology" (https://myu.co/faqs).

Figure 2. Screenshot of the MyU application logo

MyU was first launched in 2018. Twenty-five versions of the MyU application have since been developed. Many features have been added, and the interface has been changed (Figure 5).
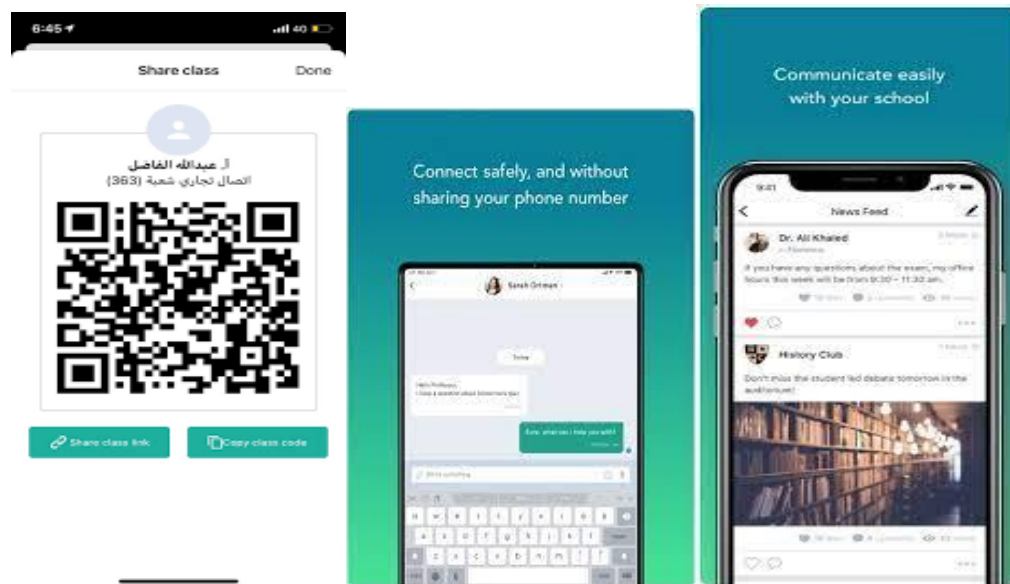
Figure 3. Screenshots of the MyU application's status, messaging, and barcode features

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[2] More information can be found on the MyU YouTube channel:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUMNBJ4b1FotxjLHEbAUnLA/videos

Findings

Study 1: Qualitative Data

Participants' introductory knowledge of MyU was sought from the answer to my first question: *How did you discover MyU and what were the reasons for creating an account on MyU?* An example answer was as follows:

"*Aah, from you, when we took the module with you previously, you said download it, so I downloaded it ... to be able to communicate with you properly because if I did not download it, there will be no communication between me and you*" (M1)

All participants agreed that installing MyU and creating a profile were easy and identical to any SMP:

"*I do not remember that much, but I recall it was simple and I did it very fast; it did not take time*" (M1)

"*It was easy and clear*" (M2)

Seven main themes emerged from my interviews as follows.

(1) MyU is most similar to Twitter

in terms of the Like button, mention, comments, and open conversation: "*I do not [know] why I feel it is similar to Twitter as an application. I mean, when you write something, we reply, like when you tweet, and they [followers] mention you below*" (M1). Almost all participants agreed that MyU is identical to Twitter, except for M2, who sees it as more similar to WhatsApp. F3 also mentioned Kik, a texting message application, as another application relevant to MyU design.

(2) MyU is more private compared to WhatsApp.

It limits privacy violations, namely, a user not having to share a private number, the invisibility when being online, the absence of the ability to make phone calls, and context collapse; that is,

there is a line between what is academic and what is personal. "*Like we said, regarding WhatsApp, it has no privacy. For example, the number of the teacher is with you* [as a student] *and the ability to know if she is online or not. I mean, there is almost no privacy on Whats*[App]" (B7).

(3) MyU is less formal and more instant.

MyU was defined as being formal compared to WhatsApp, which was defined as being personal. "*WhatsApp has more intimacy, unlike MyU* [that is] *more formal*" (B6).

(4) MyU should be promoted and circulated to a larger group of teachers and students.

One participant stated: "*I wish everyone use[d] MyU and* [was] *introduced to it. Very few* [people] *know* [about] *MyU*" (M2). Another stated: "*If I were to choose between WhatsApp and MyU* [they mean for teacher-student communication], *I* [would] *choose MyU, not WhatsApp*" (F3).

(5) Visual impairment and the usage of MyU.

One participant went on and on with details on using MyU for the first time: F3, who is a special-needs student, with a visual impairment (blindness). F3's interview enriched and broadened my research scope to explore how special-needs students can use technology to communicate with their teachers and the effort that they put into these practices. Through F3's long and extended explanation of her experience of downloading MyU for the first time, she raised the issue of the compatibility of MyU with the voice-over application:

"*I said to myself let it explain* [the voice-over application] *and then start to explore the application by yourself* [MyU]. *Of course, I did not understand anything, but I came to a conclusion that it is identical to any social media application, same as Snapchat; it has nothing, I mean in terms of difficulty. I was asking myself a question: now will it be compatible with the voice-over application or not?*" (F3)

F3 also mentioned the Daily application, which helps her to "read" pictures. The application explains to her what the picture is about. This is another effort F3 as a student with visual impairment had to do in order to understand my post to her classmates. For example, she told me about an instance when I posted both a text and an image post on the MyU status of the class grades in the midterm. Daily app and voice-over read my status to F3, and she concluded from my text that the attached picture was her class grades.

(6) MyU's English interface.

The issue of English being 'my's main and only language was raised in almost all interviews. In the focus group, for example, A4, A5, B6, B7, and S8 agreed that English could be a challenge to some students in using MyU, yet they also acknowledged that it was simple English:

"*I did not feel its difficulty, but maybe users whose language is simple* [the level of English proficiency] *do not like to deal with the application whose language is English"* (A4)

"*My language is simple* [her level of English proficiency] *and it was* [MyU application] *very easy to me. I mean I am not very good* [she used the word *Shatra* in Arabic which means excellent]. *I mean I think I am a beginner*" (S8)

(7) Online representation on MyU.

Online representation was surprisingly part of F3's interviews, where she explained in an enthusiastic way why she uses the cartoon character Maruko[3] as a profile picture on her MyU profile:

Me (laughing): *ha-ha … Why did you choose Maruko?*

F3: "*Because I love her. Because she is my dearest. She represents me."*

She later explained how she sees the similarities between Maruko's personality traits and hers (F3). This adds online identity representation to students' experience of MyU.

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[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chibi_Maruko-chan

Study 2: Quantitative Data

First: Demographic Statistics

Table 3 represents the distribution of the sample according to demographic variables. The results indicate that the total sample size was 360 members, 20% of them being males and 80% females. 15.3% in the age category were less than 20 years, 59.7% from 20 to 30 years, and 90% more than 30 years. According to the educational level, 1.4% had a diploma, 91.1% had a bachelor's degree, and 7.5% were postgraduate. The results also indicated that 22.2% of respondents used MyU for less than 1 year, 36.1% used it for 1 to 2 years, 35.8% for 3 to 4 years, and 5.8% for 5 years and more. 90% found out about MyU from the module's professor, 7.8% from colleagues, 1.9% from social media, and 0.3% from other sources.

The results also indicate the diversity of the universities to which the respondents belong, namely: King Abdulaziz University, Kuwait University, Tabouk University, Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Gazan University, Al Majmaah University, Taif University, Shaqra University, Imam Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University, and Sajer University (Figure 6).

Figure 4. Sample geographical distribution

Table 3. Distribution of the sample according to demographic variables

Variables		N	%
Gender	Male	72	20.0%
	Female	288	80.0%
Age	Less than 20 years	55	15.3%
	From 20 to 30 years	215	59.7%
	More than 30 years	90	25.0%
Educational level	Diploma	5	1.4%
	Bachelor	328	91.1%
	Postgraduate	27	7.5%
How long have you been using MyU?	Less than 1 year	80	22.2%
	From 1 to 2 years	130	36.1%
	From 3 to 4 years	129	35.8%
	From 5 years and more	21	5.8%
How did you find out about MyU?	From module professor	324	90.0%
	From colleagues	28	7.8%
	From social media	7	1.9%
	Other	1	0.3%
University	King Abdulaziz University	48	13.4%
	Kuwait University	181	50.4%
	Tabouk university	11	3.1%
	Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University	13	3.6%
	Gazan University	7	1.9%
	Al Majmaah University	7	1.9%
	Taif University	16	4.5%
	Shaqra University	61	17.0%
	Imam Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University	14	3.9%
	Sajer University	1	0.3%

Second: Description of the Study Axes

1. **Knowledge of MyU**

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents' responses to the phrases of the knowledge of MyU. The results indicate a high response of respondents on the phrases of the axis, as the mean values ranged from 1.73 to 2.57 degrees.

It was also possible to arrange the axis phrases in descending order according to the mean as follows: Choose a profile picture; Block or allow notifications; Enable notifications for new messages; Write about me; Block or allow others to send me private messages; Block persons; Record a voice message; Control who can message you; Allow or prevent people from knowing if you have read their messages (with means: 2.57, 2.55, 2.52, 2.42, 2.15, 2.08, 2.01, 1.9, and 1.73 degrees, resp.).

Table 4. Distribution of respondents' responses to the phrases of the knowledge of MyU

	I do not know		I know it and have never used it		I know it and have used it before		Mean	Standard deviation
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Choose a profile picture	19	5.3%	115	31.9%	226	62.8%	2.5750	.59237
Write about me	47	13.1%	114	31.7%	199	55.3%	2.4222	.71167
Block or allow others to send me private messages	101	28.1%	104	28.9%	155	43.1%	2.1500	.83098
Record a voice message	115	31.9%	124	34.4%	121	33.6%	2.0167	.81062
Block or allow notifications	34	9.4%	91	25.3%	235	65.3%	2.5583	.66083
Block persons	86	23.9%	159	44.2%	115	31.9%	2.0806	.74390
Allow or prevent people from knowing if you have read their messages	176	48.9%	104	28.9%	80	22.2%	1.7333	.80111
Enable notifications for new messages	55	15.3%	60	16.7%	245	68.1%	2.5278	.74587
Control who can message you	148	41.1%	100	27.8%	112	31.1%	1.9000	84511.

Moreover, to find out the level of knowledge of the program, the responses of the sample were divided into three categories according to the theoretical range (9–27 degrees) as in Table 5; the results in the table indicate that the level of knowledge of the program is high, with a percentage of 44.7%.

Table 5. Level of knowledge of MyU

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Level	Low (9.00−14.00)	40	11.1	11.1	11.1
	Average (15.00−20.00)	159	44.2	44.2	55.3
	High (21.00+)	161	44.7	44.7	100.0
	Total	360	100.0	100.0	

Level of knowledge of the program
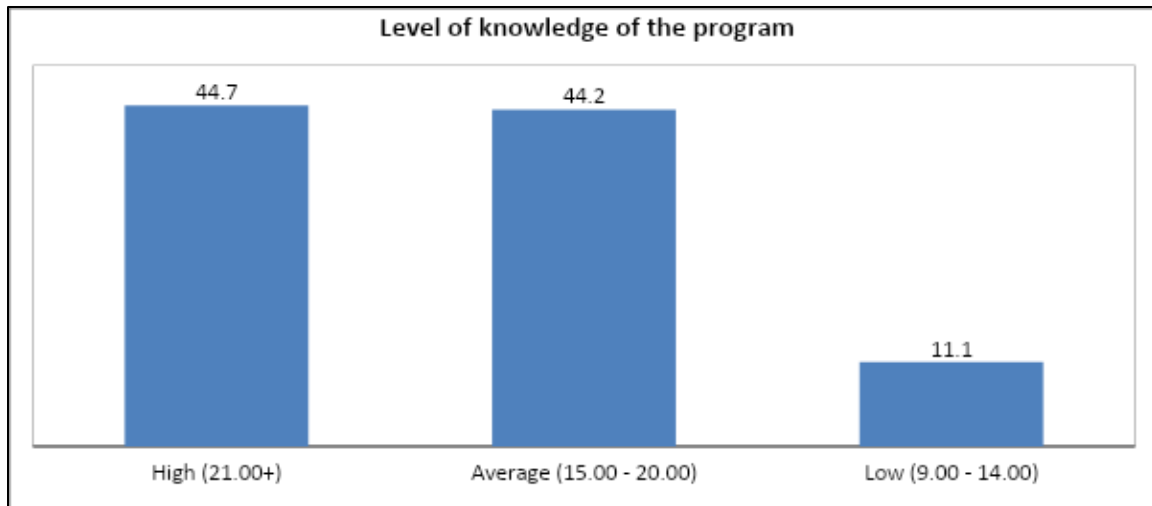
2. Advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members

Table 6 presents the distribution of respondents' responses to the phrases of the advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members. The results indicate a high response of respondents on the phrases of the axis, as the mean values ranged from 3.46 to 4.33 degrees.

It was also possible to arrange the axis phrases in descending order according to the mean as follows: One of the advantages of MyU is the ability for all students to participate by commenting on posts made by the course teacher; One of the features of MyU is that all students can see the posts of the course professor; One of the advantages of MyU is the ability to join the academic section group; MyU makes it easy to get my questions answered through comments on posts made by a subject teacher; I had no trouble using MyU; MyU breaks the gap between the teacher and the student (with means: 4, 33, 4,32, 3.31, 4.16, 4.10, and 3.46 degrees, resp.).

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Standard deviation
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
I had no trouble using MyU	28	7.8%	6	1.7%	29	8.1%	135	37.5%	162	45.0%	4.1028	1.13589
One of the advantages of MyU is the ability to join the academic section group	17	4.7%	7	1.9%	20	5.6%	117	32.5%	199	55.3%	4.3167	1.00680
One of the features of MyU is that all students can see the posts of the course professor	16	4.4%	6	1.7%	18	5.0%	124	34.4%	196	54.4%	4.3278	.97792
One of the advantages of MyU is the ability for all students to participate by commenting on posts made by the course teacher	17	4.7%	4	1.1%	17	4.7%	125	34.7%	197	54.7%	4.3361	.97651
MyU makes it easy to get my questions answered through comments on posts made by a subject teacher	20	5.6%	10	2.8%	32	8.9%	128	35.6%	170	47.2%	4.1611	1.07213
MyU breaks the gap between the teacher and the student	38	10.6%	40	11.1%	90	25.0%	102	28.3%	90	25.0%	3.4611	1.26827

To find out the level of the advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members, the responses of the sample were divided into three categories according to the theoretical range (6–30 degrees) as in Table 7; the results in the table indicate that the level of the advantages of using MyU is high, with a percentage of 83.3%.

Table 7. Level of the advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Level	Low (6.00–13.00)	20	5.6	5.6	5.6
	Average (14.00–21.00)	40	11.1	11.1	16.7
	High (22.00+)	300	83.3	83.3	100.0
	Total	360	100.0	100.0	

Level of Advantages of using MyU program to communicate between university students and faculty members

3. The similarity between MyU and some social media platforms and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail

Table 8 presents the distribution of respondents' responses to the phrases of the similarity between MyU and some social media platforms and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail. The results indicate a high response of respondents on the phrases of the axis, as the mean values ranged from 3.24 to 4.27 degrees.
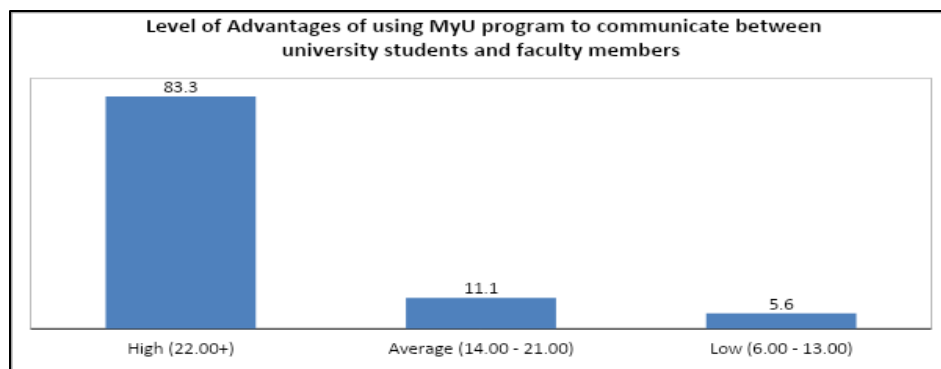
It was also possible to arrange the axis phrases in descending order according to the mean as follows: If I had to choose between using MyU and using e-mail to communicate with my teachers, I would choose MyU; MyU can replace the need to communicate with the professor via e-mail; Communication via MyU is faster (real-time) compared to communication via e-mail; One of the advantages of MyU compared to WhatsApp is that the mobile number is not recognizable; One of the advantages of MyU compared to WhatsApp is the separation between what is official, for study, and what is personal; MyU is more official than WhatsApp; MyU makes it easier to refer to the posts made by the professor compared to WhatsApp; One of the advantages of MyU compared to WhatsApp is that it does not know if the user is online or not; One of the advantages of MyU compared to WhatsApp is that it is not possible to make contact through the application; If I had to choose between using MyU and using WhatsApp to communicate with my teachers, I would choose MyU; There is a great similarity between MyU and Twitter in terms of Like and Mention button (@); There is a great similarity between MyU and WhatsApp in terms of private conversations; MyU is more private than WhatsApp; There is a lot of similarity between MyU and social media applications (with means: 4.2722, 4.19, 4.19, 4.11, 4.08, 4.07, 4.05, 3.93, 3.86, 3.83, 3.56, 3.45, 3.26, and 3.24 degrees, resp.).

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Standard deviation
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
There is a lot of similarity between MyU and social media applications	27	7.5%	69	19.2%	92	25.6%	134	37.2%	38	10.6%	3.2417	1.10956
There is a great similarity between MyU and Twitter in terms of the Like and Mention buttons (@)	18	5.0%	43	11.9%	81	22.5%	153	42.5%	65	18.1%	3.5667	1.07180
There is a great similarity between MyU and WhatsApp in terms of private conversations	29	8.1%	51	14.2%	76	21.1%	136	37.8%	68	18.9%	3.4528	1.18156
MyU is more private than WhatsApp	38	10.6%	43	11.9%	126	35.0%	91	25.3%	62	17.2%	3.2667	1.19002
One of the advantages of MyU compared to WhatsApp is that the mobile number is not recognizable	13	3.6%	12	3.3%	51	14.2%	129	35.8%	155	43.1%	4.1139	1.01016
One of the advantages of MyU compared to WhatsApp is that it does not know if the user is online or not	14	3.9%	27	7.5%	59	16.4%	128	35.6%	132	36.7%	3.9361	1.08616
One of the advantages of MyU compared to WhatsApp is that it is not possible to make contact through the application	26	7.2%	23	6.4%	52	14.4%	130	36.1%	129	35.8%	3.8694	1.18117
One of the advantages of MyU compared to WhatsApp is the separation between what is official: for study, and what is personal	13	3.6%	11	3.1%	52	14.4%	142	39.4%	142	39.4%	4.0806	.99114
MyU is more official than WhatsApp	18	5.0%	18	5.0%	38	10.6%	131	36.4%	155	43.1%	4.0750	1.08801
If I had to choose between using MyU and using WhatsApp to communicate with my teachers, I would choose MyU	35	9.7%	24	6.7%	56	15.6%	96	26.7%	149	41.4%	3.8333	1.29924
Communication via MyU is faster (real-time) compared to communication via e-mail	16	4.4%	11	3.1%	43	11.9%	107	29.7%	183	50.8%	4.1944	1.05607
If I had to choose between using MyU and using e-mail to communicate with my teachers, I would choose MyU	15	4.2%	9	2.5%	36	10.0%	103	28.6%	197	54.7%	4.2722	1.02520
MyU can replace the need to communicate with the professor via e-mail	15	4.2%	19	5.3%	33	9.2%	106	29.4%	187	51.9%	4.1972	1.07775
MyU makes it easier to refer to the posts made by the professor compared to WhatsApp	14	3.9%	18	5.0%	53	14.7%	124	34.4%	151	41.9%	4.0556	1.05673

In order to find out the level of similarity between MyU and some social media platforms and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail, the responses of the sample were divided into three categories according to the theoretical range (14–70 degrees) as in Table 9; the results in the table indicate that the level of similarity is high, with a percentage of 69.4%.

Table 9. Level of similarity between MyU and some social media platforms and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
	Low (14.00–32.66)	18	5.0	5.0	5.0
Level	Average (32.67–51.32)	92	25.6	25.6	30.6
	High (51.33+)	250	69.4	69.4	100.0
	Total	360	100.0	100.0	

Level of similarity between MyU and some social media platforms, comparison between whats App and e-mail
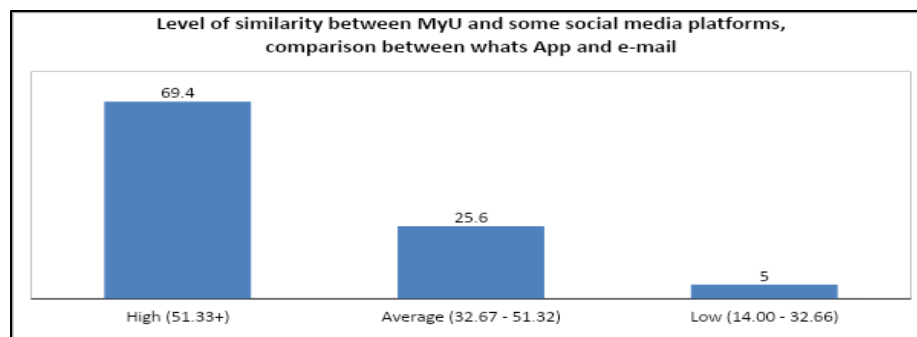
4. The limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it

Table 10 presents the distribution of respondents' responses to the phrases of the limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it. The results indicate a high response of respondents on the phrases of the axis, as the mean values ranged from 2.80 to 4.30 degrees.

It was also possible to arrange the axis phrases in descending order according to the mean as follows: I hope all students and faculty members will know about MyU; MyU should be widely known; I hope that an Arabic version of MyU will be available; As far as I know, few students and faculty members know of MyU; It is difficult for students with poor English to use MyU; One of the difficulties of using MyU is that it does not have an Arabic interface (all icons and options are in English) (with means: 4.3056, 4.13, 3.90, 3.44, 2.92, and 2.80 degrees, resp.).

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	Standard deviation
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
One of the difficulties of using MyU is that it does not have an Arabic interface (all icons and options are in English)	54	15.0%	97	26.9%	105	29.2%	73	20.3%	31	8.6%	2.8056	1.17588
It is difficult for students with poor English to use MyU	47	13.1%	90	25.0%	105	29.2%	79	21.9%	39	10.8%	2.9250	1.19303
I hope that an Arabic version of MyU will be available	12	3.3%	15	4.2%	84	23.3%	134	37.2%	115	31.9%	3.9028	1.00638
MyU should be widely known	9	2.5%	12	3.3%	52	14.4%	137	38.1%	150	41.7%	4.1306	.95127
As far as I know, few students and faculty members know of MyU	32	8.9%	48	13.3%	86	23.9%	116	32.2%	78	21.7%	3.4444	1.21835
I hope all students and faculty members will know about MyU	9	2.5%	10	2.8%	39	10.8%	106	29.4%	196	54.4%	4.3056	94764.

In order to find out the level of the limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it, the responses of the sample were divided into three categories according to the theoretical range (6–30 degrees) as in Table 11; the results in the table indicate that the level of similarity is high, with a percentage of 52.5%.

Table 11. Level of the limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Low (6.00–13.00)	11	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Average (14.00–21.00)	160	44.4	44.4	47.5
	High (22.00+)	189	52.5	52.5	100.0
	Total	360	100.0	100.0	
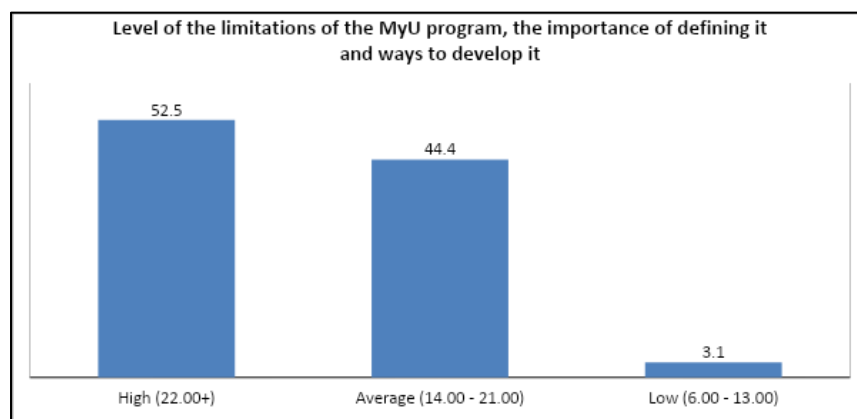
Third: Difference Tests

1. **Differences in the study axes according to gender**

The first statistical hypothesis expects that there are no differences in Knowledge of MyU features, Advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members, The similarity between MyU and some social media platforms and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail, and the limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it, according to gender. To test this hypothesis, an independent sample t-test was done as in Table 12; the results in the table show that the t-values for the 4 axes = 1.538, 1.411, 1.038, and 0.093, which are not significant at the 0.05 level, so there are no differences according to gender. This result supports what the first statistical hypothesis expects.

Table 12. Independent sample t-test for differences in the study axes according to gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t- value	Sig.
Knowledge of MyU features	Male	72	20.6389	3.94435	1.538	.125
	Female	288	19.7951	4.21583		
Advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members	Male	72	25.4722	4.60243	1.411	.159
	Female	288	24.5139	5.28160		
The similarity between MyU and some social media platforms and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail	Male	72	53.0000	10.08276	1.038	.300
	Female	288	54.4444	10.68020		
The limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it	Male	72	21.4722	4.33126	.093	.926
	Female	288	21.5243	4.20794		

2. **Differences in the study axes according to age**

The second statistical hypothesis expects that there are no differences in Knowledge of MyU features, Advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members, The similarity between MyU and some social media platforms and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail, and the limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it, according to age. To test this hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA test was done as in

Table 13; the results in the table show that the F-values for the 4 axes = 1.091, 0.504, 1.455, and 0.317, which are not significant at the 0.05 level, so there are no differences according to age. This result supports what the second statistical hypothesis expects.

Table 13. One-way ANOVA for differences in the study axes according to age

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Knowledge of MyU features	Between Groups	37.941	2	18.971	1.091	.337
	Within Groups	6208.589	357	17.391		
	Total	6246.531	359			
Advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members	Between Groups	26.906	2	13.453	.504	.605
	Within Groups	9535.883	357	26.711		
	Total	9562.789	359			
The similarity between MyU and some social media platforms and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail	Between Groups	323.941	2	161.970	1.455	.235
	Within Groups	39751.348	357	111.348		
	Total	40075.289	359			
The limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it	Between Groups	11.373	2	5.687	.317	.728
	Within Groups	6402.557	357	17.934		
	Total	6413.931	359			

3. Differences in the study axes according to educational level

The third statistical hypothesis expects that there are no differences in Knowledge of MyU features, Advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members, The similarity between MyU and some social media platforms and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail, and the limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it, according to educational level. To test this hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA test was done as in Table 14; the results in the table show that the F-values for the 4 axes = 0.720, 0.395, 0.171, and 0.127, which are not significant at the 0.05 level, so there are no differences according to educational level. This result supports what the third statistical hypothesis expects.

Table 14. One-way ANOVA for differences in the study axes according to educational level

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Knowledge of MyU features	Between Groups	25.083	2	12.541	.720	.488
	Within Groups	6221.448	357	17.427		
	Total	6246.531	359			
Advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members	Between Groups	21.127	2	10.564	.395	.674
	Within Groups	9541.662	357	26.727		
	Total	9562.789	359			
The similarity between MyU and some social media platforms and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail	Between Groups	39.601	2	19.801	.177	.838
	Within Groups	40035.688	357	112.145		
	Total	40075.289	359			
The limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it	Between Groups	4.574	2	2.287	.127	.880
	Within Groups	6409.357	357	17.953		
	Total	6413.931	359			

Fourth: Correlation

1. **Correlation between How long have you been using MyU? and Knowledge of MyU features**

Table 15 represents the relationship between How long have you been using MyU? and Knowledge of MyU features. The results in the table indicate that there is a significant relationship with Spearman's correlation coefficient = 0.211, which is significant at 0.01.

Table 15. Spearman's correlation coefficient between How long have you been using MyU? and Knowledge of MyU

		How long have you been using MyU?
Knowledge of MyU features	Correlation coefficient	.211[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	360

2. **Correlation between demographic variables and similarity and limitations of MyU**

Table 16 represents Spearman's correlation coefficient between demographic variables and the similarity and limitations of MyU. The results indicate that there is no relationship between any of the demographic variables and between the similarity or the limitations of MyU.

Table 16. Spearman's correlation coefficient between demographic variables and the similarity and limitations of MyU

		The similarity	The limitations
Gender	Correlation coefficient	.088	.009
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.096	.869
	N	360	360
Age	Correlation coefficient	-.071-	-.026-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.182	.629
	N	360	360
Educational level	Correlation coefficient	-.009-	.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.863	.687
	N	360	360

3. **Chi-square to identify the relationship between How long have you been using MyU? and Knowledge of MyU features**

Table 17 represents a chi-square to identify the relationship between How long have you been using MyU? and Knowledge of MyU features. The results indicate that there is a relationship between How long have you been using MyU? and items: Choose a profile picture, record a voice message, block persons, and allow or prevent people from knowing if you have read their messages, with chi-square coefficient = 21.270, 37.050, 16.395, and 13.543, respectively.

Table 17. Chi-square to identify the relationship between How long have you been using MyU? and Knowledge of MyU features

			Less than 1 year	From 1 to 2 years	From 3 to 4 years	5 years and more	Chi-square	Sig.
				How long have you been using MyU?				
Choose a profile picture	I do not know	N	7	8	3	1	21.270	.002
		%	1.9%	2.2%	0.8%	0.3%		
	I know it and have never used it	N	39	37	32	7		
		%	10.8%	10.3%	8.9%	1.9%		
	I know it and have used it before	N	34	85	94	13		
		%	9.4%	23.6%	26.1%	3.6%		
Write about me	I do not know	N	10	20	15	2	10.206	.116
		%	2.8%	5.6%	4.2%	0.6%		
	I know it and have never used it	N	35	40	32	7		
		%	9.7%	11.1%	8.9%	1.9%		
	I know it and have used it before	N	35	70	82	12		
		%	9.7%	19.4%	22.8%	3.3%		
Block or allow others to send me private messages	I do not know	N	32	34	32	3	9.797	.133
		%	8.9%	9.4%	8.9%	0.8%		
	I know it and have never used it	N	22	35	39	8		
		%	6.1%	9.7%	10.8%	2.2%		
	I know it and have used it before	N	26	61	58	10		
		%	7.2%	16.9%	16.1%	2.8%		
Record a voice message	I do not know	N	45	41	23	6	37.050	.000
		%	12.5%	11.4%	6.4%	1.7%		
	I know it and have never used it	N	23	45	50	6		
		%	6.4%	12.5%	13.9%	1.7%		
	I know it and have used it before	N	12	44	56	9		
		%	3.3%	12.2%	15.6%	2.5%		
Block or allow notifications	I do not know	N	11	12	11	0	5.511	.480
		%	3.1%	3.3%	3.1%	0.0%		
	I know it and have never used it	N	21	35	31	4		
		%	5.8%	9.7%	8.6%	1.1%		
	I know it and have used it before	N	48	83	87	17		
		%	13.3%	23.1%	24.2%	4.7%		
Block persons	I do not know	N	29	30	25	2	16.395	.012
		%	8.1%	8.3%	6.9%	0.6%		
	I know it and have never used it	N	37	56	54	12		
		%	10.3%	15.6%	15.0%	3.3%		
	I know it and have used it before	N	14	44	50	7		
		%	3.9%	12.2%	13.9%	1.9%		
Allow or prevent people from knowing if you have read their messages	I do not know	N	46	62	59	9	13.543	.035
		%	12.8%	17.2%	16.4%	2.5%		
	I know it and have never used it	N	25	36	33	10		
		%	6.9%	10.0%	9.2%	2.8%		
	I know it and have used it before	N	9	32	37	2		
		%	2.5%	8.9%	10.3%	0.6%		
Enable notifications for new messages	I do not know	N	15	18	18	4	2.721	.843
		%	4.2%	5.0%	5.0%	1.1%		
	I know it and have never used it	N	14	24	18	4		
		%	3.9%	6.7%	5.0%	1.1%		
	I know it and have used it before	N	51	88	93	13		
		%	14.2%	24.4%	25.8%	3.6%		
Control who can message you	I do not know	N	37	58	43	10	9.624	.141
		%	10.3%	16.1%	11.9%	2.8%		
	I know it and have never used it	N	23	29	40	8		
		%	6.4%	8.1%	11.1%	2.2%		
	I know it and have used it before	N	20	43	46	3		
		%	5.6%	11.9%	12.8%	0.8%		

Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion

This paper's main objective has been to identify the uses and interaction of communication between university students and faculty members through MyU and compare it with both WhatsApp and e-mail as means of communication. Its main question has been: What are the uses and interaction of communication between university students and faculty members through MyU compared to WhatsApp and e-mail? To explore the study objectives and answer its questions, a sequential mixed-methods approach was employed, covering both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative research method involved conducting open-ended, semi-structured interviews with eight participants (three of them had individual interviews, and five were in a focus group) who had MyU accounts. To supplement the qualitative data, a quantitative survey was also administered through an online questionnaire with a total of 365 participants.

Both qualitative and quantitative studies had several findings in common, for example, finding out about MyU through the module's professor, the easiness of installing, creating an account on MyU and choosing a profile picture, and the similarity with WhatsApp and Twitter. MyU is considered more private than WhatsApp in terms of unrecognizable mobile number, inability to know if a user is online or offline, make a phone call, and know whether a message was read or not, and MyU is more formal than WhatsApp with the ability to draw a line between what is formal and what is private. Hence, MyU is the application chosen over WhatsApp if participants had to choose. On the other hand, in comparison between MyU and e-mail, MyU is considered less formal and more instant. Participants in both studies found the features of joining a group, being able to see their professor's and classmates' comments, and having the ability to comment and discuss as effective communication features. Participants agreed that MyU should be widely known. Participants also agreed that there should be an Arabic version of MyU.

However, a number of differences have appeared between Study 1 (qualitative) and Study 2 (quantitative). For example, only 30% of participants in Study 2 agreed on the English interface; the English version is considered one of the difficulties of using MyU, especially for students with poor English. This is opposite to the opinion of the majority of Study 1 (qualitative) participants .

Finally, there were no statistical differences between (a) Knowledge of MyU features, Advantages of using MyU to communicate between university students and faculty members, The similarity between MyU and some social media platforms and the comparison with WhatsApp and e-mail, and The limitations of MyU, the importance of defining it, and ways to develop it and (b) demographic variables. Yet, a statistical relationship was found between How long have you been using MyU? and Knowledge of MyU features, namely: choosing a profile picture, recording voice messages, blocking users, and the option of knowing if a message was read (in private chats) or not .

In light of the literature review, a number of the current study findings are aligned with existing scholarly works. For example, Madge et al. (2012) found that the use of social media enhances interaction and engagement among students and can lead to improved learning outcomes. Moreover, Wozniak and Silveira (2017) believed that one of the advantages of social media is the ability to promote informal interaction among students (e.g., discussions). The current study finding on the preference for MyU over WhatsApp is aligned with Rahimli, Yusupova, and Altun (2020), where students considered WhatsApp's issue of privacy and confidentiality as a disadvantage, being uncomfortable sharing personal information. Kassymova et al.'s (2019) results were supported by the current study, where students had issues with e-mail communication, such as delayed responses from teachers. Students in this study agreed, when asked if communication via MyU is faster (real-time) compared to communication via e-mail, that they would choose MyU to communicate with the professor[4]. Moreover, in comparison to Alfailakawi (2022) and Alsaffar (2019), the sample in both studies preferred MyU over other means of communication, also found in the current study .

Finally, this study broadened the scope of research on social media as a new means of teacher-student communication, where Twitter was replaced by MyU; here MyU comes as a new player in teacher-student e-communication regardless of teaching and grading. MyU is found – in this study – as a semi-social media platform, getting its best features from other SMPs, such as Twitter and WhatsApp, while avoiding their disadvantages in terms of privacy and differentiating between what is formal and what is personal .

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Contributions, Limitations, and Future Work

This paper has broadened the scope of research on social media as a new means of teacher-student communication. It adopted a sequential mixed-methods approach and addressed a new online platform for teacher-student communication in a number of GCC countries[5], namely, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Moreover, Study 1 (qualitative) addressed an under-researched group: special-needs students; the case of F3's visual impairment invites further investigation of special-needs students' experiences of online teacher-student communication, in general, and MyU, in particular. In addition, the interviews shed light on English being the only language for MyU, which invites MyU developers to design an Arabic version for non-English speakers .

The study has some limitations, such as the adoption of MyU from teachers' perspective, the different practices of MyU among different educational institutions: schools, universities, colleges, and so on, and also how MyU is adopted in other GCC countries not included in this study. Moreover, the sample included only females, which was due to the feasibility and available conditions and capabilities for the researcher.

Future studies should include male participants, look into teachers' experiences with MyU compared to other platforms and means of communication with students. With there only two studies on MyU to date: Alfailakawi (2022) and Alsaffar (2019), there is a need for further research on MyU as an example of the merging of digital media in the form of an SMP with teacher-student communication and the ability to set boundaries between formal and informal communication and protect users' privacy .

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[5] Gulf Cooperation Countries: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Oman.

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