

## **The Impact of Social Network Sites to Determine Student`s Orientations: Field Study on Jordanian Private Universities**

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### **Abstract**

*This study aimed at identifying the impact of social network sites to determine student`s orientations at the Jordanian private universities. The researchers adopted the descriptive and analytical method to highlight the concepts related to the subject matter of the study, analyze them and induce the results through investigating the opinions of a random sample counting (351) male and female students at the Jordanian private universities. To realize the goals of the study, a questionnaire of (22) items to collect preliminary information was designed and accordingly, data was collected and analyzed and hypothesis were tested using (SPSS) testing program. The study revealed the following results: There is an impact of social network sites on the determination of students` orientations (political, social, and cultural) at the Jordanian private universities. In the light of the study`s results, the researchers presented a number of recommendations and proposals the most important of which are: The establishment of Arabic social network sites after the pattern of the big networks like (face book, Twitter and YouTube) to generate the required change in the Arab nation.*

### **Introduction**

The significant changes the world has been witnessing under information technology umbrella are the main influential factor on the political, economic, social and cultural environment. The influence of the instant change created by information technology in society has become clear and it is expected to have greater, more comprehensive and deeper effect in the near and remote future.

Social websites are now known as modern social media that witness a dynamic movement of development and spread, and originally, they were just a limited and narrow virtual society which afterwards grew to turn from a textual informative instrument to an audiovisual tool that affects the decisions and responses of people.

The majority of population has dealt with this kind of technology and remaining portion is on the track and that is why this technology exists anytime and anywhere. This research handles the impact of using social network sites on the determination of students` orientations at private universities.

### **The Study`s Problem**

In a world that lives the age of information technology with its huge revolution and explosion; and through catching up with the significant development of the role of social websites and the great demand they receive; and the powerful influence of those networks on the public; it becomes clear that they perform an important role that deserves to be studied to recognize its magnitude and influence to determine the political, social and cultural orientation. On the basis of the aforementioned, the problem of this study can be formulated in the following principal question: (What is the impact of using social network sites to determine the students` orientations at the Jordanian private universities?).

This main question can be subdivided into the following subsidiary questions:

1. What is the impact of using social network sites to determine the political orientation among the students of the Jordanian private universities?
2. What is the impact of using social network sites to determine the social orientation among the students of the Jordanian private universities?
3. What is the impact of using social network sites to determine the cultural orientation among the students of the Jordanian private universities?

### ***The study`s Importance***

1. If social network sites are well-employed, they can possibly contribute in elevating the values of knowledge, criticism and interpersonal dialogue from which any developmental or cultural project emerges.
2. The importance of this research lies in being one of the researches that attend contemporary issues and the growth of the youth role in change in the Arab world.
3. Social network sites are considered as alternative media, i.e. The site where criticism is practiced, important ideas and methods are generated and new ways of organization, cooperation and training among the members of society are established.
4. This study can be regarded as a starting point for many other studies in the same domain.

### ***The Study`s Goals***

This study seeks to identify using social network sites and their impact to determine the students` orientations at the Jordanian private universities and from this goal emerge the following sub-targets:

1. Identifying the motives behind using these networks by the students of Jordanian private universities.
2. Identifying the role of social network sites to determine the orientations of the students of the Jordanian private universities.
3. Identifying the most prominent social network sites used by the students of the Jordanian private universities.

### ***The Study`s Hypothesis***

1. Ho: There is no statistically significant effect at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for using social network sites to determine the orientation among the students at the Jordanian private universities.
2. Ho: There is no statistically significant effect at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for using social network sites to determine the social orientation among the students at the Jordanian private universities.
3. Ho: There is no statistically significant effect at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for using social network sites to determine the cultural orientation among the students at the Jordanian private universities.

### ***Procedural Definitions***

Social network sites: Social interactive network accessible to users anytime and anywhere which first appeared on the internet few years ago and changed the concept of communication and closeness among peoples. They acquired their social name because they foster relationships among human beings, and lately, they have gone beyond their social aspect to become expressive and protestant means. The most famous network sites are Facebook, twitter and you-tube.

### ***Orientations***

It is a particularly important concept in society as the majority of the students` cultural, social, political and scientific activities work on forming, assessing adjusting or measuring orientations to achieve progress in all the walks of life.

### ***First: Theoretical Frame***

The concept of social network sites is: a social term that refers to one of the indispensable instinctive needs of people to build their lives. The human nature requires people to communicate with each other (Safko, 2010).

Social network sites are a set of international websites connected to millions of devices round the world to form a group of tremendous networks that transfer huge and continuously developed information very instantly among the different countries of the world (Al-Sharhan, 2003). The term was also defined by Al-Shahri (2009) as a system of electronic networks that allow a participant to establish his own site and to connect it through an electronic social system to other members of identical interests and hobbies. Social networks were established and the term was coined in 1954 by John Barnz, a researcher at London University (Serrat, 2009).

In 1970s, some primitive electronic social means came up them in the mid-nineties of the 20th century; modern social networks appeared whose first site was (classmates.com) which was launched in 1995 as a free site for friends to communicate. In May 1997, there came six degree site which took its name from the experiment of an American psychologist at Harvard University "Stanly Milligram", and from 1999 appeared a group of social network sites that did not attain much success. The year 2002 witnessed the real birth of the social network sites we know today, and at that time, Friendster site appeared in California. The sight was based on friends` communication and multiple techniques of members of social networks through a virtual society. In the second half of 2002, Skyrock site emerged in France as blog platform which later turned into a communication network in 2007. Harvard University by a student who was called Mark Zokerberg, and because of the difficulty of finding videos for internet sharings, the idea of You-Tube came into existence by Harly, Steve and Jado in February, 2005 in California. In 2006, Dirzi, Ivan and Baise founded Twitter in San Fransisco the Twitter was separated as an independent company that held the same name.

### ***Types of Social Communities Networks***

The main types of networks can be restricted in the following six types (Mayfield, 2010):

1. Big social networks such as (facebook, my space) which allow people to establish their own web pages and then communicate with friends to share their contents.
2. Blogs: which are internet magazines with some interjections that appear according to novelty?
3. Encyclopedia (Wikls): They are a type of sites that allow people to add information on them. The best of which is (Wikipedia 4).
4. Badcast (voice blog): Files of voice and video available through subscription via (apple iTunes).
5. Forums: Spaces for electronic chatting about a specific issue or subject.
6. Micro-blogging: Micro-blogging meets with social network sites concerning the contents amount and little updated materials through the mobile phone and Twitter.

### ***The Advantages of social Network Sites***

They allow users to interact with friends through forums, games and images. An expert says that the basis of this is keeping the cintents and innovation skills in the product. Social networks also facilitated information transformation via electronic mail and receiving it through the programs of transforming and copying files. Dyrli&Kinnman (1996) stated that the internet helps developing thinking skills and creative thinking in addition to realizing some learning purposes. Furthermore, social communication networks also play an effective role in international relief efforts through spreading appeals for aid and donation calls. Social networks are now the most popular means to search for jobs and work opportunities as well as showing university lectures by specifying a certain educational site in the network.

### ***Orientation Formation***

Forming orientations is related to the origin of those orientations. I.e. The way in which one forms inclinations towards persons, groups or social systems.

In other words, the way in which an individual acquires readiness to see to see the world around him distinctively, lessen some trends and things and reject other things. Therefore, orientations are initiated through three basic ways (Ibrahim, 2004).

1. Direct contact with the subject matter of the orientation.
2. Touching on social organizations that incorporate the entire walks of life.
3. Dealing with media leads to the formation of new orientations according which communication takes place indirectly, and this, in turn, leads to formulating a tendency towards it as a result of reception, accumulation and repetition.

### ***The Factors that Affect Orientation Formation***

Sociologists look good care of studying the factors that influence forming social trends by studying and analyzing their formation. Most views pointed out that the most important factors were the following (Ibrahim, 2004):

***The cultural frame:*** It is commonly known that man lives in a cultural context that consists of customs, traditions, values, beliefs and trends which all dynamically interact and influence the individual.

***Family:*** It is an important factor being the first institution that makes one acquire orientations through the bringing up process.

***Social relations outside the family:*** They are the relationships among society members beyond the family's boundaries such as with friends, union members, official institutions, relatives and neighbors.

Media and communication means (television): These have become very important and influential factors in forming orientations especially the television which has many advantages that distinguish it from other media and communication methods.

### ***Second: Previous Studies***

The study of Hafez (2011) which is titled "University Youth Communication through Social Network Sites". This study aimed at identifying the real motives of communication among university students through social network sites. The study affirmed that such communication is considered a social phenomenon more than being a necessity created by modern technology. The study also showed that youth addiction on the excessive use of social network sites led to the loss of the required skills to establish social relations in the real social environment and the declination of face-to-face personal contact against social alienation.

The study of Al-Dailami (2011) title "Facebook and change in Tunisia and Egypt". The purpose of this study was to identify the reasons behind the events of Tunisia and Egypt and the role of facebook in them. The study used the descriptive analytical method and revealed that social network sites contributed in the success of Tunisia and Egypt revolutions because they facilitated communication among people and shortened distances between them. Moreover, these sites stimulated public awareness and directed it to certain behavior by increasing the sum of information provided for some targeted sectors of the public. Furthermore, the study also revealed that organizing protests through the facebook and other sites to achieve social change through low-cost activities led to expose the participants in those protest threat and violence.

The study of (Rowaibeh, Ali, 2005): This study aimed at exploring the behavior of a sample of the students of the faculty of administrative sciences while using digital that technology and its impact on their scholastic level. To achieve its goals, the study investigated the views of (211) students through a questionnaire and conducted open dialogues with a sample of (30) students. The study reached several results of which: there were no differences in using digital chat programs. Due to gender variable. The study also stated that there was a kind of temporality in the usage and that it was not more than an exploration phase. The study presented a set of recommendations to increase the positive aspects and lessen the negative ones. The study of (Conroy, Feezell and Guerrero, 2009) under the title "Facebook is...fostering political engagement: A study on a collection of social network sites and internet sharing". The study aimed at identifying the effect of modern media on civil engagement and the extent of group membership encouragement in political engagement.

The study used content analysis method and presented some important results from which were: Political groups pages offer information to their visitors through different sources, and that 62% of the pages present extra information from outside the facebook and that 82% of them publish links for additional sites in the space of the dedicated links. The study of (Kuppuswamy, Narayan, 2010): The study aimed at identifying the influence of social network sites like Orket, facebook, my space and you-tube on youth teaching because these sites attract the young, has become more and more popular and part of the daily life of growing numbers of people.

They study revealed an influence of social network sites on youngsters` teaching and that they distract students off their studies. However, these sites may be useful for learning and that they are based on sound educational principles and proper supervision by teachers. Moreover the study states that social network sites have a positive effect and also about the negativity of teaching the young and that depends on one interest to be used positively or negatively in learning.

### ***The Study`s Methodology and Procedures***

The study adopted the descriptive and field analytical method. On the descriptive level, some procedures were carried out such as library search and viewing theoretical and field studies and researches in order to crystalize the foundations and the starting points of the theoretical frame, looking into previous studies that form a vivid support to this study. As for the field analytical research, it was used to cover the application side of this study to get some results through the questionnaire of this study and according to the acknowledged scientific steps.

### ***The Study`s Population and Sample***

The study`s population included Bachelor`s degree students and post graduate students at the Jordanian universities subjugated to high Education Ministry`s law in the Jordanian Capital, Amman. Those universities are: (Middle East University, Al-Ahliyya Amman University, Applied Sciences, Al-Zaytoonah, Isra, Petra, and Amman Arab University). A judgmental sample was chosen, i.e. choosing the element purposely (Malhotra, 2004, P: 322), where only the fourth year of Bachelor students and Master degree students were chosen. Table (1) states the characteristics of the study`s sample. (450) questionnaires were distributed from which (351) were recollected at a rate of (78%)from the total. Table (2) shows the questionnaire`s distribution among the study`s population.

***Table (1) the distributed questionnaires among the study`s population***

<b>Name of University</b>	<b>Academic Program</b>	<b>Distributed Questionnaires</b>	<b>Recollected Questionnaire</b>
Al-Ahliyya Amman university	Bachelor	55	41
	Master	10	7
Applied Science University	Bachelor	55	42
	Master	10	5
Al-Zaytoonah University	Bachelor	55	42
	Master	10	9
Isra University	Bachelor	55	41
	Master	10	6
Petra University	Bachelor	55	50
	Master	10	6
Middle East University	Bachelor	25	19
	Master	40	33
Amman Arab University	Bachelor	20	16
	Master	40	34
<b>Total</b>		<b>450</b>	<b>351</b>

### ***Preliminary Data Collecting Tool***

The researchers developed a questionnaire of three sections as a tool to collect data and information related to the study from the vocabulary of the study`s sample according to previous research efforts and theoretical literature.

### **Reliability of the Tool**

The questionnaire was offered to a jury of experts of the teaching staff at the Jordanian universities, and they counted (11) specialized administrations teachers. The jury presented their remarks upon which some items were adjusted and others were deleted.

### **Validity of the Tool**

In order to measure the study's tool, (Cronbach's Alpha) of testing the consistency was used. Equivalent forms method was also used to test the degree of harmony and internal consistency of the scale's items.

Correlation coefficient between the two parts reached (0.766) while Cronbach's Alpha of the first part of the first part of the questionnaire was (0.907) and (0.942) for the second part and that was an indicator to the internal consistency among the items of the scale.

### **The Statistical Methods Used in the Study**

(spss) program was used to extract the results through statistical treatments that included simple repetitions, percentages, arithmetic means, standard deviation, Cronbach's Alpha, linear regression analysis and one sample T-test to test the hypothesis.

### **Data Analysis and Hypothesis Test**

The characteristics of the study's sample table (3) the results of the descriptive analysis to the demographic variables of the study sample respondents as (65%) of the sample were males, (63%) Bachelor's degree students while the percentage of Jordanians were (73%).

### **The Results of the Descriptive Statistics of the Study's Questions**

the arithmetic means and standard deviation of the study's questions related to the independent variables and the dependent variable were extracted and summarized in table (4). As for the social network sites used by students, the results revealed that they were only three sites: Facebook, Twitter and You-tube which were summarized in table (5) where in facebook was in the front of those sites used by union members at (46%) then twitter at (29%) and finally you-tube at (25%) and that confirms the popularity of those sites especially facebook which is used by tens of millions.

**Table (4) the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the study's sample members answers**

expression no.	expression	arithmetic means	standard deviation
	<b>The motives of using social network sites</b>	3.79	0.85
1	Because they provide the chance to express opinions frankly and freely	4.10	0.90
2	To communicate with friends and society and to get to know new friends	3.74	0.95
3	Entertainment at entertainment sites	3.85	0.80
4	Because they develop personal skills and dealing with others	3.96	0.78
5	Because they give the chance to the users to discuss different social issues with others	3.90	0.75
6	Because they offer self-release	3.85	0.84
7	To catch up with the local and international	3.65	0.85
8	Diversity in offering different activities	3.82	0.85
9	Important source for information about different issues	3.66	0.90
10	Because of their novelty	3.39	0.97
	<b>The role of social network sites in the political orientation</b>	3.94	0.87
11	Social network sites became an outlet to express and discuss political issues freely	3.82	0.85
12	Social network sites contributed in showing the real picture of the political situation	3.72	0.92
13	Social network sites contributed to identify the political situation in the interior and exterior societies	4.10	0.88
14	They contributed in demonstrations and revolutions lately	4.12	0.85
	<b>The role of social network sites in determining the social orientation</b>	3.65	0.87
15	Social network sites contributed in social change	3.48	0.88
16	Social network sites contributed to fulfill my desires and social needs	3.66	0.90
17	They contribute in forming a public opinion towards social change	3.69	0.97
18	Effective sharing with others and dialogues to solve the dominant problems of society	3.77	0.75
	<b>The role of social network sites to determine the cultural orientation</b>	3.31	0.71
19	Social network sites contributed to widen intellectual perspectives	3.65	0.80
20	Social network sites created new cultural values and new people	3.14	0.66
21	Social network sites contributed in attending dialogue issues and acceptance to the other	3.33	0.75
22	Shorten the distances between different cultures to understand their cultural issues	3.12	0.66

*Table (5) social network sites used by students*

Site	Repetition	Percentage
Facebook	162	46
Twitter	102	29
You-tube	87	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>100</b>

### *The Study's Hypothesis Test*

In this section, the researchers handle the tests of the study's hypothesis which were coined on the appropriate statistical method as follows:

Ho.1: There is no statistically significant effect at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) for using social network sites to determine the political orientation among the students of Jordanian private universities.

*Table (6) the results of one-sample statistics T-test*

Description	Arithmetic means	Standard deviation	T calculated	t Table	Df	t sig.	Result
First sub-hypothesis	3.79	0.84	23.808	1.645	351	0.000	Rejection of null hypothesis

(One-sample T-test) was used to test this hypothesis. The results revealed that t-calculated was higher than table-t and that significant t (sig) was less than 0.05 and according to decision rule, we reject the first null hypothesis and accept the alternative that states the existence of an impact of using social network sites to determine the political orientation among the students of Jordanian private universities.

*Table (7) the results of one-sample statistics T-test*

Description	Arithmetic means	Standard deviation	T calculated	t table	Df	t sig.	Result
Third sub-hypothesis	3.31	0.71	21.602	1.645	351	0.000	Rejection of null hypothesis

To test this hypothesis, (one-sample T-test) was used and the result of table (7) that t-calculated was higher than table-t and that significant t was less than 0.05 and according to decision rule, we reject the first null hypothesis and accept the alternative one that states the existence of an impact of using social network sites to determine the social orientation of the students of Jordanian private universities.

*Table (8) the results of one-sample statistics T-test*

Description	Arithmetic means	Standard deviation	T calculated	t table	Df	t sig.	Result
Third sub-hypothesis	3.31	0.71	21.602	1.645	351	0.000	Rejection of null hypothesis

To test this hypothesis, (one-sample T-test) was used and the results of table (8) that t-calculated was higher than table-t and that significant t was less than 0.05 and according to decision rule, we reject the first null hypothesis and accept the alternative one that states the existence of an impact of using social network sites to determine the cultural orientation of the students of Jordanian private universities.

### *The Most Important Result*

1. The results revealed that the motives of using social network sites by students were comparable. In the front motive related to "Because they provide the chance to express opinions frankly and freely" with an arithmetic means of (4.10) and standard deviation of (0.90) followed by the motive related to "Because they develop personal and life skills and interaction with others" with an arithmetic means of (3.96) and standard deviation of (0.78).

2. Although the results generally confirmed the role of social network sites to determine orientations, they differed in the arithmetic means between high values in one of the political arithmetic items that stated "social network sites contributed in demonstrations and revolutions lately" at (4.12) and other less values in one of the cultural orientation items that stated "shortens the distances between different cultures to understand their cultured issues" at (3.12).

3. The use of social network sites by the students of the Jordanian private universities was restricted in three sites: Facebook at (46%), Twitter at (29%) and you-tube at (25%).
4. The results revealed the existence of a statically significant effect of using social network sites to determine the (political, social and cultural) orientations among the students of the Jordanian private universities.

### **Recommendations**

In order to enrich scientific research and cover many aspects of social network sites and their impact in different fields, the researchers recommend the following:

- The establishment of Arabic social network sites similar to the big networks like Facebook, Twitter and You-tube to create the required change in the Arab countries.
- Conducting scientific studies to the available contents of social network sites from the occurring reality of the individuals` use of these networks to identify the methods and mechanisms of this use.
- Working to deepen the positive aspects of social network sites and removing the obstacles and negative especially what is related to immoral practices.
- Using social network sites to support and foster communal peace, solve the problems that face students and society and working on the stability of society instead of raising disputes and conflicts.

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