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The effect of social media on spouse relations on Jordan society

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Abstract---Social media has an effect in practically all aspects of human interactions. The present study focuses on the impact of social media on married couples. The research proposes hypothesis for the positive as well as the negative aspects that social media usage might have on spouse relationships. The approach for the study is based on exploratory and descriptive social research methodology, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze data. A survey questionnaire was designed and tested for the purpose of the study. The result of the research highlights the potential benefits of social media for married couples when used to strengthen the relationship, by increasing their daily interaction, keeping them communicated while prolong absences, or finding solutions to common shared problems. On the other hand, the negative effect of social media for spouses' relationships relies on the perceived decrease of quality and quantity time spend together, the feeling of wasting couples time, and the potential threat that this might cause to the relation. Finally, variables such as age, income level and number of years within the relation, influence how social media usage will affect the spouse relationship.

Keywords---social media, communication, relationships, spouse, interaction.

Introduction

Societies in the current era are witnessing a wide movement of social interactions through social media. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has brought about many changes in different areas of life. The remarkable advances in electronic communication technology have resulted in a dynamic movement of developments and spread among thousands of its users bringing about a change in people's social relations, methods of communication and interactions. Communication is one of the most essential elements of human interaction and is a well-studied phenomenon in societies since ancient times. As Chukwuere & Chukwuere (2017) report, "People from all walks of life can now easily share information, pictures and post both motivational thoughts on the social media and advert jobs."

Social media has become the essential part of all sectors in family life and has played a major role in changing and transforming our lives. Social media includes social networking sites and blogs where people can easily connect with each other. Social media is defined as: "applications and websites that are used to communicate with others, and to disseminate information over the World Wide Web through computers or mobile phones.", (Dollarhide, 2019). Social networking has a lot of benefits, such as helping us to keep in touch with people, share photos, correspondence, learn new information and more. In addition to the positive aspects of social networks, there are many negative aspects. Many people spend long hours in front of a computer screen, engaging in virtual relationships rather than meeting face to face, in addition to a variety of other negative effects such as excessive and useless social networking. Despite the great benefits that we may achieve from our use of social networking sites, it may cause the destruction of social relationships, especially marital relationships to a degree that may lead to separation. Social networking affects the relationship in terms of the lack of dialogue between the two parties and the lack of face-to-face conversation. Also feeling deprived of intimacy and affection between family members, despite their being under one roof, but their minds remain within social media and each of them creates their own virtual world.

Conceptual Framework

Effect: refers to the ability that social media might have and whether its consequences affect a great number of people, by changing person's behavior that would not be altered otherwise.

Social media: defined as means of communication through which the user creates an account that enables to communicate via the Internet with other people electronically to share information, ideas, opinions, messages and other written, visual, audio and file content.

Spouse relations: refer to the nature of the relationship and the life that goes between a man and a woman after they are legally linked in front of society through the marriage contract.

Limitations of the Study - This study is limited to and within the reach of Jordanian married couple in the sample population who have access to the internet. It covers spouse in Jordanian society.

Literature Review

social media is spreading rapidly and becoming part of almost every individual in our society, affecting our social norms and culture. Along the last years research started focusing and studying the impact of social media on couples and family life and relationship. Hina Gull, et al, (2019) carried out a study entitled “Impact of Social Media Usage on Married Couple Behavior a Pilot Study in Middle East.”, which implies social media is the major cause of negative impact on the lives of couples.

Brandon T., McDaniel et al. (2017) in their study, “Do you have anything to hide? Infidelity-related behaviors on social media sites and marital satisfaction.” tried to examine the couple purpose of using social media and investigated whether married couples are using social media to engage in behaviors such as infidelity and to what extent this behavior is related to relationship satisfaction, ambivalence, and relational attachment. Results showed that a small percentage of the respondent were engaged in social media infidelity-related behaviors. It also revealed that more engagement in infidelity-related behaviors on social media was significantly related to lower relationship satisfaction, higher relationship ambivalence, and greater attachment avoidance and anxiety in both women and men.

Vincent (2017) investigated the impact of social media on interpersonal communication relationships amongst Couples in Tanzania. This study aimed at determining the ways that couples use social media, as well as to investigate the positive and negative impact of social media on interpersonal relationships among couples. The study approached 117 respondents, applying descriptive survey research design, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze data. The results showed that 80 percent of the respondents spent 4 hours daily on social media. The findings also revealed that 80 percent of respondents said communication through social media helps them to strengthen their relationship.

Social media has changed the social norms and culture (Al-sharqi, Hashim and Kutbi, 2015). Lenhart & Duggan (2014) found that ten percent of married couples who used internet believed that it has a major impact on their relationship, whereas 17 percent stated that it has minor impact. Clayton, et al, (2013), carried out a ground-breaking study. The results showed that the usage of Facebook anticipated harmful relationship outcomes, such as breakups, divorces, and cheating. The ineffective usage of Facebook by couple may lead to relationship collapse (Williams, 2012).

Nomar (2012), studied “The use of social networking sites and its impact on social relations.” on a sample of Facebook users in Algeria. The study reported statistical differences between the use of males and females. Females dealt with greater awareness on the potential consequences of using Facebook. Furthermore, Facebook used time was related negatively with the quality and quantity of face-to-face interactions within the families and group of friends. The study identified withdrawal syndrome when the individual was deprived of Internet access.

Helsper & Whitty (2010) studied the effect of social media on couples and identified potential sources that triggered conflict between couples. The study was carried out on 920 couples. The results showed that displaying personal details, flirting, sexting, and falling in love with others are part of online infidelity behaviors. Other studies (Hand, et al, 2013; Farrugia, 2013; Utz& Beukeboom, 2011) presented several negative factors emerging from using social media among couples such as: jealousy, surveillance, mistrust, ignorance, depression, and lack of interaction.

On the positive side, the study of Boase (2006) and his colleagues "The Strength of Internet Links.", showed that Internet might help build relationships, supports social networks, connect friends and relatives across distances, and obtain help and advice from all around the world. Since the main purpose of this paper is to study the effect of social media on Spouse relations in Jordan, it is worth to understand the impact of social media on the Jordanian society. Today, the use of the Internet and social media in Jordan may be greater than any time before and one of the highest in the Middle East countries. According to a report issued by DataReportal , a global platform providing data on Internet penetration, online time in Jordan increased by 0.8 percent over the year 2020, standing at 66.8 per cent in January 2021 with a total of 6.84 million Internet in the country. The report also indicated that the number of social media users in Jordan increased by 11 per cent between January 2020 and January 2021. That is an increase by 600,000 making a total of 6.3 million social media users, which is 61.5 per cent of the population.

Scope of the study

Social networks have created many problems and generated risks to the stability of families and emotional and marital relationships. These virtual networks have changed many milestones in our practical, academic and family lives as well, as they have produced social problems that we did not face before, and they also surrounded family members with the merits of isolation, and therefore each of them is alone at his computer, browsing websites, or immersed in conversations with online friends or with unknown people, with whom he /she establishes various relationships, some of which are serious and useful, and some are for entertainment purposes and others. In this sense, the subject, the impact of social media on Spouse relations is of relevance, and is the focus of social, psychological and educational studies and research, especially when the stability of marriage among the spouse in the Jordanian society in particularly, and the Arab world in general, is of concern and importance for the present and future of family relations.

From this perspective, the researchers believes that the issue of "impact of social media on Spouse relations.", needs further research and studies, to detect the factors and variables that can help spouse to gain access to social media usage with a higher degree of knowledge and objectivity. The aim of the study is determined by the attempt to identify the positive and negative impact of social media that affect spouse relations. The study question is stated as: what is the impact of social media on Spouse relations in Jordan and Arab society?

Objective and methodology

The importance of the study is highlighted by identifying the impact of social media on Spouse relations, the study draws its importance through the following:

1. Identify the positive impact of social media on Spouse relations.
2. Identify the negative impact of social media on Spouse relations.
3. This study provides a scientific contribution to enriching scientific research in one of the important social issues that is facing the Jordanian and Arab society.

Objective of the study

This study aims to investigate the impact of social media on Spouse relations and attempts to achieve the following goals:

1. To identify the extent of the couple's usage of social media
2. To identify the positive and negative impact of social media on the relationships of spouses.
3. To provide database and information on the couple's usage of social media in the Jordanian society to alleviate the problems faced by couples who are affected by social media.

Study hypotheses

The present study will examine the following assumptions:

1. There is a significant statistical Association between social media and positive Spouse relationship.
2. There is a significant statistical Association between social media and negative Spouse relationship.
3. There are statistically significant differences in the positive and negative impact of social media on the relationships of spouses according to personal

Research methodology

This research aims to focus on studying and analyzing the impact of social media on Spouse relations. An exploratory and descriptive social research methodology was used in this study, based on a social sample survey.

Population sample

The study population consisted of Jordanian married couple. A Probability sampling method was used to identify Potential participants. The sample consisted of (410) respondents.

Study tool

For data collection purpose, a survey questionnaire was designed by authors and has been conducted over the period of three months (Feb. - 2021- April 2021) and

consisted of three parts: the first part reported personal traits and included the following variables: Gender, age, Years of marriage, Level of Education, and Income Level. The second part: the Use of social media included five questions which gather information regarding spouse usage of social media. The third part included (31) items consisted of two dimensions, the positive impact (11) items and the negative impact (20) items. The researchers used three-point Likert scale in order to measure the respondents' answers to the study items as follows: Agree (3), Neutral (2), Disagree (1), and by setting signal (\surd) in front of the answer, which reflect the degree of consent.

Validity and reliability

Questionnaire was validated and tested by several experts to obtain reliable and profound data as well as to validate the understanding of questions. The questionnaire was given to a jury of five academics, all of them are professors of sociology, and they were requested to ensure the appropriateness of the items for this study. They suggested some modifications. The researchers took the referee remarks which have been approved by 95.6 % of them into consideration. The questionnaire was pre-tested to determine if it was understood by the respondents.

A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient test was used, to check the internal consistency of the questionnaire, as well as to extract the reliability value, and it was (0.803) for Positive Effects dimension, (0.916) for Negative dimension and (0.827) for all dimensions. All these values are >0.60 which means stability of the tool.

Statistical treatment

The (SPSS statistical packages for Social Sciences IBM SPSS-V26) was applied to process the data, the following methods and procedures were used:

1. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the characteristics of the study sample, depending on the frequencies and percentages, to answer the study questions.
2. To test the significance of each statement, Mean, standard deviation, t-value, and the level of significance were used.
3. To test this Study Hypothesis, and the differences in the responses, mean, standard deviation - t-test for and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to find out the differences in respondents' answers related to personal variables. Tukey's test was used to know exactly which group cause the differences if they exit.

Results and Discussion

A description of the personal sample characteristics is presented in Table (1). Results shows that 62.4 percent of the respondents were females, followed by male 37.6 percent. Regarding age, 71.7 percent were within the age group 30 and more. The finding revealed that most of the respondents (68.8 percent) were married for five years and more. Moreover, as the education level is concerned,

55.4 percent of the respondents held bachelor's degree. Regarding income 78.5 percent of the respondents were from the medium income group.

Variable	Value	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	154	37.6
	Female	256	62.4
Age Group	18-21	16	3.9
	22-25	49	12.0
	26-29	51	12.4
	30 and more	294	71.7
Years of marriage	less than a year	41	10.0
	1-2 years	46	11.2
	3-4 years	41	10.0
	5 Year and more	282	68.8
Education	High school	64	15.6
	Diploma	47	11.5
	Bachelor	227	55.4
	Postgraduate	72	17.6
Income	low	49	12.0
	med	322	78.5
	High	39	9.5

Table 1. Sample characteristics frequencies

Couple's usage of social media

To answer the first question: What is the extent of the couple's usage of social media? Frequency and percentage were used. Table 2 indicates that 100 percent of the respondents use social media. In effect, 48.8 percent of the sample reported usage of one to two hours a day, and 24.4 percent reported spending three to four hours per day, while 15 percent spent more than 5 hours, and only 11 percent of the respondents spend less than an hour a day using social media. Al-Mutawa's study (2015) indicated that 56 percent of respondents spend their time on social media for a period of one to three hours, and 16 percent for more than three hours, while 28 percent of them spend less than an hour, which implies a steady increase of screen time during the last six years.

The results also reveal that Facebook is one of the most used social network sites by 50 percent of the respondents, followed by Instagram (21.5percent), and Twitter (1 percent). The rest of the sample members (27.6 percent), use other sites such as TIKTOK, WeChat and YouTube. Regarding the use of the password on their mobile, 81.2 percent revealed that they use password while 18.8 percent of them they do not use password. However, according to a study carried out by (Chukwuere & Chukwuere, 2017), WhatsApp is the most preferred social media application. 54.1 percent of the respondents understand that the high usage of social media has affected their life, whereas 45.9 percent have the impression that usage of social media has no effect on their life. Gull et al. (2019), study revealed that more social media usage led to negative feelings on couple relationships. However, this study further reveals that there are also positive consequences for the spouse relationship by using social media, based on the characteristics of the

couple and the used they make of their Internet time, such as using it to increase interactions along the day with their husband or wife.

Variable	Value	Frequency	Percent
How many hours do you spend per day using social media	Less than an hour	46	11.2
	one to two hours	200	48.8
	three to four hours	100	24.4
	five hours & more	64	15.6
What is the most used means of communication	Facebook	205	50.0
	Twitter	4	1.0
	Instagram	88	21.5
	Other	113	27.6
I have password for accessing my mobile	No	77	18.8
	Yes	333	81.2
I am witnessing that higher use of social media is affecting my life.	No	188	45.9
	Yes	222	54.1
Do you use social media	No	Frequency	Percent
	Yes	410	100.0

Table 2 The use of social media

Positive effects of social media

To measure the positive impact of social media and to test hypothesis (1):” There is a significant statistical association between social media and positive Spouse relationship”, Mean, standard deviation, t-test and rank were used to test the level of observed significance for the positive effects of the social networking sites usage. Table 3 shows that all items achieved arithmetic means range within 1.48 to 2.65 > 3.00, and standard deviations from 0.63 to 0.86, which means that all are statistically significant and existed at the significant level 0.05. This implies a relatively positive view of Spouse relations for those who completed the questionnaire. It also shows from Table (3), item No. (7), “social media enabled us to shop from home” has a high mean (2.65) and a relatively small standard deviation (0.669). Item No (2), “Social media sites have reduced our household expenses”, has the lowest mean (1.48).

The current study revealed many positive aspects that were disclosed by the respondents, such as accepting different cultures, access to marital counseling, opportunity to learn various aspects of married life and more positive impact of social media on spouses as revealed in table (3). Social media may present a positive effect that is full of promise and commitment to users. Spouses separated by distance, do not face difficulties, and preserve their emotional relationships using social media. They stay connected with each other all the time and physical distance has become no more a problem for partners (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). Partners popularity on social media feel excited if their partners publicize their relationships, add positive posts, and upload romantic pictures online (Hina Gull, et al, 2019). Vincent (2017) findings showed that social media helped 80 percent of respondents strengthening their relationship. Boase, et al. (2006) findings showed that the usage of Internet helps build relationships, supports social networks, as well as connecting friends and relatives across distances. Steinfield,

Ellison, & Lampe (2008), found that social media has a positive effect on self-esteem for those who suffer from low self-esteem, and the usage of social media was an advantage to them.

No.	Items	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig.	Rank
1	Social media has facilitated communication between the spouses	2.13	0.811	53.235	0.000	8
2	Social media sites have reduced our household expenses.	1.48	0.678	44.040	0.000	11
3	Social media gave us an opportunity to learn various aspects of married life.	2.37	0.817	58.622	0.000	4
4	Social media enabled us to find solutions to our marital problems.	1.84	0.813	45.952	0.000	10
5	Social media has allowed us to communicate with specialists and family guides with complete confidentiality	2.10	0.820	51.709	0.000	9
6	Social media helped us buy our needs at the lowest prices	2.28	0.866	53.320	0.000	5
7	Social media enabled us to shop from home	2.65	0.669	80.369	0.000	1
8	Social media gave us access to marital counseling.	2.23	0.825	54.707	0.000	6
9	Social media encouraging learning.	2.50	0.757	66.985	0.000	3
10	Using social media gives me a feeling of well-being, happiness and empowerment.	2.25	0.783	58.169	0.000	7
11	The use of social media helps me to accept different cultures.	2.63	0.636	83.799	0.000	2

Table 3. Mean. Standard Deviation and the t-test for the positive effects

Negative effects of social media

To test hypothesis (2): "There is a significant statistical association between social media and negative Spouse relationship", Mean, standard deviation, t-test and rank were used to test the level of observed significance for the negative impact of the social networking sites usage. Table 4 shows that all items obtained means ranging from 1.99 to 2.59 > 3.00, and standard deviations from 0.62 to 0.84, which implies that all are statistically significant and existed at the significant level 0.05. This indicates the negative view of Spouse relations regarding usage of social media as revealed in Table (4). Item No. (8), "Social media waste couple's time", has a high mean (2.57), and a relatively small standard deviation (0.686). On the other hand, Item No (9), "The use of social media led to violence between spouses", has the lowest mean (1.99). The researchers believe that the use of social media, with its various applications by couples, influence in one way or another their relationship. This study also confirmed the existence of a direct negative impact of social media on spouses, such as: wasting couple's time,

increasing rates of divorce, access to adult content, increasing infidelity, and more negative impact of social media on spouses as revealed in table (4).

Previous studies and literatures also focusing on social medial negative impact on spouses, shows different negative effects such as: breakups, divorces, and cheating (Clayton, et al, 2013), conflicts (Clayton, 2013), diminishes social ties and increases social isolation (Nie 2001; Nie, et al 2002), depression, mistrust, ignorance, negative interaction, and surveillance (Hand,2013). Ineffective usage of means of social media by couples can lead to relationships collapse (Williams, 2012).

No.	Items	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig.	Rank
1	We violate marital privacy through social media	2.23	0.793	57.008	0.000	16
2	Social media has affected our social relationships outside marriage.	2.34	0.764	62.150	0.000	9
3	Social media have weakened the relationship between the spouses	2.25	0.834	54.584	0.000	11
4	Social media allowed the couple to make relationships outside the marriage.	2.28	0.812	56.726	0.000	10
5	Social media prompted to access adult content.	2.57	0.634	82.205	0.000	3
6	There can be a distress in couples by comparing spouses to media actors on social media platforms.	2.37	0.761	62.915	0.000	8
7	Social media prompted the couple to lie.	2.26	0.807	56.644	0.000	14
8	Social media waste couple's time	2.57	0.686	75.687	0.000	1
9	The use of social media led to violence between spouses	1.99	0.803	50.164	0.000	20
10	Social media have led to physical and mental diseases due to their excessive use	2.46	0.723	68.966	0.000	6
11	Social media led to lower the trust level among spouses.	2.19	0.833	53.302	0.000	15
12	Social media helped negative rivalry between the spouses	2.09	0.760	55.586	0.000	19
13	After the marriage, I have, at least once forgotten the important work because I was on high usage of social media.	2.01	0.829	49.161	0.000	18
14	The use of social media led to suspicion between the spouses	2.24	0.831	54.544	0.000	12
15	The use of social media widened the communication gap between the spouses	2.26	0.816	56.007	0.000	13
16	The use of social media effected the beliefs of one of the spouses	2.14	0.804	53.813	0.000	17
17	Social media can increase the infidelity among the spouses.	2.51	0.707	71.949	0.000	4
18	In many cases, social media have increased the rates of divorce between spouses	2.59	0.620	84.483	0.000	2
19	Couple use social media during bedtime.	2.45	0.759	65.304	0.000	5
20	I know the password of cellphone of my	2.33	0.848	55.551	0.000	7

spouse.					
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Table 4. Mean. Standard Deviation and the t-test for the Negative effects

One-way ANOVA Analysis was used with the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$ to investigate the third hypothesis "There are statistically significant differences in the positive and negative impact of social media on the relationships of spouses according to personal variables". Table 5 shows that there are statistically significant differences for the positive impact of social media on the relationships of spouses according to personal variables such as years of marriage and monthly income. Also, it was found that there are statistically significant differences for the negative impact of social media on the relationships of spouses according to age and monthly income.

ANOVA	positive Effects	Negative Effects		
		F	Sig.	F
Age	3.636	0.069	9.788	0.000
Years of marriage	7.518	0.000	1.253	0.290
Education	0.527	0.664	1.465	0.223
Income	2.689	0.043	3.606	0.028

To be more accurate, Tukey's test was used to find out the significant differences for the positive impact of social media on the relationships of spouses within variables. As a result, Table 6 shows that a significant relationship emerged between low-income respondents and high-income respondents. A second significant relationship emerged between respondents married for less than a year with those respondents whose marriage period exceeded five years.

Income	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
	1	2
low	2.1187	
med	2.2250	2.2250
High		2.3450
Years of marriage	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
	1	2
5 Year and more	2.1596	
1-2 years	2.2945	2.2945
3-4 years	2.3481	2.3481
less than a year		2.4612

Table 6. Tukey's test for the differences in Positive Effects

Moreover, the significant differences for the negative e impact of social media on the relationships of spouses within variables was found. Table 7 revealed that a significant relationship emerged between low-income respondents and high-income respondents. Furthermore, according to age, a significant relationship emerged between the age group 18-21 and the other age groups.

Age Group	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
	1	2
30 and more	2.2381	
26-29	2.4275	
22-25	2.4306	
18-21		2.7750
Income	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
	1	2
High	2.1872	
med	2.2974	2.2974
low		2.4541

Table 7. Tukey's test for the differences in Negative Effects

Conclusions and Limitations

To conclude, the present study validates all three proposed hypotheses. There is a positive and a negative relation between social media usage and spouse relationships, based on specific couples' attributes such as age and number of years within the relation. The positive effect of social media on spouses derives from accepting different cultures, encouraging learning, taking advantage of the opportunity to learn various aspects of married life through online resources, joint online experiences such as shopping, and access to marital counseling, among other factors. On the other hand, social media usage has an adverse effect on spouse relationship when it is perceived as a waste of couple's quality and quantity time, and it involves access to adult content, among other negative signs, that might lead to increasing rates of divorce, as well as increasing infidelity. The present study through its findings can be considered as an expansion of the literature investigating the impact of social media on Spouse relations especially in the Jordanian and Arab society.

Limitations to the present research include the scope of the discussion, limited by the lack of previous studies on this topic for Jordanian society, as well as the timing of the study, developed during a special international pandemic context that has disrupted personal as well as professional lives of the participants and society. Future lines of research include a further desegregation of the positive and negative effects of social media on spouse relationships, as well as an extension of the study in other cultural contexts.

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