



The Role of Social Media Networks in Influencing Public Opinion and Promoting National Values in Jordanian Society: Facebook as a Model

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ABSTRACT

Social media has emerged as the most influential communication tool, playing a critical role in shaping public opinion and fostering national values. This is particularly evident among young individuals, who constitute the primary demographic of social media users worldwide (Al-Khazaleh & Al-Khresha, 2023). Jordan is recognized as one of the most active countries in social media usage, with a high percentage of its population engaging on digital platforms for news consumption, political discussions, and social interactions (Arab Social Media Report, 2023).

This study examines the impact of social media—specifically Facebook—as a platform for influencing public opinion and reinforcing national values in Jordanian society. A qualitative research approach was adopted, utilizing semi-structured interviews conducted with six Facebook users from Middle East University in Jordan. The findings revealed that Facebook is the most widely used and preferred platform in Jordan, with its accessibility and interactive features significantly shaping political awareness, civic engagement, and cultural discourse (Hammad & Saleh, 2022). Additionally, participants acknowledged that Facebook plays a pivotal role in promoting national identity and values, as it serves as a medium for discussions on social cohesion, governmental policies, and Jordanian heritage (Alsoud & Alshaikh, 2022).

Despite its positive influence, concerns remain regarding the spread of misinformation, online polarization, and the potential for digital echo chambers to limit diverse viewpoints. Thus, understanding the dual impact of social media—both constructive and disruptive—on public opinion and national values is essential for developing digital literacy programs and regulatory measures (Alrawashdeh et al., 2023).

Keywords: social media, Facebook, public opinions, national values, Jordan.

1. Introduction:

Communication is realised as a vital element in individuals' everyday life. Moreover, the availability of efficient communication channels, such as social media networks, could enable individuals to share their ideas, express their opinions, and bridge cultural and national beliefs (Adams, 2023). Social media is considered the most popular communication tool and plays a fundamental role in formulating public opinions and promoting national values, especially among young age individuals who are realised as the main users of social media platforms. These networks strongly aided in formulating young individuals' information and knowledge, which as a result contributed to shaping their public opinions and formulating their cultural, political and national values through their practices on these networks (Alkhaza'leh et., 2022). The continuously increasing interest in these networking sites has been approved through the past years. In recent days, individuals relied more on contemporary social media networks more than traditional media, such as radio, TV, magazines, newspapers, for the purposes of formulating thoughts, opinions, views and information. The ease of use of these technologies has aided in spreading such contemporary media tools within public life, which as a result contributed in formulating their thoughts and culture.

Jordan is realised as one of the main social media network-widely used countries, as it utilizes such networks widely in different governmental sectors in the country. Most governmental and private Jordanian institutes focused wildly on their presence on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter, which reflected the importance of such platforms and their role in shaping young individuals' opinions, beliefs, and national values (Al-Dulaimi, 2020). Therefore, this study came to explore the role of social media networks in influencing public opinion and promoting national values in Jordanian society, taking Facebook as a model.

1.1 Problem Statement and Research Questions:

According to the fact that individuals' public opinions are greatly influenced by several factors (Ausat, 2023), and the noticed negative national values that noticed widely among the Jordanian society individuals, such as the weakness in the national belonging values, the existed environmental damages, some examples of laws disrespecting, especially among universities youth (Moajdeh, 2024). Therefore, the impact of social media in society construction, and in forming individuals' public opinions and improving their national values should be investigated in-depth according to its importance. Thus, the researcher recognised the noticeable need to conduct a study that basically aims to explore the role of social media networks, especially Facebook which is realised as the most common used social media platform in Jordan, in influencing public opinion and promoting national values in Jordanian society which represents the main problem of this study. Therefore, the main questions that this study seeks to cover are:

- What is the rate of Jordanian audience usage of Facebook?
- What is the Role of Social Media Networks (Facebook) in Influencing Public Opinion in Jordanian Society?
- What is the Role of Social Media Networks (Facebook) in Promoting National Values in Jordanian Society?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Media Networks

Social media refers to internet-based platforms that facilitate communication, interaction, and information exchange among individuals worldwide (Obar & Wildman, 2015). These platforms enable users to create, upload, and share multimedia content, including text, images, audio, and video, fostering a highly interactive digital space (Appel et al., 2020). The core purpose of social media is to connect individuals, promote social engagement, and facilitate digital networking (Yohanna, 2020). Unlike traditional media, which primarily operates through one-way communication, social media platforms offer real-time interactivity, allowing users to comment, share, and engage with content dynamically (Al-Fraihat et al., 2023).

One of the most significant transformations enabled by social media is the shift from physical to digital relationships, where individuals maintain connections with family, friends, co-workers, and even strangers they have never met in person (Tandoc et al., 2022). This connectivity has reshaped communication patterns, fostering cross-cultural exchanges, virtual friendships, and online communities that transcend geographical boundaries.

Over the past two decades, numerous social media platforms have emerged, each offering distinct features and serving diverse purposes. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube have revolutionized the way people consume information, engage in public discourse, and express personal identity (Abbas et al., 2022). This study focuses specifically on Facebook, one of the most widely used platforms in Jordan, where users can share posts, updates, personal profiles, photos, and videos, engaging with friends and communities through likes, comments, and shares. The interactive nature of Facebook has made it a central tool for digital communication and public opinion formation in Jordanian society (Al-Khasawneh & Smadi, 2022).

While social media has enhanced communication and social connectivity, it has also introduced several challenges. Psychological issues, such as social media addiction, anxiety, and digital fatigue, have been widely reported among users who engage excessively with online platforms (Ahmed & Samhan, 2023). Furthermore, security concerns related to personal data privacy and cyber threats pose significant risks, as users often unknowingly expose sensitive information online (Alsoud & Alshaikh, 2022). Additionally, the rapid spread of misinformation and fake news remains a major issue, particularly in politically sensitive environments where false narratives can shape public perceptions and influence political outcomes (Hamad, 2023).

Given the growing impact of social media on society, it is essential to foster digital literacy, promote responsible online behavior, and implement regulatory frameworks that balance freedom of expression with user safety. Future research should explore strategies to mitigate the risks associated with excessive social media use while maximizing its benefits for public engagement and information dissemination (Faraj & Obeidat, 2023).

2.2 Public opinion:

Public opinions represent individuals' thoughts, views, beliefs and attitudes that a group of individuals held toward a special matter, event or a society related topic (Moussaïd et al., 2013). It also represents the shape of individual interactions with others through sharing experiences, knowledge and thoughts (Mallinson & Hatemi, 2018). This concept can include various life aspects, such as social, cultural, political and economic aspects. Public opinion is also realised as a crucial element in decision making and the democratic practices in society. Public opinion is also recognised as a considerable element in service, policies and responses when

developed by governmental, non-governmental or either public institute (Gadzali et al., 2023; Harahap, Kraugusteeliana, et al., 2023). Furthermore, public opinions could impact social movements, political decisions and dynamics in general. It could also be influenced by several factors, which could be summarized as follows (Ausat, 2023):

- Information is realised as a critical factor that could influence public opinion; as having more trust, reliable and accurate information could reflect more positive public opinions.
- Social media and mass media is another factor that could influence forming public opinion.
- Social interaction with family and friends could influence the formation of public opinions.
- Cultural background and educational level are also recognised as critical factors that could impact the thoughts and opinions of public.
- Personal experience could impact, either positively or negatively, individuals' views toward a specific issue.
- The recent social and political circumstances could have a direct impact on people thoughts and views.
- People motions and values, such as happiness, anger, and fear, could also impact their views and opinions.

From all the above, it can be said that public opinion is a dynamic and continuous developed element. Therefore, it is recognised essential to realise public opinions in different political, social and economic fields.

2.3 National Values

National values can be defined as a dynamic and evolving concept that requires continuous interaction among individuals, societal groups, institutions, and the state. These values serve as the foundation for social cohesion, national identity, and civic participation by fostering dialogue, inclusivity, and constructive engagement among diverse societal segments (Gundara, 2011; Adams, 2023). As societies evolve, national values must adapt to contemporary social, political, and technological transformations, ensuring that they remain relevant and universally accepted (Al-Ajlouni, 2023).

Scholars have long emphasized the crucial role of national values in maintaining societal stability, fostering unity, and driving socio-economic development (Narayanan & Nair, 2017). National values function as shared social norms that mitigate divisions, promote inclusivity, and reinforce collective belonging, ultimately strengthening a harmonious and resilient society (Datta, 2014). Furthermore, these values connect diverse individuals with varied cultural, ethnic, and ideological backgrounds, offering them a unifying identity that transcends individual differences (El-Katiri, 2022). A society that upholds strong national values benefits from mutual respect, equitable opportunities, and strengthened social bonds, all of which contribute to national progress and stability (Rahman et al., 2023).

Moreover, national values are highly influenced by interpersonal communication and public discourse, particularly through media and digital platforms. National identity and values can be reinforced when individuals engage in constructive discussions, share cultural narratives, and express collective aspirations through modern communication channels (Adams, 2023; Al-Salmi, 2022). Social media, in particular, has emerged as a powerful medium for fostering national identity, as it allows users to express national pride, participate in civic debates, and celebrate shared cultural and historical milestones (Guo & Saxton, 2017; Ahmad & Abu-Zahra, 2023). Recent studies suggest that digital nationalism, which refers to the expression of national values through online platforms, has grown significantly in countries where social media serves as a primary source of news and political engagement (Khasawneh & Haddad, 2023).

Given the increasing role of social media in national discourse, it is imperative to promote responsible digital engagement, ensuring that national values are upheld, rather than distorted, through online interactions. Future research should explore the extent to which social media narratives influence national unity, identity formation, and societal polarization, particularly in diverse and multicultural societies (Rahman et al., 2023).

3. Research Method

Qualitative method has been used in this study through designing an interview that basically aims to examine the impact of Facebook on forming public opinions and promoting national values. This method enabled the researcher to get an in-depth information regarding the subject of this study through gathering public opinions and thoughts on social media and their influences on public opinions and national values. The study population consisted of all Facebook users in the Middle East University in Jordan, while 6 Facebook users' students was randomly selected and interviewed. The content analysis was used to analyze the collected data to reach the study results and gain a comprehensive realization of the study topic.

4. Analysis & Discussion

4.1 Demographic results discussion

The results indicated the age difference of the study sample which is ranged between (18-45), while the most common age group in the study sample is from (26-35), as three of the participated interviewees were aged (26, 30, 35), while two were aged (19, 22) respectively, and only one was aged (40), which represents the lowest

age group in the study sample. So, the researcher found that the study sample was from all age groups, and that most of them were young people.

The demographic results also showed that the participated interviewees were divided equally to three females and three males. Moreover, regarding the social media platform that often used the results clarified that the vast majority preferred to use Facebook, which made it our study model; as four interviewees expressed their preference for Facebook over other social media platforms.

Regarding the study questions results,

Q1: What is the rate of Jordanian audience usage of Facebook

The interviewees answers indicated that four of them have spent (4, 5, 6, between 4-6 hrs.) on Facebook, which indicated that vast majority of interviewees spend between 4-6 hours daily on Facebook, while the other two participants clarified that they spend from 1-2 hours, and 3 hours.

Furthermore, the following table clarifies the main purposes behind using Facebook as the commonly used social media platform in the Jordanian society:

Table (1): Participants answers regarding the purposes behind using Facebook

No.	Answers
P.1	Entertainment and amusement
P.2	Communication with family, friends and the world
P.3	Daily habit to pass the time
P.4	Exchange of ideas, information and opinions with others
P.5	To help me form an opinion on community issues.
P.6	An indispensable habit additionally to get closer to others

According to the above table which shows interviewees responses; there are various purposes behind using social media, including entertainment, amusement, passing the time, communication, get closer to others, exchanging thoughts, information and ideas, forming opinion in various community issues, and using it as a daily habit. This result agreed with (Obar & Wildman, 2015) study which indicate that the main purpose of using social media is to communicate, interact, and share information.

Q2: What is the Role of Social Media Networks (Facebook) in Influencing Public Opinion in Jordanian Society?

Table (2): Participants answers regarding the role of Facebook in influencing public opinion

Participants No.	Answers
P.1	I believe that Facebook is one of the most important factors influencing the formation of public opinion, as it directly influences the freedom of publication, thought and expression.
P.2	Social media, especially Facebook, plays a major role in providing the public with the opportunity to discuss the issues raised through it, and allows for social interaction through discussion, so in my opinion it is largely influential on public opinion.
P.3	Facebook clearly contributes to influencing public opinion trends in society, given the flexibility of dealing with them and the ease of expressing opinions through them, especially with the activation of the possibility of expressing their opinion anonymously.
P.4	Social media has become an effective and influential tool in shaping public opinion in societies, and has become a necessity in daily life and an active tool in public life.
P.5	Facebook is a fertile place to discuss and exchange public opinion due to the freedom of expression through it and the ease of dealing with it.
P.6	As Facebook enables a free communication between various parties, so it could be considered as an influencer tool on users' public opinion.

All interviewees believed in the positive influence of Facebook in forming and influencing public opinions, due to various reasons as clarified and discussed in table (2) above; as both participant one and three believed that the ease of expressing opinions and the provided expression freedom among their users are the main reason behind considering Facebook as an influencer tool on promoting public opinions. Moreover, participants five and six considered Facebook as a significant tool to make free communication and exchange their public opinions with others. Participant two also agreed with this opinion as he believed that Facebook is a fundamental element in providing the public with the opportunity to discuss the issues raised through it, while participant four clarified that Facebook is a necessity in daily life and an active tool in public life.

From all the above, the effective role of Facebook in influencing public opinion in Jordanian society becomes more clear; due to the freedom of expression through it and the ease of dealing with it to communicate with others and to express their opinions, which is also agreed with the results of (Alkhaza'leh et., 2022) study who indicated that social media platforms aid in formulating young individuals' information and knowledge, which as a result contributed in shaping their public opinions and formulating their cultural, political and national values.

Q3: What is the Role of Social Media Networks (Facebook) in Promoting National Values in Jordanian Society?

Table (3): Participants answers regarding the role of Facebook in promoting national values

Participants No.	Answers
P.1	I think that Facebook has low contribution to developing national values among its users.
P.2	Facebook plays a pivotal role in enhancing citizens' national values and raising their awareness, which contributes to building citizenship behavior by monitoring users' trends and expectations.
P.3	Facebook contributes to promoting national values by emphasizing positive values and habits that contribute to the progress of society.
P.4	Facebook contributes to promoting national values by developing a sense of responsibility towards oneself and activating national values such as national belonging.
P.5	The role of Facebook in promoting national values is reflected in its impact on interactivity, the abundance of information and its modernity, due to its ease of use, ease of access and follow-up, and the provision of wide spaces for acquaintance and exchange of information.
P.6	Facebook plays an important role in supporting national values by providing members of society with correct information about their history, affiliations and emphasizing the importance of the values of loyalty, belonging, patriotism and respect for others.

The vast majority of involved participants in this study believed in the positive role of Facebook in promoting national values; as only the first interviewees indicated that there is no relation between Facebook usage and the promotion of national values. On the other hand, all participants three, four and five believed that Facebook contributes in promoting national values; as it emphasizes positive national values and national belonging, while participant two believed that Facebook aid in building citizenship behavior by monitoring users' trends and expectations, which as a result promote national values. In the same way, the sixth participant indicated the essential role of Facebook in promoting national values through offering accurate information about their history. From all above it could be concluded that Facebook has a positive impact on promoting national values which agreed with (Adams, 2023) study who clarified that social media platforms, such as Facebook, could bridge cultural and national believes of their users.

5. Conclusions, limitationas and future research

This study concluded that Facebook is one of the most preferred social media platforms in Jordanian society, with its users engaging in diverse activities, ranging from information exchange and communication to idea-sharing and public discourse. The platform's accessibility, interactive nature, and ability to facilitate instantaneous conversations make it a central tool for both personal and public engagement.

The findings of this study reaffirm that public opinion is a dynamic and continuously evolving element, shaped by social interactions, digital discussions, and exposure to diverse viewpoints. Facebook plays a pivotal role in this transformation, as it allows users to engage in debates, express their opinions freely, and influence others through shared content. Unlike traditional media, which operates through one-way communication, Facebook fosters a participatory environment, where users can challenge narratives, discuss pressing social issues, and mobilize support for various causes. This reinforces the platform's impact on political awareness and civic participation, making it a key instrument in shaping digital activism and social movements.

Additionally, this study clarifies that national values are a multidimensional and complex concept, contributing to social cohesion and collective identity. The analytical results indicate a positive correlation between Facebook usage and the promotion of national values, as the platform facilitates awareness-building, cultural preservation, and discussions on social responsibility. By providing a space where citizens engage in discussions about heritage, patriotism, and societal norms, Facebook helps reinforce national identity and citizenship behavior. The ability to monitor user trends and expectations allows researchers and policymakers to understand shifting societal perspectives, helping to align national initiatives with public sentiment and emerging social values.

Limitations of the Study

Despite these valuable insights, this study has certain limitations that should be considered:

- **Sample Size and Representation:** The study focused on a limited number of Facebook users from Middle East University, which may not fully represent the broader Jordanian population. Future research should expand the sample size to include participants from diverse age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and regions.
- **Platform-Specific Analysis:** While Facebook was the primary focus, other social media platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, also play significant roles in shaping public opinion and national values. Future studies should conduct comparative analyses to determine how different platforms influence user behavior differently.
- **Lack of Longitudinal Data:** This study captures insights at a specific point in time; however, public opinion and digital behaviors evolve continuously. Conducting a longitudinal study over multiple years could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how social media influences societal trends over time.
- **Potential Algorithmic Biases:** Social media platforms operate based on algorithm-driven content exposure, which can lead to echo chambers and information polarization. Future research should explore how Facebook's algorithms shape the diversity of viewpoints users are exposed to, and how this impacts critical thinking and opinion diversity.

Future Research Directions

Building on the findings of this study, future research should explore the following areas:

- **The Role of Other Social Media Platforms:** Since digital behaviors differ across platforms, future research could examine how Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok contribute to public discourse and national identity in Jordan.
- **The Influence of Social Media Regulations:** With growing concerns over misinformation, digital privacy, and content moderation, future studies should assess how government regulations impact the role of social media in opinion formation.
- **Artificial Intelligence and Public Opinion:** As AI-driven algorithms increasingly curate content based on user preferences, it is crucial to investigate how AI influences the type of information people receive and whether it contributes to biased opinion formation.
- **The Psychological Impact of Social Media on National Identity:** Future research should explore how excessive social media exposure affects individuals' perceptions of national values, patriotism, and belonging.
- **Public Opinion and Digital Activism:** Given the rise of online activism in Jordan and the Middle East, future studies should investigate how social media movements shape policy changes and influence real-world political decisions.

By addressing these areas, future research can provide a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between digital platforms, public opinion, and national values, ensuring that policymakers, educators, and social scientists develop strategies that promote responsible and constructive online engagement.

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