

The role of social media in empowering women socially and economically: A field study on women of Al-Mafraq Governorate who have micro-enterprises

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Abstract

The current study aimed at identifying the role of social media in empowering women socially and economically who have micro-enterprises, the descriptive approach was used to suit the study objectives. The sample of the study consisted of (42) women who had micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate, who were chosen by convenient sampling.

The results showed that the social media has a high role in the empowering women socially and economically who have micro-enterprises. It was found that there was a statistically significant effect at the level (0.05) of social media on the social and economic empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate.

Key words: role, social media, empowering women, micro-enterprises, Al-Mafraq Governorate.

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Introduction

Social networks are among the most used sites by all age groups, as these sites have a major impact on the scientific and behavioral thinking of their users. The use of social media has increased in recent times, as it was first used by young people and then used by all age groups due to the ease of use and the variety of options they offer (Robert, 2013).

Despite the huge potentials provided by social networks, these sites have failed to shed light on the social and cultural issues of Arab women, Most Arab media reflects the traditional image of Arab women as a merely housewives and must take care of the family and the home and adopt the social and cultural aspects imposed by society on them (Marwick & Boyd, 2011).

Also, most of the Arab world countries still present women with the traditional image, which led to the woman's image being distorted by some media, and pushing the woman herself to adopt the negative image of herself in order to align with the image that the media drew for her. Therefore, the main objective of conducting this study is to shed light on the role that social networks play in building the modern image of Arab women and the impact of these methods in helping women to enable them socially and economically (Kimberley, 2010). The use of social media has increased in recent times, as it was first used by young people and then used by all age groups (Sari, 2008).

In a study conducted by Nicole Ellison in 2013 to learn about the rates of using social networks in Britain, the proportion of social media users in Britain is currently determined, to reach 60% compared to 43% in 2007. Facebook is one of the most used applications in Britain, In addition to a number of other social networking sites used in Britain that include Twitter, Tumblr, and LinkedIn (Marwick, 2010).

In this study, the researcher will shed light on the most important factors that led to the increase in the use of social media and the impact of these methods on building the personality of their users, as social media and discussion forums on the Internet have an impact on the assessment of the personality of users of these networks, in addition to that there are some users who take more than one personality on social media, which have undermined confidence among users of these networks. Also, this study aims to identify the extent to which social networks affect the building of the personality of Arab women and their social and economic empowerment, as women become more able to obtaining what they want through the use of social media.

Problem of the study

Social networks are of the most used methods for youth of both sexes of all age groups; the use of these networks has increased recently in a clear and tangible manner, which has led to an increase in studies that are interested in revealing the impact of social networks in helping users and paving the way for them to work through these sites.

Accordingly, the problem of the study is to reveal the negative effects of these networks on affecting their users in general and their impact on building the image of women in particular, in addition to revealing whether social networks have made it easier for women to express themselves and publish their views more freely than they were in the past. This study seeks to answer the following question: **What is the role of social media in empowering women socially and economically in Al-Mafraq Governorate who have micro-enterprises?**

Objective of the study

The study aimed to identify the impact the social media in empowering women socially and economically in Al-Mafraq Governorate who have a micro-enterprises.

Importance of the study

The importance of the current study comes from highlighting the role of Arab women through their use of social media networks, and how these networks have affected the empowerment of Arab women by providing them with the opportunity to express their views in a transparent and spontaneous manner, as social media users seek to highlight the positive side of their personality and how they can work to invest their personalities in a way that leads to economic and social empowerment. From this standpoint, the importance of the current study may be highlighted by covering the following ideas: Contribution to the disclosure of the role of social network sites in women's empowerment, in addition to showing how modern social media contributes to drawing the image of women and their economic and social empowerment.

Study questions

The study will answer the following questions:

Question (1): How do social media contribute to social empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate?

Question (2): How do social media contribute to economic empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate?

Question (3): Are there a statistically significant effect of social media in empowering women socially and economically who have micro-enterprises?

Social Media

Social media is a system of electronic networks, which allows the subscriber to create his own site, and then link it via a social electronic system, with other members, who have the same interests and hobbies. Communication depends on the communication of text, image, video and audio, as well as the use of the computer as its primary mechanism in production and presentation (Sari, 2011).

Forms and locations of social networks

The forms of social networking sites and their networks vary according to their functions and the means by which they are used. For example:

- 1- Publishing tools (Wikipedia).
- 2- Sharing tools and video download sites such as YouTube.
- 3- Chat tools (forums).
- 4- Public networks (Facebook).
- 5- Small advertising methods (Twitter).

Global statistics have recently showed that the number of Facebook users in Jordan increased by about 5 million users, and that was at the end of the first month of this year, and figures were published by the Internet World Stats website. Among the most prominent social media sites: (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, forums, wikis, Flickr, LinkedIn (October 2012).

Literature review

A study carried out by Idan (2015) entitled "The Impact of Using Social Media Networks on the Performance of Customer Relationship Management - A Field Study from the Viewpoint of Jordanian Universities Students".

The study aimed to identify the impact of customer –oriented management and the technology used in customer relationship management, and a customer-centered administrative system in achieving customer relationship performance in the presence of social customer relationship management capabilities. The sample of the study consisted of (375) male and female students from Jordanian universities, and the descriptive approach was applied. The study found a statistically significant effect of customer –oriented management and the technology used in managing customer relationships, and the study recommended the need to involve students through the websites of universities and their official pages on social networks in evaluating employees and administrators.

A study carried out by (Jayachandran, et al, 2005) entitled “The Role of Relationship Information processes and Technology Use in Customer Relationship Management”

This study has aimed at identifying the role of relationship information processes and technology use in customer relationship management, as well as the role of mobile technology that uses social networks in achieving the performance of customer relationships. The study population consisted of companies operating in various industries in the United States, where the researcher conducted interviews using phone calls and e-mails on a sample consisting of (1105) of the senior managers of marketing, sales and customer services in those companies.

The study found that there was an effect of customer o-oriented management and a customer-centered administrative system on information in relationships, the presence of an effect of information in relationships on the performance of customer relationships, and the presence of the mediating role that influences the technology used in managing customer relationships and on the performance of customer relationships.

A study carried out by (Stageman, 2011) entitled"Consulting Social Media in the College Transition Process Experiential Accounts of the Class of 2014"

This study aimed to identify the role that social networks play in building relationships with stakeholders, and the possibility of using social networks by students to communicate with the university. The researcher has relied on interviews and focus groups, where interviews were conducted with five officials from private universities, and also used focus groups, where the researcher has relied on 12 volunteers. Each volunteer formed a group consisting of (5-10) participants from university students.

The study found that the use of social media does not significantly affect the acquisition of new students, but it helps to build and maintain strong relationships with existing students. Social networks also enhance the relationship between the university and its employees with stakeholders.

A study carried out by (O’Brien, 2011) , entitled” The Emergence of The Social Media Empowered Consumer”.

This study aimed to identify the extent of the influence of social networks on traditional customer relationship management, and on marketing concepts in Irish companies. The researcher adopted various and multiple sources to collect data, and it was in two stages: the first stage is to conduct interviews with professional and administrative specialists in this field, and the second stage is consumer focus groups, which consisted of (7) groups. The study concluded that the business has changed greatly due to the use of social networks, and these networks play a large role in facilitating the formation of relationships between the organization and the customer in terms of customer acquisition, but they are more useful in building and maintaining the relationship with the customer.

Empowering Jordanian women:

Although progress has been made in empowering women economically and socially, the potential of women in Jordan remains untapped and somewhat marginalized, as a result of social norms and traditions that continue to prevent women from achieving the desired progress. USAID programs work to promote gender equality by expanding social dialogue to change societal standards and practices based on gender discrimination, and to enforce policies and legislation in support of women's empowerment, improve services available to women and girls, as well as encourage women's participation in the fields of economy and voluntary Social works (usaid.gov).

Small projects – Micro enterprises:

These are the projects managed by each of the owner of the project and a number ranging from 5-10 workers, and the **micro-enterprises** those managed by the owner of the project and a number ranging from 1-4 of the workers or family members (UNIFEM, 2005)

Methodology

This study is based on the use of the descriptive approach: This method was used to review the most important literature related to the role of social media in empowering women socially and economically who have micro-enterprises in Al Mafraq Governorate.

Population of the study

The study population consisted of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate in Jordan, and who use social media in marketing, to facilitate the sale process and expand the sales area within Jordan.

The study sample

The sample of the study was chosen by convenient approach, where (53) women who had micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq governorate were reached, who they used social media to market their productive projects, as (53) questionnaires were distributed, (11) questionnaires were excluded because the questionnaires incomplete and the total of the participants were (42) women, this sample representing (79.3%) of the main sample. The following tables shows the demographic distribution of the study sample according to the demographic variables:

Table (1)
Distribution of study sample individuals according to age

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Age	Less than 25 years	12	28.6
	25-less than 40 years	25	59.5
	More than 40 years	5	11.9
Total		42	100.0

Table (1) shows that (28.6%) of the study sample were age (less than 25years), (59.5%) of the study sample were between (25 – less than 40 years), while it was found that (5%) of the women who have a micro-enterprises were over the age of (40 years).

Table (2)
Distribution of study sample individuals according to educational level

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Education level	High school or lower	22	52.4
	Diploma	7	16.7
	Bachelor and higher	13	30.9
Total		42	100.0

Table (2) shows that (52.4%) of the women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate hold a high school or lower with percent of (52.4%), (16.7%) of them have a diploma, and (30.9%) of them have a Bachelor's certificate and higher.

Table (3)
Distribution of study sample individuals according to micro-enterprise age

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Project Age	Less than 5 years	21	50.0
	5- 10 years	13	30.9
	More than 10 years	8	19.1
Total		42	100.0

Table (3) shows that (50%) of the micro-enterprises age were (Less than 5 years), (30.9%) of the micro-enterprises aged (5-10 years) and (19.1%) of the micro-enterprises were aged (more than 10 years).

Table (4)
Distribution of study sample individuals according to the type of micro-enterprise

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Type of micro-enterprise	Dairies	14	33.3
	pickles	12	28.2
	Beads and medals	6	14.6
	Small Plants	4	9.3
	embroidery	6	14.6
Total		42	100.0

Table (4) shows that (33.3%) of the micro-enterprises were (Dairies), the (pickles) were (28.2) of the micro-enterprises, the (Beads and medals) were percent of (14.6%) of the micro-enterprises, the (Small plants) projects were (9.3%) and finally the (Embroidery) projects were (14.6%) as a micro-enterprises from the sample of the study.

Table (5)
Marketing method for selling products in micro-enterprises

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Marketing method	Facebook	29	69.0
	Whats App	9	21.5
	Youtube	4	9.5
	Total	42	100.0

Table (5) shows that there is many methods for selling products among the owners of micro-enterprises in **Al-Mafraq Governorate**, Facebook was used with percent of (69%) from sample of the study, the WhatsApp was used as a method for selling the products with percent of (21.5%), finally, sample of the study used YouTube as a marketing method for selling the products in micro-enterprises with percent of (9.5%).

The study tool: "questionnaire"

The study tool consisted of study questions which includes the following :

First dimension: demographic data and its contains: age, educational level, micro-enterprise age, type of micro-enterprise and Marketing method for selling products in micro-enterprises.

Second dimension: Social empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate.

Third dimension: Economic empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate.

Validity of the study tool:

The questionnaire was presented to (7) specialists from the experts in many social organizations and instructors in the Jordanian universities to verify the validity of its paragraphs. The researcher benefited from the specialists observations by adopting the agreed upon observations at a rate of (80%), The adjustments were made in light of the experts' observations in terms of linguistic formulation, deletion and addition of the , thus the validity of the scale has verified.

Reliability of the study tool:

The study used (Chronbach Alpha) test to show the internal consistency for the statements and its correlation coefficients with the total degree for each dimension. Table (6) shows the results of the test, where the values of the Cronbach alpha were generally higher than (0.70), which is an acceptable ratio in research and human studies (Hair et, al., 2010).

Table (6): Results of reliability coefficients using Cronbach Alpha

Variables	Results of reliability coefficients using Cronbach Alpha
Social empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate.	0.778
Economic empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate.	0.824
Total	0.845

Study variables:

Independent variable, Social media

Dependent variables:

- Social empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate.
- Economic empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate.

Statistical Analysis Techniques:

To answer the study questions, descriptive and analytical statistics approaches were used, using the statistical package (SPSS), and the statistical analysis techniques were:

- Frequency and percentages were used to describe the study sample individuals according to demographic variables.
- Alpha Cronbach test was used to verify the reliability of the study tool.
- Means and standard deviations were used to measure the level of answers on the statements and dimensions, on the other hand to measure dispersion of answers from the mean.

- One Sample T-test was used to make sure that social media impact on the social and economic empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate.

Scale correction key

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the data have been relied upon, which include means and standard deviations of all the independent study axes and the component of the paragraphs of each axis. It was taken into consideration that the Likert scale used for the study be graded as follows:

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Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
5	4	3	2	1

Accordingly, the values of the averages reached by the study will be dealt with as follows: (3.68- and higher: high), (2.34-3.67: average), (2.33 - and below: low). According to the following formula:

High value - the minimum value of the answer alternatives divided by the number of levels, that is:

$$\frac{(5-1)}{3} = \frac{4}{3} = 1.33 \text{ and this value equals the length of the class.}$$

Thus, the low level from $1 + 1.33 = 2.33$, The medium level of the application is from $2.34 + 1.33 = 3.67$, The high level of application is from 3.68-5.00.

The Results of the study:

Means and Standard deviations were extracted to identify the responses of the study sample individuals on "The role of social media in empowering women socially and economically a field study on women of Al-Mafraq Governorate who have micro-enterprises", and the following is the answer to the study questions:

The Results related to the first question: How do social media contribute to social empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate?

Means and standard deviations were extracted to identify how do social media contribute to social empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate, and Table (7) shows this:

Table (7)
Means and standard deviations were extracted to identify how social media contribute to social empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate in descending order.

No.	Statement	Mean	SD	Order	Level
2	I became well famous to people as a result of using social media when promoting my micro-enterprise.	4.58	0.44	1	High
5	After using social media to promote my micro-enterprise, the level of trust between me and the customers increased	4.35	0.87	2	High
1	My social status has increased as a result of promotion through social media.	3.97	0.77	3	High
4	I became a counselor on some micro-enterprise matters as a result of communicating with girls.	3.89	0.89	4	High
3	Social media has strengthened my ability to make the right decisions in my life.	3.87	0.72	5	High
7	Social media increased the opportunity for other experiences in my field.	3.86	0.88	6	High
6	social media, increased the opportunity to participate in seminars and conferences related to micro-enterprises.	3.74	0.98	7	High
8	The social media used in my micro-enterprise has increased my family's confidence in me.	3.69	1.02	8	High
10	The social media used to promote my project has opened the door for me to meet people outside the country.	3.57	1.03	9	Medium
9	The social media used to promote my project has opened my path to success.	3.49	0.98	10	Medium
12	While using social media to promote my micro-enterprise, my concepts of social values embodied me.	3.57	1.12	11	Medium
11	The social media websites used to promote my project opened the way for me to identify and benefit from project owners.	3.40	1.13	12	Medium
	Total	3.83	0.85		High

Table (10) shows that the mean of **(social media contribute to social empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate)** ranged between (4.58 and 3.40), where the dimension has scored a general mean of (3.83), which is of high level. Statement (2) has scored the highest mean of (4.58), with a standard deviation of (0.44), which is of a high level, and the statement (5) (After using social media to promote my micro-enterprise, the level of trust between me and the customers increased) ranked second with mean of (4.35) with standard deviation of (0.87) which is of a high level.

On the other hand, and in the last rank, statement (11) came with an mean of (3.40) and a standard deviation of (1.13), which is of a medium level, where the paragraph states (the social media websites used to promote my project opened the way for me to identify and benefit from project owners).

The Results related to the second question: How do social media contribute to economic empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate?

Means and standard deviations were calculated to identify how do social media contribute to economic empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate. Table (8) shows this:

Table (8)
Means and standard deviations to identify how do social media contribute to economic empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate in descending order

No.	Paragraph	Mean	SD	Order	Level
4	Social media has an important role in sales in the micro project, which has led to an increase in the income level.	4.44	0.76	1	High
5	Social media has an important role in promoting the micro project, which led to the purchase of family needs through income.	4.35	0.98	2	High
1	Social media has an important role in promoting the micro project, which led to the purchase of family needs through income.	4.23	0.86	3	High
2	Social media has an important role in promoting the micro project, which led to the purchase of family needs through income.	4.16	0.76	4	High
6	Social media has an important role in sales which has led to my ability to travel to other countries.	3.89	0.96	5	High
3	Social media has an important role in sales in the micro project, which led to me entering the market outside the retail space.	3.76	1.02	6	High
7	Social media enables me to increase the size of my micro-project to get bigger.	3.68	0.94	7	High
	Total mean	4.07	0.86		High

Table. (8) Shows that the mean of **(social media contribute to economic empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate)**, ranged between (4.44 and 3.68), where the dimension scored a mean of (4.07), which is of an high level . statement (4) scored the highest mean, which reached (4.44) and a standard deviation of (0.76), which is of a high level. The paragraph stipulates: (Social media has an important role in sales in the micro project, which has led to an increase in the income level.) and statement (5) ranked second with mean of (4.35) and standard deviation of (0.98) which is of a high level, the statement stipulated (Social media has an important role in promoting the micro project, which led to the purchase of family needs through income). On the other hand, and in the last place, paragraph (7) came with a mean of (3.68) and a standard deviation of (0.94), which is of an high level, as the paragraph states (Social media enables me to increase the size of my micro-project to get bigger).

This explains that the social media contribute to social and economic empowerment of women who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate is of high level.

The Results related to the third question: Are there a statistically significant effect of social media in empowering women socially and economically who have micro-enterprises?

The study used One Sample T-test to identify the statistically significant effect of social media in empowering women socially and economically who have micro-enterprises and table (9) show the results

Table (9)
One Sample T-test to identify the statistically significant effect of social media in empowering women socially and economically who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate

Empowering	Mean	S.D	Calculated (T)	Tabulated (T)	df	Sig
Socially	3.83	0.85	17.465	1.96	41	0.002*
Economically	4.07	0.86	23.418	1.96	41	0.000*

* *Significant at the level (0.05), the value of T = 3.00, the df = the sample - 1, indicates the level of work confidence.*

Table (9) shows that the mean of the social media effect in empowering women socially (3.83) and economically (4.07). The calculated values of (t) is (17.465, 23.418) respectively, which is higher than its tabulated value (1.96). The results show that there were statistically significant differences at the level (0.05) between the means for the scale and the default mean (3.00), accordingly ,it becomes clear that there are a statistically significant effect of social media in empowering women socially and economically who have micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate.

Conclusion

The results of the study showed that social media sites play an important role in social empowerment among women who have Micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate, the study has proven this at a high level, and it has been shown that social media sites contribute to the promotion of micro-projects, and that it helps to raise the level of the social aspect of Women, by getting to know new individuals, creating relationships and making friends. Also, it was found that Micro-enterprises contribute to the social empowerment of women by increasing the confidence of family members in women who have micro-projects.

The results of the study showed that social media sites play an important role in the economic empowerment of women who have Micro-enterprises in Al-Mafraq Governorate, by increasing the level of income, this enhances the ability of women to buy their supplies and buy what they need, without resorting to anyone.

It was found that Micro-enterprises help women to enable economic empowerment, as women can save, travel and entertain themselves, in addition to the possibility of increasing the size of the micro-project to become a large project.

The results showed that social media has impact on empowering women socially and economically who have micro-projects, and that social networking sites directly assist in this, and it has become necessary for micro-entrepreneurs to create their own sites on Facebook and through WhatsApp, In order to spread and promote their products and reach a good level of sales, all of this leads to social and economic empowerment.

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