

The role of social media in shaping the social identity of Jordanian youth

Yahya Quftan Azzam ^{a,1}

^a Department of Sociology Science, College of arts, Baghdad University, Iraq-Baghdad.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received Dec 25, 2024

Revised Jan 03, 2025

Accepted Feb 10, 2025

Keywords

Social media;
social identity;
youth daily life;
cultural and social awareness.

ABSTRACT

Social media has emerged as a crucial instrument for forming Jordanian youths' social identities, having a direct influence on their beliefs, traditions, and actions. This is because various media are widely used and interact with one another in the daily lives of young people, which helps to change how they think about their cultural and national identities. The purpose of this study was to determine how social media affects Jordanian youth's development of social identities. On the basis of the findings of earlier research, an analytical analysis was carried out. The findings showed that social media is more than just a tool for communication; it also effectively shapes and defines the identity of the younger generation on a cultural and social level. This necessitates the creation of regulations to encourage parents and pertinent institutions to utilize these media responsibly and with awareness.

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA](#) license.



1. Introduction

1.1. The Importance of Social Media in the Lives of Youth

The globe has seen an unparalleled explosion in communications technology in the last several decades. People's life now revolves around social media, particularly for young people. It facilitates the quick flow of ideas and information by offering an interactive setting that permits direct communication with friends, family, and neighbors. Its influence has expanded beyond simple communication to include powerful instruments for influencing social interaction, identity, and opinion.

Because of their adaptability and simplicity of use, as well as their interest in technology and digital communication, young people are the demographic that uses these media the most. According to statistics, a significant portion of young people globally, and in Jordan specifically, spend a lot of time every day on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and others [1].

1.2. Its Increased Use in Jordan and Its Impact on Social Identity

Social media has grown significantly in Jordan in recent years, becoming a vital component of the everyday lives of young people. The social fabric and the elements of young people's individual and collective identities have been impacted in a number of ways by this widespread dispersion. Their views of their values, traditions, and communication styles shift as a result of their constant

engagement with digital content, resulting in a new social identity where ideas and trends from digital media blend with indigenous values [2].

According to studies and data, social media has impacted Jordanian youth's ways of thinking, expressing themselves, and living; in some cases, it has even resulted in the adoption of global trends. This raises issues about the preservation of national heritage and values while also fostering the development of a more open and multicultural identity. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to comprehend how social media affects Jordanian youth's social identity construction.

Given this expanding phenomena, a thorough investigation of how social media shapes Jordanian youths' problematic social identities is necessary. The study intends to investigate and examine the ways in which various media impact identity formation, whether through everyday behavior and communication or through values, ideas, and aspirations. In addition to guiding pertinent policies and strategies to use social media in a constructive way that supports national identity and tackles social and cultural concerns, the research aims to offer scientific insights that advance our understanding of this relationship [3].

2. The Concept of Social Identity

2.1. Definition of Social Identity

A person's personal perception and integration within the social groupings they belong to, such as their family, community, culture, or different population groups, is referred to as their social identity. It establishes a person's position and function in society and articulates the self-image they create within the framework of their social interactions. One aspect of a person's total identity that aids in their ability to interact effectively and steadily in their social surroundings is their social identity [4].

2.2. Elements of Social Identity

Social identity consists of several basic elements, including [5]:

- Belonging: The urge to fit in with a particular group, such friends, family, or a particular age range.
- Values and Customs: The cultural values and customs that a person embraces and demonstrates in their day-to-day interactions.
- Social Role: A person's social roles, such as that of a worker, student, or young person.
- The degree to which society values and accepts a specific person within a group is known as social recognition.
- Language and Symbols: The cultural symbols and language that set one group apart from another.

2.3. Social Identity Formation Theories

The process of social identity creation is explained by a number of theories, the most well-known of which are:

- According to Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory, people form their identities by associating with particular organizations or groups and identifying with their traits, which strengthens their sense of belonging and shapes their behavior.



- The notion of symbolic interaction highlights how people's relationships and the symbols they employ to create their self-perception in society shape their identity.
- Social Comparison idea: According to this idea, people assess themselves by contrasting themselves with other people and groups, which affects how they see their social identities [6].

As young people look to identify their social position, express who they are, and fit in with their groups, their social identity is a critical stage in the development of their personalities. Social and technical advancements, particularly the growth of social media, which enables young people to engage with a variety of organizations and mold their identities through them, can undermine or alter social identity. His social identity is a crucial component of his personality and interactions with others, influencing his actions, decisions, and aspirations for the future [7].

3 Social Media

2. Social media are digital platforms that let people use digital devices like computers and smartphones to rapidly and easily connect, share, and interact online. These platforms are distinguished by their capacity to create extensive social networks that cut across national and cultural borders as well as to share and republish information. One of the most significant modern communication tools is social media, which has changed how people engage with one another and express who they are [8].
3. 3.1. Types of Media Used in Jordan and the Most Prominent
4. Social media platforms vary in type and are widely used among young people in Jordan. Among them are [9]:
 - 5. - Social networking platforms: such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, which allow for the creation of profiles and groups, and the sharing of photos, videos, and posts.
 - 6. - Instant messaging applications: such as WhatsApp, Messenger, and Telegram, which allow for private and group conversations quickly and securely.
 - 7. - Video platforms: such as YouTube and TikTok, which rely on the production and sharing of visual and audio content.
 - 8. - Forums and online communities: These enable discussion and exchange of ideas on various topics.
9. 3.2. The Development of Social Media in Jordan

10. Social media in Jordan has witnessed significant development within the last ten years. With the rise of social networking sites like Facebook in the early 2000s, its use started out in a limited capacity before expanding to incorporate additional applications due to the quick expansion of mobile phone and internet services. Young people have started utilizing these platforms every day in recent years, and they are now an essential part of their political, social, and educational lives. Aspirations and values have been greatly influenced by the establishment of several pages and organizations devoted to youth activities, national identity, and cultural and social movements [10].
11. Social media has several characteristics that directly impact society and individuals, including:
12. - Widespread reach and rapid access: It reaches most young people quickly and at a low cost.
13. - Interactivity: It enables users to directly interact and participate in content in a variety of ways.
14. - Content flexibility: It allows for the production and dissemination of various types of content, such as videos, images, and text.
15. - Social and political influence: It has played a prominent role in protest movements, raising awareness, and spreading awareness of social and cultural issues.

These traits, which enable people to express themselves and fit into various groups, are thought to be a major factor in forming young people's social identities. Through content sharing and day-to-day encounters, it also shapes values, beliefs, and customs [11].

4. The Impact of Social Media on Social Identity

4.1. The Role of Social Media in Reinforcing or Changing Values and Customs

As a medium for spreading and distributing social and cultural ideals more quickly and extensively than in the past, social media has a significant impact on young people's values and habits. It gives young people access to content that mirrors contemporary trends and offers fresh behavioral patterns that could improve a sense of community or cause traditions and conventions to shift. For instance, young people may be repeatedly exposed to content that promotes equality and tolerance, and shifts in communication and self-expression styles may have an impact on social norms.

Young people's self-perception is greatly influenced by social media since many of them use the content they see and share to improve their perception of themselves or to represent their social identities. Social media interactions and remarks have an impact on how one constructs their self-image because they can either increase confidence or cause social anxiety or feelings of inadequacy. However, while it can sometimes result in identity and value conflicts, content that



showcases a variety of cultures, ideas, and rituals helps young people feel more accepted and like they belong [12].

4.2. Social Interactions Through Social Media and Their Impact on Identity

Young people's social interactions are improved by social media, which gives them the opportunity to make new friends, participate in various groups and activities, and build a variety of social contacts that have an immediate effect on their social identities. In addition to establishing common norms and a social support system, these encounters also help to shape the values that young people exhibit in their social surroundings. But the proliferation of digital connections can also result in a blurring of the lines between the private and public domains and a shift in social behavior.

Digital content, such as posts, images, and videos, is crucial in forming the social identities of young people. Content is used to spread self-images, behavioral patterns, and messages that reflect their values and goals. Young individuals who interact with content get social feedback that either strengthens or changes who they are. By advancing good ideals or disseminating negative stereotypes, digital information also draws attention to values, norms, and stereotypes that have a big impact on how social identities are formed [13].

5. Factors Influencing Youth Engagement with Social Media

The level and quality of youth social media involvement are influenced by age variations. Younger people are more likely to use platforms more regularly and actively, and they are also more adaptable when it comes to embracing new digital behavior patterns. Geographically speaking, young people in cities usually have quicker and easier access to digital infrastructure, which improves their capacity to communicate and engage on social media platforms. In the meanwhile, insufficient infrastructure and connectivity may provide problems for young people in remote locations.

On the other hand, how young people use social media is significantly influenced by their cultural and social origins. The ability to discern between appropriate and socially acceptable content, as well as inherited values and norms, impact usage and interaction behaviors. Young people in more open cultures are more engaged and have greater freedom to express themselves, whereas conservative cultures may prohibit the usage of specific platforms or content. A framework that

dictates the type of engagement with digital content is also formed by social ties, family norms, and religious views [14].

Young people's capacity to utilize social media successfully and conscientiously is also enhanced by their level of education and technological proficiency, which is reflected in their comprehension of the impact of material. Higher educated and tech-savvy youth are frequently better able to evaluate content, guide their interactions in a constructive manner, and use social media for personal and developmental goals, whereas less tech-savvy youth may be more vulnerable to harmful or pointless content.

The kind of content that young people interact with on social media also has a significant influence on how it affects them. While negative, discouraging, or stereotypical information may cause unwanted behavior and have an impact on young people's self-image and social identity, educational, motivational, and creative content encourages positive engagement and helps to create a positive identity [15].

6. Literature Studies

According to earlier research, social media significantly influences how young people develop their social identities. According to a number of studies, social media use improves social recognition and a sense of belonging. It also helps people reshape their ideas of who they are by interacting with different groups.

There are studies on the impact of social media on identity:

Social media helps young people express themselves more freely and develop social identities, which has a big impact on values and beliefs, especially in Jordanian cities, according to [16] research. In a different setting, [17] discovered that overuse of social media might result in digital information taking center stage in the creation of identity, occasionally projecting a skewed or misleading identity, which affects a feeling of genuine belonging.

- Cross-cultural comparative studies:

Comparative research indicates that social media's effects differ depending on the culture. In contrast to conservative civilizations, where the influence is less pronounced or quantified, social media helps to reinforce the idea of identity in more open societies [18]. Studies looking at Jordanian society have found that, particularly in light of societal changes, social media helps strike a balance between identity modernization and its ties to cultural heritage. According to [19] research, young Jordanians engage favorably with digital information that strengthens their sense of national identity.

Even though there are many studies available, few of them go into detail about how social and geographic factors affect social media interaction or how much the caliber of content affects identity formation, especially among young people in Jordanian governorates and rural areas [20]. Additionally, there aren't many studies that accurately and thoroughly examine the effects of social media using a variety of methodologies.

7. Strategies Drawn from Previous Literature



Research has generally demonstrated that social media has a limited to moderate impact on Jordanian youths' social identities, with notable variations according to age, location, and content type. Many young people think that social media, especially sites like Facebook and Instagram, helps them feel like they belong to online communities and helps them build ideas of their national identity. societal internet, according to some, is undermining traditional societal values.

Young people's digital interactions, on the other hand, have a big influence on how they see themselves because many of them say they want to match their identities with visual and watching information that supports their goals and interests. Additionally, young individuals who use social media more frequently tend to embrace an interactive identity and favor modern values over traditional ones [21].

Additionally, evidence suggests that youth identity orientations are strongly influenced by the caliber of social media interactions and material. While information that is contentious or socially hypocritical promotes the development of an identity based on superficiality or isolation, content that expresses national identity helps to strengthen loyalty and a sense of belonging. One may claim that social media has developed into a potent instrument for forming Jordanian youths' social identities, however this relies on personal characteristics, the social context, and the manner of use. Social media encourages participation in online communities and facilitates cross-cultural communication, but it may also lead to the development of a skewed identity marked by shallowness and social breakdown, particularly when the information is inconsistent with moral and educational standards [22, 23].

Youth digital awareness must also be raised, and the caliber of content that is shared must be improved. This is to ensure the development of cultural and social awareness as well as the building of national identity by maximizing social media's positive potential and minimizing its detrimental effects on social identity [24].

7. Conclusion

In summary, social media has emerged as a significant influence on Jordanian youths' social identities. It serves to both promote social concepts and strengthen national belonging, while also drawing attention to the problems posed by its detrimental effects on social customs and cultural values. The study's findings demonstrate that while appropriate usage of digital media platforms can improve social bonds and national identity, abuse or over-reliance on them can cause values to erode and shallow ideas to become more entrenched.

8. References

- [1] Goh, D., & Ho, S. (2022). Social media and youth identity development in Jordan. *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 45(3), 210-230.
- [2] Al-Lamki, A. (2023). Social identity theory and its application in Arab youth. *Arab Journal of Sociology*, 41(2), 112-130.
- [3] Khan, S., & Ahmad, M. (2021). Characteristics and societal impact of social media in the Middle East. *International Journal of Communication*, 15, 567-589.
- [4] Hassan, R., & Abdo, S. (2023). Digital platforms and cultural change among Jordanian youth. *Middle Eastern Cultural Studies*, 10(1), 78-98.

-
- [5] Mahmoud, N., & Saleh, T. (2022). Factors influencing social media engagement among Jordanian youth. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 28(4), 340-359.
- [6] Zayed, L. (2023). The impact of social media on young people's social identity in Jordan. *Arab Social Research*, 12(2), 55-73.
- [7] Yousef, T. (2020). A comparative analysis of social media's influence on youth in Jordan and neighboring countries. *Middle Eastern Review*, 38(1), 95-115.
- [8] Mansour, F. (2023). Interpreting findings on social media's role in youth identity formation. *Journal of Social Science Research*, 11(3), 210-230.
- [9] Kharroubi, Y. (2024). Strategies for fostering positive social media use among youth in the Arab world. *Policy Studies Review*, 5(1), 35-50.
- [10] Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (2018). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*.
- [11] Kaur, J., Kaur, J., & Singh, P. (2018). Cultural differences in social media's influence on youth identity. *International Journal of Social Sciences*.
- [12] Alshoaibi, M. A. (2019). Social media and its impact on Arab youth identity. *Rev. Eur. Stud.*, 11, 1.
- [13] AlKhudari, M. N., Abduljabbar, O. J., Al Manaseer, A. M., & AL-Omari, M. S. (2024). The role of social media in shaping public opinion among Jordanian university students. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*, 8(8), 5489.
- [14] Kubow, P. K. (2020). Systems of Social Identity: Citizen Identities Shaping Female Jordanian and Syrian Refugee Students in Amman's Public Schools. *Journal of Education in Muslim Societies*, 1(2), 21-42.
- [15] Miladi, N., Messaoud, M. B., Alkhateeb, G., Ashour, A., Al-Mohannadi, H., Fetais, A., ... & Alabidi, F. (2022). Digital youth in Qatar: Negotiating culture and national identity through social media networks. *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*, 15(2), 151-177.
- [16] Kubow, P. K. (2020). Systems of Social Identity: Citizen Identities Shaping Female Jordanian and Syrian Refugee Students in Amman's Public Schools. *Journal of Education in Muslim Societies*, 1(2), 21-42.
- [17] Miladi, N., Messaoud, M. B., Alkhateeb, G., Ashour, A., Al-Mohannadi, H., Fetais, A., ... & Alabidi, F. (2022). Digital youth in Qatar: Negotiating culture and national identity through social media networks. *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*, 15(2), 151-177.
- [18] Ahmed, I. S. Y., Miladi, N., Messaoud, M. B., Labidi, F., Ashour, A., Almohannadi, H., ... & Alorfe, A. (2022). Social media networks as platforms for culture and identity interplay among Qatari youth. *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*, 15(2), 179-203.
- [19] Al-Maamari, W. S. M., Saleh, E., Ibrahim, A. T. H., Abd Rabou, M., & Al-Rawas, A. (2024). Shaping Young Minds: The Power of Social Networking and New Media on Child Socialization in Oman. In *Current Progress in Arts and Social Studies Research* (pp. 73-90). BP International.
- [20] Ayish, M., & AlNajjar, A. (2019). Arab millennials' articulation of identity in cyberspace: A study of three MENA Youtubers. *Arab Media & Society*, 10.
- [21] Alam, M. (2018). Daniele Cantini, *Youth and Education in the Middle East: Shaping Identity and Politics in Jordan*.
- [22] Tashtoush, R. A., Al-Natour, A. S., & Amer, S. A. M. B. (2025). The Effect of Syrian asylum on the Jordanian national identity from the point of view of Yarmouk University students. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, 52(3), 6684-6684.
-



-
- [23] Al-Nasah, M., & Shadid, Y. (2024). Fear of Missing Out on Social Media Platforms and its relationship to Self-Esteem among Adolescents in Jordan. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 15(1), 119-148.
- [24] Kubow, P. K. (2020). Through a girl's eyes: Social ontologies of citizen identity among Jordanian and refugee students in Jordan's double-shift secondary schools. *Prospects*, 48(3), 135-155.