

**THE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA  
MOTIVATION, TRUST, CULTURE RESTRAINT  
AND RELATIONSHIP BENEFIT TOWARDS  
ONLINE RELATIONSHIP COMMITMENT**

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**UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA**

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by

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
HCM	Hierarchical Component Models
IA	Internet Addiction
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IVR	Indulgence vs. Restraint
MENA	Middle East and North African
MVA	Missing Value Analysis
PLS	Partial Least Squares
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SET	Social Exchange Theory
SN	Social Networks
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SRMR	Standardised Root Mean Square Residual
UGT	Uses and Gratifications Theory
UN	United Nations

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**PERKAITAN ANTARA MOTIVASI MEDIA SOSIAL, KEPERCAYAAN,  
KEKANGAN BUDAYA DAN FAEDAH HUBUNGAN TERHADAP  
KOMITMEN PERHUBUNGAN DALAM TALIAN**

**ABSTRAK**

Media sosial merupakan aktiviti lazim dalam talian yang mempunyai kadar penggunaan yang tinggi seiring dengan perkembangan aplikasi mudahalih dalam talian. Kehidupan pengguna media sosial masyarakat Arab penuh dengan kekangan. Motivasi mereka berkenaan penggunaan media sosial berbeza dengan masyarakat barat dan masyarakat lain. Berbeza dengan wilayah lain, penggunaan Internet di Timur Tengah, terutamanya di Jordan adalah yang tertinggi iaitu sebanyak 94%. Motivasi terhadap penggunaan media sosial menyumbang kepada peningkatan jumlah penggunaan platform tersebut serta kesan dari penggunaannya. Oleh yang demikian, kajian ini mengkaji kesan motivasi media sosial terhadap faedah hubungan dan komitmen hubungan dalam talian. Di samping itu, kajian ini turut mengambil kira kesan penyederhanaan kekangan budaya terhadap hubungan di antara motivasi media sosial, faedah hubungan dan komitmen hubungan dalam talian. Kajian ini turut mengkaji kesan faedah hubungan dan kepercayaan terhadap komitmen hubungan dalam talian. Kajian kuantitatif ini melibatkan seramai 384 golongan belia di Jordan. Data diperolehi melalui penggunaan borang kajiselidik yang telah diuji kesahan, pra-diuji dan menggunakan skala Likert lima mata. Perisian SEM-PLS telah digunakan untuk menganalisis model pengukuran dan pemodelan struktur. Hasil kajian mendapati motivasi media sosial mempunyai kesan terhadap faedah hubungan dan komitmen hubungan dalam talian. Kepercayaan dan faedah hubungan juga memberi kesan terhadap komitmen hubungan dalam talian. Di samping itu kekangan budaya

mempunyai kesan penyerdahanan terhadap hubungan di antara motivasi media sosial, faedah hubungan dan komitmen hubungan dalam talian. Selain itu, terdapat kesan perbezaan motivasi media sosial di Jordan kerana Jordan menganggap masyarakat menentang dan ia disahkan oleh Al Omoush et al., (2012). Di samping itu, masyarakat kekangan Hofstede menekan kepuasan mereka terhadap keperluan dan mengawal selia yang menjelaskan mengapa motivasi platform media sosial berbeza daripada negara lain yang menganggap masyarakat indulgensi. Kepentingan teori kajian ini dalam menerapkan teori penggunaan dan kepuasan, teori pertukaran sosial dan teori dimensi budaya Hofstede sebagai teori pendukung, yang memperkuat ramalan faedah hubungan dan komitmen hubungan dalam talian melalui penggunaan media sosial. Lebih jauh lagi, secara praktiknya, hasil penyelidikan terkini akan membantu institusi Jordan dalam memahami kehendak dan aspirasi orang dewasa muda berkaitan dengan penggunaan media sosial, dan juga akan membantu pembangun media dan media di Jordan menentukan kelebihan penggunaan platform media sosial di kalangan khalayak Jordan dan mengembangkan kawasan penting. Dalam penyelidikan masa depan, reka bentuk kajian membujur disarankan untuk menilai hubungan antara pemboleh ubah, juga harus menggunakan banyak sumber data dan / atau rancangan tinjauan yang bertanggung waktu untuk merekrut dan mengumpulkan data, yang akan lebih bermanfaat, harus dipertimbangkan maju faktor kepercayaan termasuk sifat individu, komunikasi individu, keamanan, kesan awal dan keadaan khas untuk memperbaiki dan memperluas model yang dicadangkan dalam kajian ini dan mencadangkan analisis proses bersyarat di mana sokongan sosial dapat diuji sebagai perantara dan juga moderator, yang dapat menghasilkan bukti empirikal baru untuk kajian lanjutan.

**THE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA MOTIVATION, TRUST,  
CULTURE RESTRAINT AND RELATIONSHIP BENEFIT TOWARDS  
ONLINE RELATIONSHIP COMMITMENT**

**ABSTRACT**

Social media use is a prevalent online activity that has high user participation rates and is of particular relevance to mobile app development. Arabian social media users are typically considered as living in restrained societies, and their motivations for social media use may differ from Western cultures. Moreover, social media platforms in Arabian societies may be utilised differently from other cultural contexts. In comparison to other regions, the Middle East stands out for its relatively high usage of the Internet with 94% of users, especially in the country of Jordan. The motivation to use social media has led to a rising number of users of these platforms and the effects of such use have correspondingly increased. The present study examined the effect of social media motivation on relationship benefits and online relationship commitment and considered the moderating effect of cultural restraint on the relationship between social media motivation, relationship benefits and online relationship commitment. The study also explored the influence of relationship benefits and trust on online relationship commitment. A total of 384 young adults in Jordan were recruited for this study. To collect the data required, a validated, pre-tested and self-administrated questionnaire utilising a five-point Likert scale was employed. To determine the level of performance, the partial least squares (PLS)-based structural equation modelling (SEM) approach was applied. The results of the study showed that social media motivation has an impact on relationship benefits and online relationship commitment.

Trust and relationship benefits also affect online relationship commitment, since cultural restraint has a moderating impact on the relationship between social media motivation, relationship benefits, and online relationship commitment. Besides, there are different impact of social media motivation in Jordan because Jordan considered a resistance society and confirmed by Al Omoush et al., (2012). In addition, Hofstede's restraint society suppresses their gratification of needs and regulates which explain why motivation of social media platform are different from other countries who considered indulgence society. Theoretical significance of this study in applying the uses and gratifications theory, social exchange theory and Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory as the underpinning theories, which strengthened predictions of relationship benefits and online relationship commitment through the use of social media. Furthermore, practically, the results of the current research will aid Jordanian establishments in comprehending the wants and aspirations of young adults in relation to social media usage, and will also help media developers and media establishments in Jordan determine the advantages of social media platform use among the Jordanian audience and develop essential areas. In future research, a longitudinal study design is recommended to evaluate the relationships between the variables, should also utilise multiple sources of data and/or time-lagged survey designs to recruit and collect data, which will be more beneficial, should take into consideration advanced factors of trust including individual attributes, individual communication, security, initial impressions and typical circumstances to refine and extend the model proposed in the present study and proposing a conditional process analysis where social support could be tested as a mediator as well as a moderator, which could produce new empirical evidence for further studies.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Background of the Research**

Today, the Internet, smartphones and digitalisation contribute to the criticality of social media as a global platform for the formation and strengthening of human relations. Social media, a prevalent application that arose from the Web 2.0 technology evolution, is used by people to maintain contact and also to post videos of themselves as well as places, pets and other things deemed of value to them (Chen, Fan & Sun 2019; Choi, Guo & Luo, 2020). Social media also permits users to convey thoughts, generate and share ideas, articulate beliefs, distribute videos or photos, build connections and form virtual interactions that are bounded by mutual interests (Shen, Chiou, Hsiao, Wang & Li, 2016). Consequently, social media provides prospects for improved communication through a qualified medium without censorship. Moreover, the advent and development of social media have made it easier for elderly people in remote areas to view videos and images of their grandchildren who stay far away; have enabled young adults to be notified of employment opportunities from online websites; and have allowed friends, irrespective of their locations, to interact with one another (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

There has been a global revolution in communications that has initiated a positive change in the ease and speed of communications, and which has removed the barrier of geographical constraints. The universal acceptance and use of the Internet have also encouraged the popularity of social media. The Internet has facilitated communication processes and the sharing of ideas. Initially, those ideas were confined to mundane matters such as chatting and sharing of emotional issues, but they quickly

turned into mature and idealistic ideas that have changed social and political climates by, for example, inspiring the “Arab Spring” revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen (Brown, Guskin & Mitchell, 2012).

A study by the Pew Research Center in 2020 revealed that the use of social media in emerging countries increases at similar rates as in developed nations. It was found that in 2019, 71% of adults from developing nations used social networking platforms, an increase from 53% in 2017. Among these developing countries, nations in the Middle East are distinguished by their relatively high use. For instance, an astonishing 94% of Internet users in Jordan also access social networking platforms. Just 46% of Internet users in Germany, on the other hand, visit social media sites.

The nation of Jordan has a young population, similar to other Middle East and North African (MENA) countries. The United Nations (UN) reported that over 70% of the 6.5 million citizens of the country were under the age of 30, with youth making up 22% of the population in general (UNICEF, 2020; Brookings, 2018). A survey found that Jordan ranked first among Gulf countries in the use of social media as 90% of Internet users used these platforms. The Facebook and YouTube platforms were identified as the most widely utilised social media channels in Jordan based on another survey that examined 40 nations (Radcliffe & Lam, 2018).

According to Hofstede (2016), Jordan ranking at 30<sup>th</sup> among 72 selected countries over the world in restraint values. According to Minkov and Hofstede (2010) restraint is a conviction that basic and natural desires and enjoyment in life needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms, while indulgence reflects a tendency to allow the gratification of basic and natural desires and enjoyment in life. High levels of restraint cause people to be moderate in their decision making and have (or let

themselves to have) limited wants and desires. People with high level of restraint tend to define a discipline for each behaviour and try to keep themselves generally disinterested in the opposite (Bathae, 2011). Moreover, higher levels of restraint are significantly correlated with a feeling of pessimism and negativism as restraint and limitations tend to foster negative feelings and a lack of trust (Hofstede et al., 2010). This in turn may prevent or delay a customer's attention to new and alternative options and cause the customer lower her/his evaluations of a product and eventually decrease her/his level of satisfaction. Additionally, as a cultural characteristic restraint is also thought to be associated with lower spending tendency, thrift and lower engagement and involvement in leisure, fun and pleasure related activities (Bathae, 2011; Hofstede et al., 2010). This means that in restraint-oriented cultures people may attach less importance to leisure and pleasure resulting in limited hedonic behaviours in these cultures (Erdogan et al., 2017).

Several researchers have endeavoured to comprehend the motivation that contributes to the growing proportion of social media platform users and the consequences of such a trend in Gulf countries (Al Omoush et al., 2012; Aljasir, Woodcock & Harrison, 2013; Aljasir, 2015). Prior research has demonstrated that the influence of social media platforms on online relationship commitment differs and that communication through social media can generate positive or negative connections (Huang, Hsieh & Wu, 2014; Dolan, Conduit, Fahy & Goodman, 2016; Scott, 2017). These varied findings strongly indicate a necessity for a better understanding of the usage and the impetus for such usage, as well as the impact of social media platforms on relationships. This necessity arises because social media usage, along with its associated impact, can convey diverse relationship benefits and advance individual relationship commitment on social media platforms.

Although Sweeney and Webb (2007) established that the construct of relationship benefits contributes to relationship commitment, Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007) and Liang, Ho, Li and Turban (2011) deliberated on relationship benefits from the aspect of social media motivation and its influence on online relationship commitment. Other previous studies also recognised the belongings of social media platforms on relationship commitment, e.g. Leskovec, Huttenlocher and Kleinberg (2010) and Khondoker, Bjorn, Morris and Orrell (2017).

Besides the above factors, trust is an integral aspect of a strong social network (Sherchan et al., 2013) and impacts online relationship commitment. Young adults have varying views of, and levels of trust in, social media. Studies have found that almost all young adults post their actual names, current photos, educational attainments, details of their workplace and status of their relationships on social media sites (Gefen et al., 2003). Hsu et al. (2007) argued that young adults feel more secure and relaxed when participating in private social media chats. Young adults' motives for using social media include, besides enjoyment, factors such as searching for information, establishing personal status, social interaction, relaxation, entertainment and being fashionable in the social media space.

Furthermore, in Jordan, the literature on social media practices among young adults, which has been a topic that has been thoroughly examined globally yet is still in its infancy. According to Sweeney and Webb (2007), there are limited study of only utilising the uses and gratifications theory. Thus study, using three combination of theories such as uses and gratifications theory, social exchange theory and Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory for underpinning theories which strengthened predictions



of relationship benefits and online relationship commitment through the use of social media

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Social media has transformed the world into a small village and in this context, social media platforms such as YouTube are frequently accessed due to their benefits and positive qualities. Furthermore, 71% of Internet users are social media users (Statistica, 2018), which translates to the fact that social media use will grow even more. Social media use is thus a very popular online activity that has obtained significant user participation rates and prompted mobile app growth and development (Statistica, 2018). In fact, the usage rate across the globe is significantly high as 2.196 billion users accessed Facebook, 1.9 billion users visited YouTube, 1.5 billion users used WhatsApp and 1 billion users utilised Instagram in 2018 alone (Statistica, 2018). Therefore, these social media platforms attract a large segment of society, whereby individuals share information with others from different nationalities and cultures, leading them to develop relationships and levels of online/offline relationship commitment.

Nowadays, the social benefits of using social media will go over the negatives over the next decade; this is due to social media, e-mail, and other online tools that offer opportunities to create and rediscovering social ties which make a difference in people's life. Social media reduces some of the traditional constraints like cost, geography, and time. Also, social media supports open information sharing that brings people together. While on the other point of view, using internet as a tool for communications can yield both positive and negative impacts. According to Pew internet report survey (Anderson & Rainie, 2019), 85% of technology experts and

stakeholders participating in the fourth future of the internet supports the idea that internet improves social relations and will continue improvement through 2020, while 14% are with the negative force on social world. This was a look to the future of social relationship affected by social media. Youth life in modern society is both challenging and uncertain because their individual life courses are less predictable and more individually framed than before (Kemshall, 2018). At the same time social structures are unstable, so the youth face a decline in such structures as family, work, and social security (Wyn, 2017). Young people in developing countries such as Jordan are susceptible to global changes and increasingly affected by the online relationship commitment through social media motivation.

In addition, past studies have focused on social media and relationship commitment in enhancing individual and organisational commitment, and on achieving the highest level of benefits from relationship commitment on an individual basis. However, the influence of social media motivation on relationship commitment has yet to be adequately explored (Zhan, Sun, Wang & Zhang, 2016). The literature has recognised the diverse influence of social media on relationship commitment (Benthaus, Risius & Beck, 2016; Sobaih, Moustafa, Ghandforoush & Khan, 2016; Heatherly, Lu & Lee, 2017). Nevertheless, although relationship benefits have a significant impact on relationship commitment (Sweeney & Webb, 2007), different benefits, including practical and interpersonal gains, exert adverse and detrimental effects on relationship commitment (Balaji, Khong & Chong, 2016).

Moreover, it has been found that trust has an important impact on online relationship commitment (Fadol & Sandhu, 2013). In addition to Sherchan et al. (2013) observing that trust is an integral aspect of a strong social network, other studies

(Pelling & White, 2009; Florenthal, 2015) discovered that social media sites are viewed as being untrustworthy among young adults as they are wary about publicly sharing their personal details. Consequently, they are perceived to have greater privacy and risk issues and decreased trust levels when using social media platforms. Therefore, the present study examined the impact of trust on online relationship commitment, since trust is central to the development of commitment in a reciprocal transactional relationship (Nora, 2019).

Besides focusing on how social media motivation influence relationship benefits, another important issue that has earned only slight attention by researchers is the issue of relationship benefits itself and its impact on online relationship commitment. The impact of online relationship commitment on young adults should be addressed because it exists (Zhan, Sun, Wang & Zhang, 2016). Several studies have been conducted on the impacts of online relationship commitment (Benthaus, Risius & Beck, 2016; Sobaih, Moustafa, Ghandforoush & Khan, 2016; Heatherly, Lu & Lee, 2017). However, studies on the relationship between social media motivation and online relationship commitment in the Jordan context are still lacking. One of the reasons for this is to investigate the perception, which has been suggested by a number of social media motivation models, where the online relationship commitment of young adults will be given a negative effect in Jordan. Minimal research has examined this issue and almost none has been conducted in Jordan (Hatamleh, Zolkepli & Ahmad, 2020; Ali, 2014). Alarabiat and Al-Mohammad (2015) suggested the need to study the influence of social media motivation on relationship commitment in Jordan to analyse any negative impacts, especially among young adults, who comprise a large segment of society.

In order to understand the complicated and dynamic relationship between social media motivation with online relationship commitment and relationship benefit, several moderating variables have been investigated such as customer orientation (Emin, Uguer and Nicholas, 2009), motivation (Aniza, Malini & Khalib, 2010), job level (Gilboa, Shirom, Fried & Cooper, 2008) and social support (Ling & Bhattie, 2014). However, cultural restraint has yet to receive much attention as an important moderating variable (Mohamad & Badawy, 2015). Most previous studies had examined cultural restraint as either an independent (Rabaa'i, 2016; Irawan, 2017) or a dependent variable (Enkh-Amgalan, 2016). Therefore, there is lack of studies examining the role cultural restraint play as a moderator variable. Thus, this study proposes to examine the potential cultural restraint has as moderators in the relationships between social media motivation with online relationship commitment and relationship benefit.

Reviews of literature indicate that recent studies have been concerned with evaluating the mediating role of the relationship benefits. The relationship benefits have been identified as an independent variable in a number of different relationships: visit intention (Kill et al., 2012) and customer loyalty (Conze et al., 2010). Reviews of the literature indicated that recent studies have focused on investigating the role of the relationship benefits as a mediator. Relationship benefits has been identified as a mediator in a number of different relationships: perceived control and customer loyalty (Yen & Gwinner 2003), trust and repurchase intention (Chou & Chen, 2018), service quality and customer loyalty (Chen & Hu, 2013). Due to the potential ability of the relationship benefits to act as a mediator, this study will examine the mediating impact of the relationship benefits on the relationship between social media motivation and online relationship commitment.

Very few studies have been conducted in the Jordan context on the nature, cause, and effect of online relationship commitment (Noordin & Jusoff, 2009). Therefore, this study will enhance the existing literature by examining the effect of social media motivation, trust and relationship benefit on online relationship commitment. It will help fill the gap in this field by empirically identifying the connection between social media motivation, trust and relationship benefit on online relationship commitment to develop a thorough understanding of young adult in Jordan. This study addresses the gaps identified earlier by proposing a conceptual framework that illustrates how social media motivation, and trust influence relationship benefit, and the effect online relationship commitment among young adults. The framework will also explain the role cultural restraint plays as a moderator variable in the relationships between social media motivation, with relationship benefit and online relationship commitment.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Creswell and Creswell (2017) recommended that an inclusive approach is required to address research questions. Hence, this study aimed to address the research questions listed below:

- i. What is the impact of social media motivation on online relationship commitment?
- ii. What is the impact of social media motivation on relationship benefits?
- iii. What is the moderating impact of cultural restraint on the relationship between social media motivation and online relationship commitment?
- iv. What is the moderating impact of cultural restraint on the relationship between social media motivation and relationship benefits?

- v. What is the impact of relationship benefits on online relationship commitment?
- vi. What is the impact of trust on online relationship commitment?
- vii. What is the mediating impact of relationship benefits between social media motivation and online relationship commitment?

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

Based on the research questions above, the research objectives listed below were developed:

- i. To examine the impact of social media motivation on online relationship commitment.
- ii. To examine the impact of social media motivation on relationship benefits.
- iii. To examine the moderating impact of cultural restraint on the relationship between social media motivation and online relationship commitment.
- iv. To examine the moderating effect of cultural restraint on the relationship between social media motivation and relationship benefits.
- v. To examine the impact of relationship benefits on online relationship commitment.
- vi. To examine the impact of trust on online relationship commitment.
- vii. To examine the mediating impact of relationship benefits between social media motivation and online relationship commitment.

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study focused on three areas, which set the scope of the study. Firstly, this study was carried out in Jordan, and concentrated on cities in Jordan's north, south and central regions. The population of the study was Jordanian young adults and as such,

the unit of analysis was Jordanian young adults range age between 18 to 23 years old. The reason for choosing Jordanian young adults was that they form a large group in society using internet (Dennis et al., 2019). Jordanian young adults are the largest group of the population who access social media platforms. Furthermore, social media use has intensified in this group. An annual survey of Arabian youth in 2018 reported that social media use increased from 55% in 2016 to 68% in 2017, a trend that shows no indication of slowing down. This percentage further increased to 79% in 2019 among Arabian youth (Dennis et al., 2019).

Secondly, this study concentrated on social media platform motivation. The study mainly used statistics for Facebook and YouTube (as both were ranked first and second in terms of usage in Jordan), apart from Twitter and LinkedIn, to analyse social media motivation and its impact on Jordanian online relationship commitment through psychological benefits, social benefits and functional benefits. Finally, this study explore the moderating impact of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, concentrating on the dimension of cultural restraint and its impact on the relationship between social media motivation, relationship benefits and online relationship commitment among Jordanian young adults.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study expanded the literature on social media practices among young adults, which has been a topic that has been thoroughly examined globally yet is still in its infancy in Jordan. The findings of this study are extremely pertinent to resolving the deficits in the gradually increasing knowledge pertaining to social media, cultural restraint and online relationship commitment. Consequently, this study significantly contributed to the literature in several areas.

Theoretically, this study improved predictions of relationship benefits and online relationship commitment through the usage of social media by using the uses and gratifications theory, social exchange theory, and Hofstede's cultural aspects theory as supporting theories. Furthermore, the application of these three theories in this study helped to a better understanding of social media platform motivation and online connection advantages in the cultural context, particularly in the Arabian environment. This study was able to overcome Sweeney and Webb's (2007) limitations of simply using the uses and gratifications theory.

Empirically, this study provided evidence of social media motivation that could affect the relationship benefits (i.e. social, psychological and functional benefits) of social media users in Jordan. In addition, the current research provided empirical findings of the mediating impacts of relationship benefits on social media motivation and online relationship commitment. Finally, this study endorsed findings from previous studies of the impact of cultural restraint on the relationship between social media motivation, relationship benefits and online relationship commitment among Jordanian young adults.

Practically, the results of the current research will aid Jordanian establishments in comprehending the wants and aspirations of young adults in relation to social media usage, particularly in an education sector that constitutes a secure setting for young adults to excel in their academic performance. The findings will also help media developers and media establishments in Jordan determine the advantages of social media platform use among the Jordanian audience and develop essential areas.

Methodologically, SEM SmartPLS 3.0 was utilised to examine the data in testing the hypotheses and answering the research questions of this study. The



SmartPLS 3.0 application has been effectively and successfully tested in various research disciplines, particularly information systems, social psychology, strategic management, social sciences and marketing. The employment of SmartPLS 3.0 enhanced the data analysis and improved the generalisability of the findings that contributed to the literature.

## **1.7 Definition of Terms**

To ensure consistent interpretation, the following concepts were defined in the context of this study.

### **1.7.1 Social Media**

Social media is described as an interactive computer-mediated technology that expedites the conception and sharing of knowledge, beliefs, professional interests and other practices through societies and virtual networks (Ngai, Moon, Lam, Chin & Tao, 2015). In addition, social media is characterised as a medium of electronic communication (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, etc.) that assists individuals in forming online societies to share knowledge, work interests, thoughts, personal communications and images/videos through virtual networks (Zivnuska et al., 2019).

### **1.7.2 Information-seeking**

Information-seeking is defined as using social media to gain knowledge autonomously through personal learning (Whiting & Williams, 2013). This description is in accordance with Shao (2009), who stated that the quest for information is motivated by the need among people to amplify comprehension and knowledge about themselves, others and the world.

### **1.7.3 Giving Information**

Khan (2017) referred to giving information as accessing social media to provide users with knowledge as well as to gain knowledge from diverse groups of social media users.

### **1.7.4 Self-status**

Self-status is defined as sharing social media news, which assists in achieving peer status (Whiting & Williams, 2013) and measures the extent to which sharing social media news helps an individual achieve status among their peers (Khan, 2017).

### **1.7.5 Social Interaction**

Social interaction involves using social media to facilitate mutual exchange between two or more digital users through conversation and communication with one another (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

### **1.7.6 Entertainment**

Entertainment is characterised as using social media or online media for pleasure and entertainment (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

### **1.7.7 Relaxation**

Relaxation refers to the use of social media to release daily stress and maintain calm (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

### **1.7.8 Being Fashionable**

Being fashionable involves using social media platforms to increase an individual's ranking and to amaze other users with the latest personal updates (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

### **1.7.9 Psychological Benefits**

Psychological benefits are described as being happy, feeling attached to others and mitigating stress and loneliness through the use of social media platforms (Balakrishnan & Shamim, 2013). Psychological benefits also denote a sense of belonging to a community and the interaction with other members of that community (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004).

### **1.7.10 Social Benefits**

Social benefits are defined as the impressions of fondness and kinship acquired through building an online community (Sweeney & Webb, 2007). Moreover, social benefits refer to the benefits gained from forming partnerships and establishing ties, such as offering information to those who seek it and receiving assistance (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004).

### **1.7.11 Functional Benefits**

These benefits are essential to the relationship that results from interacting with others and are essential components in electing to participate in online-based life (Sweeney et al., 2007). Functional benefits are also generated by attaining definite goals through information gathering and sharing (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004).

### **1.7.12 Online Relationship Commitment**

Commitment in an online relationship was defined by Ma and Yuen (2011) as the degree to which individuals trust that they can maintain interactions with other social media users in an online environment.

### **1.7.13 Cultural Restraint**

Cultural restraint is the act of utilising meanings and symbols, i.e. culture, to test and fight against a prevailing force. It is defined as the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

## **1.8 Organisation of the Thesis**

This thesis was divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 discussed the background of the research, the problem statement and the research objectives and questions. The study's significance and the definition of the key terms were also highlighted. Chapter 2 explained the supporting theories and elucidated the associations among the variables of the study. The literature review covered social media motivation, online relationship commitment, relationship benefits and cultural restraint. This chapter also presented the research framework and postulated the research hypotheses. In Chapter 3, the research methodologies were considered and explained, comprising the study population, unit of analysis, sampling technique, instrument development, the conceptualisation of variables, data collection and analysis methods. Chapter 4 described the data analysis and presented the findings and the interpretations of the findings. Chapter 5 deliberated on the findings by specifying supporting literature and reasoning. The chapter also presented the theoretical, methodological and practical

contributions of this study. Additionally, research limitations and future research suggestions were discussed in this chapter.

## **1.9 Chapter Summary**

The present chapter presented the background of the study and described the issues that were investigated. The chapter also listed the broad research questions that incorporated the objectives of the current research. Finally, the expected contributions of the present study were discussed. The next chapter reviews the relevant literature and explains the nature of social media development in Jordan. The chapter also includes a thorough analysis of the variables of the study and develops the conceptual framework and hypotheses of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

A review of the most important literature related to the research problem is presented in this chapter. Chapter 2 introduces the idea of social media, the viewpoints of young adults in Jordan and the theories adopted in the present study. The review of the social media literature concentrates on the impacts of social media motivation, relationship benefits, cultural restraint, and online relationship commitment on young adults in Jordan. The purpose of this chapter is to develop a richer comprehension of the problem and to show how the present study addressed gaps in the literature.

#### **2.2 Social media**

##### **2.2.1 Definition of social media**

As a preliminary step in seeking to comprehend its impacts on online relationship commitment, social media as an overarching concept should be clearly defined. Social media has expanded into multiple communication channels, through which users exchange life moments, create relationships and gain knowledge. Thus, identifying the concept of social media helps to provide socio-cognitive insights (Shen, Luong, Ho & Djailani, 2019).

One of the common channels of communication that companies have recently applied in their marketing activities is social media. Social media can be defined as an online application program, platform, or mass media tool that facilitates interaction, collaboration, or content sharing between users in general (Kim & Ko, 2012). The impact of social media on consumer's behavior includes a wide spectrum of activities

ranging from informing, sharing ideas and attitudes to acquire awareness and understanding, and visualize post-purchase behavior without purchasing (Tatar & Erdoğan, 2016).

Social media is the interaction among people in which they create share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks, Govender et al. (2013). In academia and industry, social media marketing applications have gained acclaim due to their potential to enhance marketing efficiency and efficacy through their speed and lower cost. These advantages allow the development, distribution, sharing and trading of innovative products for partners, consumers, clients and society as a whole (Vance, Howe & Delvalle, 2009; Shen, Luong, Ho & Djailani, 2019).

The concept of social media in medicine focuses on sharing knowledge about, for example, symptoms and common psychological problems. Social media is a place that allows social interactions to occur. These interactions facilitate decreased hospitalisation and mortality rates while increasing medical and home assistance efforts. Many social media users also look for information on health issues on social media platforms (Wu & Chiou, 2020).

Social media has positively transformed the World Wide Web that has been established over the past 31 years. Social media encompasses an extensive variety of devices and advancements, as described by Mangold and Faulds (2009):

“a wide range of online, word-of-mouth forums including blogs, company-sponsored discussion boards and chat rooms, consumer-to-consumer email, consumer product or service ratings websites and forums, Internet discussion boards and forums, moblogs (sites containing digital audio, images, movies, or photographs), and social media websites.”

The above definition may be explained by dividing the words "social media" into two parts—"social" and "media". "Social" refers to the interactions between individuals, while "media" refers to the devices and web advancements used to facilitate such interactions. Social media sites, meanwhile, are web-based interfaces that integrate various methods, content and communications systems that allow, at a minimum, the creation of individual profiles that show user-represented content, linkages to other individuals, the creation of connections between users as displayed in their lists of connections and the interactions between users.

These social media sites permit an individual who uses social media to produce an individual profile while communicating with users from different locations (Chung, 2017). Moreover, users can upload photos, update their current activity anytime and direct individual or open messages to anyone they want.

Based on the descriptions above, the main social media platforms used in the Middle East in 2019 are shown in Figure 2.1. Most of users (75%) used and WhatsApp and Facebook (71%) as their main social media platforms in 2019. In 2018, the usage of Facebook was decrease with 61% from 74% (2017), it is because the usage of WhatsApp highly among the user, where WhatsApp is more used for text and easy to use. Figure 2.2 depicts the annual increase of unique mobile users, Internet users, active social media users and active mobile social media users in 2019.



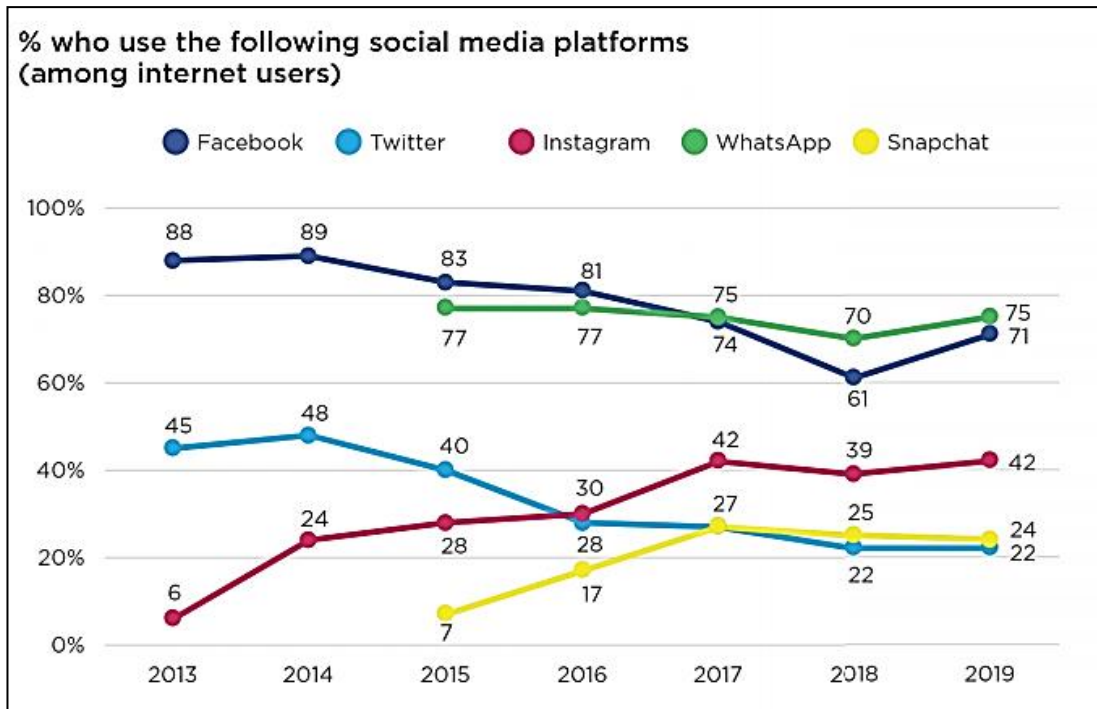


Figure 2.1 Social media platforms in the Middle East, 2019  
 (Source: <https://hootsuite.com/>)

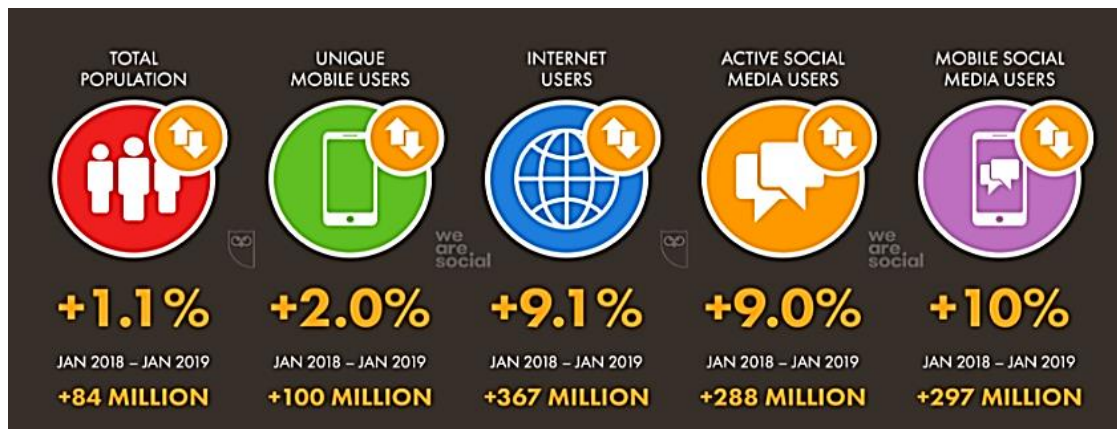


Figure 2.2 Annual growth, 2019  
 (Source: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2019-global-digital-overview>)

The figures describe the attractiveness of digital connections and communications in the Middle East together with the growth in other countries. The primary concern of the current research was social media motivation and online

relationship commitment, and the statistics on social media based on Figures 2.1 and 2.2 (2.789 billion active social media users and an annual growth of 482 million active social media users) merited a comprehensive examination of their appeal.

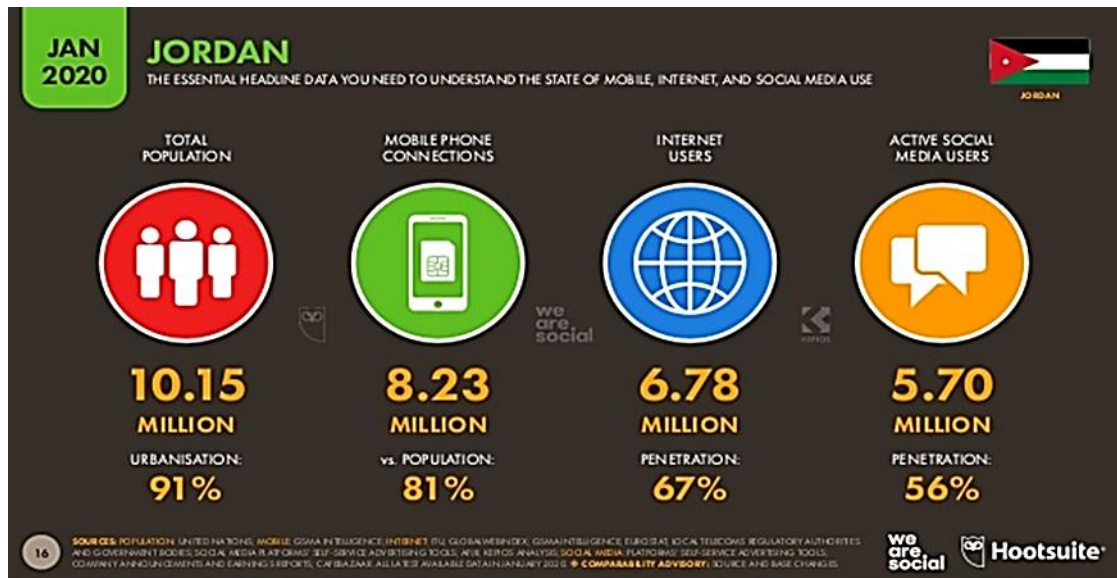


Figure 2.3 Annual growth in the Kingdom of Jordan, 2020  
(Source: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-jordan>)

Based on Figure 2.3, in January 2020, there were 5.70 million social media users in Jordan. Between April 2019 and January 2020, the number of social media users in Jordan rose by 394,000 (+7.4%), while in January 2020, social media use peaked at 56%.

### 2.2.2 Social Media Usage among People in General

Although it is certainly important to determine the specific regional, global and cultural factors affecting the level and type of social media use and motivation, it is equally important to have a detailed understanding of the use of social media by modern humanity. Given, especially, that there were 2.5 million active users of social

media in 2019 (Pew Research Center, 2019), it is essential to comprehend how this user group accesses and uses social media.

It has been estimated that, currently, the average global citizen on the Internet not only actively engages with social media but also does so simultaneously on multiple platforms. A recent study by the Pew Research Center in 2019, stated that the above-mentioned active Internet user population maintained and regularly used (at least once a week) an average of 5.54 social media accounts.

It has also been reported that approximately 3.6 billion members of the global citizenry access and engage with social media through mobile devices as opposed to desktops or laptop computers (Statista, 2020). Meanwhile, another recent study has suggested that more than one million new and existing users become active participants on social media every day (Dijck, 2019). With an acquisition rate of about 12 people per second (Dijck, 2019), it is evident that social media engagement is a highly prevalent mobile practice wherein social media users favour immediate and readily available access to social media platforms that best suit their needs and interests. It has to be noted, however, that the creation and presence of a social media account do not necessarily correlate with its frequency of use.

By the end of 2015, an estimated 1.65 billion people had subscribed to Facebook, while 400 million were registered with Instagram, 1.3 billion had a Twitter account, 300 million had a LinkedIn profile and 100 million had a Pinterest and Twitter account, respectively (Rainie, 2015). With that said, some 81 million existing Facebook accounts were fake or aliased, and only 320 million of the 1.3 billion registered Twitter accounts were logged in. Likewise, only 44% of those 320 million accessed accounts actually submitted or responded to a tweet (Duggan, 2015). Such

figures highlight the sharp difference between passive social media engagement and active usership, shedding light on more general trends in social media activity. While social media is incredibly powerful and ubiquitous in many respects, those engaged in true and active social media engagement are far less numerous than generalised studies suggest (Duggan, 2015).

It must also be noted that contact with social media serves a number of purposes outside the realm of social networking and the sharing of personal images, videos and thoughts. Here, it is critical to note that social media is regularly and actively used by business organisations interested in promoting their products and communicating via digital content with younger and technologically advanced audiences in a language they understand (Brennan & Croft, 2015). In addition, a recent study suggested that active participants in this group are twice as likely to respond to and interact with branded content for social media users aged 55-64 worldwide as their younger counterparts (Duggan, 2015). As such, in 2016, 38% of companies expected to invest more than 20% of their overall advertising expenditure on social media, which was about 15% higher than in 2015 (Brennan & Croft, 2015).

Dieter (2018) observed that 30 million Saudi Arabians used the Internet. A 2018 Pew Research Center study also disclosed that 73% of adults used YouTube, and analysis indicated that the use of Facebook and YouTube has grown in recent years. An online poll to see why social media users share digital images on Facebook was undertaken by Malik, Dhir and Nieminen (2016). The online survey attracted 368 respondents. This survey resulted in the discovery on the Facebook site of six exclusive gratifications for exchanging various images in the areas of social influence, exchange of information, habits and seeking affection and attention. In addition, Malik, Dhir and