

Facebook's Role in Spreading Electronic Harassment in Jordan

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Abstract

The study aimed to identify the degree of exposure of students in the Faculty of Mass Communication at Zarqa University to Facebook and its role in the spread of the phenomenon of electronic harassment. This study is classified as descriptive research, and the study relied on the media audience survey method. A questionnaire was used as a data collection tool to achieve the objectives of the study. The students of the Faculty of Mass Communication at the University of Zarqa, Jordan, are exposed to Facebook to a high degree, with an arithmetic average of 2.42, and the study showed that women are one of the most prominent groups exposed to harassment through Facebook from the point of view of the study sample, with an average of 3.76. The study revealed that the most prominent form of harassment is (threat and blackmail), which came in first place with an arithmetic average of 4.44, and the study showed that the most prominent goal of harassment is (sexual desires), where the arithmetic average of it reached 432.

Keywords: electronic harassment, Facebook, Jordan

1. Introduction

Because of the world's new communication revolution, the Internet has become a widespread phenomenon. It is regarded as one of the modern and influential media and communication that connects the world's population, and it is characterized by great speed and pervades all aspects of our lives and expands our abilities to think, and time scales compress and change the way we think and communicate with others (Alzyoud & Makhareh, 2023). The technological advancement we are witnessing today predates many previous advancements. Social networking sites have become an essential part of daily life (Ahmad et al., 2023), and a large percentage of Americans use Facebook and MySpace, where they can post personal information about themselves and electronically communicate with people from all over the world, according to a Pew Internet survey (Makhareh et al., 2022; Safori, 2018a; Bakhit, 2004). Without a doubt, Facebook has improved positive aspects of our daily lives, contributed to the rapid flow of information, and strengthened social relations between individuals, becoming a space for daily interaction between individuals and expanding our circle of friendships.

Despite these benefits, the method has had negative consequences, resulting in the formation of deviant virtual collective and individual groups that produced communicative content and transmitted negative behaviors in this virtual communication space. They violated Facebook users' privacy, resulting in what is known as electronic harassment (Al olaimat et al., 2022; Ghaniya, 2020). In our study, we attempt to shed light on a type of violence known as electronic harassment directed at individuals, particularly women, a phenomenon that has economic and social consequences for women and jeopardizes their reputation and stability. Harassment has a negative psychological, physical, and moral impact. The study then attempts to determine the role of Facebook in the spread of this type of harassment.

Study Problem

Because of technological progress, the spread of various social networking sites, and the transformation of people through the endless electronic space into a set of texts, images, sounds, and videos, social networking sites are entering a stage of radical transformation and are tangibly affecting the lives of individuals and their daily interactions (Sharadga et al., 2022; Al-Quran et al., 2022). This is the most widely used and prevalent Facebook site in the world, and it allows for great freedom in communication, communication, and dissemination of information and various videos, and this freedom paved the way for Facebook to become a place to spread electronic harassment by penetrating personal accounts, extortion, slander, or defamation by sending inappropriate comments, photos, and videos through this site, which is why it is called electronic harassment, and this harasses As a result, the purpose of this study was to try to identify the role of Facebook in the spread of electronic harassment from the perspective of students at Zarqa University's Faculty of Mass Communication.

Study Questions

The study aims to answer the following main question: what role does Facebook play in the spread of electronic harassment from the perspective of Zarqa University's Faculty of Mass Communication students? The following questions are derived from this main question:

1. What is the degree to which students of the Faculty of Mass Communication at Zarqa University, Jordan, are exposed to Facebook?
2. What is the role of Facebook in spreading electronic harassment from the point of view of the students of the Faculty of Mass Communication at Zarqa University of Jordan?

Objectives

The study aims to achieve the main objective of identifying the role of Facebook in spreading electronic harassment from the perspective of students at Zarqa University's Faculty of Mass Communication, and under this goal is a set of sub-goals represented in identifying:

1. Identifying the degree of exposure of the students of the Faculty of Mass Communication at the Jordanian University of Zarqa to Facebook.
2. Identifying the role of Facebook in spreading electronic harassment from the point of view of the students of the Faculty of Mass Communication at Zarqa University, Jordan.

Procedural Terms

A role, idiomatically, is a set of responsibilities, activities, and powers granted to a person or team, and they can have multiple roles (Al-Masari, 2015). It is defined procedurally as the procedure or function that Facebook performs in spreading electronic harassment.

Electronic harassment means harassment or bullying that causes harm or disgrace to people, whether it is women or men, and includes the dissemination of pornography, insults based on gender, threats, extortion, and personal information and its falsification through electronic means.

The concept of Facebook is a website that was officially launched on February 4, 2004, by the young American Mark Zuckerberg. It uses: For social communication, it is the most popular and famous social network on the Internet, and according to several recent studies, Jordanians are the most involved with this site than other social networking sites, and this site allows the ability to share photos, text messages, and videos, in addition to sharing the situation and feelings (Safari, 2018b).

Study Theory

This study is based on the theory of media dependence, and its concept is clear from the name of the theory, which is the interdependence of individuals and the media, and that the relationship that governs them is a dependence relationship between the media, social systems, and the public. as well as published (Kanaan, 2016). The theory of media dependence emerged in the 1970s and is based on the existence of a strong relationship between the public, the media, and the social system. The dependence relationship is defined as the relationship in which the public relies on the media for information to achieve certain goals. The dependence theory determines the nature of an individual's relationship with the media. When an individual relies on these means to meet his cognitive needs, these means become more influential in the individual's psychological and social life, and their impact grows. The theory works by defining the role of the media in the process of an individual's social upbringing (Ahmad, 2022). This theory is based on the existence of a strong relationship between the public, the media, and the social system, and it revolves around the public's dependence on the media to provide it with information that meets its needs and helps it achieve these needs. (Musa, 2014), some sub-hypotheses, the most important of which are: (Murad, 2011).

1. The difference in the degree of stability and balance in the social system is due to continuous changes, and therefore the need for information and news increases or decreases according to the need for this news and information, as individuals are more dependent on the media to obtain information.
2. The vitality of the media system for members of society increases the degree of public dependence on the media to satisfy their needs.
3. The different needs of the masses and their individual and psychological goals affect the degree of their dependence on the media.

The objectives of the accreditation theory

Individuals depend on the media to achieve the following goals (Makawi and El-Sayed, 1998).

1. Understanding: such as self-knowledge through learning and obtaining experience, and social understanding through knowing and interpreting things about the world or local community.
2. The guidance includes directing the work, such as that the individual decides what to buy. Interactive guidance, such as obtaining clues on how to deal with new or difficult situations.
3. Entertainment includes isolated pastimes such as rest, relaxation, and excitement, and social pastimes such as going to the cinema or listening to music with friends.

Studies confirm that relying on the media leads to the individual obtaining information that explains the facts around him and helps him to understand crises, interact with them, and devise methods of confronting them (Alzyoud, 2022; Makhraesh, 2018).

Previous studies

Ghanaian study (2020) entitled: Electronic harassment against women through social networking sites: Facebook (as a model) A case study of a sample of women victims of harassment

The study aimed to shed light on a dangerous social phenomenon that has repercussions on the position of women in Algerian society, which is the electronic harassment practiced against women. which falls into daily reality.

Al Saad's study (2020) entitled: The Role of Social Media in Preventing Sexual Harassment of Children from the Point of View of Parents in the Primary and Intermediate Levels

The study aimed to identify the role of social media in preventing sexual harassment of children from the point of view of parents. Regarding cases of sexual harassment of children, conducting studies on the most important issues of sexual harassment raised through social media, and conducting specialized studies to measure the effectiveness of official bodies in raising awareness against sexual harassment of children.

Elyan's study (2018), entitled "Electronic Harassment via Internet and Social Media: A Study on a Sample of Jerusalemite Women"

The study aimed to identify the extent of the use of the Internet by Jerusalemite women and the extent of the prevalence of the phenomenon of online harassment. The descriptive approach was used in the study of 200 single Jerusalemite women. The wide spread of electronic harassment via the Internet reached 50%, which is a high rate, and the results indicated that there is weak awareness about the concept of electronic harassment.

Al-Madani study (2017) entitled: The Role of Social Networks in Promoting Rumors Among Saudi University Students, "Twitter as a Model."

The study aimed to identify the role of the social network (Twitter) in spreading rumors among Saudi university students, and the study relied on the descriptive survey method on a sample of 400 individuals. The respondents on the scale of their attitudes towards rumors according to the different motives for exposure to the Twitter network, and there are statistically significant differences between the average scores of the respondents on the scale of their attitudes towards rumors according to the difference in the university (Umm Al-Qura-King Abdullah), and the results confirmed that the most prevalent type of rumors on the social networking site Twitter is primarily a political rumor.

Salman's study (2017) entitled: "Social networks and their role in spreading rumors from the viewpoint of faculty members at the University of Diyala"

The study aimed to identify the role of social networks in spreading rumors from the point of view of the faculty members at the University of Diyala. The degree of spreading rumors on social networks came to an average rate, and Facebook network ranked first among the most widespread networks of rumors. The study showed that the most important reasons for spreading rumors on social networks are the ease of information production and dissemination on those networks, and the results revealed that the most prominent topics of rumors on social networks are political and social rumors.

Dakheel study (2016) entitled: "Social networks and their role in drawing the image of women from the point of view of Jordanian university students."

The study aimed to identify social networking and its role in drawing the image of women from the point of view of Jordanian university students and also found that the opinions of the sample members differed about the role of social networking in drawing the image of women according to the gender variable.

Abdul Razzaq's study (2013), entitled: The Role of Social Networking Sites in Shaping Political Awareness

The purpose of this study was to learn about the role of social networks and websites (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) and their impact on political awareness. The survey method was used within the framework of the quality of descriptive

studies, and the questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 400 people using the sampling method. The study came to many results, the most important of which was that social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube) contribute to raising contemporary issues of interest to university youth and affect their political behavior and political thought. A percentage of 62.8% of the sample members' respondents said they increased their political awareness as a result of their use of social networking sites, while 37.2% said their political awareness was not affected.

Alawneh's (2012) study, entitled: The Role of Social Communication in Motivating Jordanian Citizens to Participate in the Mass Movement

This study aimed to identify the role of social networking sites in motivating Jordanian citizens to participate in the activities of the mass movement, using the media survey method, both descriptive and analytical, on a sample of 296 trade unionists in the city of Irbid. Among the most prominent findings of this study were that (74.7%) of trade unionists use social networking sites, and (24.3%) of them use them because it allows them to express opinions freely, and (50.6%) of unionists use Facebook, and (27.1%) use Twitter, and that the motives for their use of these sites are that they allow communication with friends by (28.5%) and provide the opportunity to express opinions freely by (21.8%), and indicated The results showed that 56.6% of trade unionists participate (always, sometimes, and rarely) in the mass movement that calls for reform and change in Jordan through social networking sites.

Shin, Jian, Driscoll, Bar (2012) "The Diffusion of Misinformation on Social Media" Study: Spreading Misinformation on Social Media.

The study aimed to identify rumors in social networks and relied on the survey method on a sample consisting of content analysis of 17 political rumors that spread over 13 months during the US presidential elections. The rumors tend to return several times after the initial publication, but the facts do not return, and the results show the continuation of rumors and the accompanying textual changes until the tension about the goal dissolves and the rumors appear through partisan news networks that return old rumors to the news and achieve gains.

Haney's (2015) study, entitled: Journalists' Engagement with Facebook

This study aimed to find out how eight Canadian journalists deal with Facebook and how they reconcile their online practices with the standards of traditional journalism.

The study produced a set of results, including some journalists struggling to better manage themselves within digital spaces such as Facebook, and that the majority of participants were careful not to publish their opinions on their pages on Facebook, especially about the issues they work on.

Similarities and differences between the current study and previous studies

- The current study is similar to all previous studies by relying on the quality of descriptive studies except for the HANEY study (2015), which belongs to exploratory studies. The similarity of the current study with all previous studies in terms of the nature of the study that belongs to the survey studies.
- The current study differed from all previous studies by choosing the study community, as the study community in the previous studies varied among school students, women, and university students, while this study chose the students of Zarqa University of Jordan as the study community.
- This study was distinguished from previous studies by the novelty of the chosen topic, as it chose the topic of electronic harassment, and there were few studies on this topic, which indicates the scarcity of studies in this field.

The extent of benefit from previous studies

- Developing the research problem, and setting questions and objectives of the study.
- Developing the study tool in a way that serves and is consistent with the nature of the objectives of this research.
- Comparing the results of the current study with the results of previous studies.

2. Methodology

This research is descriptive, to obtain sufficient and accurate information by depicting, analyzing, and evaluating the characteristics of a particular group or situation that are predominantly specific, or studying current facts related to the nature of a phenomenon, situation, group of people, group of events, or a group of situations. It could be used to estimate the frequency of occurrence of a specific phenomenon as well as the degree to which it is related to another phenomenon or group of phenomena (Hussain, 2006). The media audience survey method was used in the study, which is one of the most appropriate scientific approaches suitable for descriptive research in the field of media studies, especially when using the media audience.

The study population and its sample

Zarqa University students majoring in journalism, digital media, radio, and television make up the study population. In terms of the sample, students will be chosen using the available random sampling method. It included 50% of the students, making the study sample (115) students from Zarqa University's Faculty of Mass Communication majoring in journalism, digital media, radio, and television.

Study tool

The questionnaire was adopted as a research tool to collect data and information on the role of Facebook in spreading electronic harassment and to achieve the objectives of the study, the questionnaire was developed based on the literature of the scientific heritage and previous studies directly related to the subject of the study.

Table (1). The demographic characteristics of the study sample

Variable	Category	Repetition	Ratio
Gender	Male	26	52.0
	Female	24	48.0
Specialization		27	54.0
		23	46.0
Total		50	%100

Table (1) data indicates that the percentage of females from the study sample amounted to (52.0%) compared to 48.0% for males. The specialty (press and digital media) came in first place with a percentage of (54.0), followed by the specialty of (radio and television) in second place) by (46.0%).

The first axis: What is the degree to which students of the Faculty of Mass Communication at Zarqa University, Jordan, are exposed to Facebook?

To answer this question, the frequencies, percentages, and arithmetic mean of the answers were extracted, the respondents are as shown in the following table:

Table (2). The degree of exposure of the study sample to Facebook

Extent	Repetition	Ratio	Exposure
To a Great Degree	30	60.0	2.42
Medium	11	22.0	
To a Small Degree	9	18.0	
Total	50	%100	High

Data in Table (3) indicate the extent of exposure of the sample members to Facebook, where the extent of exposure to Facebook came to a high degree and with an arithmetic average of (2.42), whereby (60.0%) are exposed to Facebook (to a large extent), and this result agrees with a study Alawneh, which showed that (50.6%) of the unionists use Facebook, and those who are exposed to Facebook to a medium degree came in second place with a rate of (22.0%), followed by those who are exposed to it to a small degree at a rate of (18.0%).

The researcher believes that the high rate of exposure to Facebook may be due to the ease of use of the site as it is an application available on all smart devices, which makes it accessible to everyone, and that it is an application that has become a media position in which everyone explores their ideas and beliefs and through it publishes the most accurate details of their daily lives and communicates with others and broadcasts It also provides good advertising space for the products. All those characteristics and features that are developing day after day made it the first, most widely used, and popular platform among all segments of society, especially the youth.

The second axis: What is the role of Facebook in spreading electronic harassment from the point of view of the students of the Faculty of Mass Communication at Zarqa University of Jordan?

To answer this question, the frequencies, percentages, arithmetic averages, and standard deviations of the respondents' answers were extracted as shown in the following table:

Table (3). The role of Facebook in the spread of the phenomenon of electronic harassment from the point of view of the study sample

Paragraph	S. Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		S. Disagree		A.M.	S.D.	Rank	Degree
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%				
8	Threat and blackmail are the most prominent forms of electronic harassment.													
6	Visual harassment by asking pictures of films is the most prominent form of electronic harassment.													
10	The goal of electronic harassment is sexual desires.													
5	Written harassment through messages is the most prominent form of harassment.													
12	The goal of electronic harassment is to get money by threatening the harasser.													
7	Harassment of others is the most prominent form of harassment.													
1	Posts on Facebook include harassment of women.													
9	Espionage is a form of electronic harassment.													
2	Posts on Facebook include child molestation.													
11	The purpose behind electronic harassment is emotional motives.													
3	Posts on Facebook include harassment of the man.													
4	Verbal harassment through audio recordings is the most prominent form of harassment.													

**The question is based on a five-point Likert scale.*

Data in Table (3) indicates the role of Facebook in the spread of the phenomenon of electronic harassment from the point of view of the students of the College of Information, where the phrase (I find that threat and blackmail are the most prominent forms of electronic harassment.) came in the first place with a mean of 4.44 in a very high degree. This result differs from Abdel Latif's study (2019), which showed that most of the crimes committed against women on Facebook are concentrated in sexual harassment.

In second place came the phrase (I find that visual harassment by asking for pictures or films is the most prominent form of electronic harassment) with an average of 4.36 and a very high degree, followed in third place by the phrase (I find that the goal behind electronic harassment is sexual desires) with an arithmetic average of 4.32 To a very high degree, both statements (written harassment through messages is one of the most prominent forms of harassment) and (the goal of electronic harassment is to get money by threatening the harasser), came in fourth place with an average of (4.06) for each.

Paragraphs (Harassment of others is the most prominent form of harassment, (Posts on Facebook include harassment of women), (Espionage is a form of electronic harassment) and (Posts on Facebook include child molestation) rank sixth to ninth, with arithmetic averages ranging from (3.86 - 3.56) and at high degrees. While paragraphs (I believe that the purpose behind electronic harassment is emotional motives), (I find that the posts on Facebook include harassment of men) and (I find that verbal harassment through audio recordings is one of the most prominent forms of harassment) in the last tenth to twelve ranks, with arithmetic averages ranging from (3.28 - 2.74) and medium degrees.

Based on the foregoing, it becomes clear that the groups most exposed to harassment, according to what the sample sees, are (women), where the arithmetic mean of the phrase that deals with harassment of women reached (3.76), with a high degree, and that the most prominent forms of harassment are (threat and blackmail), with an arithmetic average of (4.44) and a very high degree, and the respondents' answers show that the most prominent goal of harassment is (sexual desires), where the arithmetic average of it reached (4.32) and a very high degree.

3. Recommendations

In light of the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

- Conducting specialized studies on the methods and forms of electronic harassment and the most popular social media platforms and networks that contribute to its dissemination.
- Carrying out awareness campaigns against harassment in all its forms through these social networks targeting different segments of society because of their strong and effective impact and their spread among them.
- The need for the concerned authorities to raise legal awareness that may contribute to curbing the phenomenon of electronic harassment, as the harasser is aware of the legal consequences that may befall him, and the victims know the legal ways that can be resorted to in cases of harassment and extortion.

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