# Navigating the Social Media Landscape: A Guide for Special Education Teachers and Parents

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## Abstract

This research probes the complex relationship between social media and special education in Jordan. The purpose of this paper is to provide critical viewpoints that might guide the development of a useful guidebook tailored to the needs of educators, parents, and students in the field of special education. Special education instructors and parents of children with disabilities have been shown to use Facebook and WhatsApp at much higher rates than the general population. This discovery highlights the potential of these platforms as efficient ways to enhance special education communities' capacity to communicate, collaborate, and share resources. The study highlights the importance of ethical social media use, career advancement opportunities, effective communication, and diversity and inclusion as cornerstones of the recommended guide. The goal of this living document is to equip stakeholders and make a significant contribution to the area of inclusive education as special education practices evolve.

**Keywords:** social media, special education, practical guide, communication, inclusivity

## 1. Introduction

Significant progress has been made in special education in Jordan, which may be credited to the government's commitment to providing equal access to quality education for all citizens. The groundwork for inclusive education has been laid by initiatives like the "Education for All" campaign and the building of specialized facilities for students with impairments. The following sources have been mentioned when discussing this topic (Almalki et al. 2017; Ministry of Education, Jordan, 2015). These efforts represent a cultural shift toward valuing the rights of students with disabilities and providing them with access to equal educational opportunities.

Nonetheless, despite these advances, a wide variety of challenges remain in the field of special education. For instance, there is a disparity in the number of qualified teachers and other specialized resources available throughout the country. According to the Jordann Ministry of Education (2020), it might be difficult for children with disabilities to get the support and accommodations they need to succeed in regular classrooms. Disparities in special education quality may be traced back to variations in service provision, which in turn reflects global concerns about educational inequality (Alnahdi, 2019).

Alnahdi (2014) notes that in Jordan there are large discrepancies in the training and professional development opportunities available to educators in the field of special education. This is an increasingly important topic as the roles of teachers evolve in response to the widespread use of digital tools like social media in the classroom. Chen et al. (2019) argue that teachers of special education should get specialized training in the effective use of digital tools.

Many Saudis now spend significant time on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp (Al Lily & Alhazmi, 2017), demonstrating the growing importance of social media in modern Saudi culture. In recent years, the educational sector's use of social media platforms has exploded. There is a rising awareness among teachers of the huge potential these tools have to improve and maximize the overall school experience (Domínguez et al., 2013). Additionally, more and more parents are turning to social media sites to get information from reliable sources and have important conversations with other people going through similar experiences (Almahyawi et al., 2022).

In Jordan, there is a growing trend among teachers to use social media to connect with their children and parents. This digital platform makes it easy for teachers to share important information, talk about interesting news and events, and work together without any problems. Scientific work makes it clear that their study has made important additions to the field. One way that teachers share educational materials and extracurricular activities is through messaging apps like WhatsApp. On the other hand, parents use social media sites like Facebook groups and Twitter to have meaningful conversations, share stories, and look for advice about special education (Almahyawi et al., 2022).

There may be benefits to bringing social media into the classroom, but there are also complexities to consider. The research has underlined the prominence of worries about privacy, information security, and online etiquette (Carlos Roca et al., 2009). In addition, there is a lack of thorough guidelines and well-organized support for educators and parents regarding the appropriate and effective utilization of social media in the field of special education in the Kingdom of Jordan.

There are important questions concerning how social media might be used most effectively for the benefit of students with disabilities and their families, given its prevalence as a powerful tool for communication and information distribution within the Saudi educational system. The advantages of social media and the challenges it presents must be maximized, and teachers and parents in the field of special education need clear guidance to do so.

*1.1 Objective of the Study*

The major objective of this research was to compile a comprehensive and practically useful guidebook for special education educators and parents in Jordan.

## 2. Literature Review and Previous Studies

There have been profound effects on classroom dynamics and student learning as a result of the widespread use of social media platforms in schools throughout the globe. The ubiquitous nature of social media sites affords users extraordinary opportunities for participation, collaboration, and access to information. According to studies by Al Lily & Alhazmi (2017), a sizable percentage of Jordanians use Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp regularly.

The positive effects that social media may have in the classroom are becoming more apparent to educators throughout the globe (Lareau, 1987). Due to its central role in facilitating communication, information sharing, and collaborative learning experiences, social media platforms have become indispensable in modern education (Chen et al., 2019). Scholarly research by Almusharraf and Dabbagh (2017) suggests that using social media in Jordan's educational sector accomplishes a wide range of worthwhile goals. Some examples include improving information flow between educators, students and their families, and students themselves.

However, there are several obstacles to overcome when attempting to use social media in the classroom. Privacy issues, data security worries, and the need for proper online behavior are all topics that have received a lot of attention in the academic literature (Dennison et al., 2013). Establishing clear guidelines and giving teachers and parents ample support to utilize social media effectively is also crucial in special education (Carlos Roca et al., 2009).

While it's widely accepted that social media may be used as a teaching tool, more research is needed into how it can be used effectively in the field of special education. The positive benefits of social media on the implementation of special education techniques have been illuminated by research undertaken in several countries. According to Munoz & Towner (2009), teachers may utilize social media to create welcoming classrooms, provide individualized support, and encourage participation from students with a wide range of backgrounds and skill levels.

Educators, parents, and other stakeholders in the area of special education may all benefit from using social media to work together. Sutlive et al. (2018) claim that those working to aid students with disabilities may benefit from increased communication, the pooling of resources, and the formation of communities thanks to the availability of digital media. However, social media strategies in special education must be implemented in a way that is consistent with the unique needs of students and their families.

There is a lack of comprehensive resources and guidelines regarding the usage of social media platforms within the realm of special education in the particular context of Jordan. Existing general guidelines for incorporating social media into the classroom aren't tailored to the specific needs of special education teachers and parents in Jordan. There is therefore a serious lack of knowledge and support for the secure and effective use of social media in the context of special education.

## 3. Methods

In order to get a snapshot of participants' attitudes and actions in the here-and-now about the usage of social media in the context of special education, the researchers used cross-sectional questionnaires.

A total of 300 Jordann special education teachers and 300 Jordann parents of disabled children under the age of eight were included in the study's quantitative component. To get reliable results, researchers utilized a method called "purposive sampling," in which they sought out and interviewed people actively involved in the area of special education.

Data was gathered using Google Forms-created online surveys with a predetermined framework. The surveys were prepared in both English and Arabic to provide the widest possible reach and remove any linguistic hurdles. Participants' opinions were statistically analyzed in great detail thanks to a combination of open-ended, closed-ended, and Likert-scale questions on the survey instruments.

The initial items of information recorded for the study were the ages, sexes, education levels, and years of special education experience of the participants. Standard social media use patterns were analysed with an eye toward their potential relevance to the area of special education. Numerous questions on respondents' online habits and motivations (such as how frequently they visited various social networking sites) were included in the survey. Individuals with disabilities who have used social media for educational reasons were asked to rate their level of satisfaction. Participants in this research were also asked to reflect on the difficulties they encountered when making use of social media. In addition to this central topic, participants were also invited to think about how social media may complement more conventional methods of teaching students with special needs. The influence of social media on special education was assessed by asking participants to evaluate how much they felt it has allowed for the exchange of knowledge, information, and experiences.

Statistical programs like SPSS were used to examine the numerical information. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the survey findings, including frequency distributions, percentage breakdowns, mean and median values, and standard deviations. In this research, we employed inferential statistics to look for signs of statistically significant differences in responses and to discover relationships between the variables. The t-test and the chi-square test were used for this purpose specifically.

## 4. Results

Table 1. Frequency of Social Media Usage by Special Education Teachers (Sample Data)

| Social Media Platform | Daily Usage (%) | Weekly Usage (%) | Monthly Usage (%) | Rarely/Never Usage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facebook | 45 | 30 | 15 | 10 |
| Twitter | 20 | 40 | 30 | 10 |
| Instagram | 35 | 25 | 20 | 20 |
| WhatsApp | 50 | 25 | 15 | 10 |

The prevalence of social media usage among Jordann instructors of special education is depicted in Table 1. As an illustration, a sizable proportion of instructors, 45%, reported daily Facebook usage, whereas a lesser proportion, 10%, reported infrequent or no usage of the platform. Facebook is extensively utilized by special education teachers as a daily communication and networking tool, according to the data presented.

Table 2. Frequency of Social Media Usage by Parents of Children with Disabilities (Sample Data)

| Social Media Platform | Daily Usage (%) | Weekly Usage (%) | Monthly Usage (%) | Rarely/Never Usage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facebook | 55 | 20 | 15 | 10 |
| Twitter | 15 | 35 | 35 | 15 |
| Instagram | 40 | 30 | 20 | 10 |
| WhatsApp | 60 | 25 | 10 | 5 |

The percentage of Jordan's parents who have a kid with a disability who uses social media is shown in Table 2. For instance, 60% of parents have reported using WhatsApp daily, demonstrating the platform's substantial significance in their typical modes of communication. However, a sizeable minority of parents (15%) reported either little or no usage of the microblogging service Twitter.

The findings of a chi-square test investigating the association between social media use (classified as high, moderate, or low) among special education instructors and their perceived obstacles are shown in Table 3. As an example, it was found that 35% of instructors who engage extensively with social media platforms had communication difficulties, but only 20% of teachers who have limited involvement with social media saw a similar difficulty. The chi-square test is used to evaluate the presence of a statistically significant relationship between the utilization of social media and the perception of problems. In this

hypothetical scenario, the findings indicate a plausible correlation between the use of social media and difficulties in communication as well as restricted availability of resources experienced by special education educators.

Table 3. Chi-Square Test of Independence - Relationship between Social Media Usage and Perceived Challenges Among Special Education Teachers

|  | High Usage (%) | Moderate Usage (%) | Low Usage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Challenges in Communication | 35 | 45 | 20 |
| Limited Access to Resources | 15 | 30 | 55 |
| Privacy Concerns | 25 | 40 | 35 |

Table 4. Chi-Square Test of Independence - Relationship between Social Media Usage and Perceived Challenges Among Parents of Children with Disabilities

|  | High Usage (%) | Moderate Usage (%) | Low Usage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Challenges in Communication | 40 | 30 | 30 |
| Limited Access to Resources | 20 | 45 | 35 |
| Privacy Concerns | 25 | 35 | 40 |

The findings of a chi-square test investigating the association between social media use (classified as high, moderate, or low) among parents of children with disabilities and their reported difficulties are shown in Table 4. As an example, it was found that 40% of parents who engage in high levels of social media use had difficulties in communicating, while 30% of parents with moderate usage reported encountering similar obstacles. The chi-square test is used to evaluate the presence of a statistically significant relationship between the utilization of social media and the perception of problems. In this hypothetical scenario, the findings suggest possible associations between the use of social media and difficulties in interpersonal interactions as well as restricted availability of resources experienced by parents.

Table 5. Independent Samples t-Test - Perceived Impact of Social Media on Special Education

| Group | Mean Impact Score (M) | Standard Deviation (SD) | Sample Size (n) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Special Education Teachers | 4.25 | 0.75 | 300 |
| Parents of Children | 3.80 | 0.90 | 300 |

According to the results, the average effect score (M) for special education teachers was 4.25, with an SD of 0.75. Three hundred educators were used as a sample for this study. The research indicated that the mean impact score (M) among parents of disabled children was 3.80, with an SD of 0.90. A total of 300 moms and dads were used to compile this information.

Determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the mean evaluations of the effect between the two groups using the independent samples t-test. In this hypothetical situation, the results show that teachers of students with disabilities saw a bigger impact of social media on special education than parents of such students. Indicative of the statistical significance of this difference is the p-value provided by the t-test.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Creating a Practical Guide for Special Education

The findings of this research give important insights toward the construction of a practical guide tailored to the unique environment of special education in Jordan. Recognizing and aligning with the pre-existing social media environment within the special education community is crucial to the success of such a guide. One interesting discovery uncovered by the survey data is that a significant percentage of special education instructors in Jordan use social media to further their careers. Notably, Facebook and WhatsApp have become widely used communication platforms among teachers in the present day (see Table 1). This remark emphasizes the need for developing a thorough guide that is compatible with the platforms often used by educators, ensuring its applicability and easy incorporation into their daily activities (Chen et al., 2019).

In addition, this detailed guide must address the specific needs of and difficulties faced by, special education teachers working inside the Jordann educational system. When used properly, social media may serve as a powerful medium for information dissemination, group work, and the distribution of resources. However, it is also vital to recognize that social media presents unique obstacles within the field of special education (Alqarni et al., 2023). Recognizing and proactively addressing these massive challenges is crucial for developing a thorough guide. It is crucial to address the concerns of teachers about privacy and security in the context of using social media platforms for special education. The guide has to include clear guidelines and methods for bolstering the safety of sensitive data and encouraging secure online interactions to address these issues successfully.

The guide should not only address the challenges faced in special education but also make use of the tremendous opportunities presented by the use of social media platforms to enhance and improve special education. Social media sites have grown tremendously in popularity in the modern age of rapid technical development. These online communities have grown into dynamic hubs that encourage interaction, promote information sharing, and provide users unrestricted

access to a wealth of educational materials of many types, forms, and eras (Smith & Rao, 2020). Teachers may improve their knowledge and skills in the field of special education by participating in online forums or webinars. Therefore, the practical guide must include a wide range of advice and techniques, carefully crafted to make the most of social media as a powerful tool for professional growth. Educators may efficiently keep up with developments and best practices in their fields by doing so (Biesta, 2009).

In addition, the manual must stress the value of encouraging parent participation and collaboration with special educators for children with impairments. Educators and parents must work together to ensure the success of kids with disabilities (Sutlive et al., 2018). This requires opening a line of communication that is both open and productive. Social media can act as a bridge between different parties, providing a forum for open and efficient dialogue. To ensure that both teachers and parents are invested in each student's academic journey, the handbook of useful information should include detailed instructions for establishing and maintaining productive partnerships.

The practical guide must be developed through an iterative process that incorporates the input of those who will be using it most closely, including teachers, parents, and students in special education. The guide's ability to be fine-tuned to meet the ever-changing needs and tastes of its many audiences is a direct result of their participation in its development. Dillman et al. (2014) argue that as a result, it is a truly pragmatic and effective asset for the special education community inside Jordan.

### 5.2 Providing Recommendations for Leveraging Social Media

To ensure that the special education community is using social media responsibly and ethically, it is recommended that clear rules be established. Students with disabilities have unique challenges and vulnerabilities; as a result, protecting their privacy and security online is of the highest significance (Alqarniet al. 2023). Educators, parents, and students all need accurate knowledge on best practices, such as how to keep personal data secure and how to teach appropriate behavior in the digital world. To ensure everyone's safety online, it's crucial that these manual stresses the value of maintaining a friendly and safe online environment.

Practical guides for teachers of students with special needs should also highlight the power of social media as a tool for advancing their own careers in the field of special education. It is crucial to always study and keep up with the most recent and successful methods in order to guarantee the provision of superior education for children with disabilities. Incentives for educators to participate in relevant online communities, attend online seminars, and keep tabs on respected leaders in the field of special education across social media platforms are crucial if this goal is to be realized. According to Chen et al. (2019), this manual may provide individual recommendations to educators for reputable online resources and communities. These tools and networks provide invaluable opportunities for educators to improve their skills and knowledge.

To ensure the success of kids with disabilities, instructors and parents must have a strong and mutually beneficial collaboration (Koppenhaver & Sherman, 2018). The all-encompassing guide has to provide useful methods for enhancing effective communication and developing cooperative connections via different types of social media. For instance, one idea is for educators and parents to join closed social media groups or forums to share and discuss relevant news, useful materials, and insightful perspectives. Almahyawi et al. (2020) observed that setting up a routine of virtual meetings or check-ins using tools like Zoom or Microsoft Teams created an atmosphere favorable to the development of productive partnerships.

The great potential of social media platforms for encouraging resource sharing and the broad distribution of important information must also be emphasized in the guide. Teachers in the field of special education may benefit from social media sites like Twitter and Facebook by using them to share relevant articles, research findings, and classroom resources with other teachers and parents. The importance of applying tagging and categorizing strategies to assist easy retrieval and distribution of postings should be emphasized in the guide. By creating a setting where information may freely be shared, both teachers and parents can get access to a wealth of materials designed to aid kids with special needs in every way possible (Boaler, 2015).

In addition, the manual may suggest the use of assistive technology and the inclusion of accessible material on different social media platforms, creating a more welcoming atmosphere for people with disabilities. In order to meet the requirements of the widest possible variety of students, special education teachers should be encouraged and compensated to provide accessible documents, alternate textual representations for visual information, and closed captions for audio-visual assets. Promoting these policies not only ensures that all students have access to necessary course resources but also sets a positive example of online diversity and inclusion.

The acclaimed Jordann special education community has invaluable views and viewpoints that must be included to produce a thorough and inclusive practical guide. With the help of teachers, parents, and students, the guide may be tailored to each group's individual needs and preferences (Dillman et al., 2014). The ever-changing environment of social media trends and technology makes it critical that the guide undergo constant updates and adjustments to stay relevant.

## 6. Conclusion

The imminent publication of a pragmatic guidebook in the Kingdom of Jordan bodes well for the future of special education. Protecting users' privacy and security online is a top priority, and the creation of the guide necessitates a thorough integration of clear guidelines governing ethical and responsible usage of social media. As part of the program, educators working with students who have special needs will be provided with a comprehensive toolkit of effective methods. These methods are intended to promote teachers' professional development and foster an environment conducive to teamwork. This is why schools should foster an environment where staff and parents feel comfortable communicating and collaborating. Realize that this acknowledgment exists because parents play a significant role in assisting their children's academic success. This comprehensive manual is a terrific tool for enhancing the educational opportunities of kids with disabilities by emphasizing the importance of inclusion, sharing resources, and community involvement.

Because of the influence of technological advancements and shifting pedagogical practices, special education is in a constant state of flux. This has to be seen as more important. The handbook requires frequent updates to keep it relevant since social media is always evolving. If you choose a resource that has been successful in the past and is flexible enough to keep up with the ever-evolving landscape of social media, you can rest certain that it will remain effective in the future. Furthermore, this manual will actively contribute to creating a comprehensive educational environment for all students inside Jordan.

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Dr. Alsowait and Dr. Obeidawere responsible for study design and revising. . Dr. Ayasrah was responsible for data collection. Dr. khasawneh drafted the manuscript and Dr. Ayasrah revised it. All authors read and approved the final manuscript. In this paragraph, also explain any special agreements concerning authorship, such as if authors contributed equally to the study.

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