

The Adoption of Social Media by Small and Medium Enterprises in Jordan: A Descriptive Study

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Abstract

As social media rose through the past 10 years, it has prospered to be a main communicating method. Therefore this study aims to explore the use of social media applications (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Skype) by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Jordan. A survey of 148 SMEs in Amman, Jordan was conducted to achieve the study objectives. The study found that SMEs mostly used application was Facebook (by more than half of the SMEs), and the least used one was LinkedIn (by more than fifth of the SMEs). Also, approximately third of the SMEs used YouTube, Skype, and Twitter. Of those, more than one third used these applications daily. The study also found that gaining popularity, enjoyment and social influence were the main motivations for using all five applications by SMEs. Moreover, the study found that the applications were mostly used for information, communication, marketing, and improving business reputation. Furthermore, SMEs considered both fake identities and security issues as the main limitations for using the five applications. In light of the results, several recommendations were suggested to increase the use of social media by SMEs in Jordan.

Keywords: Social Media; SMEs; Facebook; Twitter; YouTube; LinkedIn; Skype; Use; Adoption; Jordan



ملخص البحث

ازدهرت وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الإلكترونية خلال العشرة سنوات الماضية، فأصبحت تُشكّل إحدى وسائل التواصل الرئيسية. لذا يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة استخدام المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة الحجم في الأردن لخمسة من تطبيقات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الإلكترونية (هي: فيسبوك، تويتر، يوتيوب، لنكدان، وسكايب). ولتحقيق هذا الهدف فقد أجريت دراسة مسحية لـ ١٤٨ مؤسسة صغيرة ومتوسطة الحجم في مدينة عمّان، الأردن.

وأظهرت نتائج البحث أنّ أكثر التطبيقات استخداماً في المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة الحجم كان تطبيق فيسبوك (يستخدمه أكثر من نصف عينة الدراسة)، وأنّ أقلّ التطبيقات استخداماً كان تطبيق لينكدان (يستخدمه أكثر من خمس عينة الدراسة). وأنّ ما يقرب من ثلث المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة الحجم يستخدم تطبيقات يوتيوب، سكايب، وتويتر. ومن بين تلك المؤسسات التي تستخدم هذه التطبيقات فإنّ أكثر من ثلثها يستخدم هذه التطبيقات يومياً. وأظهرت النتائج أيضاً أنّ الدوافع الرئيسية لاستخدام هذه التطبيقات كان على التوالي: لاكتساب الشعبية، للمتعة، وللتأثير الاجتماعي. ووجدت الدراسة أنّ هذه المؤسسات في الغالب تستخدم هذه التطبيقات للحصول على معلومات، للتواصل، للتسويق، ولتحسين سمعتها التجارية. وأخيراً، فإنّ أبرز المعوّقات الرئيسية لاستخدام هذه التطبيقات الخمسة من وجهة نظر المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة كانت المسائل الأمنية والهويات المزيفة.

وفي ضوء هذه النتائج، قدّم البحث عدداً من المقترحات والتوصيات لزيادة استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الإلكترونية من قبل الشركات الصغيرة والمتوسطة في الأردن.

الكلمات المفتاحية: وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة، فيسبوك، تويتر، يوتيوب، سكايب، لنكدان، استخدام.

Introduction

In the late 1990s, Internet became well known, websites that allowed individuals to create and upload content began to emerge. By the late 2000s, social media had gained extensive acceptance and some services gained huge numbers of peers. For example, Archambault and Grudin (2012) conducted a longitudinal study in Microsoft to investigate how Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter are used and whether they are considered to be useful for organizational communication and information-gathering. The study found that Between 2008 and 2011, social networking went from being a niche activity to being very widely and heavily used. Growth in use and acceptance was not uniform, with differences based on gender, age and level. In 2011, 82% reported using Facebook and over half reported using it daily. Professionals started realizing the value of social networking sites for work. In addition, Turner et al. (2010) interviewed members of a small company about their full range of communication channels. The study found that use of Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter reportedly increased over the year. Leftheriotis and Giannakos (2014) also investigated whether employees make use of social media for work purposes, what values increase this usage, and if that usage is related with their performance. Results confirmed that in the case of social media for work, employees make extended use of them no matter their age.

Social media is defined” as the interaction among people which allows them to share, create and exchange information in virtual communities with less effort and time” (Cohen, 2011, P1). Social networking sites are spreading fast over the globe, across Middle East too. This research chose Jordan as a country to examine this phenomenon although it hasn’t reached its peak in using technology.

Social media has a number of characteristics that make it a suitable option for doing SMEs’ work activities. These characteristics include but are not limited to (Cohen 2011, P1): (i) a wide range of content formats (e.g., text, image, video, etc.) and allow combining more than one content; (ii) allows communication to take place in real time and to cross one or more applications through social sharing, email and feeds; (iii) involve different levels of interactions by participants who can create and comment on social media networks; and (iv) offer one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many communications. Therefore, social media applications could provide SMEs with opportunities for interaction and communication with customers and suppliers (DiMicco et al. 2009), collection of market research data, promotion of goods and services, provision of detailed information about products and services, expanding their business, and recruitment of candidates. In addition, social media applications



offer organizations enormous opportunities and benefits to improve their business performance (Leftheriotis and Giannakos, 2014). For example, they are an excellent way for businesses to broaden their exposure to the public at a much lower cost than traditional marketing, and they may help organizations reach more customers, understand their needs and wants, and build stronger relationships with them (Wiegand, 2014). Organizations including SMEs started realizing these potential benefits of social media applications.

On the other hand, the importance of SMEs has increasingly grown over the years and they have become the backbone of any country's economy, especially in developing countries. SMEs represent approximately 90% of the total firms across the world and they have a significant role in creating employment opportunities (Hall, 2002). SMEs are generally considered to be flexible, adaptive and innovative firms (Liu et.al. 2005) and these characteristics could make them a good fit for social media applications.

In this regard, SMEs have been generally slow in using technologies in general due to their size and limited resources (Lee and Xia, 2006). The position of SMEs in developing countries in terms of technologies use is still lagging behind SMEs in developed world (Kartiwi, 2006). Although researchers have increasingly started to explore the use of social media applications by individuals (e.g. Leftheriotis and Giannakos, 2014; Turner et al. 2010), little research has explored the use of social media applications by SMEs either in developed or developing countries. Hence, there a need to explore whether SMEs use the social media applications in doing their activities.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the social media applications that are currently used by SMEs in Jordan, and for each application to:

Identify the frequent use of social media applications by SMEs in Jordan.

Define the motivations that attracted SMEs in Jordan to use social media.

Identify the purposes of using social media applications by SMEs in Jordan.

Highlight the limitations of using social media applications by SMEs in Jordan

This study could be useful for academics and practitioners. For academics, it may give them an idea of the extent to which SMEs use social media applications in doing work activities, which they can use as a starting point to investigate other factors that might influence the use of social media applications by SMEs. For practitioners especially SMEs owners and managers, it may help to encourage them to use the social media applications and to raise their awareness of the benefits of these applications to their work.

Literature Background: Social Media Applications

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Skype are the social media applications utilised in this study because of both their popularity in the world and in the Middle East in particular, and their features and options that are suitable for the implementation of SMEs activities. We specifically chose those five applications (shown in figure 1) because they are the most used applications in work places in addition to their widespread popularity in Amman, Jordan.

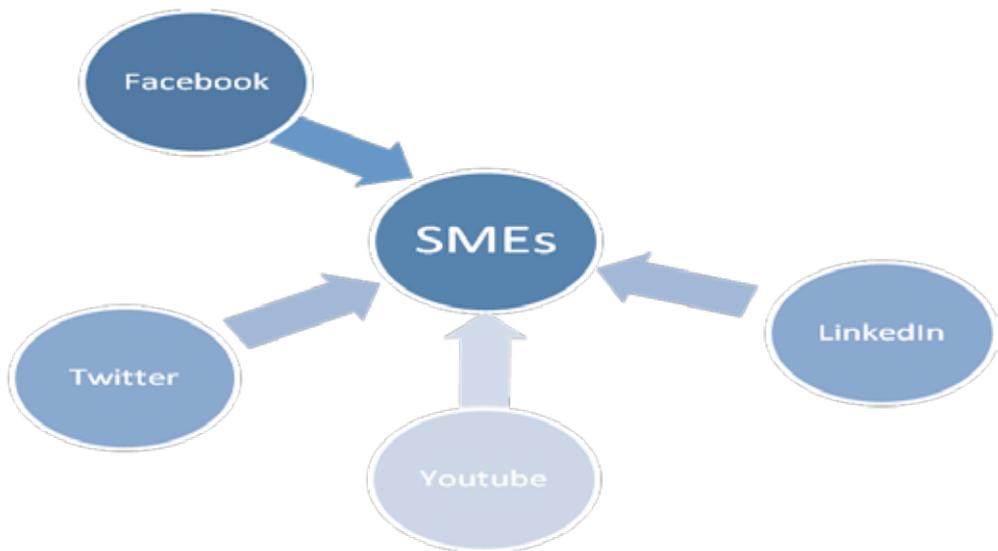


Figure 1: Social media applications that were used in this study

For each application, we asked the following questions:

- Do you use the following social media tools?
- How frequently do you use social media tools?
- What motivates you to use social media in your workplace?
- For what purpose do you use social media tools?
- Please indicate which of the following is a limitation for using social media tools?

Below is a brief description of each of these applications:

Facebook: Facebook was established in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg with the help of

his colleagues in Harvard University. The membership was exclusively for Harvard students, but after gaining some popularity and acceptance, Facebook was expanded to anyone who declares that he/ she is at least 13 years old. Facebook is shown as a social networking service. Users must register first before using the website, after they do so they create a personal profile that enables them to add users as friends for instance, send , and receive messages and automatic notifications when they update their profile. Moreover, Facebook allows users to create groups with mutual-interests, organized by workplace, school or college, or other features. As of September 2012, Facebook has over one billion active users around the world, of which approximately 9% are phony and that is considered one of the disadvantages of using Facebook whether for personal or business purposes (Phillips, 2007, P1). Facebook improved ecommerce (buying and selling products and services online) on April 2011, as it started by presenting a new gateway for marketers and innovative agencies to help them build up brand promotions and sell their products and services on their accounts on Facebook online.

For SMEs, Facebook has turn into an important element of an effective and efficient marketing plan. It allows businesses to connect with users and build up a strong relationship with customers. But if Facebook was misused, this can end up in wasting money and damage the company's reputation. (Business Pundit 2014).

Twitter: Twitter is an online social networking and micro blogging service that allows users to send and read short 140-character text messages, called "tweets"." Registered users can read and post tweets, but unregistered users can only read them (iMarketing Factory, 2011). Twitter could help SMEs (iMarketing Factory, 2011) (i) attain more customers as it has many users around the world which makes it one of the best platforms to search for potential customers and it can also bond them with their existing customers and let them be familiar with their brands, (ii) build relationships with customers by posting updates and tweets that are interesting for them, (iii) create brand awareness by creating personal profiles and create profile for their company which let them gain the trust of their followers in order to create awareness about it, (iv) introduce new products in interesting ways that would attract customers and gain more popularity among peers, (v) announce important news and share information with customers quickly as it is a cheaper and faster way to do so, (vi) collect customer's feedback about company's products and services through the comments and asking customers directly, and (vii) manage online reputation as it allows companies to monitor what is being said about it in general. In this regards, Zhao and Rosson (2009)

found that Twitter was used in their organization for ‘life updates’ or personal status, for sharing information with friends or colleagues in real time, and as ‘personal RSS feeds’ to monitor trusted external sources for news or links.

YouTube: YouTube is large video-sharing engine, founded in 2005, on which users can upload, view and share videos. YouTube allows people to share their inspirational thoughts which take a video form worldwide. As for SMEs, YouTube may offer some of their material via YouTube, as part of the YouTube partnership plan (Barringe, 2012, P2); for example, they could upload a video that advertise their products and services. They can also upload a video that contains the instructions of using these products and services, which is similar to service after selling in the traditional media. There is also a comment section in YouTube, which allows people to share their positive or negative thoughts and comments about a specific video.

LinkedIn: LinkedIn the largest professional network with 300 million members in over 200 countries, founded in 2003. LinkedIn connect professionals around the world to make them more productive and successful. LinkedIn could help SMEs in (Sundberg 2014, P1; Remillard, 2014; Flanigan, 2011): (i) recruiting professionals and contacting them, (ii) advertising vacant positions, (iii) classifying potential enterprises to associate with, (iv) establishing connections as it enables the user to communicate with people who already know, and to reach out to people LinkedIn believes he/she may know based on his/her connections, and (v) building up a brand as LinkedIn is the professional element of a business (Flanigan, 2011).

Skype: Skype’s recognition has been on the rise ever since its formation in 2003. It is a free video service to anyone in the world .People can create a profile and stay in touch with their family and friends. Skype is the quickest way for doing things together; a simple Skype text, video and voice make it simple to share your thoughts and experiences with people wherever they are. With Skype, sharing a story, celebrating a birthday or holding a meeting or even learn a language is possible (Skype Communication, 2014). Skype provide some benefits to its users such as saving their money and helping them work together in any place around the world as long as you have internet access (Outar ,2011). Therefore, Skype provide SMEs a better way of communication with their customers and suppliers or even interviewing potential candidates to fill their vacant positions.

In light of the above, we can conclude that social media has a number of characteristics that make it a suitable option for doing SMEs’ work activities. Therefore, social media applications could provide SMEs with opportunities for interaction and com-



munication with customers and suppliers. On the other hand, although the literature describes the different aspects of these application and their potential benefits for people in general and industry in particular, little research has attempted to explore the actual use of these applications especially by SMEs in developing countries.

Methods

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive approach. A survey was the main method used for data collection. The study explored the use and adoption of five social media applications by 150 SMEs in Amman, Jordan namely Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Skype. The survey (Appendix 1) developed for this study consisted of three complimentary parts as follow:

Part one consisted of the personal information, which was mainly about the gender, age, marital status and the education.

Part two contained general information about the company such as: name of the company, nature of work, number of employees and year of establishment

Part three consisted of specified question about the adoption and use of the five applications of social media, such as: Frequent use of social media applications, the motivation, purposes and limitation of social media applications.

The survey was evaluated by a number of experts and put in to practice in the sector after making necessary alterations were seen appropriate.

The study population consists of all SMEs in private sector in Amman, Jordan. In total, there are more than 100,000 SMEs in Jordan. These enterprises are the center of the national economy, as they supply around 50% or more to GDP, offer employment to an estimated 60% of the Jordanian workforce, generate up to 70% of new job opportunities in the economy; and finally account for 45% of exports in Jordan, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Economic, 2012).

The survey was distributed through a personal visit by the last three authors. The participants were explained the purposes of the study and asked to complete the surveys. The instructions for completing the questionnaire were given on the cover page to avoid any misunderstanding. Surveys were distributed conveniently to a sample of SMEs in Jordan (150 questionnaires were distributed).The questionnaires were completed by various kinds of employees (e.g. company owners, general managers, IT managers, and communication officers). Two surveys were ignored because of missing data. Therefore, only 148 surveys were usable for this study and included in the analysis. A summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents is

presented in Table 1.

Table 1: A summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic Characteristics	N = 148	Percent
Gender		
Male	111	75%
Female	37	25%
Age		
21-30 years	69	46.6%
31-40 years	63	42.6%
41-51 years	13	8.8%
51 years and above	3	2%
Marital status		
Single	69	46.6%
Married	71	48%
Other	8	5.4%
Education		
Diploma or less	28	18.9%
Bachelor	111	75%
Masters	9	6.1%

As shown in the table above, the results indicate that 75% of the respondents were males, and 25% were females. As for the age, the highest percentage was 46.6% which was for respondents whose age is between 21-30 years old. Considering the marital status, 46.6% of the respondents were single, while 48% were married. And last but not least 75% of the respondents hold a bachelor degree. In addition, Table 2 shows the data analysis concerning the company information.



Table 2: Basic Company Information

Categories	Freq=148	Percent
Nature of Work		
Groceries, restaurants & cafes sector	44	29.9%
Films , animations and graphic design sector	26	17.7%
Clothes, shoes, beauty & hair care sector	19	12.9%
Online trade sector	14	9.5%
Consultations sector	10	6.8%
Travel and Tourism sector	9	6.1%
Pharmaceutical & medical sector	9	6.1%
Information & Communication sector	8	5.4%
Bookshops, stationary & toys trade sector	8	5.4%
Number of Employees		
10 employees & less	35	23.6%
11-25 employees	60	40.5%
26-50 employees	31	20.9%
51-150 employees	14	9.5%
151 employees & more	8	5.4%
Years in the market		
2 years or less	37	25.3%
3-5 years	29	19.9%
6-10 years	32	21.9%
11-20 years	29	19.9%

21 years & more	19	13%
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As shown in table 2, 29.9% of the respondents own or work in a grocery store , restaurants and cafes sector , while 12.9% of the respondents own or work in films , animations and graphic design sector, or own or work in clothes, shoes, beauty & hair care sectors. In regard to the number of employees, 40.5% of SMEs employ between 11-25 employees while 23.6% of SMEs employ 10 or less employees. 2 years or less was the highest in regard of years in market with the percentage of 25.3% , while 21 years & more was the lowest with the percentage of 13%.

Data Analysis and Findings

This study explored the adoption and use of five social media applications (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Skype) by SMEs in Jordan. Various questions about the applications such as the use, frequent use, motivation, purpose of use, and limitations were explored. The data obtained from the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS 19.0 program. The results are presented in Table 3.

As shown in table 3, Facebook was used by 51.4% of SMEs. Of those, 81.6% used Facebook daily. The highest three motives for using Facebook by SMEs were as follow: to gain popularity (76.3%), for enjoyment (75%), and (72.4%) for the social influence. Whereas the highest five purposes for using Facebook by SMEs were as follow: sending and sharing information (89.5%), advertising and campaigning for their product/service/brand (88.2%), to communicate with customers or to improve business reputation (81.6%), and for receiving and viewing information (78.9%). SMEs considered fake identities (76.3%), security issues (71.1%), and leads to addiction (67.1%) as the main limitations for using Facebook.

For YouTube, it was used by 32.4% of SMEs. Of those, 63.8% used YouTube daily. The highest three motives for using YouTube by SMEs were as follow: to gain popularity (61.7%), for the social influence (40.4%), and (38.3%) for enjoyment. Whereas the highest three purposes for using YouTube by SMEs were as follow: searching for information (59.6%), advertising and campaigning for their product/service/brand (40.4%), and for receiving and viewing information (36.2%). SMEs considered security issues (80.9%) ,fake identities (72.3%), and leads to addiction (53.2%) as the main limitations for using YouTube.

Moreover, Skype was used by 31.5% of SMEs. Of those, 50% used Skype daily. The highest motive for using Skype by SMEs was to gain popularity (34.8%). Whereas the



highest five purposes for using Skype by SMEs were as follow: communicate with the colleagues (58.7%), sending and sharing information (54.3%), to communicate with customers (52.2%), and 50% for both receiving and viewing information and communicating with the Suppliers. SMEs considered fake identities (91.3%) and security issues (89.1%) as the main limitations for using Skype.

Furthermore, Twitter was used by 31% of SMEs while 57.8% of these SMEs used it daily. The highest three motives for using Twitter by SMEs were as follow: to gain popularity (51.1%), for social influence (48.9%), and (42.2%) for enjoyment. Whereas the highest four purposes for using Twitter by SMEs were as follow: for both receiving and viewing information and communicating with customers (57.8%), and for both sending and sharing information and improving business reputation (55.6%). SMEs considered fake identities (97.8%) and security issues (86.7%) as the main limitations for using Twitter.

Finally, the least used application was LinkedIn (22.1% of SMEs). Of those, 40.7% used LinkedIn daily while 37.4% used it once a month. The highest three motives for using LinkedIn by SMEs were as follow: to gain popularity (59.4%), for social influence (56.3%), and 46.9% for enjoyment. Whereas the highest three purposes for using LinkedIn by SMEs were as follow: searching for information (87.5%), advertising and campaigning for their product/service/brand (59.4%), and 53.1% for receiving and viewing information. SMEs considered both fake identities and security issues (100%) as the main limitations for using LinkedIn.

Table 3: The adoption and use of the five social media applications (i.e., Facebook, YouTube, Skype, Twitter, and LinkedIn)

	Facebook		YouTube		Skype		Twitter		LinkedIn	
	Freq =148	%								
Adoption/Use of the application										
Yes	76	51.4	47	32.4	46	31.5	45	31.0	32	22.1
No	72	48.6	101	68.2	102	68.9	103	69.6	116	78.4
	Freq =76	%	Freq =47	%	Freq =46	%	Freq =45	%	Freq =32	%
Frequent use of the application										
Daily	62	81.6	30	63.8	23	50.0	26	57.8	13	40.7
Once a week	12	15.8	11	23.4	11	23.9	9	20.0	7	21.9
Once a month	2	2.6	6	12.8	12	26.1	10	22.2	12	37.4
Motivations for using the applications										
To gain popularity	58	76.3	29	61.7	16	34.8	23	51.1	19	59.4
Enjoyment	57	75.0	18	38.3	11	23.9	19	42.2	15	46.9
Social influence	55	72.4	19	40.4	11	23.9	22	48.9	18	56.3
Perceived benefits	47	61.8	15	31.9	11	23.9	16	35.6	12	37.5
Number of members peers	40	52.6	17	36.2	11	23.9	18	40.0	13	40.6
Perceived complementarily	39	51.3	9	19.1	10	21.7	13	28.9	5	15.6
Other	8	10.5	6	12.8	10	21.7	4	8.9	5	15.6
Purposes for using the applications										
Sending and sharing information	68	89.5	10	21.3	25	54.3	25	55.6	10	31.3
Advertising & campaigning for the brand	67	88.2	19	40.4	7	15.2	20	44.4	19	59.4
Communicate with the customers	62	81.6	6	12.8	24	52.2	26	57.8	6	18.8
Improves business reputation	62	81.6	15	31.9	7	15.2	25	55.6	15	46.9
Receiving & viewing information	60	78.9	17	36.2	23	50.0	26	57.8	17	53.1
Gain more clients	54	71.1	11	23.4	10	21.7	18	40.0	11	34.4
Searching for information	50	65.8	28	59.6	3	6.5	20	44.4	28	87.5
Sales/marketing	49	64.5	13	27.7	7	15.2	19	42.2	13	40.6
Communicate with the colleagues	49	64.5	2	4.3	27	58.7	16	35.6	2	6.3
Conduct market research	46	60.5	12	25.5	7	15.2	17	37.8	12	37.5



	Facebook		YouTube		Skype		Twitter		LinkedIn	
	Freq =148	%								
Time saver	44	57.9	7	14.9	15	32.6	14	31.1	7	21.9
News and weather	41	53.9	10	21.3	2	4.3	13	28.9	10	31.3
Recruiting	37	48.7	4	8.5	7	15.2	0	0.0	4	12.5
Job search/interviews	36	47.4	3	6.4	7	15.2	0	0.0	3	9.4
Communicate with the Suppliers	28	36.8	5	10.6	23	50.0	10	22.2	5	15.6
Other	8	10.5	4	8.5	4	8.7	0	0.0	4	12.5
Limitations of using the applications										
Fake identities	58	76.3	34	72.3	42	91.3	44	97.8	32	100.0
Security issues	54	71.1	38	80.9	41	89.1	39	86.7	32	100.0
Leads to addiction	51	67.1	25	53.2	9	19.6	18	40.0	9	28.1
Affects productivity	33	43.4	21	44.7	19	41.3	17	37.8	14	43.8
Leads to isolation	26	34.2	15	31.9	5	10.9	7	15.6	5	15.6
Other	3	3.9	0	0.0	12	26.1	6	13.3	10	31.3

Discussion

According to the findings of this study, the most used social media application by SMEs in Amman/Jordan was Facebook (51.4%) while the least used application was LinkedIn (22.1%). For YouTube, Skype and Twitter, they were used by 32.4%, 31.5% and 31% of SMEs respectively. Of those, more than one third used these applications daily (i.e., Facebook 81.6%, YouTube 63.8%, Twitter 57.8%, Skype 50% and LinkedIn 40.7%). These findings are consistent with previous research such as Archambault and Grudin (2012) and Turner et al. (2010). The main three motives for using the five applications (i.e., Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Skype and LinkedIn) by SMEs were: gaining popularity, enjoyment, and social influence. This means that SMEs could mostly use these applications for advertising and marketing their products and services and attracting skilled persons who use these applications effectively to work with them while keeping their selves enjoyed.

Moreover, the study found that the most common purposes for SMEs to use the five social media applications were to receive and view information, send and share information, communicate with customers, advertise and campaign for their product/service/brand, improve business reputation, search for information, and communicate with the colleagues and suppliers. In this regards, the participated SMEs used all five applications to receive and view information, used Facebook, Twitter and Skype to both send and share information and communicate with customers, used Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn to advertise and campaign for their product/service/brand, used Facebook and Twitter to improve business reputation, used YouTube and Linke-

In to search for information, and used Skype to communicate with their colleagues and suppliers. Therefore, there are various purposes for using various social media applications, which differs from company to another depending on its nature of work and the used application itself. These findings are to some extent consistent with other studies (e.g. Dauleh, 2014, which found that most of SMEs used social media tools for marketing their products and services, reaching more customers and gaining their satisfaction and for increasing the trust between their co-workers.

In addition, the study found that the most risky limitations of using the five applications by SMEs were both fake identities and security issues. Therefore, SMEs were aware of the potential risks of using these applications; nonetheless, this did not inhibit them from using these applications for their work activities.

It is worth noting that the sample may not reflect the national trends because only 148 surveys were completely filled up. Therefore, due to the small sample size of this study, it cannot be claimed that the findings are generalizable to all SMEs or to all developing countries. It would be advantageous to conduct a larger scale survey over a wider geographical range.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The problem of this study is that social media use is increasing in Jordan but it didn't reach its peak yet. The aim of the study was therefore to explore the social media applications that are currently used by SMEs in Jordan. A quantitative study was conducted in order to achieve the study objectives.

The study results showed that SMEs mostly used application was Facebook (by more than half of the SMEs), and the least used one was LinkedIn (by more than fifth of the SMEs). Also, approximately third of the SMEs used YouTube, Skype, and Twitter. Of those, more than one third used these applications daily. The study also found that gaining popularity, enjoyment and social influence were the main motivations for using all five applications by SMEs. Moreover, the study found that the applications were mostly used for information, communication, marketing, and improving business reputation. Furthermore, SMEs considered both fake identities and security issues as the main limitations for using the five applications.

In light of the above results, the findings generally suggest that SMEs need ongoing support from the government, industry or any bodies that are interested in the development of SMEs. This support includes providing a more comprehensive view about social media applications such as raising the awareness of SMEs about the potential benefits of some of these applications such as YouTube, Skype and LinkedIn, and conducting training courses that help SMEs to set up rules, procedures and strategies on how to use these various applications. This also implies that the owner/manager of the SME needs to know and understand the potential benefits of some of these social media applications by learning from the experiences of other SME users as well as through better education programs that can be initiated by industry body or govern-



ment. For example if an SME is considering using Facebook or Twitter, the focus should be on raising their awareness about the potential benefits and risks of these applications.

Specifically, several recommendations can also be suggested for the continual adoption and use of each of social media by SMEs in private sector in Jordan. First, since Facebook is the most used and popular application among other applications, SMEs could keep using Facebook on the same professional level. In addition, as fake identities and fake profiles were the main limitations of using Facebook, SMEs could spread awareness on how to protect their companies and employees from fake identities in addition to create security awareness.

Second, since SMEs were not using Twitter, Skype, and LinkedIn that much, government, industry or any bodies could raise the awareness of SMEs about the potential benefits of using these applications particularly their ability to receive and view information and communicate with customers, current and potential employees.

Third, since SMEs are not fully aware of the usefulness of YouTube for advertising and campaigning matters, therefore we recommend SMEs to allow the IT department offers a wide range of workshops about YouTube and how to make the most of using it. SMEs could also start publishing their achievements and work via YouTube or share links of YouTube on Facebook.

Finally, SMEs rarely used social media applications to communicate with suppliers as they do not trust social media applications yet. However, social media applications were created to help people save time and effort, instead of spending time trying to reach a supplier over the phone. Therefore, industry could help and encourage SMEs to use social media applications in order to contact their suppliers because they save time, effort and money.

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Appendix One: The survey used in the study

Personal information

Gender: Male Female
 Age: 21-30 years 31-40 years 41-51 years 51 years & above
 Marital status: Single Married Other
 Education degree: Diploma or less Bachelor Masters PhD
 Company information
 Company name:
 Year of establishment:
 Nature of company work:
 Number of employees:

Questions/options	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	LinkedIn	Skype
Do you use the following social media applications?					
Yes					
No					
If your answer is NO please indicate why and do not complete the survey.					
How frequently do you use social media applications?					
Daily					
Once a week					
Once a month					
What motivates you to use social media applications in your workplace? (Select all that apply)					
To gain popularity					
Perceived benefits					
Enjoyment					
Social influence					
Number of members Peers					

Questions/options	Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	LinkedIn	Skype
Perceived complementarily					
Other					
For what purpose do you use social media applications? (Select all that apply)					
Sending and sharing info					
Receiving and viewing info					
Advertising & campaigning for the brand					
Communicate with the customers					
Communicate with the suppliers					
Communicate with colleagues					
Time saver					
Searching for information					
Improves business reputation					
Conduct market research					
gain more clients					
Job search / Interviews					
Sales/Marketing					
News and weather					
Recruiting					
Other					
Please indicate which of the following is a limitation for using social media applications?					
Leads to addiction					
Lead to isolation					
Affects productivity					
Security issues					
Fake identities					
Other					

