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Social Media's Influence on Gendered Interpersonal Communication: Insights from Jordan

Aseel Zibin [1,2,*], Yara Al-Sabatin [1] and Abdel Rahman Mitib Altakhaineh [1]

[1] Department of English Language and Literature, School of Foreign Languages, The University of Jordan, Amman 11942, Jordan; yar8231020@ju.edu.jo (Y.A.-S.); a.altakhaineh@ju.edu.jo (A.R.M.A.)
[2] Faculty of Scientific Research and Graduate Studies, Applied Science Private University, Amman 11937, Jordan
* Correspondence: a.zabin@ju.edu.jo

Abstract: This study aims to examine the impact of social media on interpersonal communication patterns in Jordan and determine whether there are gender differences. Through adopting a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire from a sample of 50 Facebook users in Jordan chosen based on a self-selection method, comprising 24 men and 26 women, and two semi-structured focus group discussions were conducted with randomly selected 10 men and 10 women. The quantitative analysis showed that there were statistically significant differences between genders in terms of nonverbal communication and communication roles. However, no significant differences were found in verbal communication, listening, feedback, context, communication channels, and conflict resolution. The qualitative data provided further insight into the findings, demonstrating how cultural and societal norms, particularly those related to gender roles, influence interactions on social media. The participants expressed a range of perspectives on how social media impacts their communication, with many noting changes in communication dynamics due to increased exposure to global influences. In line with Genderlect Theory this study highlights the role of gender, demonstrating that while traditional gender-based communication styles endure, they are progressively shaped by the dynamic and evolving nature of digital interactions.

Keywords: social media; communication patterns; interpersonal communication; gender

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1. Introduction

The introduction of social media has revolutionized how people engage and connect with each other. Originally used as a simple tool for keeping in touch with friends and family, social media has now become a powerful force that influences almost every aspect of modern life. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok play a vital role in sharing information, building relationships, and forming communities. This development has significantly changed how people communicate with each other, both positively and negatively (Hruska & Maresova, 2020). Social media is quickly becoming one of the most important tools for communication, connecting people and communities, and providing a platform for active engagement. As defined by Shearer and Mitchell (2021), social media is "a group of Internet-based applications built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, allowing the creation and exchange of user-generated content". It exemplifies how individuals create, share, and exchange ideas and information through online networks.

In addition to its impact on communication patterns, social media has also become a significant tool for self-expression and -presentation (see Zibin et al., 2024). With advancements in technology, social media's widespread use for communication and friendships has both positive and negative consequences for social cognition and interpersonal relations (Yee et al., 2021). Communication patterns refer to the way interactions between people are choreographed, including both verbal and nonverbal exchanges, which are influenced by factors like cultural background and social conventions (Bavelas et al., 2021; Burgoon et al., 2021). Within this context, Genderlect Theory (Tannen, 2001, 2007) provides a framework for examining gender differences in communication patterns on social media. According to Tannen (2001), men and women have distinct communication styles, or "genderlects", shaped by socialization into different roles and expectations. Thus, through incorporating Genderlect Theory we can understand how these gender-specific communication styles are both reflected and reshaped in the digital sphere, where traditional rapport and report talk dynamics interact in new ways. Thus, the current study aims to answer the following questions:

(1) Are there statistically significant differences regarding the impact of social media on communication patterns among Jordanian Facebook users based on gender?
(2) Based on Genderlect Theory, to what extent do differences in conversational styles between men and women affect communication patterns among Jordanian Facebook users?

It can be observed that this study seeks to shed light on how social media interacts with gendered communication styles, which provides insights into the broader effects of digital communication on societal interactions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework: Genderlect

Genderlect Theory was proposed by sociolinguist Deborah Tannen; it suggests that men and women possess distinct communication styles akin to different cultural dialects. These differences arise from the socialization of individuals into different gender roles from a young age, which affects their communication purposes and processes (Tannen, 2007). Men, often socialized to prioritize independence and status, frequently use communication as a tool for negotiation and establishing hierarchies. This style is referred to as "report talk", focusing on exchanging information and demonstrating knowledge. In contrast, women are typically socialized to value connection and intimacy, leading them to engage in "rapport talk", which aims to build relationships and nurture connections through communication. This distinction manifests in women's comfort with private, intimate conversations, while men may thrive in public speaking scenarios where they can assert their competence and status (Tannen, 1994).

An important tenet of Genderlect Theory (Tannen, 2001) is that these divergent styles can lead to misunderstandings in mixed-gender interactions. For instance, women might perceive a man's directness as abrupt or insensitive, while men might find a woman's focus on rapport lacking in substance or directness. Tannen (2001) emphasizes that these differences are not inherent but rather culturally influenced behaviors learned and reinforced throughout life. Understanding these gender-specific communication patterns can foster greater empathy and improve mutual understanding. The theory challenges the notion that one style is superior to the other, instead encouraging recognition and adaptation of these differences to enhance communication. Tannen's influential texts, such as "You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation", highlight the importance of acknowledging and bridging these communication gaps to improve interpersonal relationships.

While initially focused on face-to-face communication, recent research has expanded the application of Genderlect Theory to digital platforms, examining how traditional gender communication patterns manifest in social media. This is particularly relevant when considering Ledbetter's summary on interpersonal communication technology (ICT) and technological affordances, which can illuminate the differences between developer-intended and unintended uses of social media in interpersonal contexts. Unintended uses often reflect human social needs and goals, suggesting that technology significantly alters communication processes, which in turn can influence how gendered communication styles are expressed online.

Hofstede's characteristics of masculinity and femininity provide a useful framework for analyzing how gendered communication patterns extend beyond Western contexts (Karczewska & Kukowska, 2021). Masculine cultures, which value assertiveness, achievement, and material success, tend to exhibit more straightforward, competitive, and performance-oriented communication styles. In these societies, women might be socialized to convey more collaborative or caring signals, while men might be more outspoken (Escobar & Altunkaya, 2022).

Conversely, in more feminine cultures communication is typically more cooperative, emotionally expressive, and focused on relational harmony. In these societies, individuals are often socialized to prioritize empathy and consensus over aggressiveness and competition. As a result, differing communication patterns may emerge between the sexes, reflecting a greater emphasis on collaboration and interpersonal relationships (see Toy, 2024).

Furthermore, Hofstede's approach highlights how these distinctions are influenced by societal systems defining gender roles rather than being restricted to Western cultural limits. For example, societies with high masculinity ratings might exhibit more unique gendered communication patterns that reinforce traditional gender roles (Lin & Lou, 2024), while more feminine cultures may blur these distinctions, allowing greater flexibility in communication between men and women. Thus, Hofstede's dimensions suggest that while individual identity and psychological factors undoubtedly shape gender-based communication disparities, broader cultural norms surrounding masculinity and femininity also play a substantial role.

A study by Kimbrough et al. (2013) explored interactions on Facebook, revealing that women users were more inclined to use emojis and exclamation points, emphasizing relational closeness and emotional expression. In contrast, men users prioritized information sharing and displaying knowledge, maintaining a more factual and objective dialogue. Another study, by Herring and Kapidzic (2015), examined gender differences in computer-mediated communication (CMC), identifying consistent patterns of gendered language usage across platforms like chat rooms and social media. It found that women often employ emotive and supportive language, aligning with Tannen's concept of "rapport talk", while men typically use more authoritative and assertive language consistent with "report talk". Assertion in communication refers to the confident and respectful expression of opinions, needs, or rights. For example, in a professional setting a man employee may assert his viewpoint during a meeting by stating, "I believe our strategy could benefit from incorporating more data analytics, as it has proven effective in similar projects". This exemplifies assertion through the confident presentation of ideas that enhances the discussion. Conversely, women often utilize more emotive and supportive language when asserting themselves. A woman colleague might say, "I feel that adding more data analytics could help us see the bigger picture, especially in understanding our customer behavior". Here, the emphasis is on emotional appeal and consensus-building language, which aligns with Tannen's concept of "rapport talk".

In relation to gender roles and stereotypes, Rui and Stefanone (2013) investigated how social media can highlight these norms through user interactions. Even in non-face-to-face environments, users frequently adhere to traditional gender norms, with women emphasizing community and relationship-building and men displaying competitive and individualistic tendencies.

Studies in professional networking contexts, such as Duffy and Hund's (2015) research on LinkedIn, suggest that gendered communication styles persist in these settings. Women frequently highlight teamwork and social skills, while men emphasize achievements and technical skills, reflecting traditional Genderlect Theory patterns. This indicates that professional self-presentation on social media follows similar gendered patterns.

Collectively, these studies highlight the significance of Genderlect Theory (Tannen, 2001, 2007) in understanding gendered communication on social media. They reveal the persistence of traditional gender communication patterns while illustrating how social media can challenge or reinforce these norms. This study aims to expand the existing literature by examining the impact of social media on communication patterns between men and women in Jordan. By focusing on this specific Middle Eastern context, this paper highlights the unique cultural and societal norms that shape gendered communication on digital platforms. This research not only enhances the global understanding of Genderlect Theory but also provides insights into how social media can mediate, transform, or perpetuate traditional communication roles within diverse cultural settings. Furthermore, it seeks to address gaps in the literature by exploring the intersection of gender, culture, and social media in non-Western contexts, offering valuable implications for both scholarly exploration and practical communication strategies.

2.2. Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is a crucial aspect of human interaction. It involves the exchange of thoughts, feelings, and information between individuals, playing a significant role in building and maintaining relationships. Effective interpersonal communication requires active participation and genuine engagement, forming the foundation for meaningful social interactions and cohesive communities (Bell, 2020).

Within interpersonal communication, the exchange of information is vital in shaping attitudes and behaviors. Dialogue influences perceptions, while sharing personal experiences and knowledge leads to mutual growth and fulfillment (Febriantini et al., 2021). Thus, interpersonal communication promotes cooperation and empathy, fostering a sense of belonging while mitigating feelings of isolation.

In Jordan, where society is largely men-dominated, interpersonal communication exhibits distinct characteristics. Women often develop unique communication styles to navigate traditional gender roles and assert themselves through using distinct linguistic forms in both online and offline communication compared to men (see Altakhaineh et al., 2024). Cultural conventions shape communication patterns, determining how information is exchanged in various contexts. Women in Jordan may employ indirect communication strategies and adaptability to engage effectively in personal and professional settings (cf. Lavaf & Shokri, 2021). This demonstrates the dynamic nature of interpersonal communication, influenced by cultural norms and individual adaptability within a specific societal framework.

Indirect communication is commonly associated with high-context communication and feminine communication styles. In high-context communication, a significant portion of the message is conveyed through tone, body language, and shared understanding rather than explicit statements (Multicultural You, 2020). This aligns with feminine communication, as women tend to use indirect techniques to maintain harmony and avoid

conflict, having been socialized to prioritize emotional expression and relational connection. Therefore, indirect communication serves as a critical component of both high-context and feminine communication styles, allowing individuals to express themselves while preserving the social and emotional equilibrium. This overlap suggests that while gender influences these behaviors, the context of communication and broader cultural norms also play significant roles (Success Across Cultures, 2024).

Shandilya et al. (2022) investigated how gendered communication is reflected in virtual workspaces through emojis, GIFs, and memes. Their study found that women were more likely than men to express feelings and assert their presence in online professional discussions using nonverbal cues. These digital tools enabled women to communicate assertively, especially in situations where face-to-face interactions might be limited due to cultural norms or hierarchical structures. In contrast, men tended to focus on more traditional, assertive communication styles centered on information sharing.

Ledbetter's research on the impact of technology on human communication is crucial for analyzing interpersonal communication technologies (ICTs). Ledbetter (2017) explores how ICTs provide unforeseen affordances that fulfill various human social needs beyond merely facilitating communication. These affordances refer to unanticipated capabilities that emerge as users engage with technology in everyday life. Ledbetter emphasizes that although ICTs aim to improve communication efficiency they also open new avenues for social engagement, identity formation, and connection (Ledbetter, 2021).

For example, users can maintain relationships, build communities, and fulfill social roles in ways that transcend conventional face-to-face interactions using platforms like social media or messaging apps (Ledbetter & Herbert, 2022). These technologies can meet emotional needs, support self-presentation, and foster social connections through affordances such as anonymity, asynchronous communication, and broader reach. As individuals navigate interpersonal relationships and negotiate social hierarchies, Ledbetter's work highlights how these unexpected affordances reshape social dynamics (Ledbetter, 2023).

2.3. Social Networking Sites

According to Verduyn et al. (2020), social networking sites are internet platforms that emerged with Web 2.0, enabling users to interact within virtual communities centered on shared interests or affiliations. These platforms offer services such as messaging, personal file sharing, and news updates. Stockdale and Coyne (2020) describe social networking sites as essential components of the digital landscape, facilitating meaningful interactions among individuals and groups in virtual environments (see also Abed & Rathwan, 2024). Users can share information, comments, messages, and images, fostering personal connections and the exchange of ideas. Vall-Roqué. et al. (2021) highlight the role of social networking sites in quickly spreading information, empowering users to articulate their aspirations and engage with social issues through interactive media creation.

Effective interpersonal communication is a dynamic process in which individuals collaboratively create meaning, rather than simply exchange information. Bavelas et al. (2021) assert that communication is co-constructed through interaction, with both verbal and nonverbal cues shaping meaning. This collaborative dialogue cultivates shared understanding and emotional bonds, continuously negotiating meanings and reinforcing social ties. The co-creation of meaning is particularly evident in digital communication, where text and nonverbal elements, such as GIFs and emojis, convey meaning and express emotions, ultimately influencing the evolution of relationships over time.

The importance of social media has grown as its usage has expanded, becoming essential in various social, educational, cultural, economic, and political contexts. More than just a symbol of progress, social media is a critical component and driving force of

contemporary development. Its global adoption is attributed to its user-friendly design and compatibility with multiple devices, ensuring access across different societal sectors, regardless of users' skills (Mason et al., 2021).

Vallor (2020) noted that the integration of modern technologies, such as smart devices and applications, with the internet has led to a new form of communication through social networking sites. This evolution can be divided into two stages, the first generation of the internet (Web 1.0) and the second generation (Web 2.0), with most social networking methods emerging in the latter. Initially, social networking services were based on email communication but have since evolved to include platforms that allow users to create personal profiles, view news, and exchange messages.

Communication on virtual social networking sites has transformed the quality and patterns of interactions across all societies, reshaping social structures and processes. As Valeri and Baggio (2021) observed, the nature of communication itself has changed, significantly influencing individual and group relationships.

Urbonavicius et al. (2021) emphasized that virtual social networking has created communication patterns that differ significantly from traditional face-to-face interactions. These platforms facilitate asynchronous communication, allowing users to respond at their convenience, which changes how they manage time and engage with one another. This flexibility enables communication across different time zones and schedules, helping to maintain connections in busy lifestyles. However, it can also result in delayed responses and prolonged conversations (Abdul-Rahaman & Abdulai, 2020).

Stockdale and Coyne (2020) pointed out that the rise of text-based communication on these platforms has changed the complexities of human interaction. In face-to-face encounters, nonverbal cues—such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice—play a crucial role in conveying emotions and intentions. In contrast, text-based communication often lacks these nuances, which can lead to misunderstandings and a reduction in emotional depth. While Shandilya et al. (2022) noted that emojis, GIFs, and other textual elements serve as substitutes for expressing tone and emotion, they cannot fully replicate the richness of nonverbal communication.

The increase in visual and multimedia content has also transformed how individuals express feelings and ideas. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat promote the sharing of images, videos, and memes, creating engaging and visually appealing communication methods. These formats enable more creative expression, allowing users to share experiences in vivid and impactful ways. They cater to shorter attention spans and the growing demand for quick, digestible content in the digital age (Abbas & Di Pietro, 2022). Deldjoo et al. (2020) argued that virtual social networking sites have changed societal norms and habits while introducing new communication patterns. While they enhance people's ability to connect and share experiences, they also challenge established aspects of human connection. As these platforms continue to evolve, their impact on communication and interaction in both virtual and real-world settings is likely to increase.

2.4. Previous Studies

Subramanian (2017) investigated the impact of social media on interpersonal communication, emphasizing its role in satisfying social needs. This descriptive study utilized a questionnaire to collect data, highlighting that individuals increasingly rely on mobile phones for communication due to modern lifestyles and time constraints. Similarly, Yu (2023) explored the effects of social media on interpersonal relationships by examining interactions across various platforms, including new media and short video services. While social media provides numerous avenues for connection, it may also result in negative consequences such as loneliness and anxiety stemming from diminished face-to-face in-

teractions. Reliance on social media and usage patterns significantly impact interpersonal relationships. Yu's analysis offers insights into how to mitigate the adverse effects of social media while enhancing its positive attributes.

When analyzing these effects through the lens of Genderlect Theory, Tannen's concept of rapport talk—which emphasizes relational communication and emotional expression—aligns with women's increased use of emojis, GIFs, and other nonverbal cues for emotional connection on social media. In contrast, men's communication typically reflects report talk, favoring direct and factual exchanges. This distinction underscores the fundamental dynamics of Genderlect Theory, highlighting the differences between masculine, direct communication and feminine, relational communication styles.

Laksana and Fadhilah's (2021) study examined how communication on Twitter affects interpersonal communication among teenagers. Through a mix of methods like observing participants, conducting in-depth interviews, and reviewing existing literature, the researchers focused on ten Indonesian high school students who are active on Twitter. They found that conversations on Twitter, often starting from comments on personal posts or shared frustrations, can lead to deeper chats through direct messages. When these exchanges happen regularly and are mutual, they help create a sense of familiarity and strengthen bonds. The study highlights how digital communication is unique, showing how Twitter helps young people feel closer and more connected, even without meeting in person. The researchers connect their findings to existing studies on online communication and relationships, emphasizing how interpersonal communication is changing in the digital age.

Lopez and Cuarteros' (2020) study examined the impact of Facebook usage on interpersonal communication within families. Researchers surveyed 120 university students, focusing on their Facebook habits and the quality of their communication with family members, including parents, siblings, and extended relatives. The findings indicated that while Facebook can enhance communication, excessive use may lead to misunderstandings due to the absence of nonverbal cues typical of face-to-face interactions. The study emphasized a preference for in-person communication when addressing sensitive or private family issues. Statistical analysis demonstrated a significant difference in the quality of interpersonal communication between Facebook interactions and face-to-face interactions, with the latter being rated higher. Although a positive correlation was identified between social media use and interpersonal communication, the study stressed the need for a balance between online and offline engagement to minimize conflict. Researchers recommend prioritizing face-to-face communication for sensitive discussions and being aware of the limitations of online platforms in expressing emotions and subtleties.

Gnambs (2021) explained that Genderlect Theory posits that men and women often exhibit different communication styles. Women typically prioritize rapport talk, which emphasizes relationship-building and emotional intimacy, positively influencing their experiences with social media. Conversely, men generally favor report talk, which is more direct and informational, potentially impeding emotional connections. These distinct communication styles give rise to varied perceptions of social media's impact; women view it as a means to strengthen emotional bonds, while men consider it a tool for social or informational purposes. This distinction suggests that gendered communication dynamics significantly affect how social media influences interpersonal interactions. This study aims to contextualize and enhance our understanding of how social media both maintains and reshapes existing gendered communication roles in contemporary relationships through the lens of Genderlect Theory.

Imam et al. (2023) conducted a study on the impact of social media on interpersonal connections among young individuals in the Batna state (a city and the capital of Batna Province (or Wilaya) in Algeria), utilizing a simple random sample of 100 participants. The findings indicated that 60% of respondents believe social media has improved their interpersonal relationships, whereas 40% perceive it as having a detrimental effect. Notably, a quarter of the participants reported enhanced family relationships as a result of social media use.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to investigate the influence of social media on interpersonal communication patterns among men and women Facebook users. Considering the current social media landscape in Jordan, Facebook was chosen as the primary platform for data collection in this study. As of January 2025, Statcounter Global Stats (2025) reports that Facebook holds a substantial 78.21% share of social media users in Jordan, significantly outpacing other platforms like Instagram (16.31%) and YouTube (2.97%). This dominant presence highlights Facebook's importance in the region and its suitability for engaging participants and collecting data on social media behaviors and interactions.

3.2. Sample and Population

The study population related to the questionnaire consisted of approximately 4.9 million Facebook users in Jordan. Given the impracticality of reaching every potential participant, a self-selection method was utilized. The questionnaire link was shared in various popular Jordanian Facebook groups and pages frequented by young adults, enabling interested individuals to voluntarily choose whether to participate. This approach aimed to engage a segment of the Jordanian population that is active online.

This study focused on a sample of 50 respondents (age range 19–32 years old), evenly divided by gender, from Jordan's estimated 4.9 million Facebook members. Due to time and logistical constraints, this sample size was deemed appropriate for the exploratory objectives of this study. The primary aim was to identify early trends and insights into gendered communication on social media, establishing a foundation for future research using larger, more representative samples. Ethical approval for this study was obtained, and a copy of the approval is sent to the Editors.

3.3. Quantitative Methods

Data collection for the quantitative component was conducted using a structured questionnaire aimed at evaluating the impact of social media, particularly Facebook, on various communication patterns among Jordanian youth. The questionnaire included multiple sections that addressed different aspects of communication influenced by social media, such as verbal and nonverbal communication, listening, feedback, context, communication channels, and communication roles. Each section featured specific statements, and respondents indicated their level of agreement on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This scale format allows for straightforward interpretation of the mean scores (see Appendix A for more details). To assess the questionnaire's reliability, internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. The result was 0.861, indicating that the questionnaire is reliable. Table 1 shows the Cronbach's Alpha score for each aspect of communication:

Table 1. The Cronbach's Alpha score for each aspect of communication.

Variable	Reliability
Verbal Communication	0.801
Nonverbal Communication	0.795
Listening	0.843
Feedback	0.824
Context	0.791
Communication Channels	0.779
Conflict Resolution	0.801
Communication Roles	0.837

Table 1 shows the Cronbach's Alpha scores for different aspects of communication, highlighting how reliable each variable is. The scores reveal a high level of internal consistency across all aspects examined. Listening stands out with the highest reliability score of 0.843, indicating strong consistency in this aspect. Feedback follows closely with a score of 0.824, while communication roles also shows substantial reliability at 0.837. Both verbal communication and conflict resolution have a reliability score of 0.801, suggesting similar consistency in these areas. Nonverbal communication and context have the scores of 0.795 and 0.791, respectively. Communication channels has the score of 0.779, which falls within an acceptable range, indicating that it is a reliable measure. In general, each component demonstrates strong reliability, reinforcing the robustness of the communication assessments.

The questionnaire was developed to assess various dimensions of communication, with specific attention to how they relate to Tannen's concepts of report and rapport. Each section was designed to capture aspects of communication relevant to these styles: In verbal and nonverbal communication, items (e.g., "Social media has changed the way I use language to communicate with others") were designed to evaluate participants' conscious use of language (report) versus emotional expression through nonverbal means such as emojis and status updates (rapport). In listening and feedback, questions addressing active listening (e.g., "Social media has improved my ability to listen and understand others' viewpoints") and feedback processes were intended to assess how these approaches either facilitate or hinder relational dynamics. In communication roles, the questionnaire aimed to elicit responses about participants' roles in conversations, which can reflect the transition between report-focused interactions (asserting facts) and rapport-focused interactions (building relationships). Table 2 provides a summary of the questionnaire sample distribution:

Table 2. Questionnaire sample distribution.

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Men	24	48.0
	Women	26	52.0
	Total	50	100.0

3.4. Qualitative Methods

The qualitative component consisted of two semi-structured focus group discussions with 10 men and 10 women. These participants were different to the participants who answered the questionnaire, but they had a similar age range to the questionnaire respondents. These discussions aimed to provide deeper insights into the effects of social media on communication patterns among men and women in Jordan. Participants were randomly selected from students at the University of Jordan who met the inclusion criteria

of being active Facebook users and willing to discuss their communication experiences. This random selection process aimed to maintain gender balance while ensuring a diverse range of viewpoints.

To explore the participants' experiences and perspectives in their social context, the focus group discussions employed an ethnographic approach. This method allowed for a better understanding of the cultural and social dynamics that shape gendered communication within the Jordanian context. The ethnographic nature of the discussions facilitated the examination of behaviors and interactions influenced by both digital and societal factors.

The focus group discussions complemented the quantitative results by offering deeper insights into how social media impacts communication habits. Participants were asked to reflect on their questionnaire responses and discuss the influence of gender on communication patterns on social media within the Jordanian context. The focus group sessions were held at the University of Jordan and each lasted approximately 20 min. They were tape-recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis for the quantitative component was performed using SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics V. 30), a statistical tool. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize the data and provide an overview. An independent *t*-test was conducted to analyze the questionnaire results and identify any statistically significant differences in communication patterns between men and women since the sample size was sufficient for this analysis.

For the qualitative component, thematic analysis was applied to examine the focus group discussions, allowing for the extraction of key themes regarding the effects of social media on communication among men and women in Jordan (see Altakhaineh & Zibin, 2021). This mixed-methods approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the data by integrating both quantitative and qualitative insights.

4. Quantitative Results

To assess the normality of the data, skewness and kurtosis were calculated. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3. Normality test including skewness and kurtosis results.

Variable	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Verbal Communication	−0.016	0.337	−0.600	0.662
Nonverbal Communication	−0.033	0.337	−1.175	0.662
Listening	−0.353	0.337	−0.262	0.662
Feedback	−0.277	0.337	−0.321	0.662
Context	0.170	0.337	0.079	0.662
Communication Channels	0.200	0.337	−0.136	0.662
Conflict Resolution	−0.078	0.337	−0.802	0.662
Communication Roles	−0.036	0.337	−0.792	0.662

Table 3 shows that the data were normally distributed, with skewness results having a range of ±1 and kurtosis results having a range of ±2 (Hair et al., 2022, p. 66). These findings suggest that the score distribution is relatively symmetrical and follows a bell-shaped curve, meeting the assumptions required for parametric tests. The normality of the data enhances the reliability of the statistical results from subsequent analyses, such as the *t*-test, which can be confidently applied since the underlying data satisfy these criteria.

Regarding the first research question, the data analysis revealed that social media usage influences communication patterns among users in Jordan, with a particular emphasis on gender differences in nonverbal communication and communication roles.

Tannen's (2001) distinction between "report" and "rapport" communication styles provides a framework for interpreting these findings. Report talk focuses on conveying information and asserting independence, while rapport talk prioritizes connection, emotional expression, and relationship-building.

A *t*-test was conducted to identify significant differences in interpersonal communication patterns on social media between men and women; the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of a *t*-test related to the effect of gender on interpersonal communication patterns on social media.

Variable	Gender	*N*	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig.
Verbal Communication	Men Women	24 26	2.96 3.03	0.81 0.75	−0.305	48	0.762
Nonverbal Communication	Men Women	24 26	2.57 3.59	0.94 0.77	−4.204	48	**0.000**
Listening	Men Women	24 26	3.01 2.86	0.63 0.95	0.676	48	0.502
Feedback	Men Women	24 26	3.03 3.40	0.94 0.84	−1.468	48	0.149
Context	Men Women	24 26	3.14 2.76	0.99 0.68	1.598	48	0.117
Communication Channels	Men Women	24 26	3.07 3.03	0.77 0.93	0.180	48	0.858
Conflict Resolution	Men Women	24 26	3.04 3.04	1.01 1.01	0.011	48	0.991
Communication Roles	Men Women	24 26	2.99 3.45	0.83 0.76	−2.064	48	**0.044**

The bold indicates that the *p* value is statistically significant.

Concerning verbal communication, the results indicate that both men (M = 2.96, SD = 0.81) and women (M = 3.03, SD = 0.75) had similar mean scores, with no significant difference observed (t(48) = −0.305, $p = 0.762$). This suggests that there may not be notable gender differences in verbal exchanges, reflecting a more report-oriented approach. With respect to nonverbal communication, a significant difference was found (t(48) = −4.204, $p < 0.001$), with women (M = 3.59, SD = 0.77) scoring higher than men (M = 2.57, SD = 0.94). This suggests that women may rely more on nonverbal cues, indicative of rapport-oriented communication practices. Regarding communication roles, women also scored higher (t(48) = −2.064, $p = 0.044$; M = 3.45, SD = 0.76 for women and M = 2.99, SD = 0.83 for men), suggesting a stronger tendency to adopt rapport-driven strategies in social interactions. In other areas, such as listening (t(48) = 0.676, $p = 0.502$), feedback (t(48) = −1.468, $p = 0.149$), context (t(48) = 1.598, $p = 0.117$), communication channels (t(48) = 0.180, $p = 0.858$), and conflict resolution (t(48) = 0.011, $p = 0.991$), no statistically significant differences were found. This similarity suggests a shared reliance on both report and rapport practices across genders in these domains.

5. Qualitative Results

The semi-structured focus group discussions provided insights into the experiences of women regarding the influence of social media on their communication patterns. Women/girls reported a greater influence of social media on their nonverbal communication compared to men, with these differences being statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This suggests that women/girls might be more adept or reliant on using digital features, such as emojis, GIFs, and other visual cues, to compensate for the lack of physical nonverbal cues in online communication. A respondent during the focus group discussion stated:

> "As a girl, I can easily say that I rely a lot on GIFs and emojis to express myself on Facebook and other social media platforms".

Here, it should be noted that in this study we use the terms "men" and "women" based on how participants identify themselves. It is crucial to understand that in Jordanian culture, unmarried females are often called "girls" until they get married. This reflects societal norms that link adulthood and womanhood with marriage. This distinction is particularly important in conservative Jordanian society, where premarital relationships are generally unaccepted. As a result, many unmarried females are culturally viewed as "girls". This understanding helps clarify our use of terminology throughout this paper.

In terms of communication roles, women/girls also indicated a stronger impact from social media than men ($p = 0.044$). This includes aspects like assuming leadership roles in conversations. Items from the questionnaire showed that women/girls feel empowered to engage and lead more frequently in online settings than they might in face-to-face interactions. This empowerment could be attributed to the conservative nature of Jordanian society, as one participant expressed:

> "Jordan is a conservative society, so in many areas, it is not OK for men and women to mingle freely and talk to each other. These women and girls may feel more comfortable talking to others, especially men, behind the screen".

Additionally, focus group discussions revealed that social media platforms provide a space where traditional gender dynamics might shift, allowing women greater opportunity and confidence to express themselves and engage in conversations. The richness of the data was enhanced by qualitative insights, despite potential self-selection bias. The participants who consented to partake in the discussions may have been more open about their experiences than the typical Jordanian woman/girl social media user. Future studies could address this self-selection bias by recruiting a more diverse sample and incorporating behavioral or observational data to complement self-reported insights.

6. Discussion

The findings reveal subtle differences in communication between men and women in Jordan, influenced by cultural and social contexts. For instance, the survey items related to nonverbal communication included statements such as the following:

- I use emojis and GIFs to express my feelings on social media.
- Social media has changed my perception of nonverbal cues in face-to-face interactions.
- I rely on profile pictures and statuses to understand others' emotions.

The results indicate that women/girls reported significantly higher agreement with these statements than men, resulting in higher mean scores for women/girls in nonverbal communication. This finding emphasizes the tendency for women/girls to engage more with nonverbal expression through digital platforms, which aligns with our discussion of gender differences in communication styles. It could also potentially be a result of societal norms that encourage women/girls to use more subtle forms of communication. In a

men-dominated society, traditional gender roles often position men as dominant, leading women/girls to adopt nonverbal strategies to assert themselves or convey messages where verbal expression is limited. These adaptations demonstrate women's/girls' resilience and highlight how cultural contexts shape communication practices (see Zibin et al., 2024).

Moreover, women/girls scored significantly higher in communication roles, suggesting a keen understanding of their communicative environment, which allows them to navigate it effectively. This adaptability may be necessary in a patriarchal society, where women/girls must rely on emotional intelligence and flexibility to engage meaningfully. By mastering various communication roles, women/girls can influence their personal and professional domains while balancing traditional expectations with modern aspirations.

The absence of significant gender differences in verbal communication, listening, feedback, context, communication channels, and conflict resolution indicates areas where gendered communication may not differ greatly. In these domains, the convergence of men and women's communication styles could suggest shared cultural norms or mutual environments, such as workplaces or educational settings, where both genders are expected to adhere to similar interaction standards. This may also signal a gradual shift in societal values, with evolving gender roles in communication due to globalization and modernization.

This notion was echoed by a woman participant during the focus group discussion:

> "If you compare Jordan now and twenty years ago, you will notice that there are changes. Women are more powerful than before and they can be in charge of sensitive positions in the country. They also work in different fields, so many of them are not just stay-at-home moms like before. We can say that globalization, social media, and being open to others through tourism and exchange programs are responsible".

An important explanation for the findings is that nonverbal communication and communication roles may be more directly influenced by the distinct ways in which gender norms and socialization impact communication styles. Social media often accentuates these differences by allowing varied forms of expression, such as emojis or GIFs, which may be interpreted and utilized differently among genders. Conversely, domains such as verbal communication, listening, feedback, context, communication channels, and conflict resolution may be shaped by factors that are more universal or evenly distributed across genders, leading to similar communication styles.

To address the second research question, the findings can be analyzed using Genderlect Theory. According to Tannen's (2001, 2007) theory, men and women are socialized into different communication styles that reflect broader cultural norms. In Jordan, these norms are shaped by historical, religious, and social factors that define gender roles. Women are traditionally expected to embody nurturing and modest roles, which may be reflected in their communication style that emphasizes nonverbal cues. They often use emojis and other digital expressions to convey empathy and emotion.

In contrast, men typically occupy more assertive roles and may not need to rely heavily on nonverbal skills, preferring direct communication that aligns with traditional expectations of masculinity. A man participant during the focus group discussion stated:

> "I talk the same regardless of where I am, on the street, on campus, on Facebook, or X. Men should not change the way they talk".

The societal context in Jordan is undergoing changes due to increased exposure to global cultures and values. This shift may impact communication dynamics; for example, younger generations exposed to global media and diverse perspectives through social media may gradually challenge and transform these traditional roles. This could

lead to a blending of communication styles, as both genders adopt elements from one another, reducing differences in areas such as feedback and listening, which were not statistically significant.

This study acknowledges that Jordanian internet users are influenced by their surrounding world. Although the results provide insightful information about how social media affects communication in a predominantly Jordanian cultural setting, more research is necessary to fully understand how intracultural and intercultural ICT effects interact. Future studies should investigate how exposure to varying cultural norms through ICT platforms affects communication patterns and societal expectations in Jordan. A more thorough grasp of the reciprocal effects between localized cultural practices and global ICT dynamics may be achieved through longitudinal designs or comparative research across cultural contexts.

Additionally, the evolution of digital communication platforms allows users to experiment with different identities and roles. This flexibility and experimentation might be reflected in communication patterns, where differences between genders are less pronounced. Individuals, despite adhering to traditional gender roles, negotiate their identities in more fluid ways online. This type of interaction may explain why certain aspects of communication remain similar across genders, highlighting a shift toward more individualized and less traditionally constrained communication styles influenced by a globalizing world.

To enhance the discussion on Genderlect Theory and its application within Jordanian communication patterns, it is important to reference existing studies that showcase the theory's relevance across different cultural contexts. For example, Natano et al. (2024) studied communication patterns among male and female university students, revealing distinct styles: female students tend to seek connection and use rapport talk, while male students focus on status and employ report talk. This demonstrates how gender differences can emerge even in academic settings, reinforcing Tannen's idea of varied communication strategies. Similarly, research by Sadia et al. (2021) on conversation traits within Punjabi family settings shows that, even within the same dialect, males and females display different language traits influenced by their societal roles. These findings reflect gender dynamics in Jordan, where communication norms are also shaped by cultural expectations. Additionally, Ahmad et al. (2024) found that sociolinguistic features in television talk shows both reflect and challenge gender stereotypes in Pakistani and American contexts. The insights from this study about how male and female roles are portrayed in media can help us analyze the evolving depiction of gender in Jordanian digital communication, emphasizing the need to consider cultural variations when applying Genderlect Theory. Together, these studies highlight the importance of integrating gender-focused analyses in diverse communication contexts, which enriches our understanding of the shifts in communication patterns driven by social media and cultural exchange.

While research on the impact of social media on interpersonal communication is extensive, each study offers a unique perspective. To our knowledge, no study has specifically examined a Middle Eastern context. Kemi (2016) and Imam et al. (2023) investigated the effects of social media on interpersonal relationships in Abuja (the capital city of Nigeria) and Batna state, respectively. Their studies examined overall impacts, including both positive and negative effects on connections, emphasizing social media's potential to foster ties while recognizing risks such as Internet Addiction Disorder and reduced face-to-face interaction.

In contrast, the current study emphasizes gender-specific communication patterns within the unique cultural context of Jordan. By focusing on gender differences, this study addresses a significant gap in the literature, revealing statistically significant disparities in communication influenced by social media. This provides a detailed view that builds on

Subramanian's (2017) examination of social requirements and changes in communication modalities due to digital technologies, which lacked a gender-focused analysis.

Furthermore, this study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from questionnaires with qualitative insights from focus group discussions. This approach offers a triangulated perspective compared to the purely descriptive or quantitative methodologies used in studies like those of Subramanian (2017) and Imam et al. (2023). The depth offered by this mixed-methods design allows for a more holistic understanding of how men and women in Jordan navigate their communication experiences in the digital sphere.

Unlike Yu (2023), who explored the diverse effects of different social media platforms on interpersonal relationships—highlighting both positive prospects and negative consequences such as loneliness—this study complements the existing literature by specifically examining how social media contributes to shifts in communication patterns across genders. It sheds light on how sociocultural factors and gendered expectations influence communication strategies, providing insights into how to adapt these platforms to enhance mutual understanding and connectivity in culturally specific environments.

The findings are consistent with those of Kimbrough et al. (2013) and Herring and Kapidzic (2015), who reported that gender disparities in communication styles persist across digital platforms. Women often employ more emotive and relational language, while men prefer informational and assertive interaction patterns. However, the current research emphasizes the subtle evolution of these communication patterns in response to the dynamic nature of digital media. Although traditional gender-based patterns persist, as evidenced by previous research, this study indicates that they are increasingly influenced by the changing modalities of social media interaction.

This dual nature of social media serves both as a platform for reinforcing traditional gender norms, as seen in studies by Rui and Stefanone (2013), and as a space for transformation, providing new modes of engagement and expression. Consequently, this research offers a new perspective on Genderlect Theory by illustrating how digital interactions in Jordan have the potential to mediate and transform traditional communication roles, a topic that is currently underrepresented in the existing literature.

7. Limitations

This study has several limitations that may impact the generalizability of the results. The small sample size, consisting of 20 focus group participants and 50 questionnaire respondents, restricts the ability to extrapolate findings to a larger population. While efforts were made to include a diverse sample across genders, the complexity of gendered communication on social media necessitates a larger sample for more robust conclusions. Future research should focus on increasing the sample size to enhance representativeness.

The reliance on self-reported data introduces the potential for response biases, which may influence the reported impact of social media on communication styles (see Zibin & Al-Tkhayneh, 2019). There is also a risk of satisficing behavior, where participants may provide superficial answers instead of thoughtful responses. Furthermore, the voluntary nature of participation presents a self-selection bias, particularly among women who may be more inclined to share candid insights.

Moreover, focusing exclusively on students from the University of Jordan in the focus groups may overlook perspectives from older individuals or those outside the academic setting. Future research should incorporate probabilistic sampling and include a wider demographic range to improve both representativeness and validity.

8. Conclusions

This study revealed that social media significantly influences communication patterns, particularly in nonverbal communication and communication roles, with notable gender differences. The results indicate that social media is reshaping traditional communication roles, enabling clearer role delineation through structured interactions in digital spaces, such as group conversations and collaborative tools. While social media allows for diverse expressions, it may also limit the depth of nonverbal communication by omitting physical signals like facial expressions and gestures, which can lead to misunderstandings. Despite this limitation, social media affects communication dynamics in Jordan, providing new opportunities for interaction that can empower users, especially women, by fostering more equitable communication environments. Although digital platforms offer convenient and varied channels for communication, face-to-face interactions remain crucial for conveying the full spectrum of nonverbal cues necessary for a better understanding.

It is also essential to recognize that the shifts in communication styles cannot be solely credited to social media; other factors like cultural changes, access to education, and evolving gender roles also significantly influence these dynamics (see Al-Khasawneh & Al-Khasawneh, 2025). Our findings show that respondents feel their communication styles have changed because of social media, but they also recognize the impact of wider societal changes.

The findings support Genderlect Theory (Tannen, 2001, 2007), which posits that men and women may employ different communication strategies. However, the lack of statistically significant gender differences in some communication behaviors suggests that both men and women users are adapting similarly to these digital environments. This indicates that while traditional gendered communication styles still exist, social media often promotes more neutral interactions by providing a platform where individuals can express themselves in a less confrontational or biased manner. Future research could investigate the impact of other social variables on interpersonal communication patterns on social media, both in Jordan and other cultural contexts.

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Appendix A Questionnaire (Translated)

Greetings,

The researchers are conducting a study on communication in Jordan. Please answer the following questionnaire, noting that the responses will be confidential and used solely for scientific research purposes. Please note that participation is completely voluntary and that you may choose to stop taking part in this study without any consequences. If you have any questions, you can contact a.zabin@ju.edu.jo.

Signature _____

Gender:_____
Age:_____
Nationality:_____
Social media platforms you use daily: _____

Paragraphs	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Verbal Communication					
1. Social media has changed the way I use language to communicate with others.					
2. I find myself using more written communication (texts, messages) due to social media.					
3. My vocabulary and expressions have been influenced by social media trends.					
Nonverbal Communication					
4. I use emojis and GIFs to express my feelings on social media.					
5. Social media has changed my perception of nonverbal cues in face-to-face interactions.					
6. I rely on profile pictures and statuses to understand others' emotions.					
Listening					
7. Social media has improved my ability to listen and understand others' viewpoints.					
8. I find it easier to engage in active listening through social media interactions.					
9. Social media distractions make it harder for me to listen attentively in face-to-face conversations.					
Feedback					
10. Social media allows me to give and receive feedback more quickly.					
11. The feedback I receive on social media is often more immediate than in-person interactions.					
12. I find that feedback on social media lacks the personal touch compared to face-to-face feedback.					
Context					
13. The context of my communication changes significantly when I use social media.					
14. I adapt my communication style depending on the social media platform I am using.					
15. Social media has blurred the lines between professional and personal communication.					

Paragraphs	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Communication Channels					
16. I prefer communicating through social media over other channels like phone calls or emails.					
17. Social media has become my primary channel for staying in touch with friends and family.					
18. I use multiple social media platforms to communicate with different groups of people.					
Conflict Resolution					
19. Social media has affected how I resolve conflicts with others.					
20. I find it easier to address conflicts through social media rather than in person.					
21. Social media sometimes escalates conflicts due to misunderstandings.					
Communication Roles					
22. Social media has influenced the roles I take on in conversations (e.g., leader, follower).					
23. I am more likely to initiate conversations on social media than in person.					
24. Social media makes it easier for me to assume a leadership role in group discussions.					

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