EXPLORING SELF-ESTEEM AMONG JORDANIANS: INSIGHTS INTO AGE GROUPS, MARITAL STATUS, AND SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

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ABSTRACT

Self-esteem plays a critical role in the maintenance of an individual's psychological well-being. Self-esteem varies among individuals across different cultures. To date, only a limited number of studies have been identified to examine the self-esteem variables among Jordanians. This study aims to investigate the correlation between self-esteem, age, marital status, and the usage of social media applications among Jordanians. A total of 287 individuals took part in this study. This study was a cross-sectional study. A survey that included both sociodemographic data and the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RES) was used. The results show the importance of age and marital status as influential factors in self-esteem among Jordanians. Also, the results show a weak association between self-esteem and social media applications. Further studies, that take these variables into account, to increase self-esteem among Jordanians will need to be undertaken.

Keywords: *Self-Esteem, Psychological Well-being, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Jordanian Culture.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

There is a growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of self-esteem in social and behavioral studies (e.g., Holas et al., 2023; Orth & Robins, 2022). Previous studies mostly defined self-esteem as the individuals' perspectives towards themselves and their attitudes (Tus, 2020). Self-esteem highlights the inner sense of social support and self-worth (Li et al., 2018; Xia & Yang, 2019).

A consequence of high self-esteem is positive psychological well-being which is an important factor in maintaining a sense of self-efficacy, and improving self-regulatory strategies (Kim et al., 2021; Rehman et al., 2023; Trautner & Schwinger, 2020; Xiang et al., 2019). High self-esteem may contribute to the increase in motivation and task engagement levels, and it may be an important factor in building strong relationships (Acosta-Gonzaga, 2023; Fox & Magnus,2014; Ibrahim &Mohamed, 2023; Sorjonen et al., 2023).

Most likely, low self-esteem can give rise to a sense of loneliness, and it can lead to crime, educational failure, substance abuse, and violence (Chiha et al., 2023; Cherrier et al., 2023; Rimes et al., 2023). In many cases, low self-esteem may be associated with a sense of insecurity which has a significant impact on the individual's relationships (Gori et al., 2023; Nwankwo & Oparaugo, 2023). In addition, low self-esteem appears to be linked to mental health conditions

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including depression and anxiety (Cheang et al., 2023; Parwez et al., 2023).

The aim of the present research is to explore, for the first time, to the best knowledge of the researchers, self-esteem among various age groups in Jordan, and this study offers some insights into the association between Jordanian self-esteem and their social media applications and marital status.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the literature, self-esteem has been associated with the individual's appetite, quality of sleep, and physical activity (Hernández, 2023; Wang et al., 2023). Gender, genetic factors, educational and income levels are major influencers on the individual's self-esteem (Griffin, 2023; Falk et al., 2023; Tamanaifar et al., 2023; Willemse et al., 2023; Xin et al., 2023; Yan, 2023).

Moreover, researchers suggest a link exists between technology and self-esteem (Dong et al., 2023; Luo, 2023; Wright & Wachs, 2023). Technology may cause low physical activity, high stress and depression levels, poor academic performance, and an increased sense of loneliness (Larrieu et al., 2023; Yadav & Reddy, 2023; Ying et al., 2023). Other researchers reported that technology may improve academic performance and interaction opportunities (Karatas et al., 2023; Vassilakopoulou et al., 2023; Yılmaz & Griffiths, 2023).

Previous studies have explored self-esteem in various cultures including Singapore, Lebanon, and China (Hawi & Samaha, 2017; Jiang & Ngien, 2020; Yang & Zhang, 2022). In the neighboring countries of Jordan, few studies have been

investigated the self-esteem, for instance, in Iraq AlShawi & Lafta (2015) highlighted the importance of positive childhood experiences with a strong family bonding on building a high self-esteem whereas Raja & Sajit (2018) revealed a strong relationship between the self-esteem and academic achievements.

Aboalshamat et al. (2017) demonstrated a significant relationship between low self-esteem and depression, anxiety, and stress among dental and medical students in both governmental and private colleges in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, ALAhmari et al. (2019) reported significant negative correlations between self-esteem and body mass index in college-age Saudi females. Moreover, Alghamdi et al. (2023) confirmed the negative impact of low self-esteem on the behaviors and academic achievements of Saudi medical students, while Alrabai (2017) elucidated significantly negative correlations between social anxiety and the self-esteem of Saudi learners studying a foreign language.

There is limited research on self-esteem in Jordan. Sawalhah & Al Zoubi (2020) reported medium self-esteem among students in a Jordanian university. Previous studies in Jordan linked self-esteem with academic self-regulation, verbal abuse, fatigue, and Facebook news sharing (Habes et al., 2020; Sawalhah & Al Zoubi, 2020; Yehia et al., 2020). Additionally, Al-Krenawi & Bell (2023) found significantly lower self-esteem among women compared to men in a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, we employed a random sampling technique to gather a diverse and representative group of participants from the Jordanian population since random sampling involves each member of the population having an equal opportunity to be selected for inclusion in the study (Acharya et al., 2013).

We distributed participation invitations to almost 500 participants across various social media applications. The participants were from Amman, Irbid, and Aqaba cities in Jordan. Hair et al. (1998) stated that the sample size should be 15-20 opinions for each independent variable. Hence, our sample size required to be at least 195 since our questionnaire has thirteen variables.

We conducted the research during January-March 2022. The current study is a descriptive cross-sectional study. It utilizes a two-section survey. We used Google Forms to create the online survey. The first part of the survey reported sociodemographic data including gender, age, and marital status, and this question: "Which social media app do you use the most frequently?".

The second section of the survey included the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RES). This scale assesses self-worth through a 4-point Likert scale that ranges from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The RES is considered valid and reliable with a reproducibility coefficient of 0.83, signifying outstanding internal consistency (Hatcher & Hall, 2009). The test-retest reliability of RES showed correlations of 0.85 and 0.88, indicating excellent stability (Rosenberg, 1965). Regarding RES validity, it demonstrates concurrent, predictive, and construct

validity when compared to established groups (Hagborg, 1993; Makhubela & Mashegoane, 2019). The RSE also shows significant correlations with other self-esteem measures, such as the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Demo, 1985). The participants completed an informed consent to fill in the surveys. The participants did not receive any rewards for their participation.

4. ANALYSIS

To analyze the data, we measured the descriptive statistics for the demographic information, the RES, and the social media application question using SPSS (George & Mallery, 2018). We used eta squared to measure the association between self-esteem and social media applications (Levine et al., 2002). We calculated the Pearson correlations to examine the association between age, marital status, and gender with self-esteem (Cohen et al., 2009). Furthermore, we used the Independent Samples T Test to compare the self-esteem between the married and single groups (Norušis, 2006). Also, we used ANOVA to compare the self-esteem among various age groups (Braver et al., 2003).

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

A total of 287 individuals took part in this study. Most participants (88.2%) were females, aged between 16 and 21 years old (28.6%). Half of the participants were single and the rest were married. Table 1 shows the frequencies of the demographic data.

Table 1. The Frequencies of the Demographic Data

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	253	88.20
Male	34	11.80
Age		
10-15	24	8.40
16-21	82	28.60
22-26	53	18.50
27-31	36	12.50
32-36	15	5.20
37-41	22	7.70
42-46	12	4.20
47-51	43	15.00
Marital status		
Single	144	49.80
Married	143	50.20

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the self-esteem of Jordanian participants, from which we find that the highest average was awarded to question three which stated: "I think I have many good qualities" with a mean of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 0.75 followed by question ten which said: "I have a positive attitude towards myself" with a mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 0.97. Additionally, a high average was recorded for question four which stated: "I can do the things other people do" with a mean of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 0.91.

However, both questions five and six resulted in low means 2.06 and 2.30 which stated that: "I feel like there is nothing that makes me proud of myself", and "Sure, I feel useless sometimes" respectively. The lowest average was reported for question

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nine which said: "In general, I tend to feel like a failure" with a mean of 1.88 and a standard deviation of 1.08.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Self-Esteem

Variables		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
`1- In general, I am satisfied with Myself	N	54	143	75	15	3.51	1.21	6
	%	18.8%	49.8%	26.1%	5.2%			
2- Sometimes I feel useless	N	16	86	127	58	2.56	1.26	7
	%	5.6%	30.0%	44.3%	20.2%			
3- I think I have many good Qualities	N	116	157	11	3	4.30	0.75	1
	%	40.4%	54.7%	3.8%	1%			
4- I can do the things other people Do	N	79	173	31	4	4.02	0.91	3
	%	27.5%	60.3%	10.8%	1.4%			
5- I feel like there is nothing that makes me proud of myself	N	11	43	131	102	2.06	1.14	8
	%	3.8%	15.0%	45.6%	35.5%			
6- Sure, I feel useless sometimes	N	10	70	122	85	2.30	1.22	9
	%	3.5%	24.4%	42.5%	29.6%			
7- I feel like a person of value, at least, on an equal basis with others	N	63	190	26	8	3.95	0.91	4
	%	22.0%	66.2%	9.1%	2.8%			
8- I wish I had more respect for myself	N	74	124	61	28	3.54	1.33	5
	%	25.8%	43.2%	21.3%	9.8%			
9- In general, I tend to feel like a failure	N	14	23	128	122	1.88	1.08	10
	%	4.9%	8.0%	44.6%	42.5%			
10- I have a positive Attitude towards myself	N	103	150	27	7	4.10	0.97	2
	%	35.9%	52.3%	9.4%	2.4%			

Note: N = 287, Minimum = 1, Maximum = 5. There was zero selection for neutral choice. Low level of agreement:1-2.59, Moderate level of agreement: 2.60-3.39, High level of agreement:3.40-5.

4.2 Social Media Applications Question

Figure 1 shows the applications that Jordanians used the most in their daily lives. It is clear from the chart that WhatsApp and Facebook were the most popular applications since 25% of the participants preferred them, and 85 participants (20.2%) used only Facebook whereas 77 participants (26.8%) used only WhatsApp. However, Instagram was in third place in popularity as 42 participants (14.6%) used this application.

Only ten participants of our sample used the TikTok application, while six participants used all the applications together. Finally, 15 participants used both Facebook and Instagram.
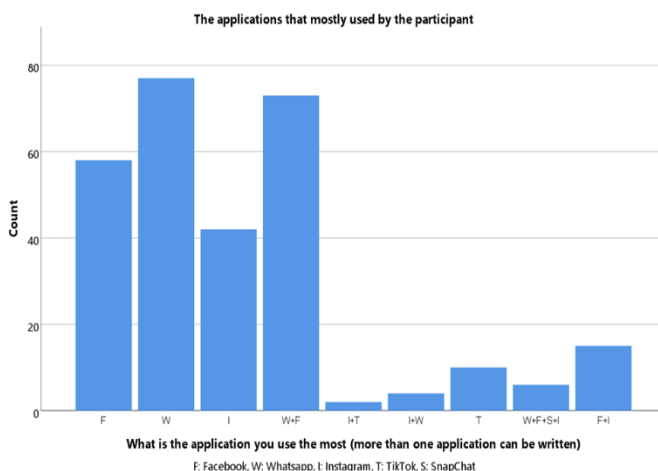

Figure 1. Social Media Apps Used the Most in Jordan

4.3 Associations Between Self-esteem and The Measured Variables

The values of Eta squared (0.00884) indicate a weak association between self-esteem and social media applications. However, there was a significant negative association between age and self-esteem, since the Pearson correlation value was (r=- 0.246, p <0.01) between them. Furthermore, there was a positive correlation between marital status and self-esteem (r=0.163, p<0.01). In addition, there was no correlation between gender and self-esteem (r=0.009, p = 0.883).

Particularly, the mean of self-esteem is significantly different between the age groups. Generally speaking, the participants reported high self-esteem, except for those over 40 years old who had moderate self-esteem. The highest self-esteem was for participants aged 16 to 21 years old, as shown in Table 3. In addition, the self-esteem for the married and single groups is significantly different $t_{280.357}$ = - 2.784, p = .006). The mean self-esteem of married participants was 3.41 (SD = 0.86), significantly lower than that of single participants, which was 3.68 (SD = 0.76).

Table 3. Self-Esteem of Each Age-Group

Age group	10-15	16-21	22-26	27-31	32-36	37-41	42-46	46-51	Total
Mean	3.47	3.75	3.65	3.73	3.73	3.45	2.75	3.15	3.55
N	24	82	53	36	15	22	12	43	287
SD	0.96	0.69	0.68	0.72	0.67	0.84	1.11	0.91	0.82

5. DISCUSSION

The findings were that self-esteem has a positive correlation with marital status and social media applications and a negative correlation with age. This study confirms that self-esteem is associated with both social media applications as mentioned in the literature, Individuals with low self-esteem use Instagram or Facebook to boost their sense of self-worth by seeking likes and follows (Diefenbach & Anders, 2022; Eşkisu et al., 2017). Also, time used on WhatsApp positively influences the students' psychological well-being since it gives them a feeling of social integration (Bano et al., 2019).

Previous studies evaluating self-esteem observed an increase in self-esteem as the age increases from adolescence to adulthood (Bleidorn et al., 2016; Orth et al., 2018; von Soest et al. 2016). What is surprising is that our study found a decrease in self-esteem as age increases. A possible explanation for this might be that most participants are females, and in the cultural context of Jordan the normal place for women is their homes, especially once they are over 40, and they mostly depend on their husbands and sons which limits their choices and interactions, also even if they have a work they can retire before the age of 55 based on the law of Jordan which might give them a sense of low productivity and self-esteem (Sonbol, 2022).

The results shed light on the importance of marital status as an influential factor that affects self-esteem. The current investigation found that singles have higher self-esteem than married individuals. This result might be explained by several factors first, after marriage couples have more responsibilities, for instance, they tend to deal with money as a collective

resource with a high level of commitment (Burgoyne et al., 2010). Second, the couple's mental and physical health may decline after being married (Huntington et al., 2022). Third, some women described marriage as a restriction in front of their goals and freedom (Mishra & Dubey, 2013).

The findings highlight the importance of increasing self-esteem among Jordanian people, especially women, in their adulthood. There is a need to support the women's sense of self-worth in Jordan after being married. Future studies might implement self-esteem-enhancing programs for adults in Jordan. This study has some limitations since we included participants from various ages and different factors might influence their individual's self-esteem. Also, we collected the survey online which limits the possible discussions with the participants. However, future research might assess Jordanian self-esteem taking these factors into consideration.

6. CONCLUSION

This study was set out to examine the effect of age, marital status, and social media apps on Jordanian self-esteem. The main results of this investigation show that Jordanians' self-esteem decreases once they get older, or they get married. This would be a fruitful area for further work since upcoming studies might investigate ways to support Jordanian adults' self-esteem. Considerably more work will need to be done to determine the exact impact of marriage and age on the psychological well-being in Arab countries, including Jordan.

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