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The e-hate speech in Jordan

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to know the extent to which Jordanians are aware of the concept of hate speech on social media based on the survey methodology. The results of the study revealed that there was a high level of understanding of the concept of hate speech, with about (73%) defining the concept of hate speech and related definitions and forms. In conclusion, the more the respondents are capable of identifying the concept of hate speech, the greater their ability to perceive its effects on society it was accepted by the results.

Keywords: Hate, Speech, Social Media, Awareness, Media.

El discurso de odio electrónico en Jordania

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es saber hasta qué punto los jordanos son conscientes del concepto de discurso de odio en las redes sociales basado en la metodología de la encuesta. Los resultados del estudio revelaron que había un alto nivel de comprensión del concepto de discurso de odio, con aproximadamente (73%) definiendo el concepto de discurso de odio y las definiciones y formas relacionadas. En conclusión, cuanto más capaces sean los encuestados de identificar el

concepto de discurso de odio, mayor será su capacidad de percibir sus efectos en la sociedad que los resultados aceptaron.

Palabras clave: Odio, discurso, redes sociales, conciencia, medios de comunicación.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hate speech is a phenomenon that has been escalated through cyberspace; its expansion has become frequent on social networking platforms, specifically on Facebook. Further, crimes of hate speech against ethnic minorities have recently risen on the Internet and the FBI has confirmed that this type of crime has risen by 17% in 2018 (WASSEM & HOVY, 2016).

The growing rhetoric of hatred in Europe, especially from the extreme right and the practices of hate speech electronically are on the rise. Therefore, many groups of human rights have expressed concern about the use of social networking sites as key platforms for spreading this hate speech, hatred, and racism (QASMEAH, 2016). The danger lies in the fact that Social Media is a free and immediate intermediary, through which one can reach the largest possible base of the public in the world very quickly. The most dangerous thing is that there is justification for spreading the hate speech under the name of freedom of expression,

Twitter and Facebook are always looking to effectively reduce hate speech. Social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube

have invested millions of dollars in trying to identify and remove the content of hate speech from their platforms. But identifying how to get rid of this type of discourse and disinformation always clashes with freedom of expression. In an attempt to reduce the spread of hate speech on Facebook, the Facebook administration has removed 2.5 million content related to hate speech reported by users in the first three months of 2018 (LEETS, 2001).

The phenomenon of hate speech appeared in the media community in Jordan specifically in the period between 2014-2016, the peak of the Syrian asylum according to the Jordanian Media Credibility Monitor Akeed in Arabic who recorded some cases in this regard and mentioned that social media is the main source of hate speech. This speech began to grow and reached serious stages in stirring up conflicts, manufacturing attitudes and influencing public opinion presenting clear indicators on issues affecting the cultural and religious dimensions of Jordanian society, both in expressions related to cultural or political values and indirect religious and sectarian dimensions, culminating in the repercussions of the assassination of Christian writer Nahed Hattar and the repercussions the death of the Christian young man Shadi on the 4th of August 2016, when electronic interactions have shifted to social media, making up the most dangerous phenomena of hate speech in Jordanian society (GUDELIENE, 2017).

In light of these developments in the Jordanian media scene, the research team recognized the need for studying this increasing

phenomenon in Jordan in particular and in the media field in general. The discourse of hatred is a recent concept in the Jordanian media, and the cases practiced by some people under this name have increased through the Social media wave, which intensifies the regional, sectarian, religious and ethnic conflicts. The seriousness of this recent phenomenon in Jordanian society has been subject to legal procedures; this paper aims to study the level of Jordanian university students' understanding of the concept of hate speech through social media.

The importance of the study lies in the fact that it provides information on the level of awareness of hate speech which is spreading in a very aggressive way among the youth group represented by university students by demonstrating the students' awareness of this concept.

This study is also important because it reflects the views of an influential and large social group in society as a whole based on the assumption that they are the most affected by the current events and by the discourse of widespread hatred. In addition, this study is in line with the recent events of the massacre of the mosques of New Zealand, in which 49 people were assassinated by a Christian extremist influenced by a hate speech through social media. The importance of the study stems from updating of Jordanian legislation to cope with the crimes of hate speech. In order to counter such behavior, the hate speech clause was introduced in the amended cyber-crimes law.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the survey methodology, which is one of the most important methods used in media studies, it helps in the ease of collecting data from a large number of people to indicate what is actually happening in order to reach conclusions and generalizations, given the large size of society and the difficulty of carrying out a comprehensive survey of them. The researchers used the simple random sample of Jordanian university students. The questionnaire was distributed electronically on the pages of student groups; it was answered by 250 students from Yarmouk University in Jordan (GUNDUZ, 2010).

The questionnaire was adopted as the main tool for collecting data from the sample members, representing students of a Jordanian public university, considering that this tool provides a good degree of scientific objectivity away from bias. Questionnaires are the most widely used tool in scientific research because it is a simple and quick way to collect data. It is considered the least expensive research tool in terms of time, effort, and money (AL-WAFAIE, 1998).

In this study, the questionnaire consists of a set of parts. The first part relates to the demographic characteristics, specifically gender and academic major. The second part of the questionnaire contains the questions that the study seeks to answer. They are as follow; the concept of hate speech among students, the students' awareness of the causes of the hate speech, the extent to which the students were aware

of the forms of hate speech that spread over the social media and the next part of it is to know the effects of the hate speech on the system of religious, social and cultural values of the Jordanians, and the degree to which students are aware of the issues that occur in Jordan and their ability to classify them as hate speech. The five-dimensional Likert measurement scale was used in the questionnaire (BOSTA, 2010).

To verify the validity of the virtual tool, the research team applied the questionnaire to an experimental sample to ascertain the apparent authenticity of the tool and its questions, and the soundness of the formulation of questions and paragraphs so that they are understandable to the respondents. The tool was also presented to a number of specialists who are professors in the Faculty of Mass Communication and the Faculty of Education. To verify the reliability of the tool through the coefficient of (Kronbach Alpha), it was found that the lowest values between the variables are 0.78 and the highest value is 1.00. These values are strong indicators that the study tool has a high degree of reliability used in the data of the study (COKASH, 2017).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the study presents the main results, in which 250 respondents from Jordanian university participated; 166 (67%) females and 84 (33%) males. Of these, 217 (85%) are on their bachelor's and

33 (15%) on their masters. The study sample included 103 (88%) students studying media and journalism and the rest has a non-media degree. The majority of respondents are Muslims 233 (93%), while 17 (7%) are Christians. In response to the first question on the concept and forms of hate speech, the results show that there is a high level of understanding of this concept, three quarters of respondents (73%) were able to identify the concept of hate speech and its related definitions and forms, while about 17% remained without a position or neutrality of it, and the remaining (10%)disagreed with the terms in the study to define the concept of hate speech.

More specifically, about two-thirds of the sample (170, 67%) agreed with the statement which defined hate speech as hatred of others while13% disagreed with it. Moreover, 153 respondents (60%) believe that not accepting the customs and traditions of others who are different from us is one of the definitions of hate speech while 10% of the sample does not. The overwhelming majority of the respondents (214, 84%) believe that insulting and contempt others is an expression of hate speech and while 3% disagree with this.

About three-quarters (189, 74%) of respondents think that one of the concepts of hate speech is spreading rumors about people who are different from us while 15% did not think so. Finally, 203 (80%) of the respondents agreed that degrading people who are different in religion or ethnicity and not accepting them is one of the most prominent concepts of hate speech, while 8% of the sample did not agree (See table 1).

Table 1: Respondents' perception of the concept of hate speech

Statement	Agree	Neutral	disagree
Good hatred of others who differ from me.	170 (67%)	47 (20%)	33(13%)
Do not accept the customs and traditions of others who are different from me	153(60%)	71(30%)	26(10%)
Blasphemy and contempt for others	214(84%)	28(13%)	8(3%)
Spreading rumors about people	189(74%)	23(11%)	38(15%)
Underestimating and not accepting people who are different in religion or race.	203(80%)	25(12%)	22(8%)
Total	365(73%)	86(17%)	29(10%)

The results in Table (2) indicate that three-quarters of the sample (75%), agreed that they knew people who acted through social media platforms in a form of hatred, while about 12% did not agree, while (12%) were neutral on this issue.

Table 2: Do you know any of your friends made any of these forms of hate speech?

Forms of hate speech	Agree	Neutral	disagree
Some propagate rumors and spread false news about those who disagree with religion and race	254 (81%)	28(12%)	18(7%)

Help spread strife through social networking sites	212(84%)	13(5%)	25(11%)
Some people degrade someone because of the difference in their religion or race	225(90%)	3(1%)	22(9%)
Do not accept the customs and traditions of others who are different from him	161(64%)	32(13%)	57(23%)
No mercy on people other than their religion	150(59%)	58(24%)	42(17%)
Insulting and ridiculing large religious symbols	209(83%)	27(11%)	14(16%)
The participation of some through social media to defame the people of a whole country and to accuse it in a certain way of generalization	193(77%)	44(18%)	0
Some penetrate the private life of individuals and disseminate them to the public	157(63%)	41(17%)	52(20%)
Frequencies total	1511(76%)	246(13%)	243(12%)

**More than one option is available to each respondent

According to the data, 90% (225 respondents) agree that they know people who have abused people on social networking sites because of their differences in religion or race, and 83% (209 respondents) agree that they know people who are insulting and ridiculing great religious symbols through social networking sites, because their followers are different from them. About 84% (212 respondents) said they believe that they have used social media in helping some people who spread dissension among followers of

different religions. And 64% (161 respondents) agree that they know people who do not accept the customs and traditions of others who are different from them.

The data in Table (3) classifies the attitudes of the respondents from cases that occurred in the Jordanian society and published on social media. Students were asked whether these cases apply to the concept of hate speech from their point of view or not. In general, about two-thirds of the sample of the study, 64% believe that the five cases that were presented to the respondents apply to the concept of hate speech, namely the assassination of the Christian journalist NahedHattar because of the re-publication of the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, And the condolences of Muslims by the Christian musician Jordan Shadi Abu Jaber, who died in an accident on the airport road, the Ministry of the Interior banned the activities of believers without borders, which affect ideological ideas at the request of deputies belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood, and the cheers of the Wahdat and Faysali fans, which are offensive to national unity, and criticism of the Syrian refugees and blame them for being the main cause of the problem of water shortage in northern Jordan, specifically the city of Mafraq).

Table 3: Cases in Jordanian society related to hate speech concept from sample view

Forms of hate speech	Yes	NO
The assassination of the Christian journalist NahedHattar because of the re-publication of the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad	165 (67%)	85(33%)

peace be upon him		
The condolences of Muslims by the Christian musician Jordan Shadi Abu Jaber, who died in an accident on the airport road	154(62%)	96(38%)
The Ministry of the Interior banned the activities of believers without borders, which affect ideological ideas at the request of deputies belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood	105(41%)	145(59%)
The cheers of the Wahdat and Faysali fans, which are offensive to national unity	196(79%)	54(21%)
Criticism of the Syrian refugees and make them the main cause of the problem of water shortage in northern Jordan, specifically the city of Mafraq	182(73%)	68(27%)
Frequencies total	1511(76%)	246(13%)

In particular, the case of fans of Al-Wehdat and Al-Faisaly clubs recorded the highest percentage of the hate speech concept (196, 79%), followed by the publication of news of criticism of the Syrian refugees and accusing them of being the main reason for the problem of water shortage suffered by the people of the Badia North with 73%. Then case of the assassination of Jordanian Christian writer Nahed Hattar in front of the Palace of Justice because of the re-publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him (67%), followed by the controversy raised by the social media about the condolences of Muslims on the death of Jordanian Christian musician Shadi Abu Jaber after a traffic accident on the airport road by (62%). While the incident of the decision of the Ministry of the Interior and

at the request of deputies of the Muslim Brotherhood to ban the event of the organization believers without borders, because it is disseminating religious ideas alien to the community with 41%.

The results show that the most important reasons behind the spread of hate speech in social media are: The absence of awareness and the law of people (207 respondents and 82%), the error in the concept of freedom of expression media chaos 80% (203 respondents), followed by the spread of corruption in society (202 respondents, 79%), a lack of awareness of the damage caused by hate speech (195 respondents, 77%), and Encouragement and competition by known symbols on hate speech (187 respondents, 73%).

As for the question related to the most prominent effects of the hate speech, the following effects were revealed; a lot of quarrels and conflicts between people (228 respondents 88%), followed by an increase in crimes and acts contrary to morality (222 respondents and 87%), and then social disintegration (216 respondents and 85%), followed by creating an enabling environment for violence and extremism (211 respondents and 82%).

Regarding the most effective methods to address the spreading of hate speech on social media, the following methods were the most agreed upon from the point of view of respondents;

the use of places of worships is one of the most important methods (165 respondents and 65%), media campaigns (161 respondents and 63%), and dissemination of legal awareness 60% 153 respondents. Further, over a half of the sample 59% (151 respondents) view that the application of censorship in the law of electronic crimes: and the Family control will intensively decrease hate speech promotion, while some (105 respondents, 41%) do not believe that there is any risk of hate speech to be addressed on social media.

As for the first hypothesis: The more the respondents are capable of identifying the concept of hate speech, the greater their ability to perceive its effects on society it was accepted by the results because the Pearson Coefficient test indicated that there is significant relationship between respondents' ability to identify the concept of hate speech and their ability to perceive the impacts of hate speech on society. There was a strong and positive relationship between being aware of the concept of hate speech and its impact on society $r = 0.985$, $n = 248$, $p < 001$.

While the second hypothesis There are statistically significant differences in the level of awareness of the concept of hate speech based on religious affiliation of the respondents (Muslim or Christian) was rejected because when the t-test was run the data indicated that there was a significant difference between Muslims' understanding of the concept of hate speech concept ($M=2.12$, $SD=1.43$) and Christians' understanding of the

concept of hate speech (M=2.95, SD=0.21) conditions; t (249)=2.432, $p \leq 0.002$ for Christians favor.

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