The Impact of Social Websites Over Jordanian Students' Intentions of Active Political Participation: An Application of Theory of Planned Behavior

Samer M. Al-Mohammad*

Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Graduate School of Business, German Jordanian University, Amman, Jordan. *Email: samer_f3@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Appreciating the massive popularity and application of social websites worldwide, the purpose of this paper was to explore the impact of such websites over young Jordanians' intentions of active political participation. To that end, the paper developed a model based on Ajzen's (1991) Theory of planned behavior. Further, quantitative data was collected through a survey of 461 BA students at one Jordanian university. Empirical findings underlined that respondents' use of social websites had a direct impact over their exposure to online political content. Further, exposure to such content had a direct impact over respondents' both "attitudes towards active political participation" and "perceived behavioral control." While "subjective norms" had also a strong significant impact over respondents' "attitudes towards active political participation" and "perceived behavioral control," both constructs had a direct impact over respondents' "intentions of active political participation." Upon its findings, the paper draws some conclusions, introduces certain recommendations, and suggests further avenues for future research.

Keywords: Active Political Participations, Social Websites, Theory of Planned Behavior
JEL Classifications: M30, M31

1. INTRODUCTION

The last 4 years have witnessed a remarkable change in the political sphere of the Arab world. The "Arab Spring" phenomenon has spawned most of the Arab countries with different manifestations and different levels of intensity. Noticeably, "Arab spring" was ignited, coordinated and motivated by younger generations of Arab political activists. Further, the use of different social websites has been a common factor amongst the different uprisings in different Arab countries. For instance, the initiation and success of the "Egyptian revolution" was associated with the use of Facebook (Attia et al., 2011; Mansour, 2012). In addition, and up until now, Syrian political activists rely heavily on Facebook and YouTube to spread their views, news and clips.

Social websites have been defined as those websites that make it possible for people to form online communities and share user created contents. They represent a union of social networking sites and social media sites (Kim et al., 2010). While considerable research has underlined the growing use of social websites in politics, empirical findings suggest that the use of such websites does have an impact over individuals' intentions of active political participation/engagement (Attia et al., 2011; Benmamoun et al., 2012; Zhang and Lin, 2014). Active political participation refers to "an individual's undertaking of any offline politically motivated endeavors, whether in support of or opposing a certain political regime. Such endeavors include attending or participating in political debates, seminars, marches or demonstrations. Further, they include composing political content and joining political groups, movements or parties." While young people represent the main and most active participants in social websites (Cachia et al., 2007), such websites seem to have considerable impact over young people's intentions of active political participation (Conory et al., 2012), especially when considering that young people tend to adapt easier and quicker to change (Cachia et al., 2007).

As an Arab country, Jordan has witnessed its own version of "Arab spring." Active political movements have been formed, all over the country, demanding several economic, social and political reforms. Between the years 2010 and 2013, Jordan

has witnessed over 2000, mostly peaceful, demonstrations with substantial achievements, including; the revision of Jordanian constitution, the open investigations of several corruption files, the replacement of several governments, and the call for early elections of a new parliament. Despite the decreased momentum of such demonstrations since the last quarter of 2013, Jordanian political activists continue to demand more reforms. Accordingly, the "Jordanian spring" is anticipated to continue. As in neighboring countries, Jordanian young political activists have taken on social websites as tools for communication and organization (Swedan, 2015). Many groups were formed online to share political views and gather momentum for political activities. On the other hand, several government sponsored groups were also formed online to share certain ideas and values to support governments' political endeavors. With Internet penetration rate of 55.9%, about 3.535 million users (Ghazal, 2012), such politically motivated efforts should be noticed and examined for their impact, especially when considering that almost 78% of the Jordanian population is below the age of 35 (Department of Statistics/Jordan, 2015). Accordingly, the purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of social websites over Jordanian BA students' intentions of active political participation. The paper examines such impact using the theory of planned behavior (TPB) introduced by Ajzen (1991).

Political marketing literature has underlined the importance of new Internet technologies and online social websites to political communication (Mylona, 2008; Towner and Dulio, 2012). However, research in such particular area remains limited (Zhang et al., 2010; Gordon et al., 2011), especially in the context of Jordan (Alawneh, 2012). Accordingly, the contribution of this paper is twofold. Firstly, the paper adds to the limited body of political marketing literature addressing the political impact of social websites. Secondly, the timing of the paper contributes to its importance considering the political unease both in Jordan and its neighbors.

The findings of the paper can help in understanding how Jordanian youth form their political intentions and how social websites can contribute to that. Accordingly, the findings could be of use to academic researchers and politicians embarking on political marketing.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS

The main research problem of this paper is to provide a thorough understanding of how social websites impact Jordanian youth intentions of active political participation. In relation to the research problem, and based on relevant literature review, the paper is designed to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a direct effect of social websites' level of use over Jordanian youth exposure to online political content (i.e., political information in the form of news, views, messages, debates, events, images and clips)?
2. Is there a direct effect of exposure to online political content over Jordanian youth attitudes towards active political participation?
3. Is there a direct effect of exposure to online political content over perceived behavioral control with regard to active political participation?
4. Is there a direct effect of Jordanian youth (1) attitude towards active political participation, (2) subjective norms and (3) perceived behavior control over their intentions towards active political participation?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Political Marketing, Communication and Internet

Political marketing represents the application of the marketing concept to the field of politics i.e., marketing of politicians, political parties and ideas. It has been defined as the application of marketing principles and procedures in political campaigns by various individuals and organizations. The procedures involved include the analysis, development, execution, and management of strategic campaigns by candidates, political parties, governments, lobbyists and interest groups that seek to drive public opinion, advance their own ideologies, win elections, and pass legislation and referenda in response to the needs and wants of selected people and groups in a society (Newman, 1999). In that sense, political marketing includes efforts aimed at integration within the marketing mix, known as the four Ps—traditionally product, promotion, price, and place—to control the individuals' behaviors efficiently (O'Leary and Iredale, 1976; Niffenegger, 1989). The product includes promises and ideas conveyed by political parties, groups or candidates. The price is the cost individuals pay for their support. The distribution represents the ability to deliver the political message in a personal way to each individual. While promotion includes the use of advertising, rallies, TV debates, flyers, billboards, door-to-door canvassing, and other campaign activities to communicate political messages (Schafferer, 2006).

Political promotion, or political communication, has witnessed considerable attention by both politicians and researchers (Kolovos and Harris, 2005). The importance of political communication stems from its impact over individuals' convections about political ideas, issues, parties and groups. Such importance has even led some "political communication" researchers to consider it as a more inclusive concept to include political marketing (Scammell, 1999). Nevertheless, while political communication focuses on the role of a long-term communication, political marketing is more comprehensive; binding together campaigning, political communication, market intelligence, product design and product promotion (Lees-Marshment, 2001).

In the history of the development of political communication and political marketing, the emergence of a new medium has been inexorably identified with changes and transformations in the realm of public life and participation (Perloff, 1999). Accordingly, the emergence and application of Internet in political communication represents a step forward in political marketing and communication (Towner and Dulio, 2012) which relied previously on more "traditional" media for communication such as TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. The internet provided a great opportunity for political entities and individuals to gain wider, more personal, and time free reach to their targeted audiences. Further, internet has provided a platform for different applications of political communication such as political-oriented online forums, political-oriented websites and social websites.

As suggested by Perloff (1999), the wide application of Internet technologies and methods into political communication has resulted in considerable change in political campaigning and audience's political attitudes, intentions and behaviors. Previous empirical research has attempted to underline the impact exerted by the internet, and its different applications, over publics' political attitudes and behaviors (Demertzis et al., 2005; Mylona, 2008; Towner and Dulio, 2012). Of concern to this paper is research conducted on the impact of social websites, as political communication tools, over individuals' political intentions.

3.2. Social Websites and Political Impact

As underlined earlier, social websites are those websites that make it possible for people to form online communities and share user created contents. They represent a union of social networking sites -such as Facebook, Google+ and Twitter- and social media sites - such as YouTube, tumbler and Flicker - (Kim et al., 2010). There is a plethora of social websites, which differ in the details and features they provide. However - and regardless of their purposes, details and features - social websites share similar objectives, i.e., to enable the; (1) formation of online communities, (2) interactions among members in such communities and (3) sharing of user created contents (Boys and Ellison, 2007; Kim et al., 2010). The last decade has witnessed an exponential growth in the use of, and membership in, social websites (Kim et al., 2010; Shin, 2010). They have been attracting people from different age groups, and with different interests and motivations, from all over the world. Social websites have provided a platform for people to communicate, build relationships, express themselves and share user created content. Such uses have gained social websites massive world-wide popularity amongst millions of Internet users.

Accordingly, considerable academic research was devoted to explore the impact of such websites over different aspects and mechanisms of individual and group behavior; such as; self-expression (Siibak, 2009), learning (Alarabiat and Al-Mohammad, 2015), working (Swan, 2001), purchasing (Pookulangara and Koesler, 2011), etc., of particular interest to this paper is research conducted on the political impact of social websites. Their huge user bases, the important amounts of data they provide, and their growing impacts on social and political life attracted the attention of social and political researchers (Wills and Reeves, 2009; Bekafigo and McBride, 2013; Gainous et al., 2013). Table 1 highlights a number of most recent research in the field of social websites' political impact.

While not attempting to be exhaustive, Table 1 underlines the diversity of research addressing the effect exerted by different social websites over political attitudes and intentions of individuals in different contexts. Several observations can be drawn from the table. Firstly, and considering the different research contexts of reviewed papers, the political impact of social websites over individuals' interest, and participation, in political events seems to be a universal phenomenon shared by both developed and developing countries. Secondly, certain stream of reviewed research was devoted to underline reasons for social websites impact over individuals' political interests, intentions and actual engagement. For instance, Lupia and Philpot (2005) proposed that

site effectiveness and efficiency affected users' political interests. On the other hand, Attia et al. (2011) suggested that social network-related factors (i.e., trust, word of mouth, relationship, loyalty and value) had a positive impact over respondents' attitudes towards political and social change. Further, Mansour (2012) underlined that the importance of social networks as sources of information, and mediums for informing internal and external communities of internal events, to the success of Egyptian revolution.

Thirdly, another stream of research has attempted to underline how the use of social websites would actually lead to active political participation. For example, Conory et al. (2012) suggested that participation in online political groups was strongly correlated with offline political participation. On the other hand, Zhang and Lin (2014) proposed that information exchange uses of social network sites (SNS) and SNS-based political activities were positively associated with the canonical mode of political participation—that is, contacting media and joining petitions and demonstrations. Further, Valenzuela (2012) underlined that the link between overall social website use and protest activity was explained by using the social network for news and socializing rather than when it was used for self-expression.

Fourthly, and consistent with the rising of what has been commonly referred to as "Arab spring," some research was conducted in the context of Arab countries. Such research has attempted to explore the impact of social websites on political attitudes and intentions of Arabs (Ayed, 2005; Alawneh, 2012; Al-Kandari and Hasanen, 2012) and their role in the revolutions that took place in certain Arab countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen (Dahlgren, 2011; Benmamoun et al., 2012; Perez, 2013). Fifthly, and in relation to population and sampling, considerable research has focused on the impacts of social websites use over young individuals and university students (Ayed, 2005; Kim and Geidner, 2008; Al-Kandari and Hasanen, 2012; Conory et al., 2012; Valenzuela, 2012; Zhang and Lin, 2014). A proposed justification for such focus could be that young people are heavy users of social websites and, perhaps more likely to be affected by them.

In relation to underlined observations, two arguments are developed. Firstly, while most of research on the "Arab spring" phenomenon was directed towards countries that actually witnessed fundamental political changes, the impact of social websites over political attitudes and participation in other Arab countries, like Jordan, is ill researched (Alawneh, 2012). Secondly, while most of reviewed research underlines a considerable effect of online social websites over individuals' political attitudes and participation, the way such effect takes place needs more structured research in order to underline the mechanisms under which individual political opinions, attitudes and intentions are formed.

Accordingly, and in relation to the above, this paper attempts to introduce a model that incorporates the TPB to explain how BA students' intentions of active political participation are formed. Through examining such model in the context of Jordan, the paper attempts to underline any potential for active participation amongst young Jordanians, and the role social websites play in feeding such potential.

Table 1: Research on political impact of social websites

Authors	Research purpose	Methodology/context	Major findings
Ayed (2005)	To examine the effect of Internet over university students' political culture	Survey of 98 university students/Jordan	The internet has a considerable effect in forming students' political attitudes especially towards the Islamic trend
Lupia and Philpot (2005)	To examine a model explaining how individual websites affect political interest	Web-based survey of 1199 members in Knowledge Networks panel	Site effectiveness and efficiency affect users' political interest. People from different ages differ in their preferences of websites
Kim and Geidner (2008)	Examined the influence of young voters' use of online SNS on their voting behavior	A survey of 416 young American voters	Online social network usage contributed to explaining the probability of voting by 5.8%. Furthermore, political use of online social networks was positively associated with self-efficacy, social capital, as well as civic duty
Attia et al. (2011)	To examine the impact of social networking tools on the recent political changes in the 18-day Egyptian revolution of 2011	Case study/theoretical/Egypt	Social network-related factors (trust, word of mouth, relationship, loyalty, value) appear to have had a positive impact on Egyptians' attitudes toward social change, which, in turn, supported their individual and aggregate behavior, leading to revolution
Kim (2011)	To examine how the use of SNSs influences individuals' exposure to political difference	Survey of 2254 households/USA	There is a positive and significant relationship between SNSs and exposure to challenging viewpoints. Online political messaging has a direct effect on exposure to dissimilar viewpoints
Alawneh (2012)	To investigate the role of social networking sites in stimulating Jordanian citizens to participate in activities of mass protests	Descriptive analysis of a sample of 296 of trade unionist in one Jordanian city	Social networking sites had a moderate role in motivating unionists to participate in mass protests
Al-Kandari and Hasanen (2012)	To explore the influence of length of time a person spends on the Internet, their reasons for using the Internet and the use of Internet applications on political efficacy, engagement and knowledge	A survey of 445 university students, 242 (54%) from Egypt and 203 (46%) from Kuwait	Internet use for the reason of self-expression has a negative impact on political efficacy. The use of Facebook, Twitter and blogs as Internet applications, together with Internet use for information, positively predict political engagement
Benmamoun et al. (2012)	To explore direct and indirect mechanisms shaping "Arab Spring." To explore virtual public spheres, the platform from which the Arab Spring was launched, and which owes much to the presence of MNEs	General review and secondary research	New information and networking technologies have already made a sizable impact in terms of paving the way toward political and social changes
Conroy et al. (2012)	To assess the relationship between online political group membership and political engagement	Analysis of online political group pages and original survey research of 455 university undergraduates during the 2008 US presidential elections	Participation in online political groups is strongly correlated with offline political participation, as a potential function of engaging members online. However, they fail to confirm that there is a corresponding positive relationship between participation in online political groups and political knowledge, likely due to low quality online group discussion
Gustafsson (2012)	Offers information regarding the political participation of the Swedish social networking site users	Members of interest organizations, members of political parties, and nonmembers were interviewed	Using only SNS does not drive previously inactive respondents to political participation. According to the members of interest organizations, social networking

Table 1: (*Continued*)

Authors	Research purpose	Methodology/context	Major findings
		in groups about their attitudes towards political content in Facebook	sites are the valuable tools for participation
Mansour (2012)	To assess the role of SNSs in the 25 January 2011 Egyptian Revolution, also known as the "Arab Spring"	Snowball sampling of a heterogeneous demographic group of participants in the revolution/focus groups/Egypt	SNSs are shown to have played a central and pivotal role in the events known collectively as the Arab Spring. Their importance as a source of non-governmental information and as a means of informing the external and internal community of internal events is highlighted by all participants
Valenzuela et al. (2012)	Examine the association between social media use and youth protest, as well as mediating and moderating mechanisms of this relationship	Survey of 1000 individuals aged 18-29 living in Chile's three largest urban areas	Facebook use was associated significantly with protest activity. The link between overall Facebook use and protest activity was explained by using the social network for news and socializing rather than when it was used for self-expression. Post materialist values and political ideologies were not found to moderate the association between Facebook use and protest
Gainous et al. (2013)	To explore how online social networking may stimulate online political participation	Survey data from the pew internet and American life project	There is a positive relationship between online social networking and online political participation. While many of the 'have-nots' do engage in online networking at higher rates than their counterparts, they are less likely to be exposed to political exchanges within their networks. As a result, the effect of online networking on participation is more pronounced for the "haves"
Olorunnisola and Martin (2013)	To assess the impact of new media (social networking and mobile messaging) over the social political movements in African nations	Disk-based research of cases to African nations with significant social movements	New media does empower citizens and have multiplier capabilities, but contextual factors minimize hyperbolic assumptions about the contribution of new media to the formation and progression of social movements
Zhang and Lin (2014)	Investigates how individuals participate in different modes of political participation via SNS in China	Survey conducted at two large universities in southern China (n=328)	Information exchange uses of SNS and SNS-based political activities were positively associated with contacting media and joining petitions and demonstrations. SNS-based political activities also positively predicted political engagement via private contacts, such as lobbying acquaintances of governmental officials, and facilitated political actions initiated by the Chinese Communist Party

SNS: Social network sites

3.3. TPB

TPB is one of the most applied theories in studying individuals' intentions towards a behavior. Introduced by Ajzen (1991), TPB posits that any behavior, which requires a certain amount of planning, can be predicted by the intention to adopt that behavior. It is a theory that may be applied to nearly all voluntary behaviors and it provides quite good results in very diverse fields (Ajzen, 2002; Park and Yang, 2012). In the TPB model, three variables precede the formation of intention, which itself predicts behavior. The three independent variables preceding intention are; (1) attitude towards the behavior, which is a reflection of beliefs and opinions held by an individual about the behavior, (2) subjective norm, which refers to the degree to which the behavior will comply with the wishes of important others, (3) perceived behavioral control, which is defined as a person's perception of his/her ability to perform the specific behavior (Wu and Wu, 2008). The more favorable the attitude and subjective norm with respect to the behavior, and the greater the perceived behavioral control, the stronger the intention to perform

the behavior should be (Autio et al., 1997). Previous research has underlined that TPB's three antecedents (i.e., attitudes towards the behavior, subjective norm and perceived behavior control) can be affected by different "exogenous" factors or variables depending on the context and behavior under study (Ajzen, 1991; Al-Mohammad, 2010; Park and Yang, 2012). Accordingly, to apply the TPB to a specific context, researchers need to pinpoint what factors are related closely to the behavior under study (Park and Yang, 2012).

Considerable research has successfully applied TPB to explore various aspects of social websites uses in different contexts (Pelling and White, 2009; Baker and White, 2010; Al-Debei et al., 2013; Mikalef et al., 2013). Interestingly, TPB was also applied to explore the impact exerted by social websites over individuals' political intentions. The theory was used to explore how individuals' intentions of active political participation were formed, and how certain "exogenous" variables had a direct effect over TPB's antecedents. For example, and in their investigation of factors associated with online environment community members' intention to participate in environmental activities in the Chinese context, Park and Yang (2012) found that ego involvement, group identification, perceived salience of environmental problems, perceived popularity of environmental activities, and perceived interactivity of the community websites, were associated with the intention of participation, either directly or indirectly, through their impact over intention's three antecedents. Further, and in a study of variables associated with online political participation in Croatia, Bosnjak et al. (2008), found that past online political participation and moral obligation had an effect over future political participation of respondents. In addition, and in a study to explore how empathetic intentions and motives affected political participation intentions by SNS' users, Lee and Kweon (2013) underlined that the variables of time spent online, information sharing and trust had an effect over respondents' offline political participation intentions. Despite differences in variables applied by different research, TPB has proved to be a solid model to analyze and predict the political intentions of social websites' users. Accordingly, this papers model is built upon TPB's original model.

3.4. Proposed Model and Hypotheses

Figure 1 introduces the paper's proposed model. The model suggests that individuals' "level of online social websites use" will have a direct impact over their "level of exposure to online political content." The model further suggests that "level of exposure to online political content" has a direct impact over users' "attitudes towards active political participation," and "perceived behavior control." The model also proposes that "subjective norms" will have a direct effect over individuals' "attitude towards active political participation" and "perceived behavioral control." Finally the model proposes that both "attitudes towards active political participation" and "perceived behavior control" will exert direct impact over individuals' "intentions of active political participation."

3.4.1. Model hypotheses
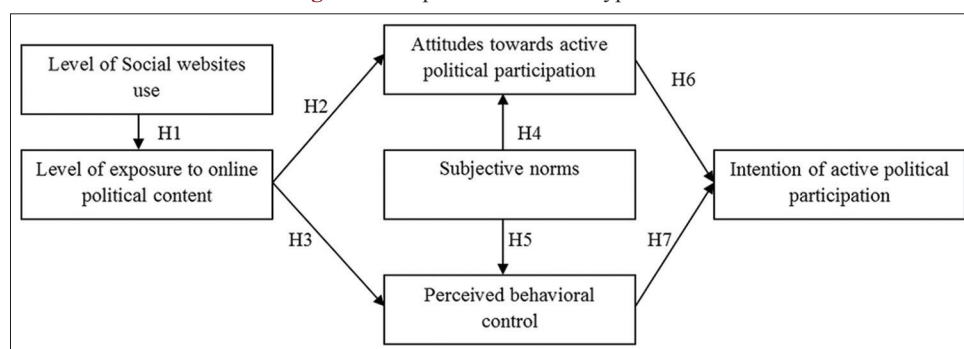#### 3.4.1.1. Social websites use and exposure to political content
Social websites facilitate the expression of social goals, needs and identity within a group of members by serving as the social glue through which members share messages and express their socio-political views (Borrero et al., 2014). In the Arab world context, and since the beginning of the "Arab Spring" phenomenon, the number of social websites users has been increasing (Mubaideen, 2014). Citizens of Arab countries like Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan took to social websites to discuss politics at nearly twice the rate of other Western countries (Dewey et al., 2012). The average Jordanian user spends up to 2½ h on social websites daily (Mubaideen, 2014). Previous empirical research has underlined a direct relationship between social websites "level of use" and exposure to political content (Kim, 2011; Chan et al., 2012). For instance, Kim (2011) found of a direct positive relationship between SNS' use and exposure to cross-cutting political viewpoints. Kim (2011) suggested that SNS' use may make it more likely that people will be exposed to diversity of across political difference that otherwise might not be available. In addition, Chan et al. (2012) found that intensity of social networking service use was related to increased willingness to express opinions about government and politics. In the context of Jordan, and appreciating the increased use of social websites, the paper builds upon previous research findings and proposes that:

H$_1$: The level of social websites use has a direct positive effect over Jordanian students' exposure to online political content.

3.4.1.2. Effects of online political exposure
Earlier research has found that changes in political attitudes may be linked to the type and degree of media exposure (Kazee, 1981); the argument being that more exposure to political content, through media, could eventually affect individuals' perceptions, orientations, beliefs and, consequently, political attitudes. While

Figure 1: Proposed model and hypotheses

Internet has become an increasingly important vehicle for political communication (Wang, 2007), exposure to online political content has also increased.

More recent empirical research has underlined a direct effect of exposure to online political content over individuals' political attitudes (Kenski and Stroud, 2006; Wang, 2007; Al-Kandari and Hasanen, 2012). Such research has proposed that the abundance of political information available on the Internet may increase political interest and encourage opinion expression (Wang, 2007). In this paper, "attitude towards active political participation" is defined as: "The beliefs and opinions held be Jordanian students about engaging in offline political activities, such as joining political parties, groups and demonstrations." This paper proposes that through exposure to online political content available on social websites, Jordanian students would develop more favorable attitudes towards active political participation. Accordingly:

H$_2$: The level of exposure to online political content has a direct positive effect over Jordanian students' attitudes towards active political participation.

Not only would it affect students' attitudes towards active political participation, but exposure to online political content would affect their perceived behavioral control regarding active political participation. In this paper, "perceived behavioral control" refers to "Jordanian students' perceptions of their ability to participate in offline political activities." Perceived behavioral control is very similar to the "political efficacy" concept used by many researchers (Park and Yang, 2012). Political efficacy is "the feeling that political and social change is possible, and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change" (Campbell et al., 1954). It is a determinant of political behavior - without feeling of competency and belief that one's actions are sequential, one has little incentive to participate in politics (Abramson and Aldrich, 1982). Several studies have underlined the impact of exposure to online political content over political efficacy (Kenski and Stroud, 2006; Wang, 2007, Chan et al., 2012); the argument being that exposure to online political content will make individuals more involved, more motivated and more aware of their own power and capability to actively participate in political endeavors. Building on previous studies, and having underlined the similarity between the two concepts of political efficacy and perceived behavioral control, this paper suggests that students' exposure to online political news and information will motivate them and make them feel that they can actually participate in political activities. Accordingly:

H$_3$: The level of exposure to online political content has a direct positive effect over Jordanian students' perceived behavioral control with regard to active political participation.

3.4.1.3. Subjective norms impacts
As underlined in Figure 1, the third antecedent of intention, according to TPB, is "subjective norms." It refers to "students' perceptions of the degree to which their involvement in active political participation will comply with the wishes of important others such as family, friends and colleagues." Previous empirical

research on TPB has underlined the impact of subjective norms over individuals' both attitude towards a certain behavior and perceived behavioral control (Liñán and Chen, 2006). The argument was that individuals' families, friends and colleagues will affect their perceptions and beliefs towards certain behaviors, in addition to affecting their perceptions with regard to their own ability to actually perform such behaviors. While previous research in other contexts has underlined the impact of subjective norms over both attitudes towards a behavior and perceived behavioral control (Liñán and Chen, 2006; Al-Mohammad, 2010), research in political behavior didn't address such impact. Nevertheless, and in the context of this paper, it is proposed that Jordanian students will be affected by their families and peers when it comes to forming their attitudes and assessing their own capabilities.

Accordingly, when families and peers favor active political participation, Jordanian students "attitudes towards active political participation," in addition to their "perceived behavioral control" will be positively affected:

H$_4$: The level of subjective norms has a direct positive effect over Jordanian students' attitudes towards active political participation.

H$_5$: The level of subjective norms has a direct positive effect over Jordanian students' perceived behavioral control with regard to active political participation.

3.4.1.4. Active political participation; antecedents of intentions
In accordance with TPB's propositions, and as underlined in Figure 1, both "attitude towards active political participation" and "perceived behavioral control" affect intentions of active political participation. In this context, "intention of active political participation" refers to "Jordanian students' future notion of undertaking any offline politically motivated endeavors, whether in support of or opposing governmental policies. Such endeavors include attending or participating in political debates, seminars, marches or demonstrations. Further, they include composing political content and joining political groups, movements or parties."

In political research context, attitudes towards political endeavors were proposed to positively affect actual participation in such endeavors (Postmes and Brunsting, 2002; Park and Yang, 2012). In the online context, findings by Postmes and Brunsting (2002) have suggested that individuals' attitudes towards advocated environmental activities was a powerful predictor of behavioral intention. Further, Bosnjak et al. (2008) found that positive attitudes towards online political participation were related to intentions to participate in future online political activities. Accordingly, and in the context of this paper, it is proposed that attitudes formed by Jordanian students towards active political participation are strong predictors of their intentions of active political participation:

H$_6$: Jordanian students' attitudes towards active political participation have a direct positive effect over their intentions of active political participation.

Further, previous research has also underlined a direct effect of perceived behavioral control over political intentions (Bosnjak et al., 2008; Park and Yang, 2012). The argument behind such research was that when individuals believe in their own ability to change political status quo, they will be more willing to join political endeavors and activities. As suggested earlier, active political participation includes different types of activities such as attending or participating in political debates, seminars, marches or demonstrations. Political activities also include composing political content and joining political groups, movements, and parties. Such activities, as SeGuin et al. (1998) suggest, can range in their level of difficulty. Consistent with previous research (Bosnjak et al., 2008; Park and Yang, 2012), this paper argues that Jordanian students' perceptions of their own capabilities in participating in political activities, and bringing about political change, have a direct effect over their intentions of political participation. Accordingly:

H$_7$: Jordanian students' Perceived behavioral control with regard to active political participation has a direct positive effect over students' intentions of active political participation.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Sample and Data Collection
Consistent with previous similar research (Ayed, 2005; Conory et al., 2012; Zhang and Lin, 2014), the study adopted a convenience sampling technique. A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 500 BA students studying at one university to the south of Jordan. Questionnaires were administered personally by a team of volunteering students and all 500 questionnaires were returned. Careful examination of returned questionnaires resulted in disregarding 39 incomplete ones. With a response rate of 92%, 461 Questionnaires were deemed suitable for statistical analysis. The personal method of questionnaire administration has resulted in such a high response rate. Table 2 shows sampled respondents characteristics.

4.2. Measurement Items
Appendix Table 1 shows the questionnaire's items used to measure the study's variables. Most of the items were adapted from previous empirical research in the domains of both social websites application and TPB. Some items were developed by the author. Three items were used to measure students' levels of social websites use, specifically Facebook, Google+ and YouTube. The three social websites are the most popular in Jordan (Mubaideen,

Table 2: Respondents' characteristics

Sample characteristics	Frequency (%)
Respondents gender	
Male	236 (51.2)
Female	225 (48.8)
Respondents age	
18-22 years	395 (85.7)
23-25 years	54 (11.7)
26+ years	12 (2.6)
Respondents' faculty	
Social sciences faculties	263 (57)
Scientific faculties	198 (43)

2014). Five items were used to measure the extent of respondents' exposure to political content on social websites. With regard to "TPB" variables, items were adapted from the instrument developed by (Liñán and Chen, 2006). Three items measured respondents' attitudes toward active political participation. Three items were used to measure subjective norms. Four items were used to measure perceived behavior control. Finally, six items were used to measure respondents' intentions of active political participation. All items were measured using a 5 point Likert scale.

4.3. Constructs Validity and Composite Reliability
The validity of the research instrument was assessed through different types of validity. Face validity was evidenced through the pilot work of the research instrument with three academics from reputable business schools in Jordan who checked the relevance and appropriateness of the questionnaire to achieve the research objectives. Content validity was evidenced by explaining the methodology used to develop the research questionnaire (Churchill, 2001), which included: (a) Examining the previous empirical and theoretical work of the research constructs, and (b) conducting the pilot study before starting the fieldwork. With regard to construct validity, as recommended by Hair et al. (1998), exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were used to assess construct validity. Thus, EFA was performed to test the unidimensionality of the research constructs to test the degree to which the items were tapping the same concept. It has been recommended that CFA, derived from structural equation modelling (SEM), was a more rigorous test of unidimensionality (Garver and Mentzer, 1999. p. 40). Thus, CFA was also utilized to confirm or refine the unidimensionality of measurements that resulted from the EFA.

To assess the EFA, four commonly used assumptions were followed (Hair et al., 1998; Field, 2000); sampling adequacy (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure >0.5); the minimum Eigen-value for each factor to be one; considering the sample size, factor loading of 0.40 for each item was considered as the threshold for retaining items to ensure greater confidence; and varimax rotation was used since it was a good general approach that simplifies the interpretations of factors (Field, 2000. p. 449). Statistical Package for Social Sciences showed which variables 'clump together'. To assess the CFA, goodness of measurement model fit indices using SEM were followed (Chau, 1997. p. 318): χ^2 (P $\geq$ 0.05); goodness-of-fit index (GFI $\geq$0.90); adjusted GFI (AGFI $\geq$0.80); normed fit index (NFI $\geq$0.90); non-NFI (NNFI $\geq$0.90); comparative fit index (CFI $\geq$0.90); standardized root mean-square residual (SRMR $\leq$0.08); and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA <0.10). Factor loadings are the correlations of the variables with the factor, the weighted combination of variables which best explains the variance. Higher values (e.g. >0.40) making the variable representative of the factor (Hair et al., 1998. p. 106).

All the research items were subjected to EFA to reveal the unidimensionality of the research constructs, Table 3. For all the research constructs, an index of Kaiser's measure of sampling adequacy (overall MSA = 0.91) and Bartlett's test of Sphericity χ^2 (P $\leq$ 0.000) suggested that factor analysis was appropriate for

Table 3: Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses results for the research constructs

Research constructs measurements and items	EFA results		CFA results		
	EFA factors loadings	Eigen values	CFA factors loadings	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Extent of social websites use					
SNU1-Facebook	0.78	1.49	0.65	0.51	0.71
SNU2-YouTube	0.75		0.75		
SNU3-Google+	0.65		0.61		
Extent of exposure to political content on social websites					
PEX1-I get exposed to so many messages with political content about Jordan	0.72	2.67	0.71	0.52	0.82
PEX2-I get exposed to so many images with political content	0.75		0.72		
PEX3-I get exposed to politically oriented debates	0.74		0.70		
PEX4-I get friend requests from political activists	0.73		0.61		
PEX5-I get invited to attend politically oriented events	0.78		0.70		
Attitude towards active political participation					
ATT1-I support current political activities taking place in Jordan	0.82	1.05	0.60	0.79	0.60
ATT2-I like the idea of active political participation	0.64		0.87		
ATT3-Given the chance, I'd like to participate in political activities	0.57		0.85		
Subjective norms					
SUB1-Close family pinion	0.62	1.01	0.61	0.77	0.54
SUB2-Friends opinions	0.85		0.84		
SUB3-Opinions of acquaintances and colleagues	0.85		0.80		
Perceived behavioral control					
PBC1-I am capable of active political participation	0.72	1.65	0.75	0.81	0.52
PBC2-I am ready for active political participation	0.63		0.87		
PBC3-In case I participate in a political activity, I'm willing to go through with it all the way	0.63		0.80		
PBC4-I'm aware of the details and requirements associated with active political participation	0.72		0.66		
Intentions of active political participation					
POI1-I am willing to do anything to actively participate in politically oriented activities	0.75	8.470	0.80	0.91	0.63
POI2-I aim to actively participate in politically oriented activities	0.81		0.81		
POI3-I will do my best to actively participate in politically oriented activities	0.82		0.82		
POI4-I am determined to actively participate in politically oriented activities	0.84		0.87		
POI5-I have thought seriously of actively participating in politically oriented activities	0.74		0.770		
POI6-I have strong intent to actively participate in politically oriented activities	0.79		0.82		
Sampling adequacy (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure>0.5): 91					
Model goodness of fit indices: Desired level	χ^2 P≥0.05	NFI≥0.90	NNFI≥0.90	CFI≥0.90	GFI≥0.90	AGFI≥0.80	SRMR≤0.08	RMSEA<0.10
Model indices results	654.5 (0.000)	0.90	0.92	0.093	0.090	0.88	0.05	0.06

EFA: Exploratory factor analysis, CFA: Confirmatory factor analysis

analyzing the data. The results of EFA indicated that research items loaded on six factors which provided general empirical support to the research constructs literature. Based on the Eigen-value >1, a six-factor model was derived that explained 65% of the total variance.

To confirm and validate the findings that emerged from using EFA, the six-factor model was evaluated by CFA using EQS 6.1 software. The measurement model of the CFA relates the observed variables to their latent variable. According to Table 3,

results that emerged from CFA analysis have provided support to the findings that emerged from EFA analysis, and all items loadings well exceeded the cut-off point value; 0.60. Convergent validity was examined using the Bentler-Bonett NFI (Bentler and Bonett, 1990). All of the constructs had NFI values above 0.90. Furthermore, as shown in Table 3, indication of the measures' convergent validity was provided by the fact that all factor loadings were significant and that the scales exhibited high levels of internal consistency (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Also, as shown in Table 3, the values of composite reliability

and average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct were all above the threshold suggested by Bagozzi (1980): 0.70 and 0.50, respectively. Further, in this research, the discriminant validity was established by first, the absence of significant cross loadings that are not represented by the measurement model (i.e., congeneric measures). To further examine the evidence for the discriminant validity among the dimensions, the author compared the shared variance among the dimensions with AVE from each dimension. Discriminant validity is established between two constructs/dimensions if the AVE of each one is higher than the shared variance. Comparing the shared variance and AVE values showed in Tables 3 and 4; where the diagonal values are the AVEs, results indicated a support for the discriminant validity among the latent variables in the model.

4.4. Descriptive Statistics
Consistent with Ababneh (2008) and Alarabiat and Al-Mohammad (2015), and based on statements' mean scores, levels of agreement with questionnaire statements for each construct were divided into three categories: A mean value of 1.00-2.49 indicated a low level of agreement, a mean value of 2.50-3.49 indicated a moderate level of agreement, and a mean value of 3.50-5.00 indicated a high level of agreement.

Accordingly, and in relation to Table 5, respondents exhibited high levels of social networks use (M = 3.48). Such result was not surprising considering previous research suggestions that young individuals are heavy users of social networks (Cachia et al, 2007; Mubaideen, 2014). However, and despite such high level of use, respondents' "exposure to online political content" via social websites was considerably low (M = 1.93). This result suggests that respondents, in general, are not involved in political debates and activities on social websites. This suggestion was supported by the fact that respondents' "attitudes towards active political

participation" and their "perceived behavior control" were both low (M = 2.43 and 2.44 respectively). Not only did respondents feel they were not capable of actively participating in political endeavors, but they also seemed to exhibit less favorable attitudes towards such endeavors. Consequently, and due to such lack of interest and motivation in politics, students would not be involved in political activities online, which means less "exposure to online political content" via social websites.

Interestingly, and in relation to "subjective norms," students felt that their families, friends and colleagues would moderately support them if they decided to get involved in active political participation (M = 2.59). This might indicate a general feeling amongst respondents that people of significance to them will actually support them in their choices and endeavors, even those political in nature. Finally, students actual intentions of "active political participation" were low (M = 2.05). This should not be surprising at this point considering the fact that students' attitudes towards active political participation, in addition to their perceptions of their own capabilities, were also low.

4.5. Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing
The analysis of the proposed model was conducted by a structural path analysis model which is shown in Figure 2. The structural path model was created by running a direct path from the level of social websites usage to level of exposure to political content, and a path was created from the later to each of attitudes towards active political participation and perceived behavioral control. Further, a path was created from subjective norms to each of attitude towards active political participation and perceived behavioral control as well as creating paths from attitudes towards active political participation and perceived behavioral control to intentions of active political participation, as shown in Figure 2.

Table 6 shows the structural path model goodness of fit measures and the structural paths results. As shown in Table 6, the goodness-of-fit measures indicated that the model had an excellent fit to the data. The structural findings showed that all the research hypotheses were supported. The structural findings showed that the research hypothesis H_1 was supported. Respondents "level of social websites' use" had positively and significantly affected their "level of exposure to online political content" via those websites ($\beta = 0.18$, T = 4.07), providing support for H_1. Also, the structural path results indicated that both H_2 and H_3 were also supported. Starting with the former, i.e., H_2, respondents' "level of exposure to online political content" had a positive significant effect over their "attitudes towards active political participation" ($\beta = 0.13$, T = 3.19). As for the later, i.e., H_3, respondents' "level of exposure to online political content" had a positive significant effect over respondents' "perceived behavioral control" ($\beta = 0.22$, T = 5.55). With regard to subjective norms effects, structural findings show that both H_4 and H_5 where supported. In H_4, "subjective norms" had a direct significant effect over respondents' "attitudes towards active political participation" ($\beta = 0.45$, T = 11.18). Further, and in H_5, "subjective norms" had a direct significant effect over respondents' "perceived behavioral control" ($\beta = 0.47$, T = 11.98).

Table 4: Shared variance among the research constructs

Research constructs	SNU	PEX	ATT	SUB	PBC	POI
SNU	0.51					
(M=3.48, standard=0.92)						
PEX	0.04	0.52				
(M=1.93, standard=0.78)						
ATT	0.004	0.05	0.60			
(M=2.43, standard=1.00)						
SUB	0.001	0.04	0.23	0.54		
(M=2.59, standard=0.91)						
PBC	0.001	0.01	0.37	0.26	0.52	
(M=2.44, standard=1.00)						
POI	0.001	0.11	0.42	0.19	0.46	0.63
(M=2.05, standard=0.93)						

Table 5: Mean scores for research constructs

Construct	Mean±SD	Strength
SNU	3.48±0.92	High
PEX	1.93±0.78	Low
ATT	2.43±1.00	Low
SUB	2.59±0.91	Moderate
PBC	2.44±1.00	Low
POI	2.05±0.93	Low

SD: Standard deviation

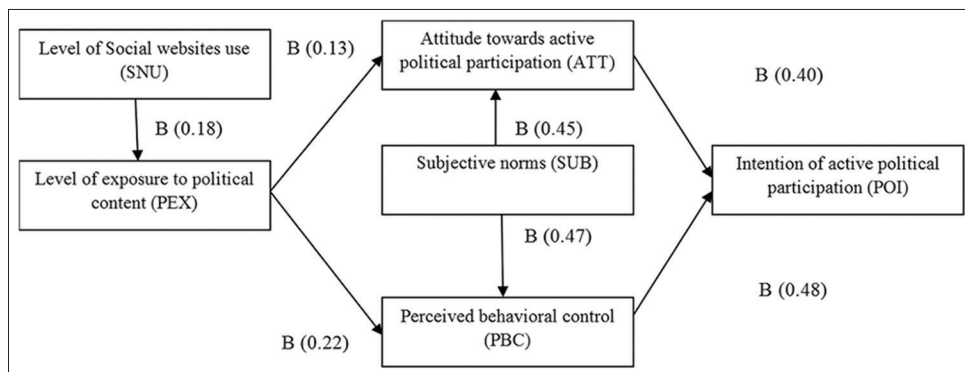**Figure 2:** Structural path model results

Table 6: Structural path model results

Hypotheses	Variables in the paths model				Standardized beta coefficients	T value*	Hypotheses testing results
H$_1$	The level of social websites use has a direct positive effect over Jordanian students' exposure to online political content				0.18	4.07	Supported
H$_2$	The level of exposure to online political content has a direct positive effect over Jordanian students' attitudes towards active political participation				0.13	3.19	Supported
H$_3$	The level of exposure to online political content has a direct positive effect over Jordanian students' perceived behavioral control with regard to active political participation				0.22	5.55	Supported
H$_4$	The level of subjective norms has a direct positive effect over Jordanian students' attitudes towards active political participation				0.45	11.18	Supported
H$_5$	The level of subjective norms has a direct positive effect over Jordanian students' perceived behavioral control with regard to active political participation				0.47	11.98	Supported
H$_6$	Jordanian students' attitude towards active political participation has a direct positive effect over their intentions of active political participation				0.40	11.55	Supported
H$_7$	Perceived behavioral control has a direct positive effect over Jordanian students' intentions of active political participation				0.48	14.03	Supported
Model goodness of fit indices: Desired level	χ^2 P≥0.05	NFI≥0.90	NNFI≥0.90	CFI≥0.90	GFI≥0.90	AGFI≥0.80	SRMR≤0.08	RMSEA<0.10
Model goodness of fit indices R2=0.49	38.5 0.000	96	91	97	98	91	0.06	0.08

*Significant at P<0.05

Finally, and in relation to antecedents of "intentions of active political participation," both H$_6$ and H$_7$ were supported. With regard to H$_6$, respondents' "attitudes towards active political participation" had a direct significant effect over their "intentions of active political participation" (β = 0.40, T = 11.55). As for H$_7$, respondents' "perceived behavioral control" had a direct significant effect over their "intentions if active political participation" (β = 0.48, T = 14.03).

5. DISCUSSION

Statistical analysis has provided significant support to hypothesized relationships between the model's variables. In order to be consistent with study's objectives and model's buildup; discussion of findings is organized under the following subheadings.

5.1. Social Websites use and Exposure to Online Political Content

Starting with the first hypothesis, and consistent with previous empirical findings (Kim, 2011, Chan et al., 2012) the extent of social networks' use was found to positively impact the extent of exposure to online political content. Although the extent of such impact was not high (β = 0.18, T = 4.07), still this is an interesting finding because, while most respondents might use social websites for non-political purposes, the mere increase in social websites' use enhances the potential that respondents will be exposed unintentionally to political news and opinions shared by others. Although such exposure might not be intentional, its importance cannot be overemphasized especially when considering its important effects; firstly, and in relation to hypothesis 2, level of exposure to online political content had

a positive significant effect over respondents' attitudes towards active political participation.

While consistent with previous research findings (Kenski and Stroud, 2006; Wang, 2007), this effect was not high (β = 13, T = 3.19). Nevertheless, it suggests that respondents do not need to be politically active online to develop favorable attitudes towards active political participation. Respondents' mere "passive" exposure to online political content might actually result in changing their attitudes towards active political participation. Secondly, and in relation to hypothesis 3, level of exposure to online political content had a positive significant effect over respondents' perceived behavioral control towards active political participation. This finding came to support previous research findings (Wang, 2007; Chan et al., 2012), and to suggest that respondents' exposure to online political content can actually increase their involvement, motivation and feeling that they can actually challenge political status quo and change things around. Interestingly, the impact of exposure to online political content over respondents' perceived behavioral control was higher than its earlier impact over their attitudes (β = 0.22, T = 5.55). Although such impact is not very high, yet it suggests that exposure's importance should be addressed with regard to its effect over respondents' perceptions of their own capabilities in relation to political change. In other words, exposure to online political content seems to increase respondents' perceptions about their ability to participate in political endeavors regardless of respondents' actual attitudes towards such participation.

The importance of the above findings stems from the fact that what might start as an unintentional exposure to political content on a social website might actually result in changes to respondents' attitudes towards active political participation and their perceived role in such endeavor. Since that the majority of Jordanian youth are heavy users of social websites (Mobaideen, 2015), and their use is leading to more exposure, then the potential for changes in attitude and perceived behavioral control in relation to active political participation is high.

5.2. Subjective Norms Impacts
Level of exposure to online political content was not the only factor affecting respondents' attitudes and perceived behavioral control in relation to active political participation. Subjective norms (i.e., opinions of close family, friends and colleagues) was another major factor affecting those variables. With regard to hypothesis 4, subjective norms had a positive significant effect over respondents' attitudes towards active political participation. Interestingly, this effect was considerably higher than that of exposure to online political content (β = 0.45, T = 11.18). While consistent with previous empirical findings (Liñán and Chen, 2006; Al-Mohammad, 2010), this finding suggests that, when it comes to shaping respondents' attitudes towards active political participation, opinions of respondents' families, friends and colleagues are paramount. This is justified by the fact that Jordanian society is collectivist in nature, where individuals feel the need to connect and belong to other social groups, and where their opinions, perceptions and attitudes are considerably affected by those groups.

In addition, and in relation to hypothesis 5, subjective norms had a positive significant effect over respondents' perceived behavioral control with regard to active political participation. Once more, the impact of subjective norms over perceived behavior control was considerably higher than that of exposure to online political content (β = 0.47, T = 11.98). Further, it was slightly higher than the impact of subjective norms itself over attitudes towards active political participation. This finding emphasized the argument made earlier about the Jordanian society being collectivist in nature, since that respondents' perceptions about their own political capabilities and contribution are affected by the opinions of other individuals/groups they relate to. Of interest in this context is the fact that most individuals will usually have a lot of their family members, friends and colleagues as friends/contacts on their social websites accounts. Accordingly, these parties might play the dual role of exposing respondents to online political content and actually affecting respondents' attitudes and perceptions towards active political participation.

5.3. Antecedents of Intentions Towards Active Political Participation
Having been affected by exposure to online political content and subjective norms, and in relation to TPB, it was essential to examine the dual impact of attitude towards active political participation and perceived behavioral control over respondents' intentions of active political participation. With regard to hypothesis 6, attitude towards active political participation had a positive significant impact over respondents' intentions of active political participation. While consistent with pervious empirical findings (Bosnjak et al., 2008; Park and Yang, 2012), the impact of attitude over intention was relatively high (β = 0.40, T = 11.55). Accordingly, for respondents to develop intentions to join political movements or comment themselves to politically motivated endeavors, they need to develop the right "political" attitudes. With regard to hypothesis 7, and consistent with previous empirical findings (Bosnjak et al., 2008; Park and Yang, 2012), perceived behavioral control had a positive significant effect over respondents' intentions of active political participation. Such effect was slightly higher than that of attitude towards active political participation (β = 0.48, T = 14.03), which suggests that respondents' perceptions of their abilities is the most dominant factor directly impacting their intentions of active political participation. In other words, it is not enough to develop favorable attitudes towards active political participation to actually commit to political endeavors; respondents must feel that they are actually capable of making a difference in order to commit themselves to such endeavors.

Finally, two observations in relation to statistical findings are worthy of consideration. Firstly, while the direct impact of subjective norms over intentions of active political participation was not measured. Still, subjective norms seem to strongly affect intentions of active political participation indirectly through their considerable impact over respondents' both attitudes towards active political participation and perceived political control. This observation reemphasizes the importance of family, friends and colleagues in shaping respondents political intentions through either personal or impersonal interaction, via social websites.

Secondly, R-square for the whole model was 0.49, which suggests that the variables proposed in the model explain 49% of changes in respondents' intentions of active political participation. While such result is reasonably high, it suggests that intentions of active political participation might be affected by variables other than those underlined by this paper.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Jordan has been blessed not to be drawn into chaotic political unrest or civil war similar to those witnessed in most "Arab Spring" countries. While several factors might have contributed to such outcome, decision makers and politicians need to understand the potential impact of social websites in shaping young Jordanians' political attitudes and actual political participation, which might cause unwarranted consequences for the country and its people. While TPB model has successfully underlined the importance of the three antecedents (i.e., attitude towards active political participation, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) in shaping active political participation intentions, focus should also be on social websites use as a potential source of change and modification of such intentions. The fact that Jordanian youth are heavy users of social websites increases the chances of them being exposed to online political content, which can lead to changes to their attitudes and perceptions towards active political participation. While youth political involvement and participation is not a bad thing to start with, the potential for negative politically motivated endeavors is also there. The rise of extreme politically motivated movements and terrorist organizations and their extensive use of social websites in recruiting young people is a striking example of such negative influence.

In relation to political marketing, government bodies and political parties concerned with youth political movement should take note of the potentially huge impact social websites can make for their political endeavors. Thorough monitoring and study of youth actions on social websites is an area worthy of consideration in order to understand youth interests in general, and to underline most suitable methods to capture their attention online. In addition, attention should also be paid to examining the role played by Jordanian families and other social groups in shaping youth perceptions and attitudes towards political participation. Such endeavors should result in better, more effective, design and execution of online political marketing campaigns. Those campaigns should carry a positive political idea tailored in a personal and relevant manner to suit young people's ambitions and way of thinking. They should also focus on the benefits youth can get from positive political involvement.

7. CONTRIBUTION LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH AVENUES

While adding to limited research on political impact of social websites, this paper's contribution stems from the fact that it underlines the potential effect of social websites use over young individuals' attitudes towards active political perception, in addition to its noticeable impact over their perceptions of their own abilities to actively participate in political endeavors. The paper further suggests that young individuals' families, friends and colleagues play a vital role in shaping their attitudes and perceptions of themselves, and that such role could be conducted either personally or through social websites. The fact that the study was conducted on a sample of young Jordanians also adds to its contribution, considering the fact that the whole Middle East region is on a political crossroad with no clear directions or consequences.

Nevertheless, the paper has a number of limitations. Firstly, and due to time and cost limitations, the paper adopted a convenience sampling technique which affects author's ability in generalizing its findings. Secondly, while the paper's focus was on social websites role in shaping young individuals' intentions of active political participation; such role might also apply to samples of older generations. The fact that subjective norms had relatively high impacts over young individuals' attitudes and perceptions supports such observation. Thirdly, while the focus of this paper was on social websites and their potential political effects, other more politically oriented websites (such as political parties/groups/activists websites and news websites) were not addressed for their potential impact. Fourthly, while R-square result was noticeably high to support the collective impacts of chosen variables over respondents' political intentions, other variables might have shown considerable impacts too.

Accordingly, future research can attempt to expand sample size to include more respondents from different parts of the country and with different age demographics. Further, future research can also examine the impact of different online political platforms available on Internet other than social websites, such as political parties' websites and news websites. Finally, future research can also study the impact of other variables in shaping intentions of active political intentions, such as online political participation, political groups' membership and social websites characteristics (trust, privacy, safety, etc.).

REFERENCES

Ababneh, R. (2008), A comprehensive performance evaluation of the Jordanian customs department using the Balanced Scorecard. Jordan Journal of Business Administration, 4(4), 463-484.

Abramson, P., Aldrich, J. (1982), The decline of electoral participation in America. American Political Science Review, 76(3), 502-521.

Ajzen, I. (1991), The theory of planned behavior. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50, 179-211.

Ajzen, I. (2002), Constructing a TPB Questionnaire: Conceptual and Methodological Considerations. Working Paper, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Available from: http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~aizen/pdf/tpb.measurement.pdf.

Alarabiat, A., Al-Mohammad, S. (2015), The potential for Facebook application in undergraduate learning: A study of Jordanian students. Interdisciplinary Journal of Information, Knowledge, and Management, 10, 81-103. Available from: http://www.ijikm.org/Volume10/IJIKMv10p081-103Alarabiat0910.pdf.

Alawneh, H. (2012), The role of social networking in stimulating

Jordanian citizens to participate in public political movements: A field study on a sample of trade unionists. Philadelphia University 17th Conference. Entitled: Culture of Change, Amman, Jordan, November; 2012.

Al-Debei, M., Al-Lozi, E., Papazafeiropoulou, A. (2013), Why people keep coming back to Facebook: Explaining and predicting continuance participation from an extended theory of planned behavior perspective. Decision Support Systems, 55(1), 43-54.

Al-Kandari, A., Hasanen, M. (2012), The impact of the Internet on political attitudes in Kuwait and Egypt. Telematics and Informatics, 29, 245-253.

Al-Mohammad, S.M. (2010), The Impact of BA education over the entrepreneurial intentions of Jordanian students: An application of theory of planned behavior. Jordan Journal of Business Administration, 6(2), 262-293.

Anderson, J., Gerbing D. (1988), Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two - Step approach. Psychological Bulletin, 103, 411-423.

Attia, A., Aziz, N., Friedman, B., Elhusseiny, M. (2011), Commentary: The impact of social networking tools on political change in Egypt's 'revolution 2.0. Electronic Commerce Research and Applications, 10, 369-374.

Autio, E., Keeley, R., Klofsten, M., Ulfstedt, T. (1997), Entrepreneurial Intent among Students of Technology: Testing an Intent Model. Babson College - Kaufmann Foundation Entrepreneurship Research Conference.

Ayed, H. (2005), The influence of Internet in the political culture. A field study. Journal of Social Sciences, 1(3), 128-135.

Bagozzi, R.P. (1980), Causal Models in Marketing. New York, NY: Wiley.

Baker, R., White, K. (2010), Predicting adolescents' use of social networking sites from an extended theory of planned behaviour perspective. Computers in Human Behavior, 26, 1591-1597.

Bekafigo, M.A., Mcbridge, A. (2013), Who tweets about political? Political participation of Twitter users during the 2011 gubernatorial elections. Social Science Computer Review, 31(5), 625-643.

Benmamoun, M., Kalliny, M., Cropf, R.A. (2012). The Arab spring, MNEs, and virtual public spheres. Multinational Business Review, 20(1), 26-43.

Bentler, P.M., Bonett, D.G. (1990), Comparative fit indices in structural models. Psychological Bulletin, 107(2), 238-246.

Borrero, J., Yousafzai, S., Javed, U., Page, K. (2014), Perceived value of social networking sites (SNS) in students' expressive participation in social movements. Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, 8(1), 56-78.

Bosnjak, M., Galesic, M., Klicek, B. (2008), Determinants of online political participation in Croatia. Drustvena Istrazivanja (Social Research), 17, 747-769.

Boys, D., Ellison, N. (2007), Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13(1), 210-230.

Cachia, R., Kluzer, S., Cabrera, M., Centeno, C., Punie, Y. (2007), ICT, Social Capital and Cultural Diversity. Report on a Joint IPTS-DG INFSO Workshop. EUR 23047 EN. Available from: http://www.ipts.jrc.ec.europa.eu/publications/pub.cfm?id=1534.

Campbell, A., Gurin, G., Miller, W.E. (1954), The Voter Decides. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson and Company.

Chan, M., Wu, X., Hao, Y., Xi, R., Jin, T. (2012), Microblogging, online expression, and political efficacy among young Chinese citizens: The moderating role of information and entertainment needs in the use of Weibo. Cyber Psychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 15(7), 345-349.

Chau, P. (1997), Reexamining a model for evaluating information centre success using a structural equation modelling approach. Decision Sciences, 28(2), 309-333.

Churchill, G. (2001), Basic Marketing Research. 4th ed. Fort Worth: The Dryden Press.

Conory, M., Feezell, J., Guerrero, M. (2012), Facebook and political engagement: A study of online political group membership and offline political engagement. Computers in Human Behavior, 28, 1535-1546.

Dahlgren, P. (2011), Media and Political Engagement: Citizens, Communication, and Democracy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Demertzis, N., Diamantaki, K., Sartzetakis, N. (2005), Greek political marketing online: An analysis of parliament members' web sites. Journal of Political Marketing, 4(1), 51-74.

Department of Statistics/Jordan, Demographic Statistics. Available from: http://www.jorinfo.dos.gov.jo/PXWeb2014R2/Selection.aspx?px_path=Population%20and%20Housing__Demographic%20Statistics&px_tableid=Table%202.px&px_language=en&px_db=Population%20and%20Housing&rxid=e0c35eac-d04f-4689-ace3-8f29bf1f19da.

Dewey, T., Kaden, J., Marks, M., Matsushima, S., Zhu, B. (2012), The Impact of Social Media on Social Unrest in the Arab Spring. Report Prepared for: Defense Intelligence Agency March 22, 2012. Stanford, CA: Stanford University. Available from: http://stageips.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/shared/2012%20Practicum%20Policy%20Brief%20SocialMedia.pdf.

Field, A. (2000), Discovering Statistics using SPSS for Windows-Advanced Techniques for the Beginner. London: Sage Publications.

Fornell, C.G., Larcker, D.F. (1981), Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. Journal of Marketing Research, 18(1), 39-50.

Gainous, J., Marlowe, A., Wanger, K. (2013), Traditional cleavages or a new world: Does online social networking bridge the political participation divide? International Journal of Political, Culture and Society, 26(2), 145-158.

Garver, M., Mentzer, J. (1999), Logistics research methods: Employing structural equation modelling to test for construct validity. Journal of Business Logistics, 20(1), 33-47.

Ghazal, M. (2012), Internet penetration tops 55% by end of June. The Jordan Times. Available from: http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/internet-penetration-tops-55-end-june. [Last accessed on 2012 Aug 17].

Gordon, E., Schirra, S., Hollander, J. (2011), Immersive planning: A conceptual model for designing public participation with new technologies. Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design, 38(3), 505-519.

Gustafsson, N. (2012), The subtle nature of Facebook politics: Swedish social network site users and political participation. New Media and Society, 14(7), 1111-1127.

Hair, J., Anderson, R., Tatham, R., Black, W. (1998), Multivariate Data Analysis. 5th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Kazee, T. (1981), Television exposure and attitude change: The impact of political interest. Public Opinion Quarterly, 45, 507-518.

Kenski, K., Stroud, N. (2006), Connections between internet use and political efficacy, knowledge, and participation. Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 50(2), 173-192.

Kim, W., Jeong, O.R., Lee, S.W. (2010), On social web sites. Information Systems, 35, 215-236.

Kim, Y. (2011), The contribution of social network sites to exposure to political difference: The relationships among SNSs, online political messaging, and exposure to cross-cutting perspectives. Computers in Human Behavior, 27, 971-977.

Kim, Y., Geidner, N. (2008), Politics as friendship: The impact of social networks on young voters' political behavior. Proceedings of International Communication Association 2008 Annual Meeting. p1-24.

Kolovos, I., Harris, P. (2005), Political Marketing and Political

Communication: The Relationship Revisited. Available from: http://www.eprints.otago.ac. nz/32/1/pm-pc.pdf.

Lee, S.Y., Kweon, S. (2013), A study on empathy, credibility, and political attitude in social media: Focused on the relationship between empathetic intention and the motivation of belonging on intended pro-social and political behavior. Advances in Journalism and Communication, 1(3), 26-40.

Lees-Marshment, J. (2001), Political Marketing and British Political Parties. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Liñán, F., Chen, Y.W. (2006), Testing the entrepreneurial intention model on a two-country sample. Working Paper. Barcelona, Spain: University of Barcelona. Available from: http://www.ddd.uab.cat/pub/estudis/2006/hdl_2072_2213/UABDT06-7.pdf.

Lupia, A., Philpot, T. (2005), Views from inside the net: How websites affect young adults political interest. The Journal of Politics, 67(4), 1122-1142.

Mansour, E. (2012), The role of social networking sites (SNSs) in the January 25th revolution in Egypt. Library Review, 61, 128-159.

Mikalef, P., Giannakos, M., Pateli, A. (2013), Shopping and word-of-mouth intentions on social media. Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research, 8(1), 17-34.

Mubaideen, I. (2014), 2.3 Hours the Average Jordanians' use of Social Networks. Alghad News Paper, 18/3/2014.

Mylona, I. (2008), SMS in everyday political marketing in Greece. Journal of Political Marketing, 7(¾), 278-294.

Newman, B. (1999), Handbook of Political Marketing. London: Sage.

Niffenegger, P. (1989), Strategies for success from the political marketers. Journal of Consumer Marketing, 6(1), 45-51.

O'Leary, R., Iredale, I. (1976), The marketing concept: Quo vadis? European Journal of Marketing, 10(3), 146-157.

Olorunnisola, A., Martin, B. (2013), Influences of media on social movements: Problematizing hyperbolic inferences about impacts. Telematics and Informatiocs, 30(3), 275-288.

Park, N., Yang, A. (2012), Online environmental community members' intention to participate in environmental activities: An application of the theory of planned behavior in the Chinese context. Computers in Human behavior, 28, 1298-1306.

Pelling, E., White, K. (2009), The theory of planned behavior applied to young people's use of social networking web sites. Cyber Psychology and Behavior, 12(6), 755-759.

Perez, X. (2013), The role of the Internet and social; Networks in the Arab uprisings- An alternative to official press censorship. Comunicar, 21(41), 147-155.

Perloff, R. (1999), Elite, popular, and merchandise politics: Historical origins of presidential campaign marketing. In: Newman, B., editor. Handbook of Political Marketing. Thousand Oaks: Sage. p19-40.

Pookulangara, S., Koesler, K. (2011), Cultural influence on consumers' usage of social networks and its' impact on online purchase intentions. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 18, 348-354.

Postmes, T., Brunsting, S. (2002), Collective action in the age of the Internet: Mass communication and online mobilization. Social Science Computer Review, 20, 290-301.

Scammell, M. (1999), Political marketing: Lessons for political science. Political Studies, 47(4), 718-739.

Schafferer, C. (2006), Election Campaigning in East and South-East Asia: Globalization of Political Marketing. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.

SeGuin, C., Pelletier, L., Hunsley, J. (1998), Toward a model of environmental activism. Environment and Behavior, 30, 628-652.

Shin, D.H. (2010), The effects of trust, security and privacy in social networking: A security-based approach to understand the pattern of adoption. Interacting with Computers, 22, 428-438.

Siibak, A. (2009), Constructing the self through the shoto selection - visual impression management on social networking websites. Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 3(1), 1.

Swedan, M. (2015), Social networks as an alternative to political parties. Alghad News Paper, 10/7/2015.

Towner, T., Dulio, D. (2012), New media and political marketing in the United States: 2012 and beyond. Journal of Political Marketing, 11, 95-119.

Valenzuela, S., Arriagada, A., Scherman, A. (2012), The social media basis of youth protest behavior: The case of Chile. Journal of Communication, 62, 299-314.

Wang, S.I. (2007), Political use of the Internet, political attitudes and political participation. Asian Journal of Communication, 17(4), 381-395.

Wills, D., Reeves, S. (2009), Facebook as a political weapon: Information in social networks. British Politics, 4(2), 265-281.

Wu, S., Wu, L. (2008), The impact of higher education on entrepreneurial intentions of university students in China. Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, 15(4), 752-774.

Zhang, W., Johnson, T., Seltzer, T., Bichard, S. (2010), The revolution will be networked: The influence of social networking sites on political attitudes and behavior. Social Science Computer Review, 28(1), 75-92.

Zhang, X., Lin, W.Y. (2014), Political participation in an unlikely place: How individuals engage in politics through social networking sites in China. International Journal of Communication, 8, 21-42.

APPENDIX

Appendix Table 1: Study variables and sources

Variable	Items	Source
Extent of social websites use	1. Facebook 2. YouTube 3. Google+	Author
Extent of exposure to political content	1. I get exposed to so many messages with political content about Jordan 2. I get exposed to so many images with political content 3. I get exposed to politically oriented debates 4. I get friend requests from political activists 5. I get invited to attend politically oriented events	Author
Attitude towards active political participation	1. I support current political activities taking place in Jordan 2. I like the idea of active political participation 3. Given the chance, I'd like to participate in political activities	Liñán and Chen (2006)
Subjective norms	1. Close family opinion 2. Friends opinions 3. Opinions of acquaintances and colleagues	
Perceived behavioral control	1. I am capable of active political participation 2. I am ready for active political participation 3. In case I participate in a political activity, I'm willing to go through with it all the way 4. I'm aware of the details and requirements associated with active political participation	
Intentions of active political participation	1. I am willing to do anything to actively participate in politically oriented activities 2. I aim to actively participate in politically oriented activities 3. I will do my best to actively participate in politically oriented activities 4. I am determined to actively participate in politically oriented activities 5. I have thought seriously of actively participating in politically oriented activities 6. I have strong intent to actively participate in politically oriented activities	