

**Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**

**Faculty of Economics and Management**

**Department of Humanities**



**Extended Abstract Bachelor Thesis**

**Attitudes among Jordanian Youth towards  
Commodification of Women's Bodies in Social Media**

**Zerounian Betty**

**© 2022 CULS Prague**

# **Attitudes Among Jordanian Youth Towards Commodification of Women's Bodies in Social Media**

## **Abstract**

This work addresses the attitudes of the Jordanian youth towards the effects of social media. The issues of the young adults in the society has become increasingly obvious in the past couple of years. Teenagers are facing a variety of issues caused by social media concerning health, social, and ethical issues. Nowadays, adolescents around the world are going through massive dilemmas about body image and women's representation in social media. However, this study's focus is only of Jordanian youth, as it interests the author to know what the result of the clash of both western and eastern societies looks like. The author's interest of the attitudes of Jordanian youth is the reason of making this study and to dive in the problem and understand the young adults perspective and point of view because in the end they are the future of Jordan. The author will come to conclusions on understandings the adolescents in Jordan and figuring out their attitudes towards social media in general and the issue of objectifying and commodifying women in specific. Based on the practical part which includes interpersonal interviews and a survey the author will come up with the conclusion of the Jordanian youth's attitude.

**Keywords:** Social media, Commodification, Women's bodies, Middle East, Jordan youth, Objectification.

# Postoj jordánské mládeže ke komodifikaci ženského těla v sociálních médiích

## Obsah

Tato práce se zabývá postoji jordánské mládeže k účinkům sociálních médií. Problematika mladých dospělých ve společnosti se v posledních několika letech stává stále zřemější. Mladiství čelí různým problémům způsobeným sociálními médii, které se týkají zdravotních, sociálních a etických problémů. V současnosti dospívající po celém světě procházejí obrovskými dilematy ohledně obrazu těla a zastoupení žen na sociálních médiích. Tato práce se však zaměřuje pouze na jordánskou mládež, jelikož autorku zajímá výsledek střetu západní a východní společnosti. Zájem autorky o postoje jordánské mládeže je důvodem zpracování této práce a ponoření se do problému a pochopení perspektivy a úhlu pohledu mladých dospělých, jelikož oni jsou nakonec budoucností Jordánska. Autorka dospěje k závěrům o porozumění dospívajícím v Jordánsku a zjistí jejich postoje k sociálním médiím obecně a víc se zaměří na problematiku objektivizace a komodifikace žen.

Na základě praktické části, která zahrnuje rozhovory a průzkum, autorka dospěje k závěru o postoji jordánské mládeže.

**Klíčová slova:** Sociální média, Komodifikace, Obraz ženského těla, Blízký východ, Jordánská mládež, Objektivizace.

## **About this study.**

This thesis investigates attitudes towards social media objectification among young people in Jordan. It focuses especially on the objectification of women, which is often understood to be made worse by social media. It draws on ethical literature about the concept of objectification in order to analyse specific trends in social media that has become a huge part of our lives. People around the world use it daily as entertainment, communication, or mainly a platform where they can keep up with what's going on in the world. This study is structured to take the reader step by step through the definition of social media in relation to objectification and commodification and to the types of platforms that are mostly used by people and especially teenagers. Nowadays, almost everyone owns a device that gives us access to social media 24-7, and in this study, it is demonstrated how this access is affecting people and especially young adults both in a positive or negative impact. Because we cannot deny the positive side of social media that plays a significant role in the knowledge revolution to people, and we know the saying that goes 'knowledge is power'. However, everything comes with a cost. Pointedly, where the negative impact is overshadowing the positive, which this study touches upon with how social media plays a role in objectifying and commodifying women, specifically when it comes to sales. Everyone is trying to gain something from these platforms; more followers, more likes or more sales, and mostly by using their bodies. Women throughout the years faced the stereotypes of looking and behaving in a certain way in the public eye, even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century women are still facing this objectification and commodification of their body or better yet of their being. In the making of this study especially in the part where objectification was explained and discussed, it was impossible to explain it without connecting it to women. It is explained including the types of objectifications, for example instrumentality, denial of autonomy, ownership and many more and some evidence was mentioned such as Kim Kardashian and some other Arab public figures. As the study goes on, it then moved to the term commodification which women are also the number one target too. Furthermore, the term 'sex sells' is discussed in this study showing how it is used in all sorts of industries and unfortunately it is true. It is seen in the parallel relation between sex or sexual behavior in representing any person or product and the rising number of sales. It is shown in teenagers using this method of objectifying their bodies on Instagram and TikTok.

This study discusses the image of women in social media and how it is represented in both Western and Eastern worlds. It is mentioned and includes some examples about the Western world by how women are represented as this sexual object that attracts the targeted users and gain the goal of the representation. Moving to the Eastern society two examples were given, United Arab Emirates and Egypt, as both these countries have almost similar traditions, values and cultures in each society however their representation of women is very different as explained in further detail in the study. Both these countries have control of social media and media industry in the Middle East. UAE's representation of women is somewhat more conservative and within the limits of the eastern women stereotypes. On the other hand, Egypt also has its limitation of presenting women in Eastern stereotypes, but it is presented in a more sexual context, and it is obvious to the audience. Therefore, they are the influencers of people in the Middle East and Arab countries. Jordan however is somewhere in between these two countries. Throughout the history Jordan has welcomed refugees from different countries and different traditions in the Middle East or even from outside of the Middle East and learned to embrace and

accept the differences between other people. Adding to that, Jordan's main media is from both countries mentioned above. Therefore, it is possible to say that Jordan's society is somewhat in the middle compared to most regarding its conservatism towards women.

In the practical part, a survey and online interviews were made with questions that were focused on the youth and the effects of social media on their perception. This survey assisted in deeply studying and analyzing this effect on the adolescents in Jordan and to which extent it has reached. The criteria that were chosen to aid this study was based on age, gender, and upbringing. This helped provide various points of perspective on the influence of social media content. It was taken into consideration the level of influence, activity, frequency of usage which had an impact on their point of view on social media in general, their family's stance regarding social media usage, and societal standards towards social media.

This collected information aided in pinpointing the attitude of the youth regarding how women are viewed in social media in the Western and Eastern world and how it is affecting them while they are being subjected to the conservativeness of the Jordanian society.

## References:

AAKRAM, Waseem. (2018). "A Study on Positive and Negative Effects of Social Media on Society". INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF COMPUTER SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING, 347-351.

AL JENAIBI, Badreya. (2011). "The changing representation of the Arab Woman in Middle East advertising and media." Global Media Journal 1(2): 67-88.

ANDERSON, Scott A. (2015). "Objectification: A 21st Century Re-Assessment". In Thom Brooks (ed.) Current Controversies in Political Philosophy. London: Routledge, 100-116.

CALLAHAN, Molly. (2021). "Why does Instagram have a negative effect on teenager's mental health" News@Northeastern.

CWYNAR-HORTA, Jessica. (2016). "The Commodification of the Body Positive Movement on Instagram". Stream: Culture/Politics/Technology Vol. 8(2): 36-56.

PAPADAKI, Lina. (2021). "Feminist Perspectives on Objectification", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/feminism-objectification/>>.

SAJIDA, Simrin. (2020). "How TikTok is affecting youth: positive and negative effects". Linens N Love.