



A STUDY ON

Social Media and Cyberbullying Among Workers

In the garment sector in Jordan.

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Glossary of Terms

CYBERBULLYING	Cyberbullying is bullying with the use of digital technologies. It can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It is repeated behaviour, aimed at scaring, angering or shaming those who are targeted.
SOCIAL MEDIA BLACKMAILING	The act of threatening to share information about an individual (including images or video) to the public, their friends or family online, unless a demand is met.
MENTAL HEALTH	A state of well-being in which the individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with everyday stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community. ¹

Executive Summary

¹ In recent years, there has been a significant increase in social media use. People use social networking tools to stay in touch with family and friends, get their news, and share their political views. Several studies indicate that social media impacts mental health in a number of ways. The increasing reliance on and use of social media puts a large number of users at an increased risk for feeling anxious, depressed, lonely, envious, and even ill over social media use.²

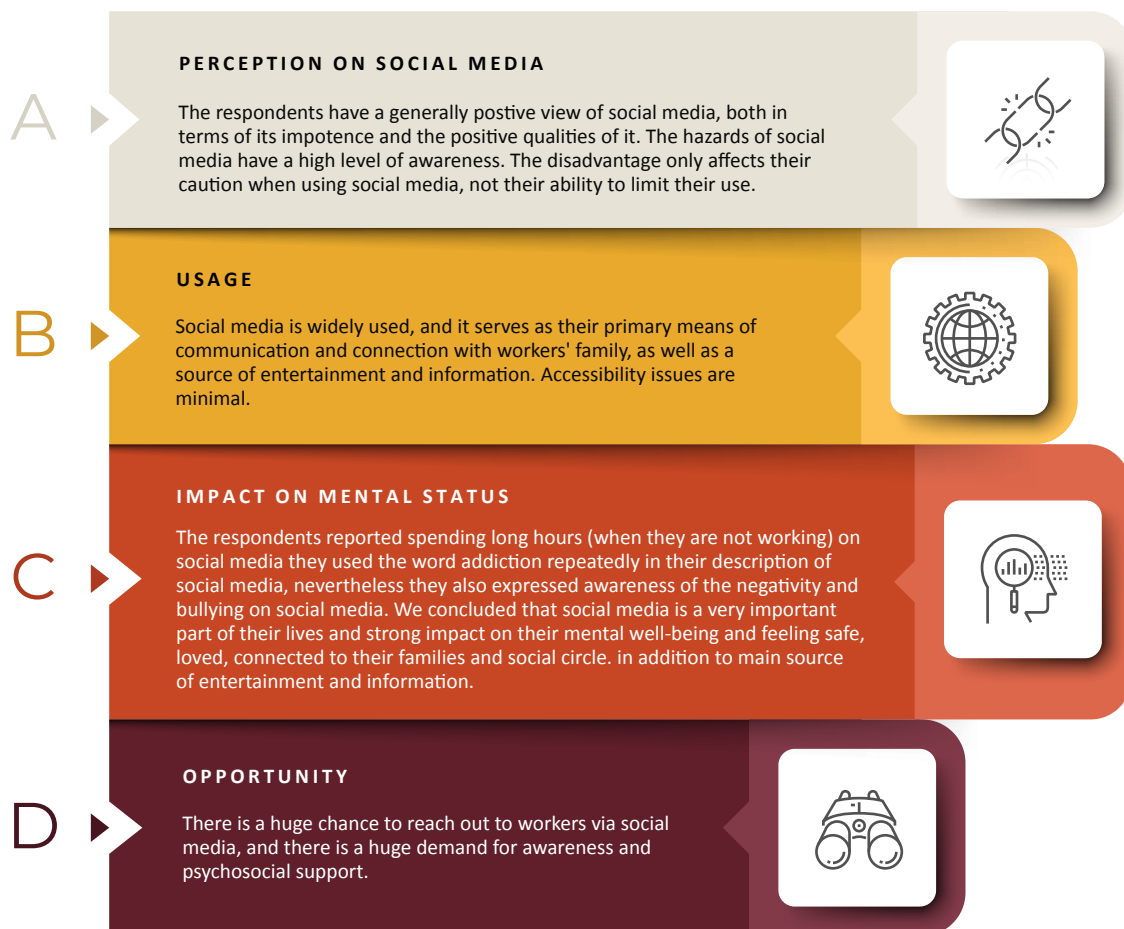
Better Work Jordan (BWJ), a joint programme of the International Labour Organization and the International Finance Corporation, works with stakeholders in the Jordanian garment industry to improve working and living conditions for workers while boosting the sector's competitiveness. In January 2021, BWJ started a mental health project that focuses on building garment workers' resilience against mental health risks, ensuring factory-level support exists, and increasing accessibility of mental health referral systems for all workers.

As part of the mental health project, a study on social media and cyberbullying among workers in the garment sector in Jordan (the "Study") was conducted by Istidama Consulting. The study included conducting five focus group discussions in multiple locations in Jordan and analyzing and reporting the findings towards the goal of the brief study. The main objective of these focus group discussions is to create a strong understanding for BWJ's team in charge of the mental health program regarding, but not limited to the following:

¹ World Health Organization website. Mental health: strengthening our response
² Pew Research Center. Social media fact sheet.

- Perceptions of garment sector workers regarding social media and its impact on mental health status.
- Usage of social media among workers
- Filtering opportunities within social media for the mental healthproject

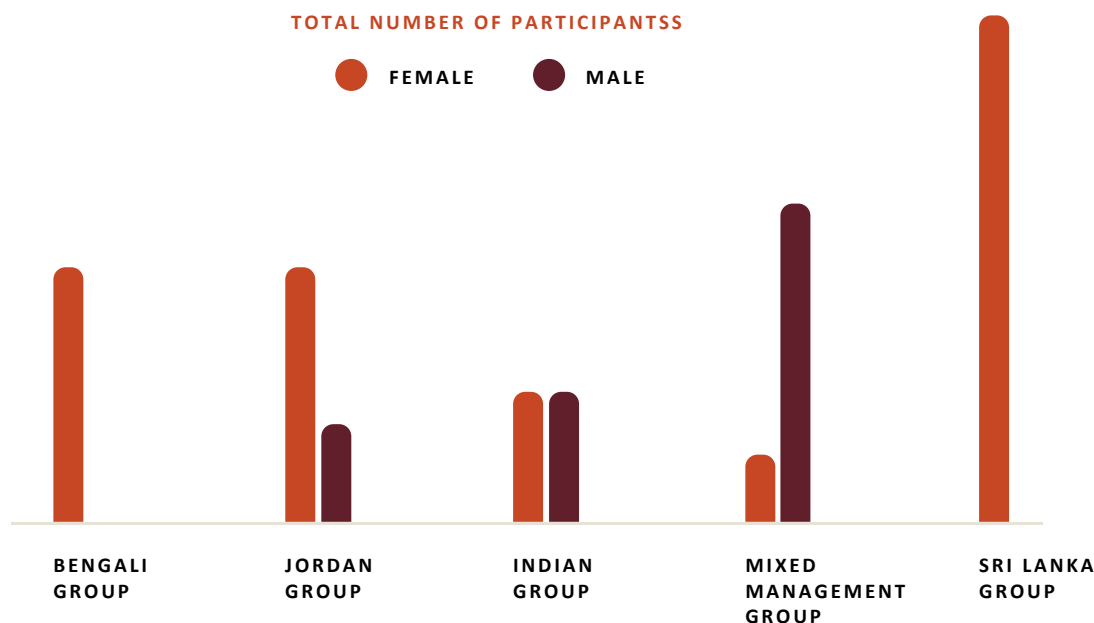
Key Findings



Methodology

The brief study aimed at capturing in-depth understanding of social issues around the use and impact of social media platforms on garment sector workers. To do so, a series of FGDs was organized hosting workers from different nationalities in three different industrial hubs (Irbid, Dulail, and Sahab). The method aims to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals rather than from a statistically representative sample of a broader population, which is the exact need for this assessment which enables us to find the information that we need in the fastest and most reliable way.

Five FGDs with 55 total participants (17 Male and 38 female) disseminated as follows:



The guidelines and questions were developed beforehand and got approved for use by BWJ before the start of the sessions, after the first session the tool was modified a little bit as one of the case studies provoked a side discussion that was not in the aim of the study. We introduced the Notecard exercise the purpose of this exercise was to spark the discussion on the positive and negative aspects of social media and what the workers perceive as positive and negative

The FGDs we all conducted with a translator except for the sessions with Jordanian workers. All the sessions were transcribed. The analysis is based on the results of the FGDs and the observations of the evaluator.

Study Limitations

- The number of focus group discussions is limited and can benefit from a triangulation of data.
- The language barrier poses a limitation in capturing all the information.
- The fact that the translators are workers and not professional translators posed a challenge. This challenge was mitigated by meeting with the translators before the session to go over the questions and guidelines, while during the sessions facilitator intervened when needed to ensure all answers were translated
- The attendance of some managers in the groups posed a challenge, however, in addition to reassuring participants that the outcomes will be anonymous and represent the whole sector without specifying issues related to certain factories, the facilitator also monitored the dynamics carefully between participants and steered the discussion in a way that avoids pointing out any

Analysis

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AMONG WORKERS

Question 1: Can you tell us what types of social media you or your colleagues use? (Follow up on what social media outlet do you use the most?)

The answers to this question varied among the groups, the non-Jordanian workers group used social media primarily for communication with their families and friends followed by entertainment worth mentioning that ticktock was prevalent among female workers and not mentioned by male workers. The mixed management group had a primary use of communication followed by a more diverse range of usage like shopping, news, and sports in addition to work-related sites like LinkedIn. the Jordanian worker group used social media for news and entertainment, they still used communication apps as well, but it was not on top of the list.



Question 2: At what time of the day do you think people usually use social media?

The answers were uniform among all groups on the timing of the usage they check their WhatsApp in the morning before work, use communications apps during the week to connect to their family, for a short time during the working week they may use them for entertainment, but the bulk of the usage is during the weekends for entertainment.

Question 3: On average how long do you or your colleagues use social media?

GROUP	WEEKEND	WEEKDAYS AT NIGHT "ON AVERAGE"
Bengali Group	All Day	1 - 2 Hours
Jordanian Group	All Day	2 - 3 Hours
Indian Group	All Day	2 - 3 Hours
Sri Lanka Group	All Day	2 - 3 Hours
Mix Management Group	All Day	1 - 2 Hours

Question 4: What do you or your colleagues use social media for in your opinion?

The discussions with all the groups led to the same finding that they first all all-use social media for communication, even Jordanians that are in their county communicate via social media in some cases especially expressing condolences when someone dies and congratulations on happy events. The below list covers all the uses of social media and some quotes from the participants.

- Connect with family
- News
- Entertainment
- New Information
- Study
- Sports
- Marketing
- Hobbies and playing games



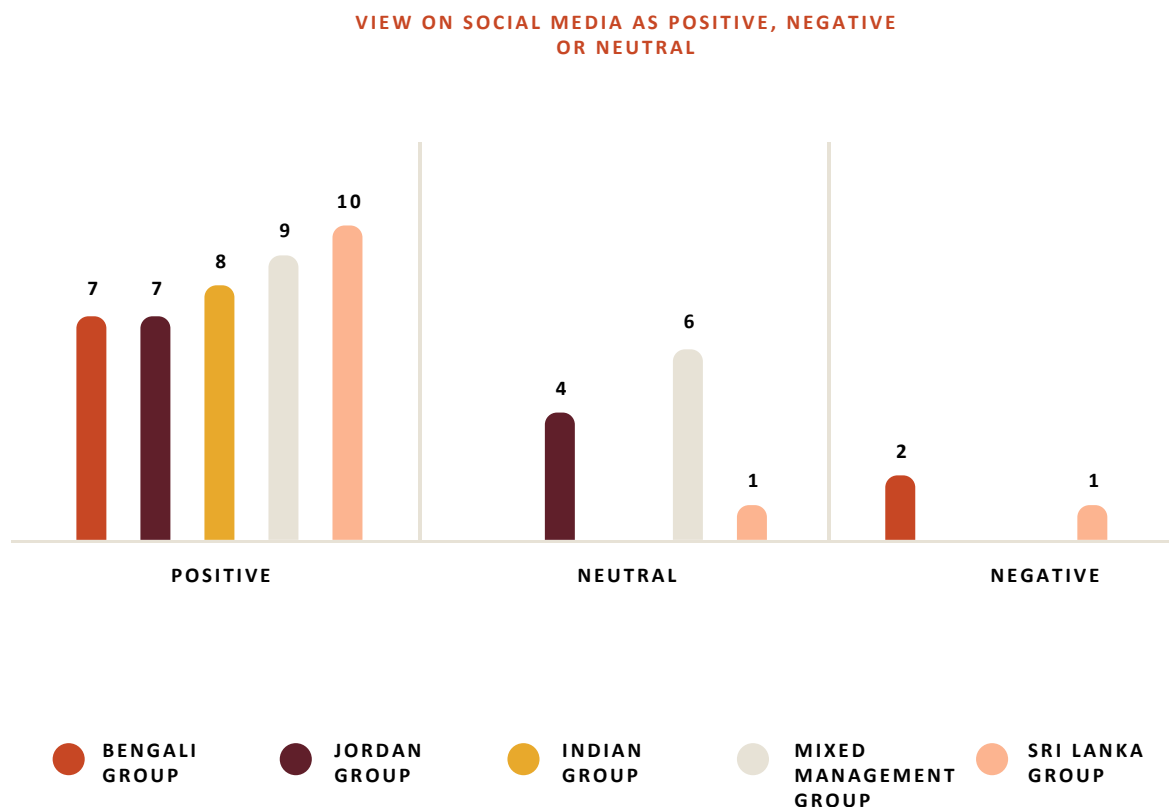
Question 5: Are there any limitations connecting you or your colleagues are facing on social media? (IT literacy, smartphone availability, free time or connection limits, financial recourses)

Based on the discussion there were no limitations in the use of social media mentioned except time. Whether it was a house rule of no phones after 10 pm in the Bengali group. Or lack of time due to working hours. Some Jordanians mentioned that sometimes they did not have internet because they did not have money for the internet bundle or were in an area with poor internet coverage.

Perception

Question 6: In your opinion is social media usage mostly positive or negative or maybe neutral? Explain.

During the sessions we had a vote on who viewed social media as mostly positive or mostly negative or neutral, most of the views were that social media is mostly positive, the details of the voting results were as follows:





THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA WERE MENTIONED

- Communication with the family
- Learn new information
- Keeping old relationships
- Studying
- The whole world is in one place
- Ease of finding any information
- There are many positive and motivational websites and videos that you can use whenever you feel the need to motivate
- WhatsApp groups make us close to our families
- The LinkedIn site increases my experience and skills, and I can develop my professional career using social networking sites
- I can learn new languages through different platforms
- Find a job easily
- Shopping
- I can find out about the world's news first
- Social media is inspiring and fun



THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA WERE MENTIONED

- Social media makes people become distant from their family and friends
- The danger increased for children
- Increase in fake relationships
- Ease of threats and blackmail cases
- Fraud
- Waste time
- The addiction of electronic platforms will affect mental health
- Because there is no control over news and information, and this affects our daily lives
- There is a lot of news and information that should not be published, such as fake news and news that can affect you personally
- I feel lost if I don't post or check Facebook
- Cyberbullying
- Sitting for a long time affects your health in general
- addiction causes negative pressure
- No censorship
- You can create fake pages and harm others with them
- Tik Tok is a very bad platform and contains bad (sexual) content

Question 7: Do you think some people may have hateful intent in their usage of social media?

All the participants agreed with the idea that there is hateful intent by some people. Examples of hateful use that were shared by the participants were (Bullying, blackmail, spreading false information to harm others, creating fake accounts to do what they like without being known), most of them stressed that people should be careful on social media. There was no variance based on the group in the response type.

Question 8: What is the ideal usage of social media?

The most prominent answer and first to mind was communication and staying connected and up to date whether that was with social news or political news. Then they go to share further examples.

- Communication (with the family and friends, staying connected to home)
- Knowledge and studying
- Access to information
- Motivation
- Find work
- Shopping
- News
- Fun

THE USE DEPENDS ON THE USER. IF YOU SEARCH FOR POSITIVE THINGS; YOU WILL FIND THEM. AND IF YOU SEARCH FOR NEGATIVE THINGS; YOU WILL FIND THEM.

Question 9: Do you or your colleagues find that social media is entertaining?

All the participants agreed that social media is entertaining. So much so that some expressed concern about how entertaining it is that it's addictive.

Question 10: Are there people on social media that make others sad on purpose?

All the participants believe that there are people who purposely hurt others, examples of hurtful actions which were discussed during the sessions were:

- Hurtful comments on social media posts and personal pictures
- Bullying
- Blackmail
- Gossip
- Harmful messages

Question 11: Do you think there is a misuse of social media? How?

All the groups confirmed that there is a misuse of social media in two forms, the first is hurting others (like blackmail and bullying) the second is misusing for oneself like wasting time being addicted to social media.

Question 12: Do you believe that everything that is shared on social media should be shared?

The general opinion is no, and most of the discussion was that especially personal information should not be shared and false information.

Question 13: Do you ever worry that people may bully you on social media if you post something?

All the participants reported that they worry about bullying, that they think before they post any picture or idea, but the reaction varied some had strong worries and others did not worry as much, and not all people, did not worry a lot had the idea that if the content is “good” and we can control who see the things on our social media there will be no bullying. But the larger section worried about bullying strongly.

Question 14: Does a person's gender or religion or language affect how they get treated on social media?

The answers were not uniform on these questions, some people see that there is some sort of discrimination, the two prominent discriminations mentioned were based on gender and religion, the people who dismissed the idea of discrimination explained that every person chooses their community on social media, and they are usually very similar to them so there would be no discrimination.

Question 15: Did you or any of your friends' \ colleagues \family get shamed for something you posted on social media? How did that do you feel?

All the groups except the (Indian) group reported that they have been shamed for posts, there was a discussion about how the girls are really monitored by male family members and that they are afraid of posting anything that was not approved by the family, the Jordanian group reported that they did not feel shamed but that they take care of what they post to be socially acceptable. The solution that was given to such circumstances was deleting the post that they got shamed for.

Question 16: Do you think the internet is a safe space for expressing yourself?

There was an agreement that the internet and social media are not safe place, the reasons that were mentioned are the safety of personal information and pictures, and the hacking of personal accounts. There was a mention by some of the participants that there could be measures to be taken to make things safer.

Question 17: Do you know about available channels to report such actions?

Most of the respondents that they are not sure they can do anything especially if the person they want to report is related to them, they all know they can report through the App they are using itself. The only ones who reported more sources are the Jordanians (Cyber security department) and there is a Facebook group I called E-Tech.

Question 18: Are you willing to use such channels to report bullying?

The participants confirmed that they will report if the confidentiality is maintained, some suggested that maybe girls will change their numbers, and change their accounts to close an issue.

Impact of Social Media on Mental Health Status 'Case Study Discussion'

CASE STUDY DISCUSSION

AJ I AJ is a 20-year-old woman who spent a year in Jordan working in X factory. She has been in a three-month romance with her boyfriend.

AJ has recently begun to have regular disputes with her boyfriend, who is constantly requesting money from her. She doesn't have any more money to give him, but he has threatened to broadcast the provocative images he has if she doesn't give him the money.

AJ couldn't handle the pressure and committed suicide on a live Tik-Tok video.

Question 19: Is this cyberbullying or blackmailing? Explain.

Most of the participants identified this as blackmail because there was asking for money, some add that this is also bullying with the blackmail.

Question 20: In your opinion: What do you think led AJ to kill herself?

Due to the importance of each individual answer, please see listed below all the answers that were given. You can see that FEAR and Family and society are higher mentions of mental state.

- She committed suicide because she was afraid of her family
- She committed suicide because of her trait that will be damaged because of the pictures
- Because of societal bullying
- fear of society
- Fear of her family
- Fear of the community
- Lack of experience because she is young
- Disdain
- Extreme tension
- Her mental state does not allow her to make the right decisions
- Her mind doesn't work, and she doesn't know how to control herself when she is
- Too much pressure on her
- She saw a similar story to her
- Possible to make people see what such pressure can cause
- To make her voice heard in the community
- To teach her boyfriend a lesson
- Very ashamed of what she did with the young man
- From her family
- The family can't be merciful to her
- Can't face the world depression
- You don't know how to face problems

For the answers above there was a pattern of women giving statements relevant to how the woman felt, Men made more references to fear and society, and the Jordanain group was the group that made the most references to mental health issues.

Question 21: And why on social media?

As the choice of words is important in these types of questions, and individual reasoning is important, the list below has all the non-repetitive answers, the number beside some of the answers is the number of repetition.

- To be an example to other girls
- To teach her boyfriend a lesson
- Possible to let the whole world know what she went through
- Send a message to everyone
- To feel guilty
- Revenge on herself
- There is no awareness because it is in a condition that you cannot judge the attitude
- "A young man's opinion: a story that started on social media platforms should end in the same way"
- To make everyone feel sorry
- To show the community what she suffered
- Awareness of others so that nothing like it will happen to them

Question 22: What do you think should happen here to protect AJ and how?

The answers covered the following suggestions, the below list is set from the most common answer to the least common answer.

- Awareness
- Education
- Trustworthy professional to help
- Parental control
- Police

Question 23: Do you think about sharing photos or videos (violence \ sexual content) with spouses or partners? how does this make you feel?

In all the groups it was a unanimous no, they refused the idea of sharing this type of content, because it may help normalize such behavior.

Question 24: In what ways can workers be helped to use social media safely and properly? How? Training, learning videos, Brochures, or any other ways?

The participant shared their ideas about how to combat such an issue, they all felt the need for a solution.



Recommendations

The findings reveal that social media literacy is a significant issue in how garment workers use social media and how it affects their mental health. We found that a basic, scalable media literacy intervention can reduce negative social media use while also assisting people in better distinguishing social media as a communication tool. We can provide the following recommendations based on the data and analysis:

- Garment Factories to collaborate with Better Work Jordan to provide training to garment workers on how to safely use social media sites, with a focus on the dangers that come with them.
- Due to the time constraints faced by garment workers, safe usage of social media training might be provided through an e-learning platform or educational videos.
- Take advantage of the fact that workers frequently use social media and have access to it as one of the ways to raise awareness.
- Social media may also function as a reporting mechanism (Hotline) for mental health issues and even a gateway through which psychosocial support can be provided. Create educational and awareness materials on how to maintain your mental health when using social media.