

Research Article



The influence of age and gender on social TV acceptance

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Citation: Habes, M., Elareshi, M., Alsridi, H., Ziani, A., & Elbasir, M. (2025). The influence of age and gender on social TV acceptance. Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies, 15(2), e202514. https://doi.org/10.30935/ojcmt/16091

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Received: 16 Sep 2024 Accepted: 7 Dec 2024 Social TV refers to the integration of social media platforms with traditional TV viewing, allowing users to interact with content and other viewers in real time. This study examines the acceptance of social TV among Jordanians, focusing on how demographic factors such as age and gender influence this acceptance. A total of 450 social TV users from three Jordanian cities were conducted and analyzed (using PLS-SEM). The results revealed that the results remained consistent with the idea that social TV is acceptable, with a significant effect on the respondents, e.g., they were of active interest in its integration. Gender and age had a significant indirect effect on the acceptance of social TV. This study highlighted that social media and social TV acceptance are closely intertwined.

Keywords: social TV, Jordan, television viewing, information gathering, second screen phenomenon, enhanced engagement, online communities

INTRODUCTION

Television viewing is one of the most investigated phenomena due to different reasons (Gui & Stanca, 2009). From the role of television to its impacts, empirical research has highlighted different results with an in-depth understanding of audience requirements and the content selection process (Jacobson et al., 2020; Nachrin, 2019; Silverblatt, 2004). However, today, when television is even advanced and ICT integration has occurred, new concepts and watching patterns are widely introduced (Fossen & Schweidel, 2019; Lin et al., 2016; Selva, 2016). In this sense, social networks have become a prominent phenomenon, demanding the attention of researchers and media stakeholders (Song et al., 2019). Furthermore, since social media is used for different purposes, the concept of social television is also enriched with communication, increased engagement, education, and opportunities for fan communities for its users (Barker, 2018; Lin et al., 2021). According to Sheldon et al. (2021), people who watch different social television platforms not only actively select the type of content and certain platforms to watch, but also share their viewing experiences with others

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on various virtual social networks. Social television is considered an extension of conventional television watching patterns (Paftalika & Hananto, 2018). They are platforms that are designed to integrate with popular social networks such as X (formally Twitter), Facebook, or Instagram. It strongly supports the concept of an active audience and the phenomenon of second screen in the contemporary era. With the accessibility of selection content that has increased, users can communicate and share their viewing experiences with other users across the globe, amplify and express their opinions, and often using more smart communication such as posts, hashtags associated with program shows, as well as trending topics.

Similarly, in Jordan, the integration of social networks has also been visible on a larger scale due to the acceptance of technology, which has increased considerably. Data on the viewing of social media in Jordan revealed that 72.9% of Jordanians use different social media platforms (Habes et al., 2022). Facebook, X, and YouTube are still the most popular platform in Jordan (Statcounter, 2021). On these platforms, Facebook has been a popular platform among younger age groups in Jordan (18–24 and 25–34), allowing them to consume different content and connect with friends, share updates, and join groups of interest. Although the X platform is preferred/used by similar aged groups but for different content such as news updates, discussions, and engagement with public figures. YouTube is highly popular among younger age groups in Jordan. It is used for entertainment, music videos, vlogs, and educational content. The concept of social TV is gradually understood by Jordanians, especially young users of social media. However, social media contains certain concerns, e.g., binge-watching among youngsters (Nachrin, 2019). Song et al. (2019) highlight the role of television in general as satisfying many physical and psychological needs of audiences. It is worth saying that this project looks at the role of demographics as having indirect effects on media content selection, as witnessed by existing literature. Therefore, this research also examines the needs and gratifications behind the adoption of social media among the Jordanian audience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Usage and Social TV Adoption

Digital platforms generally have different but distinct features that accelerate their acceptance, incorporation, and usage across the globe (Ali, 2020; Pynta et al., 2014). Especially when a rapid growth of digital platforms is taking place, their acceptance is also increasing (Muhammad, 2018). Digitalization has allowed us to adopt a "second screen phenomenon" (Guo, 2019) or multi-screen viewing, while watching normal TV, increasing our online attraction, engagement and entertainment (Song et al., 2019). In our study, social television acceptance refers to the willingness and readiness of online users to embrace and engage with social TV experiences (Trisha, 2019). It encompasses the extent to which online viewers are open to using social media platforms, participating in online discussions, increasing influence, and interacting with other viewers while watching television. It also involves using social networks to engage viewers and encourage real-time interaction during TV broadcasts. Platforms such as YouTube have linked their viewers to social TV (Fuller, 2021) as well as using it to create opportunities for fan communities (Lin & Chiang, 2019).

Furthermore, there are several reasons why social TV can be accepted among online users in Jordan, such as 'technological familiarity' and competence with online users who are more comfortable and familiar with social media platforms and digital technologies, are more likely to accept and engage in social TV experiences (Chanvisatlak, 2019; Odunaiya et al., 2020). Proficiency in using social media, understanding how to navigate online platforms, and the ability to multitask between TV and digital devices contribute to higher acceptance levels. Social media use and engagement with users who actively use social media platforms in their daily lives are more inclined to accept social TV (Habes, 2019), for example, using social TV apps that offer features such as synchronized viewing, interactive content, and personalized recommendations. Regular engagement with social media, such as posting, commenting, and sharing content (Madhubhashini, 2021), e.g., TV shows usually encourage their viewers to participate in social media contests or Q&A sessions to increase engagement and audience participation. Such actions indicate a higher likelihood of participating in social TV conversations (Djerf-Pierre et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the perceived benefits of social networks can also influence its acceptance (Jacobson et al., 2020; Moghavvemi et al., 2017). These benefits may include opportunities for social interaction and fan

communities, connecting with like-minded individuals, gaining additional information about TV shows, accessing exclusive content, and being part of a community (Enli & Syvertsen, 2016; Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2021). When users recognize these advantages, they are more likely to accept social TV. Social influence and norms can also be seen as motivation for social TV acceptance. If users observe their peers or influential figures actively engaging in social TV, it can influence their own acceptance and participation. Social norms and expectations around the use of social networks while watching TV can also impact acceptance levels (Kim et al., 2018). Relevance and interest in content, for example, the appeal and relevance of TV content, can affect social TV acceptance. If users have a strong interest in a particular TV show or event, they may be more motivated to engage with social TV to discuss (Fuller, 2021), share, and connect with those with similar interest (Kim & Kelly Merrill, 2022; Lin et al., 2016).

Note that social television acceptance is a multifaceted concept, influenced by a combination of individual, social, and technological factors. The same cases can be observed when discussing and highlighting the role of social TV platforms. Elareshi et al. (2022) considered that social TV is seen as an opportunity where the user can learn, be entertained and communicate. Although facilities are also linked to YouTube, social television has a distinguished position. The social TV market is growing, which also leads to changes in the users' behavior (Cesar & Geerts, 2011). As television is conventionally associated with limited viewing and sharing patterns, social television presents the concept of an active audience, unlimited accessibility, and opensharing patterns (Pynta et al., 2014).

Previous research (Kim et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2016) have shown that social media usage significantly influences users' engagement with digital media platforms, including social TV. For example, users who are familiar with social media are more likely to adopt features that integrate these platforms with traditional television. Given this connection, we hypothesized that social media usage would positively influence social TV adoption. This also aligns with the uses and gratifications (U&G) theory, which suggests that users seek out media that satisfies their social interaction and engagement needs.

H1: The use of social media is positively associated with the adoption of social TV.

Age-Moderated Social TV Acceptance

According to Kim (2019), today's audience is more vigilant and active in selecting the most suitable content. Different social networks also provide them with the opportunity to select the most suitable content for them, especially based on their age level. A similar phenomenon can be seen when the audience actively selects information- and entertainment-based content in conventional television watching patterns (Hosami, 2019). However, when attributed to social television content, this age gap can be clearly seen and empirically witnessed by Hossain et al. (2019). In this regard, Farooq et al. (2015) cite an example of different social TV platforms, particularly Netflix and Amazon Prime (a video streaming platform, not specifically a social TV), as also providing age-specific content, further highlighting social TV platforms as providers for information, communication and entertainment that is also accompanied by perceived benefits (Cesar & Geerts, 2011). Not that the growing popularity of these streaming services, many of which are experimenting with social viewing features (e.g., Netflix Party), suggests a shift in how audiences interact with TV content. These platforms offer synchronized viewing and chat functions, which closely align with the social TV concept. In our context, younger audiences, who ae more likely to engage in multitasking, might favor platforms that integrate social media seamlessly into their viewing experiences.

What's important is that the integration of augmented reality (AR) technology in social TV could create new opportunities for immersive engagement (Boardman et al., 2020). For example, live sports broadcasts could offer AR overlays with real-time statistics or player information, allowing users to share their experiences with friends on social platforms (Abd Majid & Mohd Shamsudin, 2019). Similarly, entertainment shows could use AR filters and effects to engage younger viewers, which also align with their preference for interactive and gamified content.

Given such findings, in terms of age, young adults (aged 18–34) tend to be more receptive to social TV (Trisha, 2019). Young adults are also more likely to be active users of social media platforms. They are generally more comfortable multitasking and engaging with social media while watching TV (Merceron & Atkin, 2020). However, older adult users (aged 35+) may be less inclined to embrace social TV. They may be

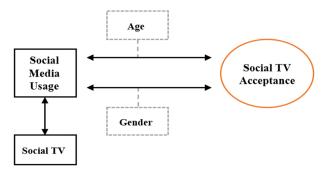


Figure 1. The proposed conceptual framework model of the study (Source: Authors' own data)

less familiar with social media platforms or feel less motivated to participate in online discussions while watching television. Hossain et al. (2019) and Farooq et al. (2015) highlight that younger people are more likely to adopt digital platforms and multitasking while engaging with social TV, whereas older tend to engage less. Therefore, we hypothesized that age would moderate the relationship between social media usage and social TV acceptance.

H2: Age moderates the relationship between social media use and social TV acceptance.

Gender-Moderated Acceptance of Social TV

Gender, as one of the most significant demographic variables, has always affected the decision-making process, especially regarding technology-based decision-making concerns. For example, when choosing and integrating virtual social networks, gender is one of the most cited variables today (Chon & Park, 2020). The role of gender in selecting the selection and use of entertainment and news content is also examined by Kelcey et al. (2021), indicating that gender is a significant factor, since their research examined the role of gender in information-based content in Iran. Kim et al. (2018) revealed that age influences users' willingness to embrace social TV experiences, with younger audiences being more inclined to engage actively on these platforms. Applying the mixed-method approach revealed that men are comparatively more actively selecting the relevant content, while women remain less active in selecting the on-line content they like. Apart from content selection, media platform selection also remained, indicating an explicit discrepancy between men and women. Hossain et al. (2019) identified that demographic factors, particularly age, play a crucial role in content selection for social TV. Their findings, therefore, support the moderating role of age in our hypothesis. Similarly, Farooq et al. (2015) examined how different age groups engage with social TV, further justifying the inclusion of age as a moderator in our model.

Another study demonstrating the role of gender in the selection of online content also indicated the same patterns (Alfadda & Mahdi, 2021). They found that gender did not only affect content selection but also remained significantly influential on the types of information sharing process. Furthermore, studies have shown that men tend to exhibit lower levels of social media engagement compared to women. For example, women use social media platforms to share more personal information than men. Women are also more open, expressive, and willing to share. In Jordan, from Data Reportal (Kemp, 2023), it is estimated that in mid-2023, Jordan would have more than ten million internet users (more than 88% of the total population), 40.4% being female users, compare with men (54.6%). **Figure 1** illustrates our proposed conceptual model.

Previous studies (Alfadda & Mahdi, 2021; Chon & Park, 2020) have found that gender influences how users use and interact with social media and digital media. For example, females are more likely to engage in community-building activities, while men are more focused on opinion-sharing activities. This led us to hypothesize that gender would moderate the relationship between social media usage and social TV acceptance.

H3: Gender moderates the relationship between social media use and social TV acceptance.

As shown in **Figure 1**, the conceptual framework initially included three main variables: Social media usage, social TV, and social TV acceptance. However, for clarity and accuracy, we focus on only two primary variables: social media usage and social TV acceptance, which align with the results. Note that while U&G

Table 1. Convergent validity of latent variables

Construct	Code	Item	FL
Social	SMU1	Social media platforms are my prior source of content consumption and interaction.	.598
media	SMU2	I am acquainted with social TV and how it integrates with social media platforms.	.994
usage CR = .762	SMU3	My perception affect how likely I am to adopt social TV for content consumption and interaction on social media.	.992
CA = .810	SMU4	Social media platforms especially shape my content preferences and choices related to social	.999
AVE = .995		TV.	
	SMU5	My observation plays a role in how I engage with social media platforms and integrate social television into my media consumption habits.	.998
Social TV	STV1	I find social TV appealing and would be interested in using it.	.992
acceptance	STV2	Integrating social media with TV content improves my overall viewing experience.	.842
CR = .801	STV3	I think social TV platforms provide a special way to interact with others while watching TV	.979
CA = .754		shows or events.	
AVE = .956	STV4	I feel satisfied using social media features to engage with TV content.	.988
	STV5	I would be willing to dig out and use social TV platforms in the future.	.979

supports **H1**, the technology acceptance model supports **H2**, by highlighting how demographic factors influence technology adoption. **H3** is informed by research on gender differences in media consumption.

METHODS

Survey

This research is based on a quantitative approach using an online survey approach with a self-proposed tool, and a closed questionnaire (a 5-point Likert scale) administered in Jordan between July and August 2022. The survey was initially developed in English but was subsequently translated into Arabic (by a bilingual expert fluent in both languages) to ensure accessibility and comprehension for all participants. The survey was sent by email and analyzed after receiving potential respondents. This Arabic version was then back translated into English by another independent bilingual translator. The two versions were compared to ensure the translation was accurate and no meaning was lost. Furthermore, ethically, the research project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Yarmouk University. In doing so, a consent agreement statement was placed on the beginner survey, asking respondents to carefully read the research and click "I agree" and "certify" to start the survey. Once the respondents agreed, they were directed to fill out the survey questionnaire. Respondents had the right to withdraw from the survey at any time without any consequences.

Study Sample

This study examined Jordanians' perceptions of acceptance of social TV acceptance from three of the largest cities in Jordan, Amman, Jerash, and Irbid, with reference to the role of demographics (age and gender) as a moderated factor. A non-probability sampling technique was used through a convenience sampling approach (Etikan et al., 2016). Because this study considered certain practical criteria, such as easy access, geographical proximity, and willingness to participate, we only targeted those who mainly understand and use social networks on a regular basis. Our sample size was limited by the research objectives to approximately 400–500 respondents, and the survey was closed once we reached the desired sample. A total of 450 respondents participated in the study. However, 17 of the questionnaires were incorrectly completed and rejected during the data analysis process. Therefore, with a total response rate of 96.2%, data analysis was performed. Developed from early research, the questionnaire consisted of 10 related items on Jordanians' perceptions of the acceptance of social TV, as shown in Table 1. Social media usage was measured with five items (see, e.g., Guo, 2019), and social TV were measured with five items (Kim et al., 2021; Selva, 2016).

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Analysis of the demographics of the respondents revealed a notable gender distribution, with a majority of female participants accounting for 57.7%, while male respondents constituted 43.3% of the total sample. Furthermore, when examining the age groups, 42.6% of the participants were between 18–21 years of age,

Table 2. Discriminant validity criterion of latent variables

The Fornell-Larcker criterion			HTMT ratio scale		
	SMU	STV		SMU	STV
SMU	.990		SMU	1.0	
STV	.691	.913	STV	.433	1.0

Table 3. Coefficients of determination R²

S/R	Construct	R^2	Strength
1.	Social media usage	.732	Strong
2.	Social TV acceptance	.647	Strong

while 47.5% were 22–25 years of age. Furthermore, 9.9% of the respondents were 26+ years old. In terms of the educational background of the participants, a majority of respondents were university students, with 58.2% identifying as undergraduate students, 31.7% as graduate students and 10.1% as postgraduate or doctoral students. This diverse educational representation provides insight into the respondents' levels of familiarity with both social media and technology, with are relevant to their acceptance of social TV.

To test the research model, the study used the partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) software (Xia & Chae, 2021), a nonparametric method. It is an appropriate technique when the aim of the study is to predict key variables in complex models based on formatively measured constructs as Hair et al. (2017) indicate. Therefore, the analysis below followed the recommendations of Hair et al. (2017, 2019). PLS-SEM is more flexible in dealing with non-normal data and is better suited for studies focusing on the prediction of key constructs rather than confirming established theories. In our study, we aim to explore the influence of demographic variable (age and gender) on social TV acceptance in Jordan. First, the study examined the internal consistency and convergent validity of the measurement model (Alarcón & Sánchez, 2015). Convergence validity determines the extent to which the survey items are consistent with each other (Alarcón & Sánchez, 2015; Bolliger & Inan, 2012). Thus, for convergent validity, the study ran the factor loading (FL) and average variance extracted (AVE) and revealed that all FL values transcend the threshold value of 0.5, ranging from 0.598 to 0.999 (Wolf et al., 2013). **Table 1** exclusively measures the dimensions of social media usage and its relationship to social TV acceptance, reflecting the constructs tested in the analysis.

Regarding the reliability of the construct, an internal reliability coefficient was calculated for the survey instrument and its subscales after the questionnaire was shared during the research distribution (Bolliger & Inan, 2012). The study found that all composite reliability (CR) ranged from 0.762 to 0.801 and Cronbach's alpha (CA) ranged from 0.754 to .810 (Alarcón & Sánchez, 2015; Xia & Chae, 2021). Instrument reliability was found to be high. Thus, the convergent validity of the measurement model was confirmed.

Second, the study ran the discriminant validity, using a two-criterion-based approach, the Fornell-Larcker and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) test (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hamid et al., 2017). The Fornell-Larcker test showed that all the squared AVE values were greater than the correlation values (as shown in **Table 2**). Likewise, the HTMT ratio test also showed that the HTMT value of .211 (Özay Köse & Gül, 2018). Therefore, all the values obtained were distinct from the other correlation values, showing that the discriminant validity was also affirmed (Alarcón & Sánchez, 2015).

The study preformed the goodness of fit (Hair et al., 2019). The goodness of fit determines how well the set of observations fit well with the expected data (Hamid et al., 2017). Therefore, the goodness of fit reveals the Chi-square value (χ^2 = 0.347, p < 0.003), indicating the observed values fit well with the expected data (Bentler & Bonett, 1980).

The study also determined the determination coefficients of determination R^2 as indicating how well the proposed model predicts an outcome, which are the dependent variables of the model (social media usages and social TV) (Sarstedt et al., 2021). It ranges between 0 and 1, the better a model is, the higher value and the closer to 1. The analysis revealed that the acceptance of social TV by respondents was predicted by their use of social media and their view of social TV. The R^2 for social media usage and social TV accounted for 73% and 65%, respectively, by the model, indicating a strong predictive power of the construct (Permatasari & Kuswadi, 2017) (as shown in **Table 3**). Note that the results support a unidirectional relationship between

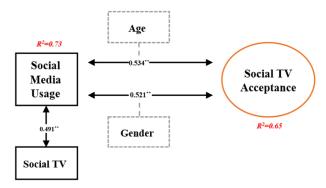


Figure 2. The study results of the proposed conceptual framework model (Source: Authors' own data)

Table 4. Hypotheses testing

	71 0			
Н	Relationships	Path	t-value*	Sig.
H1	Social media usage → social TV acceptance	.491	6.620	.000
H2	Social media usage \rightarrow Age \rightarrow social TV acceptance	.534	.737	.000
Н3	Social media usage → Gender → social TV acceptance	.521	.345	.001

Note. *Indirect effects

social media usage and social TV. However, the initial framework was intended to explore potential feedback effects, but data did not provide evidence for social TV acceptance influencing social media usage.

Finally, the study runs the structural relationships of the conceptual model. It conducted a path analysis, including path values and regression weights (Hair et al., 2017). Path analysis is an important assessment in studies based on PLS-SEM (Fowler et al., 2012). Furthermore, by providing the significance of the proposed relationships, it also determines the strength of the relevant relationships. This path analysis first examined the proposed effect of social media use on social TV acceptance. The proposition was aligned online with the arguments proposed by Elareshi et al. (2022), indicating a potential integration of social television in the Middle East, particularly in Jordan, due to its distinctive features such as information sharing, communication, entertainment, and increased accessibility (Ipsos, 2020; Kemp, 2021). The results also confirmed this consistency with the significance value and the path values of the relationships between the study variables (Figure 2).

Furthermore, age and gender were proposed as moderator factors among respondents to test their acceptance of social TV (as shown in **Table 4**). The mediation of gender in the acceptance of social television remained significant. These results were consistent in early studies (Hossain et al., 2019), where they found gender as an important factor for the selection and use of social networks. Finally, the proposed mediation of age on social television acceptance among respondents also proved significant, indicating age as an important factor in audience decision making, as also witnessed by existing literature (Evans & Clark, 2016). In general, the findings revealed that all the proposed hypotheses were validated and indicated that the respondents would accept social media that highlights their impact on age and gender.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Television networks and broadcasters often incorporate social TV strategies to enhance audience engagement and create a sense of community around their programs. They may display hashtags or social media handles on the screen to encourage viewers to join the conversation or feature live social media feeds on their websites or during broadcasts (Kim et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2021). Some shows even integrate social media content directly into their programming, presenting viewers' tweets or comments on air (Wohn & Na, 2011). This study proposed the role of two factors, age and gender, as moderators and indirect effects on the acceptance of social television in Jordan. All proposed hypotheses indicated that respondents actively selected social television for entertainment, communication, and information-gathering purposes (Kim & Kelly Merrill, 2022; Pelletier et al., 2020). The theme related to social television acceptance and further root questions focused on perceived benefits and other relevant characteristics of the relevant medium (C. H. Lin et al., 2021). The findings of this investigation indicated that the respondents indicated that social TV helped them to

explore new content (Kim & Kelly Merrill, 2022), gather information (Mcfadzean & Mckenzie, 2001), share their viewing experiences with others (Winter et al., 2018), and communicate and engage with others, regardless of their geographical locations (Kim et al., 2021; Stollfuß, 2018). It means that users who are active on social media are more likely to engage with social TV because they are familiar with multitasking across screens and interacting with content through comments, shares, or likes. However, there is no evidence, based on our data, to suggest that watching social TV increase their general usage of social media, as our analysis found no significant feedback loop.

Furthermore, the findings of our research also indicated that respondents were likely to watch content that they found to fit their gender. For example, our findings indicated that male respondents showed a higher inclination towards watching social TV to amplify their views, e.g., they are more likely to use social TV for opinion-sharing and amplifying their views, particularly regarding news, current affairs. On the contrary, the female respondents leaned towards using social TV for entertainment and engagement purposes, e.g., community-building activities on social TV platforms such as commenting, sharing, and interacting with content in real time. Social media platforms and TV networks could design tailored campaigns. For male audiences, encourage engagement with news and current affairs programs, while of female audiences, develop content-rich feature such as fan clubs or community challenges. Although our findings were consisted with Chon and Park (2020) and Kelcey et al. (2021), it did confirm what Alfadda and Mahdi (2021) indicate in their study in terms of accepting new technologies (Zoom) in their language learning. This could be due to data collection in the latter investigation. Based on our data analysis, it becomes evident that people who access social TV in Jordan perceive it as a new way of connecting and engaging with others, amplifying their discussions about their favorite shows, expressing opinions, finding opportunities for fan communities, and actively participating in online conversations related to TV content.

Finally, in responding to the second moderated factor, age, the study found that the age level had different acceptance of acceptance of social TV acceptance and content selection (Farooq et al., 2015; Hosami, 2019). Our findings indicate that age plays a significant role in how social TV is accepted in Jordan. Based on the finding that younger respondents (18–34 years) were more likely to engage actively with social TV, particularly through multitasking across social media while watching TV, television networks can design interactive features such as live polls, real-time Q&A sessions, and gamified content, specifically for younger viewers. It means that they are familiar and comfortable with digital technologies and multitasking. In contrast, older respondents (35+ years) showed less engagement with social TV preferring perhaps traditional TV viewing patterns with less interaction on social platforms (Harboe, 2010; Odunaiya et al., 2020; Song et al., 2019; Stollfuß, 2018). Therefore, these results affirmed the structural relationship between social media usage, social TV, their gender, and age. This study also highlighted the importance of social TV as part of our daily viewing experiences.

This study has added evidence from literature on the adoption and acceptance of social TV. This research also adds to the literature on the significant mediating role of age and gender between social media use and social TV acceptance. It seems that people with Internet accessibility and the adoption of social media platforms would understand the different perspectives between social television as an effective extension of conventional television. Today, social TV has been able to create an online community or groups whose members discuss products on television. It emerged due to the widespread adoption of smartphones and the increasing use of social media platforms. This paper focuses on social television acceptance, with an emphasis on demographic variables (as mediating variables) as affecting its acceptance among Jordanians. The results revealed that the results remained consistent with the idea that social TV is acceptable among Jordanians, with a significant effect on respondents, for example, they were an active interest in its integration. Gender and age had a significant indirect effect on the acceptance of social television. Furthermore, social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook, which are widely used in Jordan, could enhance their integration with social TV by offering platform-specific tool such as "watch parties" or synchronized viewing features. These tools can allow users to co-watch shows with friends while interacting through real-time comments and reactions. This study highlighted the importance of social television that is becoming a part of our daily viewing experiences.

The Study's Main Contributions and Implications

This research has several contributions and implications to the growing field of social TV research, particularly in the context of the Middle East. For example, the findings would clearly be helpful for TV and social media producers in Jordan in terms of implementation of strategies to overcome several problems when it comes to the relationship between TV productions and viewers, as follows:

Regarding the demographic influence on social TV acceptance, our study offers an overview of understanding how age and gender shape the acceptance and use of social TV in Jordan and Middle Eastern context–a region where such studies are scarce. For example, in terms of audience enhanced engagement. Social TV encourages viewers to actively engage with each other, creating a sense of community around TV shows or events (Lim et al., 2015; Selva, 2016). Viewers can discuss their favorite programs, share opinions, and exchange ideas in real time. This interaction fosters a feeling of belonging and strengthens the sense of community among like-minded individuals (Odunaiya et al., 2020).

Furthermore, social TV allows viewers to share their viewing experiences with others, even if they are physically separated (Gomillion et al., 2017; Trisha, 2019). It enables people (aged 18–34 years) to connect over common interests and participate in discussions about shows, characters, plot twists, or memorable moments. This shared experience builds a sense of camaraderie and facilitates the formation of virtual communities (Shao & Lee, 2020). Social TV also provides a platform for viewers to express their opinions and have their voices heard (Topf & Williams, 2021). Social media conversations and discussions can influence public opinion, shape the narrative around a particular show or event, and even impact the decisions of broadcasters or content creators (Zalani, 2020). In this way, social television empowers viewers and gives them a collective voice.

Worth saying that the rise of social TV has given birth to the 'second screen phenomenon', where viewers use their smartphones, tablets or laptops to interact with social media while watching TV (Guo, 2019; Lin et al., 2021). This simultaneous usage of multitasking screens enhances the viewing experience and allows viewers to access additional content, such as behind-the-scenes footage, interviews, or exclusive content. It also opens opportunities for advertisers to reach audiences through targeted social media campaigns (Alonzo & Popescu, 2021). Social TV has created opportunities for fan communities to flourish. Fans of specific TV shows or genres can connect with each other, form online communities, and participate in fan theories, fan fiction, or fan art (Lin & Chiang, 2019). Social media platforms provide a space for these fan communities to thrive and celebrate their shared interests, further strengthening the bonds among community members (Odunaiya et al., 2020). Finally, social media and social television acceptance are closely intertwined. The famer provides a space for viewers to engage in real-time features, promote TV shows, and provide valuable feedback. This symbiotic relationship has contributed to increased acceptance and adoption of social TV, as it enhances the overall viewing experience and fosters a sense of community among viewers.

Theoretically, the findings reinforce the U&G theory by illustrating how different demographic groups (age and gender) seek out and interact with media content based on their specific needs. Younger people are more likely to seek entertainment and multitasking opportunities, while older people lean towards more traditional viewing experiences.

Limitations and Future Research

Although social TV has triggered new forms of interaction, its adoption is still limited. First, this study represents data from Jordanian social TV users that question the generalizability of the results in other regions. Second, using the convenience sampling approach also limits its scope, as other sampling approaches would be more appreciated. The results, therefore, should be interpreted with caution as their generalizability may be limited. Finally, this study involved the use of only two demographic variables (age and gender). On the contrary, it should be considered that these two are not the only determinants of social TV acceptance. Factors such as individual interests, motivations, social influence, and technological affinity (not discussed in this research) can also play a significant role in shaping the engagement of online users with social TV. Other variables, such as qualification level, income, and residence, could also have an (in)direct effect on social TV acceptance, which can be studied further.

This study acknowledges the importance of social TV that it may have some positive implications for community building in Jordan, it can lead to, which was not discussed in this research, negative results such as online harassment (Gómez-Galán et al., 2020) and shared misinformation (Resende et al., 2019; Saling et al., 2021). Rapid changes in user preferences driven by emerging technologies necessitate continual adaptation by broadcasters and social media platforms. We suggest that future research could also investigate the interplay between these technological innovations and demographic factors such as age and digital literacy, further extending the findings of our study. Therefore, it is crucial for different platforms, television broadcasters and producers, as well as viewers themselves, to promote responsible and respectful engagement when sharing social TV content with others to ensure a positive community experience.

Author contributions: Mohammed Habes: formal analysis, investigation, methodology, software, supervision; **Mokhtar Elareshi:** conceptualization, validation, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing; **Hatem Alsridi:** conceptualization, resources, software; **Abdulkrim Ziani:** conceptualization, investigation, validation, writing – original draft; **Mahmoud Elbasir:** conceptualization, validation, software, writing – original draft. All authors approved the final version of the article.

Funding: The authors received no financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article.

Ethics declaration: This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Yarmouk University (Ref. 110/136/2020). The respondents were informed that their response was entirely voluntary in the research and completely anonymous and confidential.

Declaration of interest: The authors declare no competing interest.

Data availability: Data generated or analyzed during this study are available from the authors on request.

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