

Unfiltered Realities Digital Storytelling as a Tool for Mindset Management among Jordanian Youth



PRESENTED BY
Team Jordan

Table of Contents



- 01** Introduction: The Jordanian Digital Landscape
- 02** The Problem: The “Highlight Reel” vs. The “Behind-the-Scenes”
- 03** The Impact: The Hidden Psychological Toll
- 04** Digital Storytelling as a Solution
- 05** Case Study: The “Quick Success” Narrative in Online Trading
- 06** Conclusion

Introduction

Jordan has experienced rapid digital transformation over the past decade. Internet access has become widely available, and social media platforms have become an integral part of everyday life, particularly among young people.

According to recent reports from DataReportal (2024), Jordan has a very high level of social media penetration. More than 7 million people in Jordan actively use social media, representing a significant portion of the population. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube dominate youth digital culture

For many young people, social media is no longer simply a communication tool; it has evolved into a parallel social environment where identities are shaped, success is defined, and social status is displayed.

However, this digital environment often functions as a "Digital Mirage." While it appears attractive and inspiring, it frequently presents unrealistic representations of life. Carefully edited photos, staged lifestyles, and filtered narratives can distort perceptions of reality.

As a result, many Jordanian youth experience increasing pressure to match the success and lifestyles they see online.



The Problem: The “Highlight Reel” vs. The “Behind-the-Scenes”



One of the most significant challenges created by social media is what psychologists describe as “toxic comparison.”

On platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, influencers often present highly curated lifestyles. These posts are carefully planned, edited, and staged to highlight only positive aspects of life. The Curated Life Influencers frequently portray an image of constant success, luxury, beauty, and happiness.

Expensive cars, luxury travel, and glamorous lifestyles dominate digital feeds. However, these images

represent only a highlight reel rather than the full reality of life.

The Comparison Trap

Young people in Jordan often compare their everyday lives—including academic struggles, financial limitations, and family responsibilities—with the carefully edited content they see online.

|

This comparison creates feelings of inadequacy and frustration, especially in a country where youth unemployment and economic challenges remain significant issues.

The Illusion of Instant Success

Another problematic narrative promoted online is the idea of instant success. Many influencers promote the belief that financial wealth, fame, or entrepreneurship can be achieved quickly with minimal effort.

This narrative is particularly visible in fields such as:

- Cryptocurrency trading
- Online entrepreneurship
- Influencer marketing
- Digital investments

The message often suggests that success can happen overnight, creating unrealistic expectations for young audiences.

The Impact: The Hidden Psychological Toll



The continuous exposure to curated online lifestyles has significant psychological effects on youth.

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

One of the most common outcomes is FOMO, or the fear of missing out. This psychological phenomenon occurs when individuals feel anxious that others are experiencing more exciting or fulfilling lives.

For Jordanian youth, constant exposure to travel photos, luxury lifestyles, and influencer success stories can create feelings of social exclusion.

Distortion of Reality

Social media often becomes the standard by which reality is measured. When digital lifestyles appear more glamorous than everyday life, young people may begin to view their real environments as insufficient or disappointing.

This distortion can weaken appreciation for local culture, community relationships, and authentic experiences.

Identity Crisis

Another consequence is the development of identity confusion. Young people may start shaping their personalities to match popular trends rather than exploring their authentic interests and values.

Instead of asking "Who am I?", many young users ask "What will get more likes?"

This shift can affect confidence, creativity, and long-term personal development.

Digital Storytelling as a Solution



Digital storytelling is a powerful tool that helps young people see beyond the curated reality of social media. By learning to separate the influencer's online persona from their real life, youth can reduce harmful comparisons. Through storytelling projects that document real journeyssuch as learning experiences, challenges, and gradual successyoung people can share authentic narratives from their communities. These activities also promote digital literacy, helping youth recognize marketing tactics, question unrealistic success stories, and develop healthier relationships with social media.

Case Study: The “Quick Success” Narrative in Online Trading

One of the most common examples of misleading digital narratives in the region involves financial trading. On social media, many influencers promote the idea that wealth can be achieved quickly through online trading or cryptocurrency investments. They often post images with luxury cars such as Porsche or Lamborghini, combined with motivational slogans that suggest financial success can come easily through simple trading strategies. However, the hidden reality is very different. The real journey of successful traders usually involves years of learning, significant financial losses, emotional stress, and long hours analyzing market data—experiences that are rarely shown online. When young audiences see only the final result, such as a luxury lifestyle, they may feel that they are failing if they do not achieve similar success quickly. In reality, they are simply going through the normal early stages of learning and growth. Digital storytelling can play an important role in exposing these hidden realities and presenting more honest and balanced narratives.



Conclusion

Social media is a powerful force shaping the perceptions, ambitions, and identities of young people, especially in Jordan, where youth are highly active online. Although these platforms can encourage creativity, self-expression, and connection, they also often promote curated lifestyles that create unrealistic expectations and unhealthy comparison. In this context, digital storytelling offers an effective way to challenge these harmful effects by encouraging authenticity, critical thinking, and more meaningful narratives. By helping Jordanian youth share honest stories about their struggles, growth, and real-life journeys instead of only presenting polished outcomes, digital storytelling can support healthier mindsets, build self-awareness, and strengthen community connection. Ultimately, the most impactful stories are not those that sell an illusion of luxury and perfection, but those that reveal the real effort, setbacks, and resilience behind success.

