The Practice of Digital Citizenship in Algerian Society through Facebook Pages: An Analytical Study of Comments on the Facebook page of the Municipality of Biskra

ممارسة المواطنة الرقمية في المجتمع الجزائري عبر صفحات الفيسبوك: دراسة تحليلية للتعليقات عبر صفحة بلدية بسكرة على الفيسبوك

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Abstract:

this study aims to identify the methods and aspects of digital citizenship on the Facebook platform. For the purpose of the study, the researcher employed the descriptive method to analyze and interpret the data obtained through the content analysis tool applied on a sample of study consisting of comments included in posts of the active municipality page of Biskra on Facebook. The study revealed the rapid spread of negative practice of digital citizenship among Facebook users, where it has become a means for Algerian citizens to express their citizenship in a negative and harmful way.

Keywords: citizenship; digital citizenship; Facebook.

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على أساليب ومظاهر المواطنة الرقمية عبر منصة الفيسبوك. لغرض إجراء الدراسة وظفت الباحثة المنهج الوصفي من أجل تحليل وتفسير البيانات المتحصل عليها من خلال تطبيق أداة تحليل المضمون على عينة الدراسة المتمثلة في التعليقات المضمنة في منشورات صفحة بلدية بسكرة الناشطة عبر موقع الفيسبوك. توصلت الدراسة للكشف عن الانتشار السريع للممارسة السلبية للمواطنة الرقمية بين مستخدمي منصة الفيسبوك وأنه أصبح وسيلة المواطن الجزائري للتعبير عن مواطنته ولكن بطريقة سلبية ومضرة.

كلمات مفتاحية: المواطنة؛ المواطنة الرقمية؛ الفيسبوك.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The access to the digital world, and the impact it has on individuals, has become a prominent characteristic of life. This is facilitated by the rapid progress in communication means, which has generated many new concepts, including the concept of digital citizenship. In the era of the digital world, the concept of citizenship has undergone profound transformations, in terms of quantity and quality. The concept of digital citizenship has become popular, and is beginning to take shape in the electronic space. The introduction of the technological variable into political life and citizenship issues constitutes a qualitative leap and is an important subject for study, especially with the increasing use of communication technologies and social media sites, which have begun to play an important role in shaping political life and promoting patriotism.

Social media platforms come under the concept of digital citizenship, serving as hubs for deepening their added value in promoting the nation's progress, achieving its goals, developing its resources, directing them towards achieving their benefits, promoting the achievements of officials, and elevating their practices in the context of the individual user feeling that they carry the message of good citizenship through which the citizen plays his/her national role, committed to the rules, foundations, and noble ethics, and keen on the honesty of speech and accuracy of information, aware of his/her responsibilities, rights, and the appropriate method of conveying them to decision-makers and officials. Therefore, his/her expressions, perspectives, comments via Facebook and other social media platforms should stem from a deep understanding of his/her national responsibilities, thereby enhancing his/her position against those who try to reduce the significance of developmental projects and achievements in the country.

However, the use of Facebook, which has been chosen for our current study, and the resulting electronic interactions may have negative and harmful aspects due to the negative use of digital technologies. Thus, practicing digital citizenship may become a negative behavior manifested in actions with serious dimensions, such as spreading false and embarrassing information or showing hostility towards another person, often a local

official. This can lead to social decay, violent or rebellious ideas, and the spread of negativity, frustration, and disappointment among Facebook users.

Due to the increasing engagement of citizens in the digital world and their desire to develop social relationships outside of their real world and interact with virtual issues through various social media such as Facebook. However, this virtual interaction with national issues can be unhealthy because digital citizenship does not mean exceeding bounds and causing harm to others under the guise of the right to exercise citizenship with complete freedom. Digital citizens may not be aware of the consequences of their actions online. If awareness is not present regarding the employment of social media and the internet, it may lead to many harms, including cyberbullying and harassment.

Therefore, practicing digital citizenship positively and effectively with national issues is essential, as every comment they leave on Facebook pages is considered a digital footprint that they leave behind. Therefore, citizens must be realistic and aware of the nature of the internet so that they can leave a digital footprint. Based on the above, our study raises the question: What are the methods and manifestations of digital citizenship practice by Algerian citizens on Facebook?

2. The importance and objectives of studying:

- The significance of this study stems from the importance of the topic being researched. Digital citizenship is of immense importance in various political, economic, social, and security fields. In particular, it sheds light on one of the negative mechanisms of digital citizenship practice in Algerian society, especially against state institutions and projects carried out by authorities. This is in light of the continuous increase in the number of users of various social media platforms and their effective role in exchanging and disseminating information on a wide scale, which can have either a negative or positive impact on national security and citizens.

- The importance of digital culture and the use of social media platforms, specifically Facebook, as a necessary activity in the daily life of Algerian citizens, is of great impact in terms of acquiring knowledge, cultures, nationalism, and responsibility.

The main aim of the study is to:

- Identify how Algerian citizens practice digital citizenship through Facebook pages.

- Determine the factors that influence Algerian citizens' practice of digital citizenship. - Contribute to the dissemination of various concepts related to digital citizenship in Algerian society. - Monitor the main recommendations and proposals for enhancing and developing digital citizenship among Algerian citizens through social media to practice it in a more positive and effective manner.

3. Defining the Study Concepts:

3.1. Citizenship:

Citizenship and citizen are derived from the Arabic word "وطن" which means the homeland, the place of residence, and the human habitat. Watan is where someone resides and is their home. It is a place that someone dwells in (Taha and Abdelhakim, 2013). In the dictionary of sociology, citizenship is defined as the status or social relationship between a natural person and a political community (state). The first party demonstrates loyalty, and the second party undertakes protection, and this relationship is determined by the law (Al Saadi and Al Dahwi, page 20).

The concept of citizenship, as a term, refers to an individual's relationship with the state in which they reside, and the practical and emotional allegiance they hold towards it, in exchange for the state's obligation to safeguard their human dignity and protect their fundamental rights. These rights include, but are not limited to, the right to work based on the principle of equal opportunities for all citizens, the right to intellectual belief, including religious and political affiliations, and the right to participate in political decisions through free elections and political candidacy. (Al-Kut, p.68)

Digital citizenship is a form of social identity shared by individuals regardless of gender, culture, or religion, and includes a set of rights and responsibilities. It encompasses a set of rules, values, ideas, and principles

that guide the optimal use of technology (Abu Al-Rub, 2019, p.8). These rules, standards, customs, ideas, and principles are necessary for individuals, both young and old, to contribute to the nation's progress by using technology in a responsible and ethical manner (Al-Kut, p.68). The individual's interaction with others using digital tools and resources such as computers and networks as a means of communication with others using various methods or programs such as email, blogs, and various social networking sites (Sharaf and Al-Damerdash, p.131). Therefore, if citizenship is a system of principles, values, rights, and responsibilities that individuals have towards their country, digital citizenship is one way of expressing citizenship, but in a virtual way on various websites and social media platforms

3.2. Facebook:

Mark Zuckerberg founded the Facebook website as a means of communication between Harvard University students when he was still a student. Later, its use spread among students at other universities in America, Britain, and Canada. It evolved from just a place or personal blog to display personal photos and communicate with friends and family to a channel for electronic communities and a platform for sharing ideas (Sadawi and Attia, 2020, p. 732). Facebook is one of the most popular and widespread websites worldwide. It allows for the sharing of photos, videos, sending messages, leaving comments, and making friend requests from anywhere. Facebook is free, easy to use, and available at all times, in addition to offering numerous other privileges, such as games and advertisements.

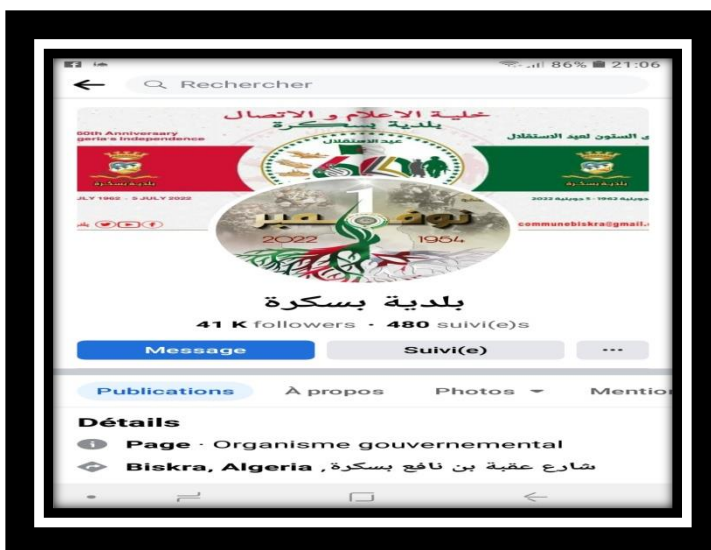## 4. The manifestations of digital citizenship:

Digital citizenship as a concept is linked to the practice of virtual relationships, which is a new pattern of relationships that finds its foundations in the virtual world or the electronic space, which is a product of the tremendous and terrifying transformations that have taken place in the field of media and communication. Therefore, digital citizenship is essentially based on harnessing information and communication technology to establish new "citizenship" relationships in a virtual world that allows individuals wider opportunities to participate and express their identity and ideas without limits or restrictions and to form intellectual relationships

within virtual groups that can transcend the boundaries of time and place or what some have called the end of geography and the end of the traditional state, and the emergence of the virtual state that Richard Rosekrantz called the expression of the virtual state, in other words, that the "citizenship of the virtual world" is no longer concerned with traditional geographic borders and that embody the sovereignty of states but goes beyond that and cannot be controlled. The manifestations and manifestations of digital citizenship can be found in the modern electronic media, which are considered components of the new media such as social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and other global networks (Al-Kut p. p. 70-71)."

5. The methodological procedures of the study:

5.1. The limits of the study:

The objective limitations of this study are twofold: Firstly, this study is limited to investigating the methods and forms of practicing digital citizenship through comments on the official Facebook page of the municipality of Biskra only. Secondly, this study is geographically delimited to include only comments that express meanings related to the practice of digital citizenship through the Facebook page of the municipality of Biskra. It should be noted that the Facebook page of the municipality of Biskra refers to the official page of the municipality of Biskra on Facebook, as depicted in the image below.

Based on the account's profile picture, it appears that the responsible party for the page is the Media and Communications Department of the municipality. The page's description includes the municipality's address, phone number, email, and website link. The page was created on January 13th, 2015, and has 41 thousand followers. The publishing style on the page varies between text, images, and video content. The language used for publishing on the page is Arabic. The topics of the posts include news, announcements, awareness campaigns, condolences, and congratulations, all related to the city of Biskra.

This page has been selected because it is an official page and every comment published on its posts is considered a practice of digital citizenship by Algerian citizens, whether the comment is addressed directly to officials or concerns the developmental projects published on the page. All of these practices indicate the relationship between Algerian citizens and local officials at the municipal level in Biskra. In addition, Facebook is the most used social media site in Algeria, according to a global report on social media users, which revealed that 97.9% of internet users resort to Facebook through various mobile phones and digital tablets. According to the report, the number of Facebook subscribers in Algeria, as of January 2021, exceeded 23 million users, representing 71.8% of the population over 13 years old. Additionally, the same report indicated that 62% of network subscribers are men and 38% are women. (El Chourouk, 2021)

The Timeframe: Comments on the posts were selected from the period between 01-09-2022 to 03-11-2022.

5. 2. The study methodology:

relied on the descriptive approach which is based on studying the problem as it exists in reality and contributes to describing it accurately and expressing it qualitatively with compression (Al-Jurrah, 2008, p. 75).

5. 3. Search tools:

Note that we relied on the observation tool in our study, which is one of the most important data collection tools and can be considered as a stand-alone methodology. No scientific research is devoid of its use. We used observation in monitoring the posts of the municipality of Biskra page on Facebook, and identifying those related to the practice of digital citizenship by the Algerian citizen (Biskri), from which a sample of comments will be taken. Content analysis: When the data collected is limited to documentary evidence, the researcher resorts to the content analysis tool (Hassouna, page 10).

5. 4. Sample population:

In this study, the study population refers to the entire set of comments on the Facebook page of the municipality of Biskra that contain content related to citizenship practices by page subscribers. Due to time constraints for presenting the intervention and the large size of the study population, we opted to choose a sample that represents a miniature of the original population. A purposive sample was used which is where the researcher selects terms on purpose if they have prior understanding of the study population and familiarity with its vocabulary, and if they believe that it will serve their study, with the number of terms being determined by the researcher. The intentional or purposive sample is one in which terms are intentionally selected by the researcher based on the availability of certain

characteristics in those terms rather than others, as those characteristics are crucial to the study. Thus, 203 comments out of 2221 comments on the page's posts within the study's time limit were studied, representing approximately 9% of comments on the municipality of Biskra's Facebook page that contain phrases indicating citizenship practices, comments directed to officials or those directed to development projects presented on the municipality of Biskra's Facebook page.

6. Results:
6. 1. The results of the study in terms of form:

Table (01): illustrates the distribution of sample participants according to gender**.**

The distribution of sample vocabulary according to gender	Repetition	the percentage
male	161	%80
Female	36	%17.1
Unknown	06	%2.9
The total	**203**	**% 100**

The above table shows that 80.4% of the comments were made by males, with a much lower percentage of 16.5% of comments coming from females, while 3.1% of comments were made by unidentified Facebook accounts, whose gender we could not determine. These results suggest that men are more actively engaged in developmental projects in the city, having a better grasp of local affairs. Additionally, the instances of cyberbullying were directed towards male officials. Furthermore, it is notable that there is a lack of female representation in the posts related to urban development in the city.

Table (02): illustrates the nature of comments on the posts of the municipality of Biskra page.

Commenting Style on Posts of the Municipality of Biskra Page	Repetition	the percentage
text	183	%97.4
Emojis	04	%2.1
GIF	01	%0.5
picture	00	%00
video	00	%00
The total	**188**	**% 100**

The table illustrates the nature of comments on the Facebook page of the municipality of Biskra. It shows that the most commonly used form of comment is text, accounting for 97.4% of all comments. The use of emoticons is significantly lower at 2.1%, while comments made using animated images are even less frequent at 0.5%. Video or image-based comments were not present among the sample. This can be explained by the fact that the page does not allow image or video comments, and that followers prefer text comments as they are the best way to express their thoughts and are suitable for finding bullying expressions.

Table (03) : illustrates the language used in commenting on posts of the municipality of Biskra's page.

The language used to comment on the posts of the municipality of Biskra page	Repetition	the percentage
The classical Arabic language	35	%18.6
Foreign language	02	%1
The colloquial language	151	%80.4
The total	**188**	**% 100**

The table above reveals that 80.4% of the comments were written in colloquial Arabic, which is the highest percentage. This was followed by the use of Modern Standard Arabic, with a percentage of 18.6%. Finally, foreign languages had the lowest percentage, estimated at 1%. This can be explained by the fact that citizens find it more comfortable to express themselves in colloquial Arabic, as it is easier to use derogatory language such as insult and profanity. Additionally, this indicates a weakness in the level of expression in Modern Standard Arabic and foreign languages. Furthermore, due to the

diverse nature of the followers of this page, including both educated and illiterate people, teenagers and adults, there is a lack of homogeneity in the language used.

6. 2. The study results in terms of content:

Table (04) : illustrates the distribution of sample vocabulary according to the aspect of bullying involved

Distributing the sample vocabulary according to the party involved in bullying	The repetition	the percentage
The person responsible for the project	120	%63.8
The project	14	%7.5
Administrator and projects	54	%28.7
The total	**188**	**% 100**

The above table shows that 63.8% of the content of the comments is directed towards bullying development project officials, while 28.7% of it is directed towards bullying both the official and the development project together. Bullying towards the project alone was at a percentage of 4.5%. This can be interpreted as the primary objective of following the page being the bullying of officials, reaching the point of bullying them as citizens rather than as responsible for these projects. This behavior is evident in all Facebook posts that are published about new development projects in the country, where a large attack from Facebook users on officials and decision-makers is observed. Meanwhile, constructive criticism of the projects themselves is weak, and expressions of appreciation for the efforts and initiatives of the state in promoting development and change are almost completely absent.

Table (05): presents the methods and manifestations of cyberbullying on urban development projects

Cyberbullying methods and manifestations on urban development projects	The repetition	the percentage
Offensive statements	06	%9
Mockery expressions	29	%44
Reducing the project's value	32	%47
The total	68	% 100

The above table indicates that 53% of the comments content is directed personally towards local officials, through insults, curses, and mocking, either due to dressing or speaking manners. To a lesser extent, 36% of the comments are directed toward mocking development projects. Meanwhile, the comments that commend these projects and appreciate the officials' efforts were the least common among the citizens' digital citizenship practices through commenting on the municipality's Facebook page, estimated at 11%. The results suggest that the citizens of Biskra believe that digital citizenship should involve deliberate and intended insults towards local officials, either due to personal vendettas or emotional reactions. Furthermore, the Biskra citizens' digital citizenship practices mostly involve mocking and belittling urban development projects within the city.

7. Results of the study:

1- The majority of the sample population appears to be male, which can be attributed to males being more involved in developmental projects in the city and having more knowledge of local affairs.

2- There is a near absence of women in the group of officials in the municipality of Biskra, as no woman was featured in any of the page's posts during the study period. This explains why the majority of comments were made by male participants and directed towards male officials. This raises questions about the role of women as responsible members of developmental projects in Biskra and their near absence in digital citizenship practices.

3- The nature of comments on the Facebook page varied between emojis and animated images, although the majority of comments were in written text form as it is the best way to express the commenter's thoughts.

4- It appears that Facebook users prefer to comment in colloquial language to make it easier for them to find words that they believe express their digital citizenship practices. From another perspective, this indicates the weakness of the level of expression in standard Arabic and foreign languages among the residents of Biskra who use Facebook. It also reflects the heterogeneous composition of followers of this page.

5- The primary goal of following the page is to comment on the official who reaches the point of bullying as a citizen, not as a responsible person for these projects, where we find a major attack by Facebook users on officials and decision-makers.

6- Biskra citizens in particular believe that practicing digital citizenship is through intentional and purposeful insults towards local officials, either due to emotional reasons or personal accounts between the commenter and the official. Additionally, citizens engage in derision and belittlement of urban development projects in Biskra as part of their digital citizenship practices. They thought this was the optimal approach to exercising their right to digital citizenship, while we observe a weakness in constructive criticism of development projects and nearly complete absence of expressions of appreciation for the efforts and endeavors of the state in bringing about development and change.

8. Recommendations:

- Keep evidence of the person who is being offensive if they continue to do so and file a complaint with the Cybercrime Department to easily arrest them.

- Unfollow any citizen who practices their citizenship by making negative comments on page posts to avoid bothering other followers and spreading negativity among them.

- Religious institutions should also play their role in raising awareness about this issue and clarifying that such behavior is not acceptable in the eyes of God, and must not be taken lightly.

- Media, in all its forms, can contribute to combating the misuse of digital citizenship through educational and advisory programs and reducing content that includes and encourages violence.

- Educational institutions such as universities and secondary schools should raise awareness among community members, especially young people, about the risks of misusing digital citizenship and the penalties associated with it.

- More studies related to the phenomenon of digital citizenship should be conducted to comprehend its strategies.

-    Civil society organizations such as associations and neighborhood committees should organize seminars and dialogues to introduce the importance of digital citizenship in promoting urban development projects and emphasize the danger of misusing digital citizenship and its impact on the deterioration of the city's developmental status.

9. Conclusion

In this intervention, we attempted to study the issue of digital citizenship and how it is practiced by Algerian citizens, without seeking to go further than that with the aim of focusing on understanding the aspects and methods of digital citizenship that are no less important than other types of citizenship. As this study concluded, the practice of digital citizenship by Algerian citizens is a negative practice, which can cause many psychological problems for the officials responsible for urban development projects such as low self-confidence, depression, and anxiety. These psychological problems that arise in officials will undoubtedly have an impact on the completion of urban development projects in the city of Biskra, leading to continuous deterioration in its developmental situation. This official will develop a kind of fear of proposing new projects while old projects have not been welcomed by citizens and were expressed about their citizenship in a violent and unhealthy way. This unhealthy and unsound way of practicing citizenship is a major problem because it not only harms officials, but it also hinders the

development process in the city by spreading chaos and weakening the sense of community and promoting individualism.

It appears that Facebook's platform has become dominated by superficial matters and improper practices of digital citizenship, demonstrated in various forms on individuals, projects, and others. We no longer see a culture of productive and constructive dialogue and critique, as hostile behavior has become prevalent under the guise of freedom of expression and digital citizenship as a legitimate right. Finally, it is important to emphasize that social media platforms are means of promoting citizenship and not the other way around. Algerian social media users must work towards practicing digital citizenship with the aim of contributing to the development of the country, its resources, directing them towards achieving urban development in cities, promoting completed projects, and encouraging officials to accomplish more. Users must maintain their practices and adhere to rules, principles, and morals of good digital citizenship, with a sense of responsibility promoting peace, harmony, mutual recognition and dialogue, practicing their national role in accordance with commitment to code and good ethics.

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11. Appendices

Some comments from the sample vocabulary

صابر
منيش عارف علاش تفكرت البومباردي وجماعتو....
ويبقى الامل

7 sem   J'aime   Répondre

Anou
الأغلبية شايع شخشوخة ...إلا من رحم ربى

7 sem   J'aime   Répondre

Mouhame
مجلس فاشل

7 sem   J'aime   Répondre

7 sem   J'aime   Répondre

كرنفال في دشرة

RAK KBIR

Tenor

Bader
عبيط و أهبل و زمباوي

7 sem   J'aime   Répondre

Hicham
مجلس فاشل لا يختلف عن من سبقوه لم يتغير شى
بسكرة مازالت مجرد دوار كبير

7 sem   J'aime   Répondre

كاش خدمة ولا غير تشرك في قمك على الناس

7 sem   J'aime   Répondre

Lolo
رئيس بلدية فاشل

7 sem   J'aime   Répondre

متير
راح نديروهالكم جنة.. بوسيو الحية برك

7 sem   J'aime   Répondre   1

Bouda████ شبعنونا مقروخل يا منافقين

7 sem   J'aime   Répondre

Rid افتتاح على المقاس

7 sem   J'aime   Répondre

Votre commentaire...

يروح فاسد و يجي فاسد و لي كرمو فيه فسدين ما درتو حتى حجا لبسكرة ربي وكيلكم

8 sem   J'aime   Répondre

Athmane بسكرة اصبحت اصطبل لي الحمير

8 sem   J'aime   Répondre

Abdellatif من سوء الى اسوء من كرسي الى كرسي وبنهم اعيان بلفلط رعيان 🤣🤣🤣🤣

8 sem   J'aime   Répondre

Oussama بلاد درابكية والقوادة لعنة الله عليكم

8 sem   J'aime   Répondre

Votre commentaire...