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The Effectiveness of Communication Strategies of Egyptian Ministries through Social Media in Enhancing Public's Digital Engagement in Public Affairs

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Abstract

Social media platforms can be considered as channels means for communication between governments and citizens, where governments use social media as a source of information to communicate their achievements, disseminate and promote their policies, inform the public, engage discussions with citizens, and foster their interaction.

Citizen engagement in the public affairs of society is one of the important advantages provided by social media to support the transparency of the political system, where engagement is known as a process of involving the public in the activities of an organization. It is the opportunity for the public to have a voice.

This study aimed to exam how the Egyptian ministries use Facebook as a social media platform to establish a dialogic relationship and supporting digital engagement with their publics, also the study aimed to develop a theoretical framework, grounded in organizational theories of dialogue, through which governmental organizations can take decisions in relation to the most appropriate strategies to contact with stakeholders via social media.

To achieve the objectives of the study a content analysis was performed of the Facebook pages of three Egyptian ministries that are Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities & Ministry of Youth and Sports for six weeks. The study analyzed 638 posts and 13815 comments to investigate the effect of communication and dialogue strategies on digital engagement of publics.

The results showed that:

- The three pages used online media more for information dissemination than user engagement and more for one-way than two-way communication.

- The study has supported the positive effect of media richness on citizen engagement via social media under normal situations

- The three pages of the Egyptian ministries on Facebook depend on strategies that support one way communication as Information dissemination strategy and Framing dialogue strategy more than interactive communication strategies like dialogue strategy, consensus building strategy and initiative participatory message strategy.

- The results supported the proposed hypotheses where the finding indicate that the type of communication and dialogue strategies used affect directly on citizens engagement via social media.
- The study presented a proposed trajectory to support the digital engagement of citizens to government organizations via social media.

Keywords: Social Media - Governmental Communication- Media Richness – Dialogic Communication- Digital Engagement- E-Participation- Dialogue Strategies- Communication Strategies.