Chapter 20
Digital Citizenship and Its Dimensions:
Analysing the Journalism Students' Ideas

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ABSTRACT

Digital citizenship is a concept that has gained importance, especially after the 2000s, with the increasing prevalence of digitalization. This study aimed to examine the thoughts of the students who took the Digital Citizenship and Society course at Gaziantep University, Faculty of Communication, Department of Journalism in the 2020-2021 academic year. The statements taken from the students reveal what the digital citizenship sub-dimensions mean in students' lives, which sub-dimension is more important to them, how they perceive the problems they encounter most in digital life, and the relationship between digitalization and participatory democracy. According to the results of the research, students have a positive attitude towards the concept of a digital citizen. Digital commerce and digital communication are the dimensions they are most associated with in their daily life. The most problematic dimensions are digital security, digital ethics, digital commerce, and digital law. Increasing digital citizenship qualities will facilitate participatory democracy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of digital citizenship has gained more importance with the spread of new communication technologies. Problems encountered in digital environments are mentioned under subheadings like a violation of privacy, technology addiction, cyberbullying, and increased non-communication. A digital citizen is a conscious citizen who can critically examine, question, and encounter digital life. Digital

citizenship can interfere with democracy in digital environments. According to Ribble et al (2004), the concept of digital citizenship has nine sub-dimensions. These are digital access, digital communication, digital law, digital rights and responsibilities, digital ethics, digital health, digital security, digital commerce, and digital literacy.

The dangers are foreseen by digitalization and the desire to benefit from it more effectively brought the demand for the digital citizenship course to be taught. Digital citizenship and society courses have started to be opened in many countries, especially in the United States. In the Faculty of Communication of Gaziantep University, undergraduate courses on digital citizenship have started in the 2020-2021 academic year.

This study aimed to examine how the concept of digital citizenship is perceived by students and the main problems pointed out with examples from their daily life. Thus, it was tried to understand how this relatively new concept was experienced from the students' side. The subject has been evaluated together with the concept of participatory democracy and thus it has become possible to make inferences about the digital world democracy relationship.

In the first stage of the study, a theoretical framework was drawn and both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the answers received from the students were made. The findings are essential for revealing the positive or negative effects of digitalization in today's world.

2. THE CONCEPTS OF DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP CONCEPT AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS

Under this heading, the concept of digital citizenship and its dimensions of digital citizenship are explained. Then, the researchers examined the relationship between digital citizenship and participatory democracy.

2.1. The Concept of Digital Citizenship

The concept of citizenship, the first example of which emerged in Ancient Greece, has lived through various transformations in the historical process thanks to its evolutionist structure. In this context, there are different opinions about the historical periods of the concept of citizenship. Heater divides the stages of citizenship into five periods. He argues that citizenship first appeared in Ancient Greece. However, he says that the Roman Republic and Empire, Medieval and Renaissance Cities, the Nation-state, and the Cosmopolis Idea constitute other citizenship periods (Heater, 2007 as cited in Temelat, 2011, p. 2-3).

Etymologically, citizenship comes from the word "cite", in Ancient Greece. It means the unity of people residing in the same city, and the concept is still used as "citizen" today. (Heater, 2007, p. 17) However, the philosopher Aristotle first used the concept of citizenship in a systematic framework. Aristotle, defines a "citizen" as a wealthy person who makes sacrifices for the place where he/she lives within the framework of the concepts of goodness and virtue (Sari, 2019, p. 16).

As a result of the developments in the historical process, the concepts existing in the societies are also affected by these developments. In this context, developments in digital technologies greatly affect the concept of citizenship and lead to the emergence of new concepts. According to Görmez (2016, p. 130), developments in digital technologies; led to the emergence of the concept of digital citizenship. However, developments in internet technologies; individuals who closely follow and effectively use these technologies, and who have all the qualifications required by a qualified citizen are aware of what they

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