

# A Proposal Based on Social Media Networks for the Development of Active Citizenship Competencies among Middle and High School Students

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## ABSTRACT

The current study aims to design a proposal based on social networks to develop the competencies of active citizenship among middle and high school students. The descriptive and analytical method as well as a questionnaire utilized to achieve the study objectives. The sample consisted of (207) middle and high school students from Schools of Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University for Educational Development. The results showed that the extent of using social media networks among the participants was medium, and the most common social media used by middle students were YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat, respectively. There were no statistically significant differences between middle and high school students for the extent of their use of social media networks. A list of required active citizenship competencies (cognitive, skill, and emotional) made and a proposal for their development designed. It consists of "objectives, general principles for the proposal, content, and team work, and the adopted educational activities and techniques. The study recommends paying more attention to the social media networks favorite by students, and benefiting from them when planning for educational programs and enrichment activities, and the need to launch young-leadership-based community initiatives to promote the concept of citizenship among young people.

**Keywords:** social media networks, active citizenship competencies, middle and high school students

## INTRODUCTION

Recently, new and unprecedented types of citizenship and community contributions emerged that replaced the traditional ones that began to gradually vanish after their massive popularity (e.g. elections' voting, attending meetings and public discussions, voluntary activities and membership of groups and teams of civil society) due to the emergence and development of Web 2.0 applications, especially media, social networks, contribution and interaction and using social media networks in developing the competencies of active citizenship. Undoubtedly, such new horizons of citizenship and community contribution offer great opportunities to educators to benefit from adopting many new and creative teaching approaches, learning concepts and the values of citizenship in the digital age that largely depends on using developed media and techniques (Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2013).

Literature frequently affirms the bad need of developing active citizenship competencies and contribution among all students, adolescents and youth based on the affirmation of National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) that preparing students to become active citizens and contributors is- undoubtedly- a key aim of digital age education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Taylor & Marri, 2012).

Social media networks play a great role in promoting the level of citizenship and community contribution in the digital age of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Over the last decade, educational authors frequently express their frustration of the vanish and decay of the traditional indicators that were adopted in the past in defining the levels of citizenship

#### **Contribution of this paper to the literature**

- Studies that tackled citizenship are rare. It is, to the author's knowledge, the first study in the field.
- Its results could be used in planning and implementing the educational programs that develop citizenship among students.
- It enhances officials' awareness of forming youth awareness of the importance of paying special attention to the concept of citizenship by using modern techniques.

contribution of the digital age citizens (e.g. attending meetings and public discussions, local elections' voting, voluntary activities and membership of groups and teams of civil society), such as (Gordon, 2013; Putnam, 2000; Wattenberg, 2007). Despite the continuity of educators' interest in the aforementioned indicators as key components of citizenship, they increasingly become far from the present situation of citizenship contribution activities in our world of the wide spread of using social media networks in bridging communication, interaction and contribution among the different communities (Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2013).

Social media networks are means of discussing the various perspectives and making hear the different sounds. They facilitate discussing immediate issues. Many pieces of the literature review confirm the importance of the contribution of education- especially teachers- and community effectively and positively affect efforts made to prepare students and give them knowledge, values and practices of citizenship in our multi-cultural age of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to equip them with the required competencies (Maguth, 2012).

However, it is noticed that Arab studies are only focusing on the intellectual frame and concepts and that foreign ones focus on real and effective mechanisms to be published and developed in the culture of citizenship and increasing focus on their conditions, duties and rights that should be defined by law and the role of education in consolidation via scientific programs. Hence, the current study aims to design a proposal based on social media networks for the education of students on citizenship.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problem of the current study is defined in the need to a proposal based on social media networks for the development of active citizenship competencies among middle and high school students. It can be formed in asking the following major question:

What is the proposal based on social media networks for the development of active citizenship competencies among middle and high school students?

It is, further, divided into the following minor questions:

- To what extent do middle and high school students use social media networks?
- What social medium is used most by middle school students?
- What social medium is used most by high school students?
- Do middle and high school students differ in using social media networks?
- What are the competencies of active citizenship of middle and high school students?
- What is the proposal based on social media networks for the development of active citizenship competencies among middle and high school students?

### **OBJECTIVES**

The current study aims at:

- Shedding light on the importance of students' education of citizenship and identifying current attitudes in citizenship education.
- The importance of using social media networks for the development of active citizenship competencies among students.
- Defining the key competencies of active citizenship.
- Making a proposal for the development of active citizenship values among middle and high school students.
- Trying to fit up with rapid and consecutive changes in the current trends of citizenship education.

## SIGNIFICANCE

It is significant because:

- 1- Citizenship education is a positive contribution in the field of education, culture and science.
- 2- Studying the factors that affect citizenship issues makes us aware of the past, corrects the present and predicts the future.
- 3- Interest in citizenship and its education enhances the progress of the community, in general, and that of citizenship, in particular.
- 4- Studies that tackled citizenship are rare. It is, to the author's knowledge, the first study in the field.
- 5- Its results could be used in planning and implementing the educational programs that develop citizenship among students.
- 6- It enhances officials' awareness of forming youth awareness of the importance of paying special attention to the concept of citizenship by using modern techniques.

## LIMITATIONS

The present study was conducted in 2016; it is limited to the Schools of Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University for Educational Development. It dealt with citizenship.

## STUDY TERMS

### Citizenship

Linguistically, citizenship, according to (Ibn Manzour, 1994), is attributed to nation where a person lives, its plural is nations.

### Active Citizenship

Bobek, Zaff, Li, and Lerner (2009) defined active citizenship as, primarily, referring to a certain group of individuals who have a shared commitment to actively contribute to all community activities and events to make them stronger, more effective and safer than the past".

Zaff, Boyd, Li, Lerner, and Lerner (2010) defined active citizens and contributors as a group of people with a strong sense of assuming performing their assigned national duties. They are overwhelmed with the feelings of social connection and integration and trust in their abilities to make the aspired change". The authors procedurally adopted the definition of Zaff et al. (2010).

### Active Citizenship Competencies

They are procedurally defined as "the set of acquired behaviors of knowledge, skills and attitudes that should be developed to be an active citizen".

### Social Media Networks

They refer to a group of developed Internet-based applications that depend on technological bases of Web 2.0 tools. They provide users with different and unprecedented opportunities to design, produce and contribute to the dissemination and using the content and applications of the web in a way that allows preparing and exchanging the designed content of the web by the user (Vanwynsberghe, Boudry, & Verdegem, 2011).

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to Rubin (2007), active citizenship is the active and effective contribution of citizens in a group of formal civil activities (e.g. activities of electoral campaigns) and other informal ones (e.g. discussing current events and political issues with friends and family members and contribution to voluntary activities in the local community).

Bogard and Sherrod, (2008) reports that the active citizen is that person who understands duties and obligations, assumes responsibilities to improve and develop life situations and tries to build more effective communities besides successfully facing different community problems. In addition, s/he has accurate understanding and an urgent need to use the opinions, perspectives and contributions of all members. Rubin (2011) illustrates that

educational authors should focus on shedding more light on the motives of students, adolescents, and youth of active national and societal contribution by going deeper into the analysis of daily life experiences- whether inside or outside schools.

## THE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Currently, massive and large-scale spread of the developed techniques allowed the emergence of the various patterns and new forms of citizenship and its development. According to Castells (2012), there was lately a large-scale development and progress of “Networked Social Movements” that basically depend on using social means and media that are available on the Internet. This contributed to re-frame and frame our contemporary educational perspective of the national and social contribution that are not limited to revolutions and large-scale political and national uprisings only, but cover contributions and daily interactions of the current man with his different personal and social issues. It is noted that efforts made by educators to reconsider the concept of national contribution should focus on youth contribution in the different social activities to surpass the traditionally limited scale of the old concept of citizenship (Allan, 2012).

In addition, educational tools and effective teaching strategies- whether formal or informal- can help create preparing future citizens for a different life of political, social and cultural systems more collaboratively and comprehensively for all people (Bachen et al., 2008; Bennett, Wells, & Rank, 2009; Thevenin, 2012). It is affirmed that youth of our digital age currently adopt applying the patterns and forms of active citizenship by using different strategies, such as:

- Flash mobbing,
- Citizen reporter blogging,
- Online petitions,
- Online charities ... etc. (Loader, 2007, 116).

Bennett (2008) introduces a 2D categorization of the contemporary educational perspective of citizenship in the digital age. It consisted of two main types of citizens:

- 1- Actualizing citizen who often tends to follow networking thinking styles and using developed techniques in reflection on national ideas, issues and problems personally and
- 2- Dutiful citizen who sticks to adhering to the old and traditional ideas of national and social contribution.

Disagreement of the traditional and contemporary perspective of citizenship is a direct result of the significant effects of digital techniques that unprecedentedly contribute to change the paradigms, concepts and behaviors of citizenship. “This allowed us to crystallize the features of understanding the best reasons that motivate educational authors to disagree on understanding the philosophy of national and social contribution and whether to adhere to old thoughts or moving to draw an unclear image of the future” (Bennett & Wells, 2009, 7).

Gordon (2013) suggests that liberation from the traditional perspective of citizenship and shifting to achieve the greatest benefit of using the developed capabilities of social media and networks of promoting the levels of contribution, learning and social bridges with others. It is clearly noted that these suggestions on “the national web” totally focus on trying to achieve a final shared objective of building and polishing core competencies required to be available for future generations to be able to accomplish the greatest benefit of adopting the techniques and social media networks to develop citizenship.

Consequently, the features of a new perspective of active citizenship and participation should be crystallized in the digital age, rather than merely seeing users and social media networks as negative consumers of information the same as TV audience, cinema visitors, radio listeners or newspapers and journals’ readers.

The educational importance of active citizenship is based on the basis of youth active participation to promote the levels of individual development with supporting the feeling of family welfare and increasing the levels of the civil texture’s cohesion and coherence of the different communities. When young men dynamically participate in promoting the welfare of their communities and countries, this is positively reflected in consolidating their self-development and establishing the strong basis of creating the active civil society (Phelps et al., 2009). In the same context, (Lerner et al., 2005; Lerner, Phelps, Forman, & Bowers, 2009) and (Sherrod, 2007) illustrate the strong connection between mastering the competencies of active citizenship and cooperation and activating youth ability of national participation that currently represent a key principal of activating positive development of their personality and developing their ability on acquiring the required values on all levels

According to Jenkins et al. (2009, b), these interactive competencies of active citizenship and cooperation are based on developing interactive skills that “enable citizens of contribution, interaction, indexing, commenting, categorizing, publishing and discussing the content of social media and networks’ messages using new and

effective methods and styles". Putnam (2000) illustrates that these participatory competencies firmly establish social relations with others and active citizens contributing to interactive environments that enable them of discovering their abilities to build social relations and broadening their connections to cover a large group of peers concerned with interacting with them personally and socially.

As a result, they are able to benefit from adopting the developed techniques of social media and networks in expressing themselves and establishing active connections with other peers to activate their abilities on building knowledge and publishing and discussing the required information.

Those citizens are able to reflect on the content of the messages of social media and networks to individually and socially express themselves. Consequently, they can move to higher levels of participation in the larger and wider national discussions with other members of the society.

## PROCEDURES

- *Methodology of the Study*: The current study used the descriptive and analytical method that studies the phenomenon as it is by collecting, categorizing and organizing data and expressing them to get to conclusions or generalizations to develop this situation.
  - *Population*: The population of the study includes all middle and high school students in Saudi Arabia.
  - *Sampling*: Middle and high school students of Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University for Educational Development.
  - *Tool of the Study*: Because the study aimed to identify a proposal based on social media networks to consolidate citizenship among youth in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a questionnaire should be made, as follows:
    - I. Reviewing literature related to the sections and objectives of the study.
    - II. Reviewing data from the world-wide web and social media networks to identify the most significant ones used by youth or students in the middle or high school.
- In its first draft, the questionnaire consisted of (8) items.

### I. Validity: A. Validity of Internal Consistency:

Pearson Correlation Coefficients to measure the relation of items to the total mark.

**Table 1.** Items' correlation coefficients to the total mark (Pilot sample: n= 30)

No.	Correlation coefficient	No.	Correlation coefficient
1	0.6540**	5	0.7263**
2	0.3997*	6	0.5170**
3	0.4185*	7	0.5679**
4	0.3925*	8	0.8280**

\* Significant at the level of 0.05 \*\*significant at the level of 0.01

### II. Reliability:

**Table 2.** Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the tool (Pilot sample: n= 30)

Variable	No. of items:	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
all items of the tool	8	0.71

### III. Description of the Sample: Preliminary Data:

**Table 3.** Distribution of the sample per educational stage

Stage	Number	Percentage
Middle	137	66.2
High	70	33.8
Total	207	100.0

**Table 4.** Distribution of the sample per level

Level	Number	Percentage
First	93	44.9
Second	66	31.9
Third	48	23.2
Total	207	100.0

To facilitate results interpretation, the author uses the following style to define the level of answering the items as follows: (Strongly agree= 3, Moderately agree= 2, disagree= 1). Then, they were categorized into three equal levels by this equation:

$$\text{Length of the category} = (\text{greatest value} - \text{least value}) \div \text{number of alternatives} = (3-1) \div 3 = 0.67$$

To get to the following categorization:

**Table 5.** Distribution of the categories of the scale used in the tool of the study

Description:	Range of means
Strongly agree	2.34 – 3.00.
Moderately agree	1.68 – 2.33.
Disagree	1.00 – 1.67.

### IV. Answering the Questions

- 1- *The first question: To what extent do the students from Schools of Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University for Educational Development use social media networks?*

**Table 6.** Frequencies, percentages and arithmetic means in a descending order of the participants' answers on using social media networks

No.	Social media networks		Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Disagree	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Rank																																																																																															
7	Using YouTube	T	125	69	13	2.54	0.61	1																																																																																															
		%	60.4	33.3	6.3				3	Using Instagram	T	125	52	30	2.46	0.74	2	%	60.4	25.1	14.5	6	Using Snapchat	T	131	34	42	2.43	0.81	3	%	63.3	16.4	20.3	1	Using Twitter	T	28	77	102	1.64	0.71	4	%	13.5	37.2	49.3	2	Using Wiki	T	24	62	121	1.53	0.70	5	%	11.6	30.0	58.5	5	Using Tumblr	T	21	53	133	1.46	0.67	6	%	10.1	25.6	64.3	8	Using Path	T	26	44	137	1.46	0.71	6	%	12.6	21.3	66.2	4	Using Facebook	T	7	32	168	1.22	0.49	8	%	3.4	15.5	81.2	General means of using social media networks			
3	Using Instagram	T	125	52	30	2.46	0.74	2																																																																																															
		%	60.4	25.1	14.5				6	Using Snapchat	T	131	34	42	2.43	0.81	3	%	63.3	16.4	20.3	1	Using Twitter	T	28	77	102	1.64	0.71	4	%	13.5	37.2	49.3	2	Using Wiki	T	24	62	121	1.53	0.70	5	%	11.6	30.0	58.5	5	Using Tumblr	T	21	53	133	1.46	0.67	6	%	10.1	25.6	64.3	8	Using Path	T	26	44	137	1.46	0.71	6	%	12.6	21.3	66.2	4	Using Facebook	T	7	32	168	1.22	0.49	8	%	3.4	15.5	81.2	General means of using social media networks							1.84									
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		%	63.3	16.4	20.3				1	Using Twitter	T	28	77	102	1.64	0.71	4	%	13.5	37.2	49.3	2	Using Wiki	T	24	62	121	1.53	0.70	5	%	11.6	30.0	58.5	5	Using Tumblr	T	21	53	133	1.46	0.67	6	%	10.1	25.6	64.3	8	Using Path	T	26	44	137	1.46	0.71	6	%	12.6	21.3	66.2	4	Using Facebook	T	7	32	168	1.22	0.49	8	%	3.4	15.5	81.2	General means of using social media networks							1.84																						
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\* Arithmetic mean out of 3

**Table 6** shows that social media networks' use by the students from the schools of Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University for Educational Development is medium. Items achieved an arithmetic mean of 1.48 that matches a (medium response). This agrees with (Jenkins et al., 2009; Mihailidis, 2013; Thevenin, 2013;

Vanwynsberghe et al., 2011). Therefore, the author suggests using social media networks in the programs and training workshops for students on developing competencies and deepening nationhood and using them in interaction and discussing problems they face.

2- *What social medium is used most by middle school students?*

**Table 7.** Frequencies, percentages and arithmetic means in a descending order for the answers of a sample of middle school students on using social media networks

No.	Social media networks		Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Disagree	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Rank
7	Using YouTube	No	92	36	9	2.61	0.61	1
		%	67.2	26.3	6.6			
3	Using Instagram	No	95	27	15	2.58	0.68	2
		%	69.3	19.7	10.9			
6	Using Snapchat	No	95	15	27	2.50	0.81	3
		%	69.3	10.9	19.7			
1	Using Twitter	No	16	43	78	1.55	0.70	4
		%	11.7	31.4	56.9			
8	Using Path	No	20	27	90	1.49	0.74	5
		%	14.6	19.7	65.7			
5	Using Tumblr	No	10	35	92	1.40	0.62	6
		%	7.3	25.5	67.2			
2	Using Wiki	No	12	30	95	1.39	0.65	7
		%	8.8	21.9	69.3			
4	Using Facebook	No	3	22	112	1.20	0.46	8
		%	2.2	16.1	81.8			
General means of using social media networks							1.84	

\* Arithmetic mean out of 3

Results showed that the most common social media used by high school students were YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram, respectively, with an arithmetic mean of 2.43-2.54. This means that they use them to a high degree. That is, their responses are approximate. This result is consistent with Abdulshafy (2011) that the most common social medium among the participants is YouTube. However, it disagrees with (Ishtaiwa & Dukmak, 2013) reporting that the majority of the participants believe that blogs and wiki are strong tools to consolidate learning. They also believe that blogs are more effective in learning than wiki.

3- *What social medium is used most by high school students?*

**Table 8.** Frequencies, percentages and arithmetic means in a descending order for the answers of a sample of high school students on using social media networks

No.	Social media networks		Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Disagree	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Rank
7	Using YouTube	No	33	33	4	2.41	0.60	1
		%	47.1	47.1	5.7			
6	Using Snapchat	No	36	19	15	2.30	0.80	2
		%	51.4	27.1	21.4			
3	Using Instagram	No	30	25	15	2.21	0.78	3
		%	42.9	35.7	21.4			
1	Using Twitter	No	12	34	24	1.83	0.70	4
		%	17.1	48.6	34.3			
2	Using Wiki	No	12	32	26	1.80	0.71	5
		%	17.1	45.7	37.1			
5	Using Tumblr	No	11	18	41	1.57	0.75	6
		%	15.7	25.7	58.6			
8	Using Path	No	6	17	47	1.41	0.65	7
		%	8.6	24.3	67.1			
4	Using Facebook	No	4	10	56	1.26	0.56	8
		%	5.7	14.3	80.0			
General means of using social media networks							1.85	

\* Arithmetic mean out of 3

**Table 8** illustrates that the most common social media used by high school students were YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram, respectively, with an arithmetic mean of 2.21-2.41. This means that they use them to a high degree. That is, their responses are approximate. The result is consistent with (Abdulshafy, 2011) that the most common social medium among the participants is YouTube. However, it is inconsistent with (Ishtaiwa & Dukmak, 2013) reporting that wiki is strong tools to consolidate learning.

4- *The third question: Do middle and high school students differ in using social media networks?*

**Table 9.** T-test of the significance of differences in the responses of the participants on using social media networks per educational stage

Educational Stage	Number	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	"T" value	Significance level
Middle school	137	1.84	0.39	0.18	Insignificant
High school	70	1.85	0.33		

**Table 9** illustrates that (T) value is insignificant; suggesting that there are no statistically significant differences among the responses of the participants on using social media networks that could be attributed to the educational stage. This is attributed to the approximation of the age group of middle and high school students.

To answer the fifth question:

5- *What are the required key competencies for active citizenship?*

Literature (e.g. Abs & Veldhuis, 2006; De Weerd, Gemmeke, Rigter, & Van Rij, 2005; Rychen & Salganik, 2003; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) was reviewed. Then, they were defined, as follows:

1- Knowledge Competencies that cover using citizens of a new theoretical knowledge, as follows:

- Key components that form the political and judicial system on local, regional and national levels, e.g. knowing the basic rights and duties of citizenship.
- Historical knowledge of the past, e.g. knowing major events and prominent historical figures that changed the process of the political system.
- Major events and prominent historical figures that currently contributes to changing the process of history and the current political system.
- The role of mass media in personal and social life.
- Relations and social rights of citizens in the society.
- Cultural dating and heritage of the state and its effect on the domination of certain cultural standards and values.
- Different cultures that interact whether on the levels of school, local community or the country at all.
- Major events and characters affecting changing the process of national and international dating.
- Tasks and activities of voluntary groups in the society.

2- Attitude Competencies that cover forming positive national attitudes by the citizens, e.g.

- Supporting the political community.
- Trying to accomplish justice, equality and equal opportunities, so that all citizens receive fair and equal treatment.
- Forming a positive image of the self, trust of the personal strengths and weaknesses and setting and implementing real plans.
- Respecting differences with others as a result of the differences of gender/sex, language and religious beliefs.
- Facing negative phenomena of fanaticism, discrimination and marginalization.
- Forming democratic attitudes, assuming responsibility, trust and interface with democratic principles and institutions.
- Feeling of citizenship.
- Respect and tolerance for others, accepting and openness to change, the ability to adaption and finding solutions to problems.
- Taking initiatives and persistence in facing the different challenges.
- Respecting human rights (e.g. freedom, equality and diversity of human beings).
- Respecting the freedom and dignity of all people.

- Realizing the importance of active and effective participation in politics and society.
  - Desire in supporting the poor and marginalized rather than keeping the surrounding environment.
- 3- Skill Competences that cover citizens having scientific or applied skills required to perform:
- Contribution to social discussions, awareness of contemporary issues and problems, being able to evaluate decisions and making and defending certain intellectual situations.
  - Solving conflicts in peaceful ways, being able to make judgments and making decisions.
  - Understanding, interpreting and evaluating media messages received by the different mass media from a perspective that focuses on interests and related systems.
  - Having linguistic competencies, especially reading and writing.
  - Being able to deal with the content of information and communication technology (ICT) from a critical perspective.
  - Having the skills of looking for, storing, retrieving, organizing and logically analyzing the required information.
  - Mastering using social media and networks.
  - Having communication skills.
  - Using different technological means interactively and actively that the citizen is not just a consumer but a producer of the informational content offered by the various means.
  - Contribution to the activities of associations, organizations and volunteer institutions of the civil community.
  - Understanding the rules and criteria of participation and contribution with others creatively.
  - Establishing cooperation and interaction with other members.
  - Having the ability to understand, accept and reflect on others perspective and persuading them of the right opinion using arguments.
  - Being able to handle issues and challenges of cultural diversity in the community.

Answering the sixth question:

- 6- *What is the proposal based on social media networks for the development of active citizenship competencies among middle and high school students?*

After defining the core competencies required to use social media networks and reviewing literature (e.g., Deakin, Coates, Taylor, & Ritchie, 2004; Kerr et al., 2007; Maslowski, Breit, Eckensberger, & Scheeren, 2009), the author making the following proposal to develop active citizenship in the light of core competencies to be reviewed by a group of experienced and specialized reviewers in education, psychology and learning techniques to give opinions on the following:

- A. Action objectives relation to the general one.
- B. Appropriateness of the content and activities to accomplish the objectives.
- C. Appropriateness of the material and its style of display.

Reviewers made some modifications, as follows:

- Editing some action objectives,
- Adding some activities and linguistic and terminological modifications. Then, the proposal is ready in its final form, made of the following items: objectives, general principles, content, teamwork and activities and educational techniques used. The following section is a display of each item.

**General Objective:** Development of key competencies of active citizenship through social media networks among middle and high school students

**Action objectives:** Consolidating unified cultural identity and citizenship.

- Using social media networks for the development of citizenship among students.
- Development of key competencies of active citizenship through social media networks among middle and high school students
- Forming discussion groups of the danger of fanaticism and extremism.
- Handling the cases of students to handle the danger of fanaticism and extremism via social media networks.

**Defining basic principles of the proposal:** Implementing the proposal is based on many principles, as follows:

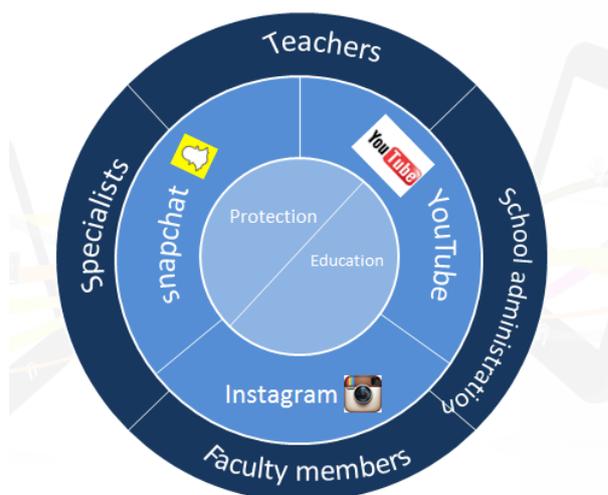
- Using social media networks for the development of citizenship among students.

- Educating students on the history of the nation and country.
- Enhancing student's awareness of citizenship responsibilities that surpass the limits of nation and place.
- Discovering and identifying the world of the students, knowing their situation, strengths and weaknesses.
- Identifying ways of solution to stop spreading these disturbances and taking required arrangements to stop the spread and maximization of these weaknesses, treating them as possible and feeling of responsibility towards them to accept and care for them.
- Openness and contacting with others.
- Freedom of opinion and expression, protecting personal liberty, communication, criticism and accepting the other's perspective.
- Marketing and disseminating citizenship among the institutions of Saudi community via the different social media networks.
- Respecting the privacy of the Saudi community.
- Providing an infrastructure for communication and modern technology to facilitate display, communication and contact with the teamwork of developing active citizenship.

**Team work:** Coordination is established among school's administration, teachers of the middle and high school, faculty members, scholars and specialists.

**Content:** It should cover educating the student and facing misinformation campaigns (education+ protection), e.g.

- Producing and publishing audio clips, videos and flashes via social media networks on the homeland and patriotism, taking into account lessons from other countries and accepting and living with others.
- Studies and statistics on the homeland to be published and promoted via social media networks.
- Conducting studies required for identifying the current situation of the country, students' adherence to citizenship competencies, dissemination of extreme thought and its areas and causes so that plans are set to solve these problems. Creating national databases to study the current situation and following-up the phases of development and progress.
- Establishing councils and formal student associations where students participate in making and taking decisions, publishing them via social media networks, offering appropriate opportunities to students to participate in school activities and applying service projects to help other citizens in the local community.
- Programs of training and professional development for educators and guardians related to citizenship issues to be published and promoted via social media networks.
- Specialized workshops in dialogues to be published and promoted via social media networks.
- Offering workshops on the importance of discussion and accepting others for school students where the Ministry of Education coordinates with effective personalities to implement the culture of dialogue because of its positive effect in limiting intellectual fanaticism and extremism. Many European countries implemented successful experiments in the field.
- Discussing the issues of the age and homeland and suggesting appropriate solutions via social media networks.
- Announcing volunteering to students and creating accounts on social media networks on volunteering and its projects.
- Symposia and courses on patriotism, developing active citizenship and using technology in this via social media networks.
- Activating a hot account via social media networks to reply to students' inquiries.
- Activating a hotline of fanaticism and extremism to reply to citizens' inquiries, especially at the time of suspicion, accidents, etc.
- Intellectual personalities and educators play a vital role in education and developing patriotism and benefiting from their social media networks' accounts in education, active citizenship development and giving the advice to rehabilitate those adopting extreme thoughts.
- Special programs via social media networks for the family to involve children and working on active citizenship development among youth.
- Setting comprehensive plans for social integration to involve all students' groups in different activities to avoid social exclusion and marginalization.



**Figure 1.** Proposal based on social media networks for the development of active citizenship competencies

**Defining activities and scientific techniques used in the program** Social media networks used in the programs have been defined to answer the first, second and third questions; namely, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat.

As the following figure illustrates we can look at this proposal as a total, cyclical and non-linear process that tries to define three core competencies to prepare active citizens able to become critical, creative and active thinkers in the future to faster the aspired social change.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been made:

- Interest in social media networks preferred by students and benefiting from them in planning educational programs and enrichment activities.
- Making social initiatives to support and consolidate the concept of citizenship among young men where they are the pioneers.
- Paying ultimate importance to the concept of citizenship in curricula and the different media.
- Involving the curricula of national education and human rights in all stages.
- Adopting the issues of education on citizenship in all institutions and curricula. This could not be accomplished without the participation of all community's institutions.
- Interest in the national religious, historical and cultural figures, encouraging tourism and traveling means to consolidate the concept of citizenship among all citizens.
- The need of disseminating the culture of integration and accepting others among all sectors because of its significance in consolidating the concept of citizenship.

## SUGGESTIONS

- Conducting further studies on the students of other educational stages.
- Measuring the impact of the proposal for active citizenship competencies.
- Studying the contemporary educational attitudes on citizenship.

## CONCLUSION

In order to be able to prepare active citizens in the future who have active citizenship, educators should develop their abilities by creating the ultimate benefit of using the digital techniques of social media and networks by the educational applications for self-expression, cooperation and interacting with others when performing the different activities in the digital age. Efforts of schools, universities, families, local communities and the different political, social and cultural institutions should be concerted in a comprehensive way. Currently, we are in a bad need to productive and active citizens who are able to cooperate, participate, interact and express themselves online to

catch the available opportunities to become critical, creative and active thinkers and agents to fasten the aspired social change from the perspective of active citizenship.

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