

ALGERIAN RADIO JOURNALISTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS USING FACEBOOK IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE: A CASE STUDY AT MOSTAGANEM REGIONAL RADIO STATION

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DOI: 10.24193/subbeuropaea.2025.1.02

Published Online: 2025-06-30

Published Print: 2025-06-30

Abstract

This study aimed to highlight the attitudes of some journalists at Mostaganem Regional Radio towards Facebook, with the goal of showcasing how this platform is utilized in professional practice within local radio. Since the study is qualitative in nature, we relied on a case study methodology by conducting interviews with a purposive sample of journalists from the Mostaganem regional radio station. We reached a set of results, summarized as follows: There is a positive correlation between the use of Facebook and

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the improvement of media work efficiency. In addition to personal uses, most journalists tend to integrate Facebook into their professional practices. Live broadcasts and news coverage are among the radio programs that most utilize Facebook.

Keywords: attitudes, usage, Facebook, Mostaganem Regional Radio, media work

Introduction

Social media is one of the modern media and communication technologies that have changed the ways of browsing and searching for news and the latest national and global developments. It has contributed to a qualitative shift and the evolution of media, resulting in what is known as new media, which has added an interactive dimension through spaces for expression in sound, image, and writing. Social media has seen significant and increasing popularity. Concurrently, media institutions such as radio have adopted a modern approach by using electronic media, which has garnered great public interest as it provides an open space for audiences to express their opinions and viewpoints. Among the social media platforms, Facebook, or as it is now called Meta, is considered one of the most popular and widely used. Facebook's virtual space includes various segments of society, including journalists, businessmen, researchers, politicians, and even heads of state and their ministries.

Facebook also offers new communicative features that assist radio journalists in the immediate transmission of news in sound and image. Notably, the live broadcast feature has significantly improved the performance of local radio journalism. Based on the above, social media has attracted the attention of many individuals and institutions, including Mostaganem Radio and its journalists, and how they utilize social media in their professional field. Through this, we seek to understand and interpret how Mostaganem Radio extends into the global information network, specifically to the Facebook social network, by posing the following question: How do journalists at Mostaganem Radio use Facebook in their professional practice?

The study's sub-questions are as follows: What benefits do radio journalists derive from using Facebook in their media work? What satisfactions do journalists at Mostaganem Radio achieve from their use of Facebook?

Importance and Objectives of the Study

The importance of this study lies in its aim to: highlight the significance of new communication technology represented by Facebook on media work; contribute to enhancing and developing the efficiency of radio journalists and increasing their productivity; examine how local radio journalists in Mostaganem benefit from Facebook in performing their media tasks; demonstrate the extent to which the use of Facebook by radio journalists impacts their professional performance.

Through our study, we aim to: reveal how radio journalists use Facebook; understand the desires and satisfactions that radio journalists achieve through their use of Facebook in media work; identify the motivations driving Mostaganem Radio journalists to engage with Facebook.

Methodological Procedures of the Study

Based on the outlined objectives of the research and the general inquiry, we believe that the most suitable method for our study is the case study approach. This method is defined as a systematic way that allows the researcher to focus on a single case to study it in depth, with precision and interest, addressing all its aspects, whether the case is an individual, a family, an institution, an organization, a group, or a small community¹.

Some scholars, including Rivlin, Jones, and McCallister, are noted for their interest in the case study method in social research. Additionally, some researchers view case studies as similar to historical studies of a case or community, offering an in-depth examination of the interconnected factors that represent the roots and contents of the case. This is precisely what we

¹ Atoof Mahmoud Yaseen, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, Beirut, Dar Al-Nahar, 1981, p. 50.

will undertake through our study, in which we have selected Mostaganem Radio as the institution to understand journalists' attitudes towards using Facebook in media work. The results obtained will specifically apply to this institution.

In this study, we relied on interviews as a tool for gathering qualitative information and data, as we need to gain deeper insights into the nature of journalists' uses of Facebook. Moreover, interviews are the most suitable tool for uncovering facts and verifying information accurately, directly from the researcher, allowing the researcher to observe the tone, fluency, and emotional justifications². The interview guide included several themes represented by the following topics:

Theme One: Questions related to the motivations behind Mostaganem Radio journalists' use of Facebook.

Theme Two: This theme contains a set of questions aimed at revealing the levels of use of Facebook by Mostaganem Radio journalists.

Theme Three: Questions assessing the satisfactions achieved from Mostaganem Radio journalists' use of Facebook in their professional roles.

Research Community and Sample

Starting from the idea that the research community includes all the elements and individuals relevant to the study that share common characteristics of interest to the researcher, from which the study sample is selected³, this study was applied to a group of journalists from Mostaganem Radio, aiming to identify their attitudes and how they utilize Facebook in media work—specifically radio work.

Since the sample is a partial group of the original research community, representing the community's elements as best as possible, the results of this sample can be generalized to the entire community, allowing inferences

² Wajih Mahjoub, *Foundations of Scientific Research and Its Methods*, Amman, Dar Al-Manahij for Publishing and Distribution, 2005, p. 165.

³ Abdel-Majid Shukri, *Local Radio, Language of the Era*, Cairo, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1987, p. 36.

about its characteristics⁴. In our study, we relied on a purposive sample, defined as: *"the researcher selects this sample based on its ability to achieve the study's objectives, meaning they freely choose the sample according to their needs and their personal beliefs that this sample represents the community and fulfills the purpose of their study"*⁵.

Our study sample consisted of journalists from Mostaganem Radio, from which nine individuals were selected from the total number of journalists affiliated with this radio station.

Defining Study Concepts

1. Use:

The concept of usage in the fields of media and communication remains one shrouded in ambiguity, and researchers have not reached a consensus on its definition. This concept is shared among many research fields. According to Pierre Chambat, the meaning of usage is often incorporated in various contexts, relating to the ownership of the tool itself and the extent of cognitive control over it⁶. Researcher Abdel Wahab Boukhenoufa indicates that the concept of usage first requires access to the technology or means, meaning that it must be physically available⁷. Following this, social and individual factors come into play that either encourage or hinder usage, and importantly, they create differences and variances in how each user interacts with it. Jacques Perriault, who introduced the concept of usage in the 1980s (1989), viewed it from the

⁴ Mohamed Gharib Abdul-Karim, *Research Methods and Ways to Prepare Studies*, Amman, University Printing House, 1999, p. 19.

⁵ Suhail Rizk Diab, *Scientific Research Methods*, Gaza, Palestine, 2003, p. 9.

⁶ Pierre Chambat, Usages des technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC) : évolution des problématiques, *Technologies de l'information et société*, vol.6, no.3, 1994, p. 250.

⁷ Boukhenoufa Abdelwahab, *The School, the Student, the Teacher, and Information and Communication Technology*, Doctoral Dissertation supervised by Nasreddine Al-Ayadhi, Faculty of Political Science and Media, Department of Media and Communication Sciences, University of Algiers, 2007, p. 50.

perspective of the value of usage and user practices, moving away from the chronological tracking of technological innovations. This opens a new critical perspective on the concept in the field of media and communication sciences, as reflected in his work "The Logic of Usage: An Essay on Communication Machines," where he argues that usage does not necessarily need to be instrumental, as it carries a symbolic function that the user assigns to the technology or tool⁸. Thus, a single tool can have multiple usages depending on the hands that handle it.

From the perspective of our study, we see that usage involves local radio journalists in Mostaganem browsing social media, along with the patterns, habits, and motivations behind this browsing, and all activities they engage in on these platforms, which range from personal to professional use.

2. Attitude:

Linguistically, the term "attitude" refers to directing or facing something, meaning to intend or lean toward a particular opinion⁹. In technical terms, it expresses the actual state accompanying the desire to act or the emotional inclination toward the action¹⁰. Bogardus views attitude as a tendency to behave either positively or negatively toward a situation, defining positive or negative values for that behavior.

In the context of our study, we see that attitude expresses a coordinated and organized style of thinking, feeling, and reacting of journalists toward social media, particularly Facebook, at the regional radio station in Mostaganem. These responses determine the degree of acceptance or rejection of using this platform in media work.

⁸ Jacques Perriault, *La logique de l'usage. Essai sur les machines à communiquer*, Paris, Éd L'Harmattan, 2008, p. 211.

⁹ Hussein Abdel Hamid Ahmed Rashwan, *Fundamentals of Scientific Research*, Shabab University Foundation, Alexandria, Egypt, 2003, p. 15.

¹⁰ Masoud Gibran, *The Pioneer: Alphabetical Dictionary in Language and Media*, Beirut, Dar Al-Ilm for Millions, 2003, p. 24.

3. Radio:

If "radio" linguistically refers to the broadcasting of news, as in someone who spreads news or is a broadcaster who does not keep secrets, then, at the technical level, it refers to the wireless transmission and reception of impulses or electrical signals through radio waves.¹¹ It also refers to the broadcasting of radio programs through ether and airwaves and the transmission of messages through media without controlling who receives them; anyone with a suitable receiving device within the broadcasting range can listen.¹²

Radio is a local media institution aimed at gathering, analyzing, and broadcasting news through radio transmission to reach its audience or listeners. The concept of radio, according to Foudil Delliou, is defined as "*what is broadcast through the ether using electromagnetic waves capable of overcoming geographical and political barriers, connecting its listeners with a direct and rapid link*"¹³. We view it as a local audio media institution aimed at gathering, analyzing, and broadcasting news through radio transmission to reach its audience or listeners.

Local radio is considered one of the tributaries of local media, meaning it is one of the limited media types that focus on a specific area of interest for a particular community. It represents a realistic reflection of the culture of that local community, aiming to serve the needs of its residents through their interaction and participation.

Several definitions of local radio have been provided, including: a radio that represents a media outlet serving a local community, meaning it broadcasts its programs addressing a specific, limited audience living in

¹¹ Suleiman Abu Jalal, *Radio and Its Role in Security Awareness*, Amman, Dar Osama for Publishing and Distribution, 2012, p. 9.

¹² Tarek Sayed Ahmed, *Dictionary of Media Terminology*, Alexandria, University Knowledge House, 2013, p. 26.

¹³ Foudil Delliou, *Introduction to Mass Communication*, Algiers, University Printing House, 1998, p. 136.

a defined geographical area, coordinated economically, culturally, and socially. This community forms a homogeneous environment despite the individual differences that necessarily exist among the members of a single community¹⁴. Thus, local radio interacts with this community, taking from it and giving back, providing various services that influence it and are influenced by it.

Mostaganem Regional Radio was established on February 10, 2004, corresponding to the 18th of Dhul-Hijjah, 1424 AH, and was inaugurated by the late President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. It is among the first regional radios to launch with 100% digital broadcasting and initially broadcast for 4 hours daily on FM107.7 and FM100.1. The broadcast was then extended to 8 hours a day from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM after a year. By 2006, the broadcasting time increased to 12 hours, from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM, and in 2008, it continued broadcasting for 17 hours starting from February 10, 2008.

Mostaganem Radio aims to establish genuine grassroots media and is committed to educating and guiding citizens through what it offers in its daily programs, which span 17 hours. These programs are inspired by various themes, the most important of which include news, development, social issues, education, culture, and history, reflecting the life, interests, and concerns of citizens in different fields.

It extends communication bridges between the public and officials, providing various social groups and segments with the opportunity to express their concerns and offer constructive suggestions.

¹⁴ Abdel-Majid Shukri, *Local Radio, Language of the Era*, Cairo, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1987, p. 12.

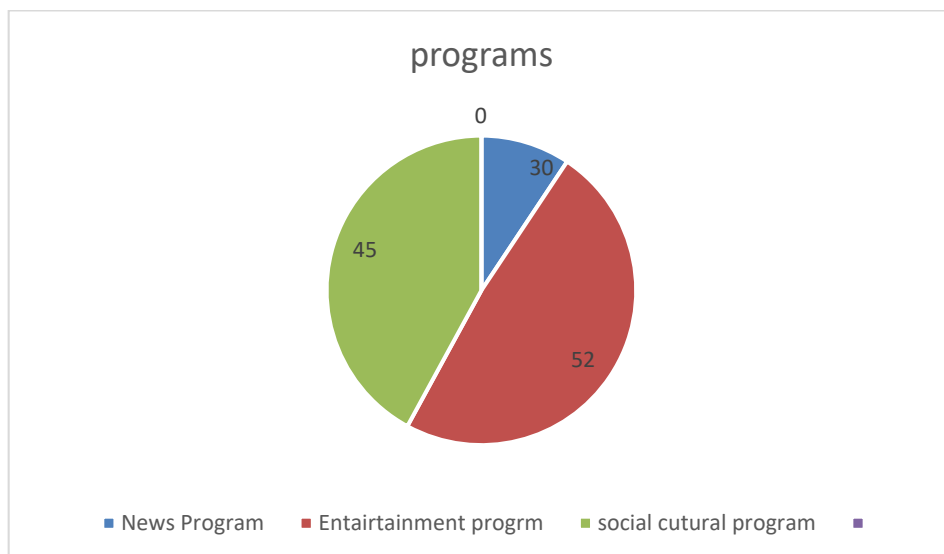


Figure 1. Percentage distribution of the programming network.

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on data provided during the interview.

Uses of Modern Communication Technology within Regional Radio

Regional radio stations are among the most influential media institutions for their audiences due to their immediacy in delivering news and real-time coverage of events. Their interactivity connects them with audiences in various social, cultural, and service contexts. These stations have benefited from modern technologies, which have brought scientific advancements to radio communication, integrating these technologies to enhance efficiency. Here's how: radio communication relies on one-way transmission through a channel, requiring listeners to tune in and listen to the presented programs.

The innovation of coaxial cables, very short waves, and optical fibers has addressed interference issues, improved transmission quality over long distances, and provided new communication channels. Computers, a core communication technology in radio work, began to be used in the last

century to reduce costs and improve production quality. Today, they are employed across all radio production phases, from editing and classification to storing large amounts of information on CDs, updating information easily, and enabling fast information retrieval and storage on other media for targeted audience engagement. Additionally, they allow combining images, text, and audio on one medium¹⁵.

Extension of Regional Radio through Facebook

The emergence of social media networks has revolutionized media, offering unprecedented opportunities for influence and borderless information flow with minimal regulatory control. Social media has introduced direct broadcasting channels from its audience, redefining traditional communication theories and ending the monopoly over media messaging, creating broader, more inclusive, and highly interactive communication¹⁶.

If Facebook and social media carry diverse content; media content plays a significant role in contemporary life. The media aspect of Facebook (assuming it has such a role, even in its broadest definition) aligns with the purpose of disseminating information to a wide audience. Recently, social media has become a primary source of information, videos, and eyewitness accounts, enabling “*citizen journalists*” to record events on their phones or cameras and post them online¹⁷.

The regional radio station of Mostaganem, launched in 2004, leveraged modern audio broadcasting technology to stay current with local and global changes. In line with other local stations and the national radio, Mostaganem's local radio integrates modern media and communication

¹⁵ Mariam Noumar, *The Use of Social Network Sites and Its Impact on Social Relations*, Master's Thesis, Media and Communication Science, University of Hadj Lakhdar Batna, 2012, p. 56.

¹⁶ M.E. Salah, *Electronic Media – Foundations and Future Prospects*, Jordan, Al-I'sar Scientific Publishing, 2012, p. 245.

¹⁷ Khadr al-Bayati, *New Media – The New Virtual State*, Jordan, Al-Bidaya Publishers, 2014, p. 398.

technology to enhance media performance and efficiency. For this purpose, it chose Facebook, a platform widely popular among various age groups in Algerian society, as a source of information and news.

In 2011, Mostaganem Radio created its Facebook page, managed by radio technicians and journalists under the supervision of the station's director. The station's Facebook page has accumulated over 143,000 followers (as of September 2024), necessitating a team of technicians and journalists to manage it under the director's supervision.

Many journalists have found it essential to adopt new communication spaces, whether to connect with other journalists, gather information, or obtain ready-made content (videos, recordings, etc.). Journalists increasingly rely on the internet, particularly social media, to perform their work. Here are the main uses of social media for journalists:

Searching for Story Ideas: Journalists use social media platforms to find story ideas, as users often share newsworthy content.

Information Gathering: social media offers a wealth of information and news from various fields worldwide, making it a valuable resource for journalists.

Obtaining Media Content (Recordings, Videos): Many media outlets present programs that rely on recordings and videos shared on social media, with programs varying by channel. Some present recordings with commentary, others use them in news bulletins to complete reports or stories, and many programs rely on social media content.

Analysis and Discussion of Research Findings

The table below shows that the study was conducted on nine respondents from the staff of the regional radio of Mostaganem, including three males and six females, with varied academic specializations and professional roles based on the nature of their work. Each has a work experience ranging from a maximum of 18 years to a minimum of 14 years.

Through interviewing the targeted respondents, many responses were recorded, analyzed, and interpreted as follows:

Target	Function	Seniority	Level	Specialization	Age	Gender
1	Head of the department of production and programming	Black-out	Black-out	ICT	42	F
2	Detective journalist	18	License	Law	41	F
3	Editor in chief	18	Master	Political sciences	43	M
4	Creative broadcaster	16	License	Telecommunications	42	F
5	Investigative editor	18	Master	Finance and economics	51	M
6	Creative broadcaster	18	License	Arabic	41	F
7	Investigative journalist	15	Doctorate	Telecommunications	38	M
8	Creative broadcaster	17	Magister	Arabic	40	F
9	Investigative journalist	14	Master's level in Arabic	Telecommunications	37	F

Figure 2. Overview of respondents profiles

The views and responses of the respondents varied between those who present their media identity on their Facebook profile and those who do not. Most journalists use their media identity on Facebook; however, some prefer not to highlight their media identity for reasons such as protecting

their privacy in the virtual space. Respondent No. 03, a 43-year-old male, Political Science, Head of the Editorial Department, said: "Yes, my private account carries my media identity as well as my personal identity, and I have no objection to sharing it with the listening audience." All respondents agreed that the areas they prioritize are political, media, cultural, educational, sports, and artistic, as noted by respondent No. 09, a 37-year-old female, Media and Communication, investigative journalist: "Primarily sports, cultural, artistic areas, and all news related to Mostaganem."

Regarding the question about using Facebook in media work, most respondents believe that using Facebook is essential in their professional practice, as the media and communication field has always been associated with modern technology. Thus, journalists need to keep up with this development and adapt to it. Respondent No. 01, a 42-year-old female, Computer Science Engineer, Head of Production and Programming Department, stated: "Facebook and various social media platforms have become inevitable to keep up with technology and stay informed about what is being circulated on Facebook, especially to verify fake news to transmit credible information to listeners." Regarding journalists' perceptions of using Facebook to achieve their professional goals, most respondents indicated that Facebook is a destination for journalists worldwide, as each journalist and media organization has its own Facebook page. Respondent No. 07, a 38-year-old male, Media and Communication, investigative journalist, stated: "Facebook is the starting point for news, not a news source, but it is a station to reach the news by following daily information. It is also an essential communication channel to track the news flow of events in real time with audio and video."

The respondents' views varied on the additional features they use after incorporating Facebook into their media work, especially after Facebook launched a range of services and features that assisted journalists. In this context, respondent No. 01, a 42-year-old female, Computer Science Engineer, Head of Production and Programming Department, said: "The radio and various media outlets must keep up with modern technology and

invest in it to improve performance, as is the case with using live streaming on Facebook.”

Concerning communication between journalists on this platform, it became clear from respondents' answers that each department within the Mostaganem Radio Station has a dedicated Facebook group where they exchange expertise, information, and news. They can also send their work and recordings without needing to travel to the station, which saves time and effort. In this regard, respondent No. 07, a 38-year-old male, Media and Communication, investigative journalist, stated: “Certainly, it is crucial to communicate and create Facebook groups among journalists to exchange information and even expertise to expand the network of relationships. Additionally, interacting with the audience by sharing, commenting, and posting is essential to build a fan base, but each journalist has their own way of doing so. Some share and comment, while others only post, paying attention to the published topics and how they respond to comments. Interaction is the cornerstone for journalists, as it allows them to determine which topics attract the audience's interest and aspirations. Therefore, most respondents are keen to post topics that generate audience engagement on the radio's Facebook page.”

It can also be said, from discussing the study's findings, that the employment of social media platforms in general by radio stations has become a pressing necessity in the context of digital transformation and the changing patterns of media content consumption. Radio stations have shifted from traditional broadcasting via frequencies to using the Internet, digital platforms, and applications available on smartphones to reach a broader and more diverse audience. Through these platforms, radio stations can directly interact with listeners, whether through comments, polls, or instant messages, creating a live interaction that enhances the listening experience and makes the audience feel like part of the program. Moreover, the radio sees social media platforms as a technological extension to promote its content by publishing short audio or visual clips to attract new audiences,

especially young people who spend a lot of time on these platforms. Live broadcasting via Facebook or YouTube has also become an effective way to attract viewers and listeners during important events or special programs. On the other hand, radio stations benefit from data analysis tools available on these platforms to understand audience interests and improve their programs based on immediate feedback. However, this utilization faces some challenges, such as maintaining privacy and combating the spread of fake news, which requires radio stations to work cautiously to ensure credibility in this digital space.

Based on this, the study results can be summarized as follows:

- Integrating Facebook into media work has become essential for its features and advantages that enhance journalists' productivity.
- Journalists at Mostaganem Radio use Facebook to search for news and information and communicate with colleagues and the audience.
- The rational use of social media, particularly Facebook, is necessary for sharing beneficial content for journalists and society.
- Exploiting the live broadcast feature on Mostaganem Radio's Facebook page has transitioned it from audio broadcasting to audiovisual.
- Journalists at Mostaganem Radio prefer Facebook over other social media platforms because it offers features and advantages that assist them in their work.
- The areas that interest Mostaganem Radio journalists on Facebook are media, political, cultural, educational, sports, and economic.
- Avoiding misinformation, verifying sources, and not considering Facebook a formal information source are essential practices.
- It appears that most journalists at Mostaganem Radio use social media platforms, especially Facebook, for professional and personal reasons.
- One of Facebook's advantages is private groups, allowing journalists to exchange various news, images, updates, and experiences.

- Journalists at Mostaganem Radio engage with the audience on Facebook by sharing, commenting, and posting.
- The study of journalists at the local radio station of Mostaganem has led to several recommendations to enhance their work and maximize the benefits of social media.

Key recommendations include:

- Holding training sessions and developing journalists' skills in video editing to allow for professional publication of media content on Facebook.
- Working on integrating other technicians and journalists and encouraging them to post on the radio station's Facebook page.
- Ensuring journalists combat misinformation, considering their role as an official source of information.
- Forming a dedicated Facebook team for the station, consisting of journalists, announcers, and technicians.
- Broadcasting daily programs and radio segments live on the station's official Facebook page to integrate audio-visual elements.

Conclusion

Through this study, we aimed to highlight how journalists at Mostaganem Radio use Facebook. It was revealed that Facebook is a valuable tool that has significantly contributed to improving journalists' performance in their duties. Most journalists at Mostaganem Radio prefer using Facebook over other social media platforms, as it offers features that support their tasks. We also identified the main fields journalists follow on Facebook and explored the benefits they gain and how this usage influences their professional performance.

Our study found that all Mostaganem journalists use social media daily, with varying hours spent by different individuals. Most of them utilize social media, especially Facebook, for both professional and personal reasons.

Their primary professional goal in using Facebook is to achieve practical benefits, as they view it as a platform to access the latest updates and information, strengthening their news-gathering process.

Despite these positive aspects, there are challenges with social media use in journalism, especially in broadcasting. Issues like privacy and misleading content require radio stations to adopt clear policies to ensure information accuracy and protect users' personal data. Ultimately, the adoption of social media by radio stations represents a major advancement, enhancing outreach and interaction, and marking a transition of traditional media into the digital era, with all its challenges and opportunities.

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