



THE PLACE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN FAMILY COMMUNICATION

Zaim Başaslanⁱ

Gaziantep University,
Turkey

Abstract:

Family communication is the verbal and non-verbal exchange of information between family members. Behaviors that require understanding, sharing, and cooperation occur through communication within the family. In modern families, spending free time together has lost its importance and this function has shifted out of the family. Social media is of great importance in effectively filling the communication gap in family communication. Personal accounts are contacted through certain applications and sometimes our family and relatives are contacted through these accounts. Sometimes we lose control of our lives by not managing our time correctly. Social media and mass media have been instrumental in the birth of a new culture and have undertaken the mission of ensuring the adaptation of individuals to the changing world.

Keywords: family, family communication, social media, communication, internet and social media use

1. Introduction

Family communication was first recognized as a separate field of scientific study by the National Communication Association (NCA) in 1989. Family communication, which was previously examined with social psychology and interpersonal communication theories, has been introduced to its own studies in the 1990s and has had advanced research in its field since the 2000s (Miller Day, 2017).

The family institution uses the phenomenon of communication to perform its own functions. The family forms the building block of socialization through communication. Socialization can never be achieved through one-way communication. Parents and children should create a mutual communication framework in the family (Çetin, 2013: 9). The exchange of messages between family members is called intra-family communication. Communication within the family; peer-to-peer communication, parent-child communication, sibling communication, and intergenerational (adult-elderly)

ⁱ Correspondence: email zaimbasaslan@gmail.com

communication (Baran, 2004: 34). Family communication is the verbal and non-verbal exchange of information between family members. This process is very important as it allows members to share their needs, wants, and concerns, and to solve their problems and challenges (Epstein et al., 1993).

"Communication within the family, spouses, parent-child, communication between siblings and intergenerational communication come to mind" (Baran 2004: 31). In this context, the individual begins to communicate with his family and family members from the moment he comes into the world (Kırık, 2014: 337). It is an institution where the individuals who make up the family and their roles and status are developed. The family environment, parents, understanding, sharing and cooperative behaviors are realized with communication within the family. In this context, a good family is necessary to understand individuals, to share common activities and to establish consensus (Çakmak ve Koçyiğit, 2017: 1).

In the regulation of relations within the family, communication constitutes the basic element for ensuring harmony and resolving conflict (Giddens, 1997: 179). *"Advances in communication technologies have also led to significant changes in the way families communicate."* In particular, the use of the internet has enabled individuals to switch to computer-mediated communication instead of face-to-face communication. The change in society has also led to changes in the way families communicate, which is the smallest unit of society (Bakan ve Bakan, 2017: 56-57).

Social networks have been added as a new form of communication to the communication that took place in the past face-to-face or through traditional means of communication. Social media is of great importance in family communication in effectively filling the communication gap. (Reuber ve Fischer, 2011: 1). The use of social media creates a positive effect due to its dynamic structure in meeting changing needs (Sashi, 2012: 262).

In addition to being virtual and user-based, social media is important in terms of increasing the interaction between target groups and people. The Internet is a unique content sharing platform. It allows information to be disseminated with much wider accessibility and flexibility compared to other media tools (Lester, 2012: 116-124). Social media channels are actively used by many people in society from the young population to adult individuals. Although different discussions have been put forward by different people in terms of positive/negative effects of individuals on the socialization process, the concept of social media is encountered in many different areas and different types as content and service area.

Individuals use social media channels for many purposes such as shopping, news, receiving information, and sharing (Görgülü, 2018: 1-2). *"Social media responds to people's socialization, requests such as escape, information, entertainment, communication, spending time with the dimension of interaction, and people have become a promising tool in social media to the extent that they can become personal"* (Hazar, 2011: 153).

With the increase in interest in new communication tools, the use of social media is increasing day by day. In this context, it causes communication breakdowns between individuals. *"The more time spent on social media, the lower the number of family relationships."*

The intensive use of social media not only causes family relations but also other problems in the family." (Güleç, 2018: 105). Young people spend a large part of their time on social networks (Hacıfendioğlu, 2010: 57). Young people are lonely in their rooms, where they spend time on the internet and are isolated from social life. Young people prefer to spend time on the internet instead of engaging in social activities. This situation arises when family members spend their free time separately (Aslan ve Cansever, 2012: 31).

According to the researches, there are opinions that social media affects communication within the family according to the duration of use. Individuals who use the internet for more than five hours a week reduce the time they spend with their family and friends; it is stated that 10% of them participate in out-of-home activities due to the internet. It has been concluded that the reason why young people use the internet too much can be attributed to poor family and friend relationships (Demir, 2016: 31).

The use of social media makes it easier to establish a relationship by eliminating the difficulties endured for a communication that inevitably begins to replace the face-to-face relationship, but makes the relationships ordinary. *"It has been concluded that social media prevents people from forming face-to-face relationships with family and friends, reducing regional communication"* (Hazar, 2011: 153-160).

The loyalty, appreciation, spending time together, communication, faith and values skills that exist in healthy families are atrophied by the time spent on social media. In this context, we can say that the use of social media by individuals in the family may have a negative effect on family communication (Aktaş ve Çopur, 2018: 145).

Individuals who use social media a lot have more of a desire to be immediately aware of everything in the virtual environment. They have suggested that overuse of new technologies can create mental health problems, loneliness and addiction in young people. Social media addicts exhibit obsessive behavior and are unable to control the use of these tools (Balci ve Baloglu, 2018: 112). In this context, it does not seem possible not to be affected by the communication within the family due to the use of social media. Young people need to spend time with their families and it is obligatory for them to be in joint activities in order to have a healthy development process. Social media, which can prevent families from being together, should be used consciously and not much time should be spent (Yalcin ve Yalcin, 2018: 740).

Considering that the starting point of communication and culture is the family, it should not be ignored that the attitudes and behaviors of families towards their children are also important in the use of mass media and social media. Today, it is a known fact that individuals who spend their time on these social networks, in general, have negative effects on children. In Turkey, especially the activities of young people to evaluate their leisure time are mostly passive (Öksüz, 2012, s. 23).

2. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the research conducted by Demir on the social media use and intra-family communications of high school students in Çanakkale in 2016, it is stated that students who use social media prefer to share their special problems and problems with their

friends on social media instead of their families. In addition, students who use social media intensively on a daily basis state that they are curious about what is happening on social media even when spending time with their families(Demir, 2016, s.19).

Çetin's research conducted in Kütahya in 2013 was conducted to examine the effect of Facebook, a social media tool, on family communication. 346 individuals of all ages and statuses participated in the study. According to the results of the research; Facebook negatively affects family communication, there are disruptions in work and responsibilities as a result of excessive use of Facebook, and virtual communication is emphasized by reducing face-to-face communication; It was found that the participants used Facebook while they were together with their families, neglected the family as a result of their spouses spending too much time on Facebook, and parents were uncomfortable with the children spending too much time on Facebook.

A study was conducted by Watt in the United States in 2016. The research was prepared to examine the effects of social media on family communication and was conducted on 158 individuals who were selected by snowball sampling method and who used Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. In the research, it is seen that age has a significant relationship with social media and family communication. "In general, I feel that social media has a negative impact on relationships with family members.", "you are distracted by social media when you interact with family members.", "the amount of time other family members spend at home on social media bothers me." As a result, it was found that young couples saw social media as mostly positive on family relationships compared to older couples.

A study was conducted by Alanazi (2015) to examine the effect of using social media on family relationships in Saudi Arabia. In the study, there are 499 participants between the ages of 20-50 with statuses such as spouse and child. According to the results of the research; more than half the number of participants think that social media increases face-to-face communication with family members. More than half think that social media is not effective in the relationship of married couples. Due to social media, there are quite a few who think that their spouse has another relationship. As a result, the study found that the use of social media in Saudi Arabia had no effect on family relationships.

The increasing use of social media in the world and in our country affects the functioning of the family institution, which is the smallest building block of society. Through public institutions and organizations serving families, it can be planned to provide training to families by experts on subjects such as conscious use of social media in places such as public education centers and intra-family communication. This situation is important for the social support function and continuity of the family institution.

Considering that the average score of the statement that social media reduces the time I spend face to face with my family is the least, that family member who fulfill their responsibilities during the day come together in the evening, according to the results of the research, they turn to social media in the evening and that this situation may cause a lack of communication; In order to encourage the family to strengthen their communication by spending quality time and to prevent them from turning to social

media more than necessary, it will be useful to develop activities such as common hobbies, activities, domestic activities and to make social media detox of families on the specified days.

The fact that the relevant public institutions and organizations advertise on social media platforms and include the subject in public spots will help raise the awareness of families and increase their awareness.

In the studies on the subject, it is seen that communication within the family is child-oriented. However, today, the effect of the use of social media on the communication between spouses in the family is undeniable. For this reason, the effect of social media use on peer-to-peer communication is an issue that needs to be emphasized both in terms of the integrity and sustainability of the family and shaping future generations as role models for children in the family. In this sense, it would be appropriate for the media, educational institutions and the Ministry of Family and Social Services to carry out studies on the subject and take measures to increase awareness.

In his research, Hazar (2011: 158-159) concluded that social media prevents people from forming face-to-face relationships with family and friends and reduces regional communication. When we look at the relationships between social support and internet use, some studies indicate that there is no significant relationship between the two variables (Miller, 2008), while a close relationship is mentioned in others (Keser and Buzlu, 2007; Subrahmanyam et al., 2008; Yeh et al., 2008). Lack of social support has been associated with depression and increases susceptibility to internet addiction (Nalwa and Anand, 2003, Yen et al. 2007). Researchers have recently pointed out that social support can also exist online. People are developing a new lifestyle through activities on the internet, which leads to a deterioration in real social relationships. In other words, depressed individuals rely on the internet for social support, which leads to a worsening of their interpersonal relationships in real lives and increases the risk of internet addiction (Batıgün and Kılıç, 2011: 2-3). The Internet and social media, thanks to their different applications, can attract and influence especially young people and children in the younger age group.

In the studies carried out, the negativities caused by the use of social media in family communication; It is possible to say that there are negative effects on family conflict, miscommunication, social isolation, family members not spending time together, not being able to spare time for each other, and education.

In line with the results reached in the researches, first of all, our suggestions in order to maintain healthy intra-family communication in our society; family members should devote enough time to each other and prefer face-to-face communication. It is necessary to raise awareness among young people and family members about the controlled use of social media and the internet, to organize trainings for families and students at universities, and to reveal that family unity and healthy communication are important for our society in these trainings.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author

Zaim Başaslan is a Lecturer working at Gaziantep University, Turkey.

References

- Aktaş, M. ve Çopur, Z. (2018). Sosyal Medya Kullanımının Eşler Arasındaki Strese Etkisi, *International Journal Of Education Technology and Scientific Researches*, Sayı: 6, 142-153.
- Alanazi, N. (2015). A Study of the Influence of Social Media Communication Technologies on Family Relationships in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Master thesis, Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta.
- Aslan, N. ve Cansever, B. (2012). Ergenlerin Boş Zaman Değerlendirme Algısı, *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, Sayı: 42, 23-35.
- Bakan, U. ve Bakan, U. (2017). Facebook'ta Aile İlişkileri Ve Sosyal Medya Adanmışlığına Yönelik Bir İçerik Analizi, *Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Cilt. 9, Sayı: 20, 54-68.
- Balcı, A. ve Tezel, F. Ş. (2016). Sosyal Medyanın Aile Katılımında Kullanılabilirliği Üzerine Bir İnceleme, *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, Cilt. 24, Sayı: 5, 2309-2322.
- Baran, A. G. (2004). Türkiye'de Aile İçi İletişim ve İlişkiler Üzerine Bir Model Denemesi. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*. Güz Sayı: 1. 31-41.
- Batıgün A. D. ve Kılıç N. (2011). İnternet Bağımlılığı İle Kişilik Özellikleri, Sosyal Destek, Psikolojik Belirtiler ve Bazı Sosyo-Demografik Değişkenler Arasındaki İlişkiler, *Türk Psikoloji Dergisi*, 26(67), 1-10.
- Çakmak, V. ve Koçyiğit, M. (2017). Aksaray Sosyal Bilimler MYO Örneği Üzerinden Aile İçindeki İletişim Kalıpları'nın İncelenmesi, *Erciyes İletişim Dergisi "akademia"*, Cilt. 5, S:1, 118-130.
- Çetin, S. (2013). Aile İçi İletişime Facebook'un Etkisi: Kütahya Örneği. *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Sosyoloji Ana Bilim Dalı Yüksek Lisans Tezi*.
- Demir, Ü. (2016). Sosyal Medya Kullanımı ve Aile İletişimi, *Çanakkale'de Lise Öğrencileri Üzerine Bir Araştırma, Selçuk İletişim*, Cilt. 9, Sayı: 2, s. 27-50.
- Demir, Ü. (2016). Sosyal Medya Kullanımı ve Aile İletişimi: Çanakkale'de Lise Öğrencileri Üzerine Bir Araştırma, *Selçuk İletişim*, 9 (2), 27-50.
- Epstein, N. B., Bishop, D., Ryan, C., Miller, I., ve Keitner, G. I. (1993). The McMaster Model: View of Healthy Family Functioning. In F. Walsh (Ed.), *Guilford Family Therapy Series Normal Family Processes*. 138-160. New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.
- Giddens, A. (1997). *Sociology*, Polity Press, Cambridge UK.
- Görgülü, B. (2018). Gençlerin Siyasal Katılım Sürecinde Sosyal Medyanın Rolü, *Selçuk Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Halkla İlişkiler ve Tanıtım Anabilim Dalı, Halkla İlişkiler ve Tanıtım Bilim Dalı, Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Konya.

- Güleç, V. (2018). Aile İlişkilerinin Sosyal Medya ile Birlikte Çöküşü, Yeni Medya Elektronik Dergi, Cilt. 2, Sayı. 2, 1, 105-120.
- Hacıfendioğlu, Ş. (2010). Sosyal Paylaşım Sitelerinde Üye Bağlılığı Üzerine Bir Araştırma, Kocaeli Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, Cilt. 20, Sayı: 2, 56 – 71.
- Hazar, M. (2011). “Sosyal Medya Bağımlılığı- Bir Alan Çalışması”, Gazi Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi, İletişim Kuram ve Araştırma Dergisi, Sayı: 32, 158 – 159.
- Kırık, A. M. (2014). Aile ve Çocuk İlişkisinde İnternetin Yeri: Nitel Bir Araştırma, Eğitim ve Öğretim Araştırmaları Dergisi, Cilt. 3, Sayı: 1, 337-347.
- Lester, D. H. (2012). Social Media: Changing Advertising Education. Online Journal of Communication And Media Technologies, 2 (1), January.
- Miller-Day, M. (2017). Family Communication. <http://communication.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-177> Erişim Tarihi: 31.10.2018.
- Nalwa K. and Anand A. P. (2003). Internet Addiction In Students: A Cause Of Concern, Cyberpsychology & Behavior, 6 (6), 653-656.
- Öksüz, E. (2012). Yüksek Öğretim Yurtlar Kurumu İle Özel Yurtlarda İkamet Eden Öğrencilerin Boş Zaman Faaliyetlerinin Değerlendirilmesi: Balıkesir İli Örneği, Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi, Yüksek Lisans, Balıkesir.
- Reuber, A. R. ve Fischer, E. (2011). International Entrepreneurship In İnternet-Enabled Markets. Journal of Business Venturing, 26(6), 660-679.
- Sashi, C. M. (2012). Customer Engagement, Buyer-Seller Relationships, And Social Media. Management Decision, 50(2), 253-272.
- Subrahmanyam K, Reich S M, Waechter N and Espinoza G (2008) Online and Offline Social Networks: Use of Social Networking Sites By Emerging Adults, Journal of Applied Develop Mental Psychology, 29, 420-433.
- Watt, J. B. (2016). Effects of Social Media Use on Family Relationships. Master thesis, California State University, California.
- Yalçın, M. ve Yalçın, M. (2018). Sosyal Medya Kullanımı ve Aile İçi İletişim İlişkisi: Üniversite Öğrencileri Üzerine Bir Araştırma, Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi, Cilt. 11, Sayı: 57, 738-743.
- Yeh Y. C., Ko H. C., Wu J. Y. W. and Cheng C. P. (2008). Gender Differences in Relationships of Actual and Virtual Social Support to Internet Addiction Mediated Through Depressive Symptoms Among College Students in Taiwan, CyberPsychology & Behavior, 11, 485-487.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Social Sciences Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).