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The Effect of Social Media Use on Marital Relationship

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ABSTRACT


Today, social communication applications are becoming widespread and developing day by day with many practical features and ease of use. In addition to traditional media, with the spread of the internet and the widespread use of electronic devices such as mobile phones, tablets and computers and becoming an indispensable part of our lives, it has become inevitable for people who need to be in touch to turn this communication channel into widespread social media tools. Social media, which is an indispensable activity in the flow of our lives, is important in the fulfillment of many necessary social activities such as sharing content and communicating with individuals of different age groups, education levels and relationship understanding, and it is becoming more and more effective. It can be said that with the spread of social media applications, where the importance of place and time has disappeared, people have turned to social media. The aim of this study is to examine the effect of the use of social media applications on marital relationship.


INTRODUCTION

With fast and easy consumption, it has started to spend time on social media tools easily due to loneliness. With this tendency, while helping users to socialize and subsequently seek friendship, its negative effects on the spouse and marriage relationship have become visible. If we need to talk about which dimensions of the marriage relationship social media affect; We can say that the spouses steal some of the time they allocate to each other due to the fact that individuals spend some of the time they allocate to each other due to the fact that they spend it on social media, and this situation affects

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the communication between them, the degree of trust of the spouses towards each other is damaged, and the content on social networking sites, shopping, gifts, travels increases as expected in ordinary life, triggering inadequacy, anxiety and depression. The aim of this study is to examine the effect of the use of social media applications on marital relationship. The research focuses on understanding the positive and negative effects of social media on marital relationships, determining how these effects occur, and evaluating couples' attitudes towards social media use.

The Concept of Social Media

In today's world, communication and interaction between people has diversified in many ways. Interactive social media are beginning to be replaced by elements on the digital platform. In this case, many social networks have begun to emerge. We can also think of social media as a type that is generally used in virtual environments. Social media are digital media environments and technologies that provide users with the opportunity to interact with each other and allow them to create content individually or in groups (Erbaşlar, 2013).

The Difference Between Traditional Media and Social Media

In the developing and changing digital world market, the needs of individuals have become more diversified in the digital world, and the concepts that include individual needs in this world have become diversified day by day. Social media, which tries to contain the traditional structure, is a set of auditory, visual, moving, that is, image-containing combinations. However, the big difference between traditional media and social media is that the space limitation has disappeared. In other words, traditional media has started to converge with social media. Geray (2023) stated in a study that new communication technologies emerged thanks to the dynamics of convergence. Pereira (2002), on the other hand, draws attention to the fact that the concept of convergence has an economic dimension as well as its technical meaning.

Use of Social Media

As a result of the rapid integration of our daily life with the internet, our daily routines have also changed. Therefore, it is noticeable that devices such as radios, televisions, telephones, etc., which were previously fixed in our homes, are now always in our hands in the form of smartphones that contain many features. As a result of the widespread use of smartphones, internet prices have become cheaper and easily accessible; With many new applications and applications needed, an online environment has been created where it has become an indispensable part of one's life. Today, it has become one of the inseparable elements of our lives thanks to the possibility of sharing the same environments with various social networks, regardless of the location of individuals. It is stated that the overload of social media causes an important techno-stressor and creates a negative result related to the intention of discontinuous use (Lin et al., 2021:1) Therefore, the user base is important. The most important group that needs to be examined among the user base is married couples.

Social Media Use by Married Couples

One of the contributions of the internet, which is widespread in the light of digital developments in the age we live in, to the social environment has been to eliminate time and space restrictions. With the disappearance of these concepts of time and space, people have gotten rid of face-to-face meetings, which is the traditional form of communication, and have communicated through virtualization, which is more comfortable. While this form of virtual communication enables people to socialize comfortably, it has also started to threaten the marriage relationship. Ensuring that images, images and sounds can be shared quickly has not only made the lives of individuals easier, but also made illegitimate relationships more comfortable by being easy to get used to and indispensable and providing more comfortable communication. This situation has carried the form of communication between married couples to different dimensions. Situations that are not encountered in traditional media have emerged among married couples, creating new data about being examined or aroused curiosity by couples. The situation that creates these feelings is the posts of the married individual regarding the marriage status during the social media use process. Like adults, teenagers also use social media frequently. A study of children aged 14-17 found that 94% had at least one active social media account (Barry et al., 2017; as cited in Wallace, 2022:1).

Social Media Tools

Today, many online interaction tools that we can access over the internet have left behind many habits that the society was used to in the past and have progressed to become a kind of interaction medium that is actively and regularly used by people from many different age groups, every social group, every occupational group, every gender and every education level. Social media is defined as "a communication space where people communicate online around one or more topics" (Fouts, 2009: 7). Online communication networks, on the other hand, are also the leading social media channels that allow interaction together. Social media have an important place in the lives of individuals in terms of purpose of use and appearance. We can say that there are platforms that are available to us with different features such as blogs, video content creation, micro blogs, video and photo content sharing sites, forums, relationship search in social media. These features help people share content and provide users with the opportunity to access content that interests them (Kılıç, 2015: 49-50). Social media, which is determined according to different application sizes, can allow people to save time by using time effectively.

Twitter

Twitter, which is among the most used internet addresses in the world, is a place where its members can tweet through the text they write. "Tweet", which means "chirping" in our language, is among the current communication preferences of many people. The purpose of using Twitter is to create a

communication connection by answering a very simple question such as 'What are you doing?' of family and colleagues (Bauman, 2014: 22).

Facebook

Often, Facebook serves as an opportunity to escape everyday stress, improve mood, and relax (Marengo et al., 2021; as cited in Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2022). Previous research has identified two forms of Facebook use: passive and active use (Verduyn et al., 2017; as cited in Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2022). Passive use refers to monitoring the activities of other Facebook members without directly interacting with them and sharing one's own information (Appel et al., 2016; as cited in Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2022). Active use is aimed at direct social interaction with other Facebook members and the ability to present one's own information by writing private messages, making "Likes", updating written statuses, sharing pictures and public comments (Marengo et al., 2021; as cited in Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2022). Although there are many options and variety of social media tools today, it continues to serve many users with Facebook alternatives that can still keep its use and interest.

Instagram

Instagram is an American-based social media application program created in 2010. Although the purposes of the application vary from past to present, the general purpose is; It aims to change and diversify the colors, tones and appearances of the images we take from our phones, which are always at hand, thanks to the various filters in the program. At the same time, Instagram also allows the post to be shared simultaneously on social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter. In the Instagram application, thanks to the same feature as on Twitter, the hashtag can be visible to many individuals. For example, writing hashtags related to the subject #evlilik #eş #ilişki #aşk #iletişim #bebek etc. increases the numbers that follow the people. In 2015, it switched to the message application to facilitate interaction with users by changing the photo sharing feature (Erarslan, 2016: 70).

WhatsApp

The popularity of WhatsApp around the world is undeniable (Vanian, 2023). From our mobile devices; "What's Up", which is a social media tool that we can easily install, connect to and actively use from our tablets and phones that we carry with us, is at the service of many active users today. Especially during the pandemic process, the whatsapp application, which is exposed to physical restrictions with each other and provides easy and practical access to announcements to be made to one or more people, has become an indispensable application of business and social groups thanks to its support for communication in both video, audio and written form. At the same time, we can say that the fact that we can easily access this situation from our mobile devices also contributes to this situation. In the light of this information, it can be said that the whatsapp application currently meets a large part of the relationship between spouses.

Snapchat

Although the people and age groups affected by social media applications vary, they are generally based on a similar content in terms of application styles and basic features. Although Snapchat shows some changes from other social media tools in terms of the content it contains, it has similar features to general social media applications. Snapchat is a privacy-focused mobile sharing application that allows time-limited photo/video sharing, created in 2011 with Stanford University student Evan Spiegel and his friends (Snapchat, 2016). An average of 9,000 snaps are made per second all over the world (Beck, 2016).

Tiktok

Tiktok was the most installed mobile app on Apple and Android devices in Europe and America in 2018 (BBCNews, 2021). TikTok is an app for making and sharing short videos. Videos are not square like in Snapchat or Instagram stories, and video transitions can be viewed by swiping up and down like a stream, not by tapping or swiping from side to side (Herrman, 2019).

Tinder

It reveals that in the U.S., 15% of the population uses dating and dating sites, while 5% of couples meet and marry on such platforms (as cited in Tanrıöver and Sunam, 2017: 12; as cited in Aydoğan, 2020:292). In the Tinder application, members specify their city, village, town, favorite activities, physical characteristics, interests, and in the light of these details, they are matched with the most suitable candidates they will like.

Use of Social Media in the World and Turkey

With the emergence of the web 2.0 base, social tools have added a new dimension to interpersonal communication. Social media has changed communication processes as well as lifestyles (Yengin, 2012: 114). As a natural reflection of this, it will be inevitable to think that people with a widespread number of followers, who will set an example in terms of relationships, spouses, expectations and marriage, also affect other members of society, that is, users.

Simply put, social media can be thought of as social media where people can plan comments, shares and activities that support them to communicate online. According to another point of view, social media can be expressed as the ability of individuals to share information, thoughts, interests and information (Özdemir et al., 2014: 59).

Social Media Use by Gender

In line with Pew Research (2018) data; 51.25% of active social media accounts are women, and 48.75% of men are in this environment. Although social media differs in terms of user options, it is not correct to interpret them as gender when different usage characteristics are taken into account. Use of social

media applications; It can be evaluated together with family environment, education level, place of life, age and personal characteristics.

Social Media Use by Age

Although the age limit for using social platforms is 13, there is also a point of view that it may pose a threat to the use of young ages (Ofcom, 2008). While channels such as Snapchat, tiktok, etc. increase the attention of day by day, their negative effects also emerge. In line with the studies on social media, these areas, which have negative qualities, become visible.

Due to the fact that social platforms prevent spending time efficiently, the need to comment on all of friends' posts and the need to be followed popularly, etc., in fact, course and homework time is transferred to spending time in these areas, and therefore, in addition to not having enough time for activities such as research, reading, etc., insensitive sharing of personal information causes negative or inappropriate content to spread quickly It can be.

The Concept of Marriage

Marriage in accordance with the Civil Code; It is specified as a civil law contract as well as the life partnership of the spouses (Yenisey, 2009). Marriage in line with the definition of the Turkish Language Association; It is expressed in the form of being married. A different approach characterizes marriage as "a contract to produce children" (Gökçe 1978).

Communication Between Married Couples

Considering the situations faced by spouses in terms of marriage and couple relations, it can be said that the most important of these are discussions and conversations aimed at resolving the conflict situation, that is, the skills of establishing healthy communication with each other. If they are not open to receiving support and developing these healthy communication skills, it can negatively affect the quality of their marriage and relationship. This, in turn, can be said to affect the marital relationship and affect the satisfaction and quality of marriage. This affects people's quality of life.

If we talk about the importance of healthy and adequate communication at the beginning of the problems we encounter in this current life, it is an undeniable fact how important and necessary healthy communication is in spouse, child, small or large family, relationship, dating and lover situations. It varies according to the dimensions of communication that directly affect the quality of life and enjoyment of life. In family interaction, where speech, vocal, verbal or non-verbal communication is intensely necessary, we can also see that these relationships are reflected in today's social media channels. It would not be wrong to talk about the importance of being able to communicate healthily and express oneself and one's wishes comfortably and in the right ways in

order to seek and find solutions to problems, to express one's feelings correctly, to reveal the requirements and to maintain mutual harmony. In this context, we can include large groups of family and friends in the family as well as the two-spouse relationship. Speaking the same language, not as a word, but as a language of communication, is an important factor in terms of getting the necessary satisfaction from the relationship and marriage, being able to establish this healthy word and body language process between husband and wife, children, nuclear family and family of origin. This factor has been carried to virtual environments with the widespread use of social media today. Along with features such as registering relatives and writing relationship status on social media tools such as Facebook, it has become visible in social media channels, especially with the dimensions of person tagging that has become widespread on Instagram. At the same time, we can observe that joint family social media accounts have been opened.

Virtual Communication and Social Media

It is inevitable for us to see that they continue their communication with easy-to-use tools such as whatsapp during the day, and through these tools, they enrich their family, spouse and friends who are near or far with various emojis, both visual and audible. It is important for family relations that the communication established here is healthy and of high quality. In social media applications, the fact that there are sections where you can adjust whether people see or not see instant shares, and the fact that some posts have features such as opening and closing to the desired person affects the options of seeing family shares, and therefore sharing options.

Social networking sites can sometimes seem like a pillar that can support the person to stay with themselves and get away from the environment where they are in distress and feel stuck. Excessive use of social network environments triggers behavioral and psychological disorders (Diker and Taşdelen, 2017:200). In line with this information, considering the fact that virtual media members may develop an addiction to spending time on the internet, it can be said that they tend to move away from real life due to spending too much time in those channels.

The Effects of Social Media Use on the Psychology of Married Individuals

In terms of family relations, it is important for the spouses' communication with each other, solving the problems between them and maintaining a healthier and happier marital relationship in terms of their psychology when considered from a larger framework. The characteristics of healthy families are loyalty, appreciation, spending time together, communication, beliefs and values, and overcoming skills (Gönen and Purutçuoğlu, 2009). The mentioned skills lose their depth with the excessive use of virtual media. In terms of these, excessive use of social media can be considered a stress factor in terms of spouse and marriage relationship.

Depression

With the proliferation of the internet and virtual sharing environments, space and time boundaries have lost their importance and it has become very easy to socialize with different people, and it has become inevitable that this situation will be reflected in the private life of the person. As this situation increased over time, the individual felt bad, caused a decrease in self-confidence and maybe depression over time. We can also state that these negative situations of the individual negatively affect the spouse, relationship and family status, causing the problems of marriages to increase and even divorces. Excessive and problematic use of social media is associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety (Seabrook et al., 2016).

Other users who think that they do not give themselves the opportunities that life gives to other people and follow their posts closely may lose their self-confidence. As a result of comparing people's spousal relationships and lives with the posts of other users based on what they see on social media, it can be called a support for the negative impact of marital relations when they do not have the same conditions or when they are perceived only as much as they are shown. Due to the excessive use of social networks, the feelings of inadequacy and many factors that the person experiences when seeing vacation and shopping photos occur, causing an increase in the symptoms of depression (Savastio, 2013).

The Effects of Social Media Use on Relationships Between Married Couples

Socially used online applications on the Internet have a significant impact on marital relationships. Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok, Youtube, etc. are controlled and monitored by many people from the moment they get up in the morning. These habits have made these tools and similar programs an indispensable part of our lives. At the same time, thanks to these social media tools used for new and different information and content, there have been changes in interpersonal communication and interaction. With its contribution to ease of use and access, it has brought a different dimension in emotional and bilateral relations. While fast communication can be seen as beneficial by people, even people who are next to each other have the opportunity to talk face-to-face, while spending a lot of time on social media can be stated as a negative feature. Young (1998: 243) revealed in his research that marriages deteriorate and deteriorate with excessive internet use. As a result, we can say that bilateral romantic relationships are affected by the use of social networks due to interpersonal interaction and interactions.

In researches on the effects of social spaces and social media tools, we can discuss the negative reflections of their effects. We can say that social platforms are the relationship in changing spousal relationships and ending marriages. On social media, dating relationships are imposed on people as if they are a normal lifestyle, while divorces are stated as an ordinary event. (Subaşı and Urtekin, 2014:610). Yalnızlık duygusu çeşitli yaş gruplarıyla beraber 30 yaşın üstündeki bekar bireylerde de

görülmektedir (Yıldız, 2012: 532). Kendi başına olmaktan sıkılan, yalnızlıklarını değiştirmek isteyen bireyler sosyal ağlar dışında sanal oyunlarla diğer kullanıcılarla iletişim halinde olabilmektedirler.

Method

In this article, the "Compilation of Documentary Sources" method applied by Seyidoğlu (2009) was preferred. With this method, publications related to social media were examined in reliable indexes and studies suitable for the article were included. The keywords "social media", "marital relationship", "relationship satisfaction", "communication quality" and "conflicts" were used to find studies examining the effect of social media use on marital relationship. The findings obtained from the research were evaluated with the researcher's own ideas.

Findings

Findings from research reveal that communication between couples has become more frequent and easier thanks to instant messaging, video calls and sharing through social media. It is emphasized that it is a particularly important means of communication for couples living far away. This can strengthen the bond between couples by eliminating time and space limitations. Additionally, communicating through social media platforms can help couples meet their emotional needs and reinforce a sense of trust. With social media platforms, couples share their experiences together. Couples can be involved in each other's lives with special events and sharing about daily life. This contributes to the strengthening of the bond between couples. Couples can use social media as an effective tool to amplify shared experiences and record special memories. Couples who see the idealized lives seen on social media may feel unhappy or incomplete by comparing their own relationships to these standards. This can lead to a lack of self-confidence and relationship dissatisfaction. A partner may constantly see other couples on social media who seem to be perfect, and their relationship may feel incomplete, inadequate, or unhappy. A conscious approach is required to prevent the emergence of comparison and self-confidence problems between couples. As a result, it seems that social media can lead to comparison and self-esteem problems in the marital relationship. To overcome these issues, it is important to take a conscious approach, strengthen communication and trust. Most couples have emphasized the importance of conscious use and setting boundaries to protect themselves from the negative effects of social media. It's important to keep time spent on social media in check, focus on the real-life relationship, and be careful about sharing special moments on social media. These findings suggest that the impact of social media on marital relationship is complex and has both positive and negative aspects. It is important for couples to approach the use of social media consciously and to be careful about communication, comparison and trust.

Discussion

Effective tools that social media use can affect communication in a marital relationship include instant messaging applications (e.g., WhatsApp, Messenger), video calling platforms (e.g., Skype, Zoom), social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram), and email. Strategies that make communication effective are factors such as regular communication, providing emotional support, understanding listening, open and honest communication, showing empathy, and using positive expressions.

The effect of experiences shared on social media on the bond in the marital relationship may vary depending on how couples evaluate these posts. The contribution of social media use to privacy and fidelity issues in the marital relationship depends on how couples behave on social media. Being transparent about privacy and loyalty can help maintain trust. The use of social media is of great importance in the marital relationship and setting boundaries. There are various resources for seeking support and raising awareness of the use of social media in the marital relationship. For example, using professional support services such as couples therapy or relationship counseling can provide couples with guidance on how to use social media. In addition, it is important for couples to learn about the effects of social media and healthy usage strategies by participating in awareness-raising programs. Information resources such as online resources, books or seminars can also support couples. Various parameters should be taken into account to understand why the effects of social media on the marital relationship differ in terms of age groups and cultural factors. For example, there may be differences between the use and interactions of young couples with social media and the use and interactions of middle-aged or older couples. Likewise, cultural values, norms, and expectations can influence the effects of social media on the marital relationship. Therefore, it is important to carry out studies in which these parameters are taken into account. Long-term observation or panel studies can be done to understand the impact of social media on marital relationship more deeply. In this way, the long-term effects of social media and changes in relationships can be better understood.

Conclusions and Suggestion

The impact of social media use on marital relationships is complex and multifaceted. When managed well, social media can facilitate communication between couples, increase shared experiences, and provide support. However, overuse can result in negative effects such as comparison and self-esteem issues, lack of communication, and trust issues. It's important for couples to be intentional in their use of social media, set healthy boundaries, and focus on the real-life relationship. In addition, making an effort to strengthen communication skills, build trust, and use social media in a positive way can also contribute positively to the marital relationship. Seeking professional help, such as marriage counseling, can also provide support for couples in understanding and coping with the effects of social media. The impact of social media use on marital relationship is a complex issue and can be evaluated from different perspectives.

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