

The Position of Adult Religious Education in Social Media as a Field of Religious Communication

İsmail Demir¹

Abstract: The age in which we live is characterized as one of rapid, radical change and radical upheaval, and assessments are made in this regard. We see that radio, television and newspapers, which were once called mass media, are now being replaced by new media. The opportunities offered by new media and social media technology have been used in many areas, including in the transmission of religious values and in notification and advice. The virtual network in which the content produced and published by users over the Internet is shared by these users is called social media. After the introduction of the Internet into human life, the concept of social media has spread widely over time and with the activation of users of social media platforms, the way religion is conveyed has changed. The impact of social media is not limited to the sharing of individual facts and thoughts, but has a direct impact on traditional life, culture and religious life. This study attempted to examine the impact of social media, which has actively embedded itself in every aspect of our lives, on the transformation of religious education. Our study was taken in order to show guidance on how social media can be used more efficiently and was written using the content analysis method. It is seen as important in this aspect.

Keywords: Education, Media, Religious Education, Social Media

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Dini Tebliğ Alanı Olarak Sosyal Medyada Yetiřkin Din Eđitiminin Konumu

Özet: Yařadığımız çağ hızlı, köklü deđiřimlerin, radikal dönüřümlerin yařandığı bir çağ olarak nitelendirilmekte ve buna iliřkin deđerlendirilmeler yapılmaktadır. Geçmiřte kitle iletiřim araçları olarak ifade edilen radyo, televizyon ve gazetenin yerini günümüzde yeni medyanın aldığını görmekteyiz. Yeni medya-sosyal medya teknolojisinin sunduđu imkanlar birçok alanda kullanıldığı gibi dinî deđerleri öğretmede, tebliğ ve irşad faaliyetlerinde de kullanılmıştır. Teknolojinin ilerlemesi, mevcut iletiřim kanallarında da yenilikler ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Farklı iletiřim kanallarının ortaya çıkmasıyla birlikte sosyal ağların sunduđu alternatifler üzerinden yeni mecralar oluşturulmaktadır. Günümüzde sosyal medya olarak bilinen bu mecraanın Müslümanların mesajı iletme sorumluluđunu nasıl etkilediđini görmek önemlidir. Sosyal medya aracılığıyla sınırsız sayıda insana ulařmanın sađladığı imkânlar, İslam'a davet alanının geniřletilmesinde oldukça önemlidir. İnternet aracılığı ile kullanıcılar tarafından üretilen, ortaya koyulan içeriklerin yine bu kullanıcılar tarafından paylaşıldığı sanal ağ,

¹ **Assoc. Prof. Dr. İsmail Demir**, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Faculty of Divinity, ORCID: 0000-0001-9756-1901.
Email: ismail.demir@comu.edu.tr

sosyal medya olarak tanımlanmaktadır. İnternetin insan hayatına girdiđi süreçten sonra sosyal medya kavramının zamanla yaygınlaşması, sosyal medya platform kullanıcılarının aktifleşmesiyle birlikte dinin aktarım şekillerinde dönüşümler olmuştur. Sosyal medyanın etkileri sadece bireysel olgu ve düşüncelerin paylaşılması ile sınırlı kalmayarak geleneksel yaşamı, kültürü ve dini hayatı doğrudan etkilemektedir. Çalışmamız sosyal medyanın daha verimli nasıl kullanılabileceđi konusunda yol göstermek amacıyla ele alımıř ve içerik analizi yöntemiyle yazılmıştır. Çalışma bu yönüyle önemli görölmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eğitim, din eğitimi, medya, sosyal medya

INTRODUCTION

In today's world where social media is extremely popular, the healthy relationship between religious education and social media depends on the people. Using social media for religious education is important to reach many people in a short period of time. Therefore, more studies should be conducted to improve religious people's use of social media and shed light on their perspectives and approaches to social media. In addition to observing and identifying the interests of young people, it is also necessary to connect these areas with religion and somehow attract their attention. The Internet has changed the perceptions that individuals used to have (Akıncı, Beril & Bat, 2010).

As in all areas, it has become essential in the area of religious education to abandon the classic methods and develop new methods. The changing learning habits of young people are obvious, so it is necessary to broadcast on the same frequency to communicate with them. Lengthy lectures bore listeners and make it difficult to understand the message that is being conveyed to the other person.

Social media has even influenced the way we give lectures. Instead of the "authority-oriented lecture", the "user-oriented lecture" has prevailed (Gezginci & Iřıklı, 2018). If the old-style authority-oriented lecture method is maintained, it can be seen that young people are dissatisfied and reinforce their prejudices. Even in the language used to convey religious knowledge, it is necessary to use the language of religion in a way that warms the hearts in the style of generalization, tolerance, mercy, compassion and kindness softened rather than using the concept of authority. In human nature, kindness and gentleness are emotions that have always existed, but it can be observed that they are a little more pronounced today. Therefore, it seems possible to attract people to religion using only the language of love, by emphasizing the feeling of compassion.

It is known that in Islam there are the terms "irřad and tebliğ". While İrřad means "to find the right path and take it with determination" (Topalođlu, 2021), tebliğ means "to deliver something or a message" (Boynukalın, 2021). The transmission of messages is one of the tasks of the prophets. Apart from being one of the duties of the Prophets, all Muslims have a responsibility in this regard. In fact, the Holy Quran points to the concept of notification with the term "Amr bi "l-Ma "ruf wa Nehy ani "l-Münker" (Ali Imran 3/104).

Social networks, which are of great importance in reaching people in our time, should be actively used for evangelization and counseling activities. If social media is not supported in a way that contributes to the moral development of the individual, it will neither be a tool from which the individual can benefit nor will it be a useful use for educational programs. As attachment to substance has increased, it has become necessary to satisfy people in a spiritual sense. The path to spiritual satisfaction for the individual lies through a healthy religious education.

METHODOLOGY

This study, the data is obtained through document analysis. Document analysis is the acquisition of data through the detailed study of documents in various subfields of social sciences (history, archaeology, political science, sociology) in cases where there is no possibility of collecting information through mutual questioning or observation (İslamođlu, 2016). Document analysis involves the analysis of written content about the phenomenon or phenomena being studied. Document analysis can be used together with various data collection methods or it can be preferred as a sole data collection method (řimřek & Yıldırım 2013). In this framework, document analysis was used alone in our research, and the relevant data was expressed through the analysis of the publications on the relationship between social media and religion.

Purpose and Importance of the Study

It is obvious that information on social media has a manipulative effect. The only way to prevent people from being manipulated with false information is to spread correct information in places where people spend a lot of time. One of the alternatives to this is imparting healthy religious education through social media. Religious education through social media makes it easier to reach people and this method will enrich religious education. Given the evolving technology and human memory, it is understandable that memories should be filled with useful things.

Through social media, which offers unlimited opportunities for interaction, people with different views and beliefs communicate regardless of religion, language and race. It can be observed that in this virtual world, individuals create their own environment and fulfill many needs, from exchanging ideas to making friends through social media. All these developments and the fact that it has become an indispensable behavior to carry out the socialization activity, which is a natural need of today's humans, through these channels increase the importance of research.

Subject of the Study

Social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, which have recently entered our lives and are very popular, have been used by many people in the world and in Türkiye for a long time. Social media is web-based services that provide individuals with features such as creating their own profiles, chatting, sharing, video calling and gaming. The fact that social media lends itself to updating and creates an environment in which people can express their opinions has made people enjoy using it. With the developing technology and the increasing number of such social networks, the usage time of these networks is increasing day by day.

General Evaluation on Social Media and Religious Education

Communication technologies have evolved in various forms over the course of technological development from the past to the present. In the early days, people communicated and received information via telegraph, radio and television. With the development of technology, the concept of Internet has emerged. The use of the Internet coupled with computer and telephone technologies has enabled people to benefit from various aspects of technology. In addition, it has significantly influenced social and business life. According to TurkStat, 98.7% of households in Türkiye have a telephone. In this regard, it can be said that the use of the phone is widespread among people.

Nowadays, people can instantly access the information they want using their phones. At the same time, they can make friends by joining social media platforms and participating in groups and activities. In addition, various content such as videos, images, etc. can also be shared on social media platforms. People from all over the world can log on to social media platforms and share these posts. At this point, pollution occurs with various information, whether true or false.

In particular, the perception of religion and religious education opens the door to abuse. It is common to spread false information by exploiting people's spirituality. Therefore, people should be careful while using social media. Believing information received on social media unchecked and spreading false information can lead to the creation of crowds.

Given these factors, it is important that people pay attention to their social media usage. It is important that parents demonstrate conscious behavior by educating themselves and their children about social media.

Social Media through Communique

Religion, which has existed since the first humans and likes to be visible, protects its existence even in the age of communication. In our age, which is called the age of communication, religion has sometimes influenced the individual and has sometimes been in the position of the affected person. As social media is used for all sorts of purposes, it is also used to share religious content and content that reflects religious sentiments. The fact that religion uses social media for announcements and invitations has therefore brought a dimension of religiosity to social media platforms.

It is a well-known fact that social media has now captured every sphere and every minute of life. Therefore, it has become a necessity to use social media channels to convey religion to people. If you look at the use of social media, you will see that the main purpose is to increase the number of followers. However, the aim is to spread religion and the tool should be updated as well as the use of social media. When it comes to shared content, funny or sad content that appeals to people's emotions is very popular.

Islam recommends communicating with people according to the concept of "emri bil maruf nehyi anil münker", and Islam develops through communication. The first point to consider when communicating is style (Sosyalmedyaber.com (SMH), accessed September 12, 2021). The communicator expresses his message as "mubelliğ", which means that he should express his message not only as a sender but also as fasih, clear, clear, clear, correct, but absolutely beautiful (Çamdereli, 2018). Time and place come after style. After confirming the reliability of the information, any dissemination of information about the religion with the intention of conveying it to those who do not know Islam will be included in the communication.

Social Media as a Field of Communication

The age we are in includes definitions such as the age of technology, communication and social networks. Considering the possibilities and innovations that come with the development of technology and the effectiveness of social networks, these definitions can be said to be realistic. These concepts have flowed into our lives by mixing with each other's development. Technological progress brings innovations to existing communication channels. With the emergence of different communication channels, new channels are created through the alternatives offered by social networks. What is important is how this medium, which has found a place in our time as social media, affects Muslims' responsibility for communication. The opportunities presented by the ability to reach an unlimited number of people through social media are very important in expanding the field of invitation to Islam (Ikra Association - Accessed March 20, 2022).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) aimed to spread the revelation he had received from Allah in his time to everyone he could reach, using all the means of communication at his disposal. The task of spreading Islam, which is the legacy of the Prophet, can be easily accomplished through the use of digital media, which represents a new, effective and powerful means of communication. From this point of view, it is very important to use all accessible organs of digital media, which are known to be as great a power as the legislative, executive and judiciary in the world, for the task of publicizing.

When social media is used for communication purposes, it should be presented with content that appeals to everyone, regardless of segment. It is necessary to create content that attracts the attention even of individuals or communities not affiliated with Islam, with innovations that everyone can discover for themselves and using absolutely accurate and reliable sources.

The general opinion expressed in research on social media highlights the effect of digital media on the phenomenon of amplification rather than on improving a situation (Akgül 2017). For this reason, another important point in conversion through digital media is to bring to a higher level individuals or communities who have accepted Islam but cannot fully fulfill its commandments. Although conversion through digital media appears to be more accessible, the most useful type of conversion is face-to-face conversion, as there may be problems with excelling after conversion or returning to the old situation if the person stops to follow content.

The segment to target on social media should be analyzed in detail. The people the posts will reach can be divided into two parts: people who are open to the report and positive about the posts, and negative people who are not satisfied with the report. When producing content on social media, the situation of whether one is satisfied or not must be taken into account. However, it would be appropriate to produce content in a way that can be understood by everyone, taking into account that there may be people in the negative group who are sympathetic to the message. The positive attitude of spreading the revelation on social media is that people come together with the same goal. This common goal guides people in the same direction.

As an example of a common goal, the recent Intifada trials (uprising of the Palestinian people), the Gezi events and the events of October 6-8 can be cited. In all these events, digital media was effectively used and played an important role in the uprisings with a common goal (Kasap, 2015). Let's look at the positive and negative aspects: In the Gezi events, the opponents of Islam united by organizing through digital media, and in the October 6th and 8th massacre, the locations of innocent people were deliberately broadcast through digital media. The reason why these situations are so received in digital media is because there is a receptive segment that accepts these ideas (Kasap, 2015: 427).

Since each individual's interests are different, it is very difficult to attract individual's attention for the office of notification through digital media.

In the modern world, we have started to value many things in our lives with technological innovations. The fact that the phenomenon of digital media, which manifests itself as a different track with communication and communication technologies, today means more than the relationship established through communication tools in society, is important evidence that the impact of the digital media is not limited to the transformation of media technologies (Akgül, 2017). Today, terms such as virtual identity, virtual community, virtual public space are current expressions that have emerged in line with the shaping of social relationships through digital media. It is difficult to make a healthy assumption about the discussions about these concepts that have arisen with the advent of social media because of how current they are, but it is useful to consider these concepts in order to understand the impact of digital media on society to recognize (Akgül, 2017: 89).

The changes in social relationships linked to social networks have changed the nature of communities tasked with transmitting religion, and virtual communities have begun to form

within social networks, giving a new form to communities added. People who gather in different places to achieve a specific goal in daily life have formed virtual communities by adding a new form to these places where they meet through technological developments (Akarçay, 2014). Virtual communities are formed in a huge and unlimited space that the Internet offers with the possibilities of digital media. Creating virtual communities is much easier than meeting real communities because the perception of time and space is ignored.

In our era, although web-based websites are preferred for online debates, various digital media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook or Instagram have become the natural space for public debates and content sharing (Kasap, 2015: 426). These current characteristics, which have emerged with the spread of virtual community, have led to digital media gaining various activities. New views that digital media can meet the need for a contemporary public sphere add another dimension to existing debates on this topic. The concept of contemporary publics, which began to be discussed with the visibility of virtual communities, is an important phenomenon that began to be discussed with the formation and emergence of digital media-based social movements (Akgül, 2017: 90).

The contribution of digital media to social movements and debates on public space will not be ignored due to the unity and solidarity generated by the new forms of relationships created by social media. Although the Internet initially realizes its contribution to social movements as a way of accessing the world, over time, with the development and renewal of these digital media applications, it is transforming into a group space where people with the same ideas and goals come together, forming virtual communities, sharing their thoughts and continuing their own struggles.

Existing Notification Areas on Social Media

Religious communities on social media can have a significant impact on individuals' formation of religious beliefs. This goes so far that religious communities in digital media can directly influence the way individuals or societies live religious life, the level of perception and communication through their effective content on social media. Religious communities, which carry out their activities and initiatives in real societies in a more difficult and limited way, have been included in a more comfortable and far-reaching platform through the accessibility of technology.

Religious content, thoughts and orientations can have a significant impact, particularly for religious communities, through options such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram or

Facebook via large digital media structures. Religious community accounts/pages producing religious content on social media are numerous and the number of these accounts is increasing day by day.

If we look at the reports and pages of the religious communities existing on social media, it is noticeable that various religious topics are discussed and debated and a lot of content is created on these topics, generally based on verses and hadiths. However, religious community accounts include both multidimensional contributions on the topic of religion as well as contributions designed within the framework of the target topic. Additionally, account pages are named after these selected topics. For example: on Facebook; “Love of Prayer,” “Prayer,” “Prayer is the Pillar of Religion,” “Time for Prayer and Prayer,” “Ladies Who Want to Pray,” “Prayer is the Salvation of the End Times,” “Prayer is the “Light of my eyes”, "Rise in prayer", "Prayer and prayers", "Time for prayer", "Prayer and faith", "Prayer is the command of Allah", "Prayer is the miracle of the believer", "Invitation to Prayer", love of prayer", "I am learning prayer", "morning prayer", "resurrection": There are (virtual) religious communities that come together under the theme of "prayer" with different names such as "prayer".

If we look at social media in general, it is possible to find examples on other religious topics, such as the examples of the Facebook “Prayer” page. On this basis, it can be said that religious communities in the field of digital media generally have a micro-level structure. An average assessment of religious communities on social media can be made using a few sites with significant numbers of participants among these examples. In fact, these virtual communities contain similar structures. The Facebook page called “Namaz Aşkısı”, which is open to all users, has over 44,000 participants. If you look at this site, you may come across a lot of information and sharing about various aspects of prayer.

The description section of the Prayer Love religious community page states that only information and sharing related to prayer and Friday messages are permitted, and contributions other than these are not permitted. On the other hand, the same statement particularly emphasizes that prayer should be given the utmost importance. Looking at the response to the report of the religious community in question and their contributions in general, one assumes that the aim is to emphasize the importance of prayer, which is one of the five pillars of Islam. With all this, this religious community draws attention to the violence, cruelty, humiliation and injustice against Muslims around the world and expresses the idea that this problem can be

solved by strengthening the feeling of Muslim brotherhood, resurrection, coming together and unification can be solved.

To encourage Muslim people to integrate their religion, the site also provides space for daily verses, hadiths, prayers and dhikrs. On the other hand, sometimes religious parables and stories are shared on the site and some religious books are recommended. The chapters are dedicated to the life stories of sect imams and Islamic scholars, and participants are taught the aphorisms of Islamic elders and content in accordance with Islamic jurisprudence and faith.

Another example of a religious community is the “Quran Studies Group”. When we look at the digital media of this religious community, we notice that it has a large audience both in terms of the number of participants/members and followers and also conveys a dynamic/active image with its daily posts. The Quran Research Group even published a book called “The Never-Ending Miracle of the Quran.”

This religious community account, which has around 24,000 followers or participants on YouTube and over 300,000 followers or participants on Facebook, contains various information and content about the Koran.

The Facebook page of a religious community called “Quran and Faith” is a religious formation that is specific only to its participants and not to all users. If we look at the description section of this religious community page with over 62,000 participants, they state that they follow a path that focuses on the principle of God's approval and therefore they can only publish content and comments around this principle. The site generally contains Salavat, Dhikr, Prayer, Verse and Hadith content, religiously focused chat videos, Hatim, Juz and Surah reading posts.

The Instagram page of the account “Islamiyet.com with Questions”, which is an account opened on Instagram, has about 102,000 followers. On this page, where images and videos are shared and live broadcasts take place, followers can quickly ask their questions and receive feedback, but also exchange ideas with each other about the question asked or any topic.

Another page is an account called “Islamic Words,” which is not an official website sharing network, and has 171,000 followers. The Islamic Sayings page is a religious exchange platform where followers frequently comment among themselves, increasing interaction, asking questions and receiving answers among the shared visual content.

The Facebook account used by the Press and Public Relations Advisory Office of the Presidency of Religious Affairs contains current Islamic information. Regarding religious

content, the Presidency of Religious Affairs posts on Twitter are increasingly proving effective and popular (Yazar, 2022).

CONCLUSION

In this modern era when global change is taking place, reforms and major developments based on accelerating access to information are taking place in many areas. Current developments in communication and technology offer individuals and societies a variety of opportunities. Serial communication tools updated in line with these services provided due to the development of technologies such as satellites, computers, smartphones and mobile devices; This meant that cultural and cognitive contacts between the continents could take place without any problems. The instruments of the mass media, renewed by globalization, have turned the world into a small city, deeming unnecessary the boundaries of time and space that have become problematic. However, communication and interaction between people has gained a lot of momentum.

Since the beginning of human history, religions have been favored in the compilation and collection of elements of personal and social life such as discourse, indoctrination and doctrine, using the available technological possibilities to convey their messages to individuals and communities at any time. Religious inscriptions that spread through generations were first engraved on tablets and then printed on printing presses, forming the basis for today's visual and auditory communication. In this way, communication has advanced to the point where it can quickly reach all people and communities with updates. Current media, which includes the Internet environment, digital networks and social platforms, compared to traditional media, are not limited to expanding interaction between individuals only in cultural, political and social areas, but also provide opportunities for current innovations and transformations in religious ones areas.

Religion has been careful to adapt to social reforms by not lagging behind current innovations, and with renewed modern technology, it has made religious reasons more quickly accessible to more people by transferring them from the physical environment to the virtual environment has. In this context, social media, which has become a routine of daily life rather than a means of communication, has facilitated access to religious information through its ease of access, use and sharing.

Religious groups and communities interested in social and technological innovations demonstrate their wisdom in not allowing themselves to be left behind by these innovations.

Religions that seek to present their teachings on a global scale using the power of mass media are making new breakthroughs by turning the power of electronic and digital media and the Internet into opportunities. In our time, virtual religious broadcasts are made in audio and video form, various virtual places of worship are opened, virtual fatwa opportunities are offered, and sacred texts are transmitted into the virtual environment so that all people and societies can access them simultaneously and quickly.

Just like the terms *irşad* and *tabliğ*, which exist in the Islamic faith, they are important in the context of social calls to Islam and with regard to influencing society. Favoring social media for guidance and dissemination, conveying popular aspects of religion and explaining its nature are very important in terms of religious dissemination. While under normal circumstances it takes a long time for a religious person or a theology teacher to answer questions on social media such as television broadcasts, social media can be used to gather feedback and provide a common answer to similar questions in a shorter time from all followers. Given all these assessments, it is not possible that religious socialization remains unaffected by the advantages and opportunities of the times. This effect is not only a normal situation, but also a necessary one. The paths this change has taken have also greatly influenced the religious lifestyles and groupings of individuals.

The term digitalization initially captured the phenomenon of religion and brought it into a digital transformation. This situation has naturally led to the digitalization of all religious concepts such as notification, guidance and even worship. Religious life, transferred to virtual channels and spreading rapidly, has greatly influenced, changed and, as a result, digitized the structure and formation of religious communities. As an indispensable justification for the updated concept of religion, religious groups, i.e. communities, have begun to appear in virtual environments. Individuals can use virtual platforms to build religious unity and bonds with people they have not previously known or seen, and can form groups that follow the same thoughts and beliefs.

Religious practices created within the framework of adult religious education on social media divide content users among themselves and offer different services in sub-branches. Some of the application content; While some focus on prayers, hadiths and glorification, others contain all features. In addition, many practices such as learning to pray, reciting prayer surahs, sunnahs and hadiths also ensure positive interactions in terms of religious education. User-preferred applications allow selectivity in content and languages covered. In addition to the

factor of linguistic diversity, the preferred practices of religious education also vary in our country and around the world.

In line with all these assessments, it can be said that virtual environments and social media may be needed more in the future, as virtuality and digitalization increasingly cover many areas of social life and may have a dimension that can be seen as an indispensable part of the individual and social life. The point at which social media has reached not only impacts the daily lives of individuals and societies, but also directly impacts their attitudes and perceptions towards religion.

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