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Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala

ISSN: 1583-3410 (print), ISSN: 1584-5397 (electronic)

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Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială, 2021, vol. 74, pp. 48-74

<https://doi.org/10.33788/rcis.74.4>

Published by:
Expert Projects Publishing House



On behalf of:
„Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University,
Department of Sociology and Social Work
and
HoltIS Association

REVISTA DE CERCETARE SI INTERVENTIE SOCIALA
is indexed by Clarivate Analytics (Social Sciences Citation Index),
SCOPUS and CROSSREF

The Role of Agents of Political Socialization in the Use of Social Media

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the role of the agents of political socialization in the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news and political participation. The research findings suggest that there is a positive relationship between the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news and the agents of political socialization, namely, the family, friend groups, school, and traditional media. Similarly, a statistically significant relationship has been found between the use of social media as a tool for political participation and family, friend groups, school, and traditional media.

Keywords: political participation, social media, agents of political socialization, online political participation, online news.

Introduction

Citizens being informed about the issues concerning their country is an indispensable element of a well-functioning democracy, and the media has an important place in this regard (Avci, 2010). In addition to traditional media outlets such as newspapers, television, and the radio, new media tools such as online journalism and social media have become a part of our lives as a result of technological developments. With the widespread use of the Internet, new media outlets that provide information flow from multiple sources have started to emerge in addition to the one-way information flow provided by the traditional media; this is the main difference between traditional media and new media. It is possible to say that there is a transition from traditional media to a structure where everyone can make their own contribution and information is fed by multiple sources (Güven, 2017). Simultaneously with the rest of the world, media outlets in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which enable citizens to be informed of issues related to the public sphere, have diversified with the widespread internet use.

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Literature review

According to the data of the second quarter of 2020 (April–June) in the TRNC, there are 224,826 internet users. When the data provided by the Information Technologies and Communication Authority (ITCA) are analyzed, it is noted that as of the second quarter of 2020, 335,505 citizens have smartphones. While the number of smartphone and tablet users in 2013 was 115,000, by 2020, this number increased to 335,000. It is observed that 317,810 of 335,505 smartphone and tablet users have 3G internet connection. Considering the fact that the population of the TRNC is 374,299 (Gündem Kıbrıs, 2020), it is understood that the majority of the population in the TRNC has an internet connection (ITCA, 2020).

Extensive internet usage has also increased the social media use. The research conducted by the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) Social Media Unit in 2014 to identify social media users and their habits in Northern Cyprus revealed that 50% of internet users share photos and videos and 46% share news and other content. It was seen that 95% of the participants have Facebook accounts, 49% Twitter, and 45% Instagram accounts (EMU Social Media Unit, 2020).

It is possible to say that in accordance with the increase in its popularity, social media affects daily life and changes the attitudes of individuals (Swigger, 2012). As social media became a part of our lives, different ways to use it in the context of politics have emerged. There are studies suggesting that social media platforms have a positive impact on political participation (Balci & Sarıtaş, 2015; Görgülü, 2018).

We are currently bearing witness to the use of social media in the political context as one of the most widely used tools for receiving political news political participation. Thanks to the Internet, people have had the opportunity to receive and share political news via social media (Bode, 2015; Shehata & Strömbäck, 2018; Xenos & Moy, 2007). Similarly, social media has introduced the method of online political participation by providing individuals with the opportunity to express their opinions, send messages in support of political campaigns, and criticize the government or interact with it (Ahmad, Alvi & Ittefaq, 2019; Anduiza, Gallego & Cantijoch, 2010; Di Gennaro & Dutton 2006; Valenzuela, Kim & Gil de Zúñiga, 2011).

The relationship between various independent variables and the use of social media as both a tool for receiving political news and political participation has become an increasingly appealing subject of research in the literature. In studies conducted on the different variables in the use of social media for political news in the literature, the variables of gender, trust (Bode, 2015), self-efficacy, interest in politics, and trust in government (Kaye & Johnson, 2002) stand out. Accordingly, the nature of the relationship between the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news and the traditional agents of political socialization, such as the family, friend groups, school, and traditional media, has largely been neglected.

In this context, while there is a significant relationship between social media as a tool for receiving political news and friend groups (Miller *et al.*, 2015), traditional media (Kaid, 2003), and especially television (Brubaker, 2010), the number of studies on this relationship is few. Similarly, although the relationship between social media and the independent variables of friends, (Miller *et al.*, 2015; Vitak *et al.*, 2011), school curriculum (Pontes, Henn & Griffiths, 2019), and television (Gil de Zúñiga *et al.*, 2010) was addressed in studies conducted on the use of social media as a tool for political participation, other agents of political socialization were neglected.

This study aims to determine the role of the agents of political socialization in the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news and political participation. For this purpose, the role of the independent variables that are known to be influential in political socialization, namely, family, school, friend groups, and traditional media, in the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news and political participation is investigated.

The widespread social media use, which is an outcome of technological developments that affect our lives, has spilled over to the field of politics as well. Despite the increasing number of studies on the use of social media for political expression, the relationship between the use of social media both as a tool for political participation and receiving news as well as the agents of political socialization has not yet been adequately examined, which increases the importance of the contribution this study aims to make. Examining the relationship between family, school, friend groups, and traditional media, which are known to be influential in political socialization, and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news and political participation will provide new information on the use of social media and help understand how influential the agents of political socialization are. Additionally, while the literature on the use of social media for political expression focuses on young people as social media users, there is a need for more studies to better understand its use in the political context of the general population. Therefore, another significance of the study is that it focuses on the use of social media for political expression by the general, heterogeneous population.

The Role of Agents of Political Socialization

Family

The authors argue that the family - where the individuals first socialize - can impact the individuals' political socialization as well (Alkan, 1979; Hyman, 1959). The family is the first setting where the individuals encounter the set of norms, values, cultural behaviors, and traditions defined by society. Lasswell argues that there is a direct relationship between individuals' political attitudes and their families (Alkan, 1979). In a study where the researcher concluded that

the communication between the family members and a child affects the child's political attitudes and behaviors, it was concluded that the children coming from protective families have less political awareness and sense of social responsibility, whereas the children coming from families that have a sense of pluralism are more knowledgeable as well as more politically inclined (Adams, 1985: 65-67). Considering its role in both political participation and gaining or acquiring political knowledge, it is possible to expect that the family - as one of the agents of political socialization - may play a crucial role in the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news and political participation. Therefore, the following hypotheses can be suggested regarding the relationship between the family and the use of social media for political expression:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the family, one of the agents of political socialization, and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news.

H2: There is a positive relationship between the family and the use of social media as a tool for political participation.

School

It is accepted that the school - which is considered to be another agent of political socialization - plays an important role in the transmission of social values and teaching the political structure of the country and the functions of the elements of this structure to the members of the society through education, and this situation has been addressed in several studies to this day (Candan & Işık, 2019). There is an important relationship between the continuation of the political system and the education of citizens on this system. In addition to the studies showing that education increases political knowledge and interest in politics (Altan, 2011), there are also studies indicating that the school may influence young people whose families are highly interested in politics (Stadelmann-Steffen & Sulzer, 2018). A study conducted in Hong Kong on young people concluded that teachers have an influence on the political activism of young people (Lee, 2016). In this study, it is contemplated that the school as an agent of political socialization may play a role in the use of social media for political expression. It is possible to expect the relationship between the role of the school as a source of political knowledge and social media as a means of receiving political news to be positive. Accordingly, it can be argued that since the school is influential on traditional political participation, it may influence the forms of political participation in social media as well. As a matter of fact, one study found that the school curriculum influenced online political participation (Pontes, Henn & Griffiths, 2019). Accordingly, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H3: There is a significant relationship between the school and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news.

H4: There is a positive relationship between the school and the use of social media as a tool for political participation.

Friend Groups

Several findings indicate that friend groups - which are regarded as another agent of political socialization - are influential in the development of political attitudes and behaviors, and they affect the level of political participation (Quintelier, 2015; Quintelier, Stolle & Harell., 2012; Yolçu, 2017). The studies conducted in Turkey revealed that party choice is influenced by friend groups, thereby drawing attention to the importance of face-to-face relationships (Anik, 2000: 253). However, there is little evidence that friend groups influence the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news and political participation (Miller *et al.*, 2015; Vitak *et al.*, 2011). In this context, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H5: There is a positive relationship between friend groups and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news.

H6: There is a significant relationship between friend groups and the use of social media as a tool for political participation.

Media

The influence of media as one of the agents of political socialization on the development of political attitudes and behaviors has been a matter of debate in the literature. According to a study conducted in the 1980s, different types of media affect political knowledge and behavior in various ways. In this context, reading a newspaper has more impact on political participation than other types of media (Garramone & Atkin, 1986). There is evidence that the media increase the knowledge of its followers regarding certain issues. For example, in a study conducted in Sweden, it was concluded that the media has an essential role in raising the awareness of citizens of environmental problems (Östman, 2014). Although the importance of both traditional media and social media as sources of political knowledge and political news is known, the number of studies on the nature of the relationship between the two is limited. However, the positive relationships between social media as a tool for receiving political news and traditional media, especially the television, and between the use of social media as a tool for political participation and television lead us to put forward the following hypotheses:

H7: There is a positive relationship between traditional and social media in terms of the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news.

H8: There is a positive relationship between traditional and social media in terms of the use of social media as a tool for political participation.

Methodology

The population of the study comprised individuals living in the TRNC who are bound to the country through citizenship and are over the age of 18 years. Face-to-face surveys were conducted with a total of 490 people using stratified sampling. Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are as follows: in terms of gender, 43% (214) were women and 56% (276) men; in terms of place of birth, 60% (294) were born in Northern Cyprus, 5% (26) Southern Cyprus, and 34% (170) in Turkey; in terms of the literacy level, 0% (2) were illiterate, 18% (91) were literate - primary school graduates, 19% (95) were literate - middle school graduates, 31.1% (162) were literate - high school graduates, 26% (131) were literate - university graduates, and 1% (9) were literate - having master's degree; and in terms of the district of residence, 32% (161) resided in Nicosia, 24% (119) resided in Famagusta, 24.1% (118) resided in Kyrenia, 6% (31) resided in Morphou, 8% (42) resided in Trikomo, and 3% (19) resided in Lefka.

The data of the study were collected between February and April 2019 through face-to-face surveys. The questionnaire used in the survey consists of three parts. While multiple-choice questions were used in the first part to collect data on the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants; four-point Likert-type questions were used in the second part where data were collected on the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news and in the third part where data were collected on the use of social media as a tool for political participation. The questions were structured based on the questions in the questionnaire developed by Onkarappa (2012) in his study titled "Patterns and Challenges to Political Socialization of the High School Students: A Case Study of Shimoga District." Moreover, the questions in the questionnaire developed by Chen and Chan (2017) in their study titled "Motivations for social media use and impact on political participation in China: A cognitive and communication mediation approach" were also used.

The normality of the collected data was measured through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and it was concluded that the dependent variables met the assumption of normality. Later, parametric tests were used to analyze the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The use of social media as a tool for political participation, and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news were determined as two dependent variables, and independent variables were determined to be the family, the school, friend groups, and media - which are agents of political socialization. In line with this research model, the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was applied to reveal the statistical relationship between the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news and political participation and agents of political socialization.

Results

The findings of the MANOVA conducted to reveal the relationship between the agents of political socialization - such as the family, school, friend groups, and media - and the use of social media as a tool for both receiving political news and political participation are as follows:

Family

Table 1. The relationship between the political activities of the parents and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news

Levene's	.040		
Pillai's Trace	.000		
Partial Eta Squared	.024		
Post Hoc Tests -Tamhane's T2	Using Social Media as a Tool for Receiving Political News	Mean Differences	Sig.
By Making Propaganda	By voting	.685	.044
	Do Not/Did Not Participate	.685	.001
By Voting	Through propaganda	.685	.044
	Do Not/Did Not Participate	.685	.004
Do Not/Did Not Participate	By Making Propaganda	-.685	.001
	By Voting	-.685	.004

The result of Pillai's Trace in *Table 1* indicates that there is a significant relationship between the way the participants' parents participate in political activities and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news. It is noted that the Partial Eta Squared value explains 2% of the relationship between the variables. It is observed that the participants whose parents participate in political activities by making propaganda or voting use social media as a tool for receiving political news more frequently compared to the participants whose parents do not participate in political activities; that the participants whose parents do not participate in political activities use social media as a tool for receiving political news less frequently compared to the participants whose parents participate in political activities by making propaganda or voting; and that these differences are statistically significant.

Table 2. The relationship between the political activities of the parents and the use of social media as a tool for political participation

Levene's	. 000		
Pillai's Trace	. 000		
Partial Eta Squared	. 024		
Post Hoc Tests— Tamhane's T2	Using Social Media as a Tool for Political Participation	Mean Differences	Sig.
By Making Propaganda	By Voting	. 217	. 066
	Do Not/Did Not Participate	. 289	. 030
By Voting	By Making Propaganda	-. 217	. 066
	Do Not/Did Not Participate	. 072	. 873
Do Not/Did Not Participate	By Making Propaganda	-. 289	. 030
	By Voting	-. 072	. 873

The result of Pillai's Trace in Table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between the way the participants' parents engage in political activities and the use of social media as a tool for political participation. It is noted that the Partial Eta Squared value explains 2% of the relationship between the variables. It is observed that the participants whose parents participate in political activities by making propaganda use social media as a political participation tool more frequently compared to those whose parents do not participate in political activities and that this difference is statistically significant.

School

Table 3. The relationship with the teachers and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news

Levene's	. 716		
Pillai's Trace	. 000		
Partial Eta Squared	. 023		
Post Hoc Tests-LSD	Using Social Media as a Tool for Receiving Political News	Mean Differences	Sig.
Yes	No	. 5044 *	. 000
	I Do Not Know/I Have No Idea	. 5837 *	. 023
No	Yes	-. 5044 *	. 000
	I Do Not Know/I Have No Idea	. 0793	. 735

I Do Not Know/I Have No Idea	Yes	-. 5837 *	. 023
	No	-. 0793	. 735

Table 4. The relationship with the teachers and the use of social media as a tool for political participation

Levene's	. 002		
Pillai's Trace	. 000		
Partial Eta Squared	. 023		
Post Hoc Tests -Tamhane's T2	Using Social Media as a Tool for Political Participation	Mean Differences	Sig.
Yes	No	. 1794 *	. 039
	I Do Not Know/I Have No Idea	. 3256 *	. 000
No	Yes	-. 1794 *	. 039
	I Do Not Know/I Have No Idea	. 1462 *	. 002
I Do Not Know/I Have No Idea	Yes	-. 3256 *	. 000
	No	-. 1462 *	. 002

Pillai's Trace results in *Tables 3 and 4* show that there is a significant relationship between participants discussing political issues with their teachers and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news and political participation. It is seen that the Partial Eta Squared value explains 2% of the relationship between the variables. It is observed that the participants who discuss political issues with their teachers use social media as a means of receiving political news more frequently than those who do not; similarly, people who talk about political issues with their teachers use social media as a political participation tool more frequently than those who do not and that these differences are statistically significant.

Table 5. The Relationship between the curriculum and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news

Levene's	. 474		
Pillai's Trace	. 001		
Partial Eta Squared	. 022		
Post Hoc Tests—LSD	Using Social Media as a Tool for Receiving Political News	Mean Differences	Sig.
Yes	No	. 3301 *	. 002
	I Do Not Know/I Have No Idea	. 3794	. 059

No	Yes	-. 3301 *	. 002
	I Do Not Know/I Have No Idea	. 0493	. 784
I Do Not Know/I Have No Idea	Yes	-. 3794	. 059
	No	- .0493	. 784

Table 6. The relationship between the curriculum and the use of social media as a tool for political participation

Levene's	. 000		
Pillai's Trace	. 001		
Partial Eta Squared	. 022		
Post Hoc Tests— Tamhane's T2	Using Social Media as a Tool for Political Participation	Mean Differences	Sig.
Yes	No	. 2317 *	. 005
	I Do Not Know/I Have No Idea	. 2786 *	. 031
No	Yes	-. 2317 *	. 005
	I Do Not Know/I Have No Idea	. 0470	. 925
I Do Not Know/I Have No Idea	Yes	-. 2786 *	. 031
	No	0470	. 925

Pillai's Trace results in *Tables 5 and 6* reveal that there is a significant relationship between the participants' perception of the curriculum's inclusion of political issues and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news. It is seen that the Partial Eta Squared value explains 2% of the relationship between the variables. It is observed that the participants who think that the curriculum helps them learn about how political issues use social media as a tool to receive political news more frequently than those who do not think so; similarly, those who think that the curriculum helps them learn about how political issues use social media as a tool for political participation more frequently than those who do not think so and that these differences are statistically significant.

Friend Groups

Table 7. The relationship between discussing political issues with friends and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news

Levene's	.000		
Pillai's Trace	.000		
Partial Eta Squared	.002		
Post Hoc Tests -Tamhane's T2	Using Social Media as a Tool for Receiving Political News	Mean Differences	Sig.
Social Issues	Political Issues	-.0321	.000
	Religion, Sports, Cinema, Music, etc.	.0965	.000
Political Issues	Social Issues	.0321	.000
	Religion, Sports, Cinema, Music, etc.	.0000	.000
Religion, Sports, Cinema, Music, etc.	Social Issues	-.0965	.000
	Political Issues	-.0000	.000

The result of Pillai's Trace in *Table 7* shows that there is a significant relationship between the issues the participants discuss with their friends and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news. The Partial Eta Squared value indicates that 1% of the relationship between the variables is explained. It is observed that the participants who discuss social issues with their friends use social media as a tool to receive political news less frequently than those who discuss political issues; that the participants who discuss political issues with their friends use social media as a tool to acquire political news more frequently than those who discuss social issues, economy, religion, sports, or cinema; that the participants who discuss religion, sports, or cinema with their friends use social media as a tool for to receive political news less frequently than those who discuss political issues and that these differences are statistically different.

Table 8. The relationship between discussing political issues with friends and the use of social media as a tool for political participation

Levene's	. 000		
Pillai's Trace	. 000		
Partial Eta Squared	. 002		
Post Hoc Tests -Tamhane's T2	Using Social Media as a Tool for Political Participation	Mean Differences	Sig.
Social Issues	Political Issues	.0475	. 000
	Religion, Sports, Cinema, Music, etc.	. 0025	. 000
Political Issues	Social issues	. 0475	. 000
	Religion, Sports, Cinema, Music, etc.	. 0450	. 000
Religion, Sports, Cinema, Music, etc.	Social Issues	-. 0025	. 000
	Political Issues	0450	. 000

The result of Pillai's Trace in *Table 8* shows that there is a significant relationship between the subjects that the participants discuss their friends and the use of social media as a tool for political participation. The Partial Eta Squared value indicates that 1% of the relationship between the variables is explained. It is observed that the participants who discuss social issues with their friends use social media as a tool for political participation less frequently than those who discuss political issues, religion, or sports; that the participants who discuss political issues with their friends use social media as a tool for political participation more frequently than those who discuss social issues, religion, sports, or cinema; that the participants who discuss religion, sports, or cinema with their friends use social media as a tool for political participation more frequently than those who discuss social issues; that the participants who discuss religion, sports, or cinema with their friends use social media as a tool for political participation less frequently than those who discuss political issues and that these differences are statistically significant.

Media

Table 9. The relationship between the types of programs watched on television and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news

Levene's	. 649		
Pillai's Trace	. 002		
Partial Eta Squared	. 039		
Post Hoc Tests - LSD	Using Social Media as a Tool for Receiving Political News	Mean Differences	Sig.
Political Programs	Programs on Business/Trade	. 2029	. 379
	Programs on Agriculture	. 6404	. 287
	Programs on Education	. 1959	. 249
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 4043 *	. 001
	Sports Programs	. 2220	. 149
Programs on Business/Trade	Political Programs	-. 2029	. 379
	Programs on Agriculture	. 4375	. 487
	Programs on Education	-. 0069	. 978
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 2015	. 358
	Sports Programs	. 0191	. 937
Programs on Agriculture	Political Programs	-. 6404	. 287
	Programs on Business/Trade	-. 4375	. 487
	Programs on Education	-. 4444	. 466
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	-. 2360	. 692
	Sports Programs	-. 4184	. 489
Programs on Education	Political Programs	-. 1959	. 249
	Programs on Business/Trade	. 0069	. 978
	Programs on Agriculture	. 4444	. 466
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 2084	. 175
	Sports Programs	. 0261	. 887

Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	Political Programs	-. 4043 *	. 001
	Programs on Business/Trade	-. 2015	. 358
	Programs on Agriculture	. 2360	. 692
	Programs on Education	-. 2084	. 175
	Sports Programs	-. 1823	. 180
Sports Programs	Political Programs	-. 2220	. 149
	Programs on Business/Trade	-. 0191	. 937
	Programs on Agriculture	. 4184	. 489
	Programs on Education	-. 0261	. 887
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 1823	. 180

The result of Pillai's Trace in *Table 9* shows that there is a significant relationship between the types of programs the participants prefer to watch and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news and political participation. The Partial Eta Squared value indicates that 3% of the relationship between the variables is explained. It is observed that the participants who prefer to watch political programs on television use social media as a means of receiving political news more frequently than those who prefer to watch programs on music, or cinema and that this difference is statistically significant.

Table 10. The relationship between the types of programs watched on television and the use of social media as a tool for political participation

Levene's	. 000		
Pillai's Trace	. 002		
Partial Eta Squared	. 039		
Post Hoc Tests -Tamhane's T2	Using Social Media as a Tool for Political Participation	Mean Differences	Sig.
Political Programs	Programs on Business/Trade	. 3342 *	. 000
	Programs on agriculture	. 3342 *	. 000
	Programs on Agriculture	. 0175	1.000
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 2094 *	. 034
	Sports Programs	. 2077	. 174

Programs on Business/Trade	Political Programs	-. 3342 *	. 000
	Programs on Agriculture	0.0000	
	Programs on Education	-. 3167 *	. 011
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	-. 1249 *	. 000
	Sports Programs	-. 1265	. 331
Programs on Agriculture	Political Programs	-. 3342 *	. 000
	Programs on Business/Trade	0.0000	
	Programs on Education	-. 3167 *	. 011
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	-. 1249 *	. 000
	Sports Programs	-. 1265	. 331
Programs on Education	Political Programs	-. 0175	1.000
	Programs on Business/Trade	. 3167 *	. 011
	Programs on Agriculture	. 3167 *	. 011
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 1918	. 459
	Sports Programs	. 1901	. 649
Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	Political Programs	-. 2094 *	. 034
	Programs on Business/Trade	. 1249 *	. 000
	Programs on Agriculture	. 1249 *	. 000
	Programs on Education	-. 1918	. 459
	Sports Programs	-. 0017	1.000
Sports Programs	Political Programs	-. 2077	. 174
	Programs on Business/Trade	. 1265	. 331
	Programs on Agriculture	. 1265	. 331
	Programs on Education	-. 1901	. 649
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 0017	1.000

When *Table 10* is analyzed, it is seen that the participants who prefer to watch political programs on television use social media as a tool for political participation more frequently than those who prefer to watch programs on business/trade, agriculture, music, or cinema; that the people who prefer to watch programs on business/trade use social media as a tool for political participation less frequently than those who watch programs on politics, education, music, or cinema; that the people who prefer to watch programs on agriculture use social media as a tool for

political participation less frequently than those who watch programs on politics, education, music, or cinema; that the people who prefer to watch programs on education use social media as a tool for political participation more frequently than those who watch programs on business/trade or agriculture; that the people who prefer to watch programs on music or cinema use social media as a tool for political participation less frequently than those who watch political programs; that the people who prefer to watch programs on music or cinema use social media as a tool for political participation more frequently than those who watch programs on business/trade or agriculture and that these differences are statistically significant.

Table 11. The relationship between the types of programs listened to on the radio and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news

Levene's	. 000		
Pillai's Trace	. 002		
Partial Eta Squared	. 039		
Post Hoc Tests— Tamhane's T2	Using Social Media as a Tool for Receiving Political News	Mean Differences	Sig.
Political Programs	Programs on Business/Trade	. 2029	1.000
	Programs on Agriculture	. 6404	1.000
	Programs on Education	. 1959	. 993
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 4043	. 014
	Sports Programs	. 2220	. 912
Programs on Business/Trade	Political Programs	-. 2029	1.000
	Programs on Agriculture	. 4375	1.000
	Programs on Education	-. 0069	1.000
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 2015	. 999
	Sports Programs	. 0191	1.000
Programs on Agriculture	Political Programs	-. 6404	1.000
	Programs on Business/Trade	-. 4375	1.000
	Programs on Education	-. 4444	1.000
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	-. 2360	1.000
	Sports Programs	-. 4184	1.000

Programs on Education	Political Programs	-. 1959	. 993
	Programs on Business/Trade	. 0069	1.000
	Programs on Agriculture	. 4444	1.000
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 2084	. 968
	Sports Programs	. 0261	1.000
Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	Political Programs	-. 4043 *	. 014
	Programs on Business/Trade	-. 2015	. 999
	Programs on Agriculture	. 2360	1.000
	Programs on Education	-. 2084	. 968
	Sports Programs	-. 1823	. 931
Sports Programs	Political Programs	-. 2220	. 912
	Programs on Business/Trade	-. 0191	1.000
	Programs on Agriculture	. 4184	1.000
	Programs on Education	-. 0261	1.000
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 1823	. 931

The result of Pillai's Trace in *Table 11* shows that there is a significant relationship between the types of programs participants prefer to listen to on the radio and the use of social media as a tool for receiving political news. The Partial Eta Squared value indicates that 3% of the relationship between the variables is explained. It is observed that the participants who prefer to listen to political programs on the radio use social media as a tool to receive political news more frequently than those who prefer to listen to music programs and programs on other topics; that the participants who prefer to listen to music programs and programs on other topics on the radio use social media as a tool to receive political news less frequently than those who prefer to listen to political programs and that these differences are statistically significant.

Table 12. The relationship between the types of programs listened to on the radio and the use of social media as a tool for political participation

Levene's	. 649		
Pillai's Trace	. 002		
Partial Eta Squared	. 039		
Post Hoc Tests -LSD	Using Social Media as a Tool for Political Participation	Mean Differences	Sig.
Political Programs	Programs on Business/ Trade	. 3342	. 004
	Programs on Agriculture	. 3342	. 272
	Programs on Education	. 0175	. 838
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 2094	. 000
	Sports Programs	. 2077	. 008
Programs on Business/Trade	Political Programs	-. 3342	. 004
	Programs on Agriculture	. 0000	1.000
	Programs on Education	-. 3167	. 013
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	-. 1249	. 260
	Sports Programs	-. 1265	. 300
Programs on Agriculture	Political Programs	-. 3342	. 272
	Programs on Business/ Trade	. 0000	1.000
	Programs on Education	-. 3167	. 304
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	-. 1249	. 679
	Sports Programs	-. 1265	. 679
Programs on Education	Political Programs	-. 0175	. 838
	Programs on Business/ Trade	. 3167	. 013
	Programs on Agriculture	. 3167	. 304
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 1918	. 014
	Sports Programs	. 1901	. 042

Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	Political Programs	-. 2094	. 000
	Programs on Business/ Trade	. 1249	. 260
	Programs on Agriculture	. 1249	. 679
	Programs on Education	-. 1918	. 014
	Sports Programs	-. 0017	. 981
Sports Programs	Political Programs	-. 2077	. 008
	Programs on Business/ Trade	. 1265	. 300
	Programs on Agriculture	. 1265	. 679
	Programs on Education	-. 1901	. 042
	Programs on Music, Cinema, etc.	. 0017	. 981

The result of Pillai's Trace in *Table 12* shows that there is a significant relationship between the types of programs participants prefer to listen to on the radio and the use of social media as a tool for political participation. The Partial Eta Squared value indicates that 3% of the relationship between the variables is explained. It is observed that the participants who prefer to listen to political programs on the radio use social media as a tool for political participation more frequently than those who prefer to listen to programs on sports, trade, music, and other topics; that the people who prefer to listen to programs on trade on the radio use social media as a tool for political participation less frequently than those who prefer to listen to programs on politics or education; that the people who prefer to listen to programs on education on the radio use social media as a tool for political participation more frequently than those who prefer to listen to programs on sports, trade, music, and other topics; that the people who prefer to listen to programs on music or cinema on the radio use social media as a tool for political participation less frequently than those who prefer to listen to programs on politics, education, or sports; that the people who prefer to listen to sports programs on the radio use social media as a tool for political participation less frequently than those who prefer to listen to programs on politics or education and that these differences are statistically significant.

Discussion

The Relationship Between the Family and Social Media As a Tool for Receiving Political News

The significant relationship found between the family and social media as a tool for receiving political news fills a gap in the literature. Because despite the increasing interest of the researchers in the use of social media as a tool for receiving news, the studies conducted on the independent variables of this subject found a significant relationship between this use of social media and only the variables of gender, trust (Bode, 2015), self-efficacy, interest in politics, and trust in government (Kaye & Johnson, 2002), thereby neglecting the role of the family as an independent variable. However, this study found that children of families who actively participate in political activities use social media as a tool to follow the news. This finding supports the first hypothesis (H1) by highlighting that there is a significant relationship between the family as an agent of political socialization and the use of social media as a tool for receiving the news.

The Relationship Between the Family and Social Media As a Tool for Political Participation

In the literature, the role of the family in political participation was mostly addressed in the context of traditional political participation and in terms of the influence of the parents on the children (Dotti Sani & Quaranta, 2015), teenagers (Jennings & Niemi, 1974), and adolescents (Jennings & Niemi, 1981). Accordingly, the influence of the family on political participation has only been investigated in certain age groups in the context of traditional political participation. However, in this study, the use of social media as a tool for political participation by the general population was examined and a significant relationship has been found between this use of social media and the family being politically active, which confirms the second hypothesis (H2) and fills a gap in the literature.

The Relationship Between the School and Social Media As a Tool for Receiving Political News

It is accepted that the school has a role in political socialization at large (Almond & Verba, 1963; Dawson, Prewitt & Dawson, 1977; Heater & Gillespie, 1981; Neundorf, Niemi & Smets, 2016), and the teachers who are in constant, direct interaction with students have an influence on the political views of the students (Bar-Tal & Harel, 2002). For example, Goldenson (1978) draws attention to the influence of the teacher in the classroom environment and provides evidence of how the existence of a free platform of discussion affects the attitudes of the students toward civil rights. However, to date, there have been no studies on the

nature of the relationship between the school/teacher and the use of social media as a means of receiving political news. In this respect, the positive relationship found between the use of social media as a tool for receiving the news and the school makes a considerable contribution to the literature. Accordingly, those who discuss political issues with their teachers tend to use social media as a tool for receiving political news more frequently than those who do not. Therefore, the third hypothesis (H3) has been tested and confirmed.

The Relationship Between the School and Social Media As a Tool for Political Participation

There are studies emphasizing the importance of the curriculum for increasing the political participation of the students. For example, in a study conducted in England on young people, a significant difference was found in terms of interest in politics and political participation between students who took the citizenship class and those who did not (Pontes, Henn & Griffiths, 2019). This finding corresponds to the positive relationship found between the curriculum in the TRNC and the use of social media as a tool for political participation and therefore supports the fourth hypothesis (H4).

The Relationship Between Friend Groups and Social Media As a Tool for Receiving Political News

Although there are many studies on the role of friends in political socialization, there are very few studies on their role in the use of social media as a tool for receiving the news. The finding that the participants who discuss political issues with their friends use social media as a means of receiving political news more frequently can be supported by a similar study, which was conducted on the use of Facebook by college students in the United States (US). It was found as a result of this study that students visit the political pages their friends liked, click on the links to political websites their friends share, and read the political content their friend post (Miller *et al.*, 2015). Hence, the fifth hypothesis (H5) has been tested and confirmed.

The Relationship Between Friend Groups and Social Media As a Tool for Political Participation

Friends of social media users who share political content on social media can see these posts, write comments of political nature, and engage in an active discussion on political issues (Vitak *et al.*, 2011). For example, a study conducted among students at a public university in the US reported that the students who discuss political issues on social media have interpersonal ties with each other in real life and that they prefer to have such discussions with their friends who have

the same or similar opinions as them (Miller *et al.*, 2015). These findings support the positive relationship found in this study between discussing political issues with friends and the use of social media as a tool for political participation and, therefore, the sixth hypothesis (H6).

The Relationship Between Television and Social Media As a Tool for Receiving Political News

Although various studies have been conducted on the use of television as a tool for obtaining political news (Leshner & McKean, 1997; Strömbäck, 2016) and its relationship with newspapers and other forms of media (Chaffee & Kanihan, 1997), the number of studies in the literature on the relationship between television and social media in terms of receiving such news is limited. In a study conducted on the use of traditional media and the Internet in presidential election campaigns in the US, it was found that seeing a political advertisement on the Internet that they also saw on television encourages people to follow the political developments on traditional media outlets more frequently (Kaid, 2003). Similarly, in another study conducted in the US, it was concluded that despite the news consumption on the Internet has increased and on television has decreased, the Internet and television complement each other rather than replace each other in the search for political news (Brubaker, 2010). These results seem to be consistent with our finding that those who use social media as a tool for receiving political news prefer to follow political news on television as well. Thus, the seventh hypothesis (H7) has been tested and confirmed.

The Relationship Between Television and Social Media As a Tool for Political Participation

Although there are various studies suggesting that there is a positive relationship between traditional political participation and watching the news on television (McLeod, Scheufele & Moy, 1999; Norris, 1996; Shah *et al.*, 2005), the number of studies investigating the role of television as an independent variable in the use of social media as a tool for political participation is insufficient. A study suggests that while there is a positive relationship between online political participation and receiving news on the Internet, no significant relationship was found between online political participation and watching the news on television. (Gil de Zúñiga *et al.*, 2010). In this respect, the positive relationship found between the use of social media as a tool for political participation and watching the news on television differs from the findings of the abovementioned study. The result obtained in this study shows that Turkish Cypriots, who engage in online political participation, also follow political news on television - a traditional media outlet. Therefore, the eighth hypothesis (H8) has been tested and confirmed.

The Relationship Between the Radio and Social Media As a Tool for Political Participation

There are many studies on the relationship between traditional political participation and the radio, in which attention is drawn to the positive relationship between them. Accordingly, those who listen to political programs on the radio also participate in various political activities. (Hofstetter *et al.*, 1994; Hollander, 1995; Ross, 2004). However, with the advent of the Internet, participation through social media - which is a new type of political participation - has emerged. Although studies were conducted on the relationship between the radio and traditional forms of political participation, the relationship between the use of social media as a tool for political participation and the radio has been neglected. In this study, it has been found that individuals who engage in political activities through social media also prefer to listen to political programs on the radio. This finding thus confirms H8 in the context of the radio.

Conclusion

In accordance with the widespread internet use in the TRNC, social media is being increasingly used by both individuals and institutions. A study conducted in the TRNC in 2018 suggested that political parties attach importance to social media presence (Güler, 2018). Social media has turned into a platform where political parties or candidates, who are considered as political actors, try to reach the voters. Another study revealed that in the TRNC, 88.5% of the voters who are social media users follow political content (Arslan & Seçim, 2015). Therefore, the considerable increase in the use of social media encouraged this study to be conducted in the context of the TRNC, and the nature of the relationship between political news and political participation - which has become one of the prominent reasons for using social media - and agents of political socialization, namely, the family, the school, friend groups, and media, is investigated. As a result, it has been determined that agents of political socialization play an important role in the use of social media as a tool for political participation and receiving political news. The findings of this study enable us to have a better understanding of the meaningful relationships between social media and political socialization that have been neglected and not sufficiently emphasized by the extant literature.

In the context of political socialization, the traditional agents of political participation, namely, the family, the school, and friend groups, are, at least, as important as the media in gaining political knowledge because as asserted in our study as well, there is a close relationship between political participation and political socialization. The findings of this study have enabled new evaluations to be made. Social media has become social environments where space limitations have disappeared. It is also extremely important to understand that the users of

these platforms, which remove the boundaries of space, are affected by various variables prior to becoming members of these platforms and that these factors affect their use of social media. Therefore, based on the analogy of the “tabula rasa” John Locke used for the people who are at the beginning of their lives (Altuner, 2012), it can be concluded that the new members of social media platforms do not enter these platforms with a mind that is in a “blank slate.”

As with any research, this study has some limitations. This study examines the use of social media as a tool for political participation and receiving political news within the framework of its relationship with agents of political socialization. Therefore, the independent variables of this study are limited to the agents of political socialization. Furthermore, it is possible to say that there are geographical limitations.

The increasing influence of social media induces changes in all areas of people’s lives, including the political sphere. We have sufficient data to say that social media will have an even bigger role in our lives in the future. Digital life also has the potential to change the usual processes and limitations. Therefore, if future studies on this topic address the possible differences between generations, it will be valuable for understanding the direction and extent of the expected change.

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