

The Role of Mobile-Based Social Media in Iran's Social Development from the View of Communication Sciences Experts

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to study the role of mobile-based social media in Iran's social development. The study referred to the views and comments of the experts and scholars of communication and social development. Thus, the statistical population of the study is all the lecturers, professors and experts of communication Sciences, around 4000 people. The sample size was estimated to be 384 using Morgan's table and selected using a simple random sampling method. A researcher designed questionnaire was used to collect the data. The findings show that among the three dimensions of social development, which were measured from the perspective of communication experts, only the hypothesis of social attitude were confirmed, and the other two important dimensions, social welfare and social justice, were rejected and it seems that the reasons of this rejection need further studies. The coefficient of determination is 26%, which means that the independent variables of this study can determine 26% of changes in dependent variables. In other words, mobile-based social media do not just appear and are rooted in the life experiences of users and aspects of social justice and welfare like the role of development in social attitude.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Development, Social Welfare, Social Justice, Social Attitude

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the role of technology in social life and other aspects of human is undeniable and a special attention is paid to information and communication technology in social, cultural and economic development programs. Development has a close relationship with culture and communication and in today's world, communication and media and cultural and social development have a reciprocal effect on each other. It means the growth and expansion of all material and spiritual conditions and aspects of social life or the process of improving the quality of life of individuals in society. The emergence of media and new communication technologies, including mass media and social networks, which are the result of globalization, have changed societies in general and the development of political, social, economic, cultural issues and especially media literacy of audiences have created unprecedented conditions.

Another important factor that needs to be considered in this regard is social development and its relation with mobile-based social networks. Many attempts have been made to understand the importance of culture in the field of social networks, which often leads to the fundamental questions of whether these emerging networks play a role in the social development. What relationship can be considered between the two?

The development of communication technologies has increased international interactions. Following this process, new social networks have expanded and it has increased cultural exchanges. People have become more and more acquainted with each other's thoughts, ideas, and values, and their social and civic values have been more influenced by others and have reached a high level of social development [1]. Today, the main concern of countries and governments is achieving comprehensive and sustainable development. Since man is a cultural and social being, the foundation of real and sustainable development is to achieve cultural and social development. Cultural development means the transformation that takes place through the irreversible density

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of cultural elements in a given society, and as a result, society exerts more effective control over the natural and social environment [2].

Scientific studies and research in communication and information foresight, in order to recognize the developmental role of communication and information technology tools and to help the country's long-term policies and achieving national development goals, have gained special importance and necessity in recent decades in developed countries and many developing countries. Communication and its new means, which are important indicators of national development, are also known as effective factors in the success of development programs [3].

Studies in "Communication and National Development in Iran" play an important and effective role in explaining the role of the media in development. The subject of a wide-ranging historical research is what concepts of development and communication have become important and priority in Iran, and their realization in development policies and programs has been based on which scientific approach. Since communication science in Iran has gone through certain stages in the evolution of attitudes and influence in development programs in the nearly four decades of its academic life, paying attention to these turning points can create a part of the scientific literature of "development and communication". Emphasizing this need, this important study of the genealogy of the two indigenous approaches to communication and development in Iran is the salient aspect of the first approach of "research orientation" and the distinctive form of the second approach is "educationalism". The effects of these two approaches can be traced not only in the establishment and development of communication sciences in Iran but also in explaining the role of communications in the development programs of the country [4]. In general, it can be said that what is significant in these developments is the role of new mobile-based social networks in disseminating social development patterns, which is more worthy of study and research. Today, there is a tremendous revolution in information technology and communications in general and mobile-based social networks in particular. Social media, as the most important means of communication and information, has created opportunities and threats in the lives of users. Therefore, the main question of the study is that from the view of communication sciences experts, what is the role of mobile-based social media in Iran's social development.

1.2. Review of Literature

In this study, in order to explain the role of mobile-based social networks in the social development of Iranians from the view of communication experts, functionalist explanation can be used "their values appear in functional sources in the position of value systems that, in practice, engage participants in constructive social action and form their action, coherence, and shape" [5]. In addition, since "new social networks" are part of the communication and information media, they can be considered as a social sub-system from the perspective of macro-sociology. Also, according to the practical and theoretical approach of micro-sociology, issues such as communication professors use which new social networks services, why professors and experts are eager to use new social networks, and what role new social networks play in social development, especially civilization's values.

According to structural theory, the pattern of social relations is reproduced and changed over time and space, the structure itself does not exist in time and space. In this theory, structure (dominant ideological and cultural factors and guidelines) and human action (human will, creativity and transcendence) interact with each other and are effective in shaping each other, and there is no way to determine the structure of action or vice versa. Therefore, the definition of social actors is influenced by the message of the media according to their cultural conditions and position in relation to others. "Social actors' perceptions, choices, and use of programs and messages are strongly influenced by social micro-bonds, and more broadly by macro-social bonds, as well as by the cultural conditions in which specific social bonds are formed [6].

In the network society proposed by Manuel Castells, the concepts of time and place have new meanings that differ from their traditional meaning among pre-modern or even industrial societies. Being in a place can be a determinant of a person's connection to a networked community or their exclusion from this pervasive yet exclusive place [7]. Today, civic values are

one of the most important, complex, and controversial topics in politics, constitutional law, political philosophy, political sociology, civic culture, and even economics. Civic values are one of the topics that many scholars such as Almond and Verba (1963), Pantam (2001) and Rice and Samberg (1997) have considered as an important factor in the social, political and economic development of society. Civic values are derived from civic culture, and civic culture is the product of social capital; which is also part of the civil society that results from the horizontal relationship between social networks. In his third approach, Patnam places great emphasis on cultural factors and civic life. By civic culture or civic traditions, he means a special kind of spelling of individualism that respects both one's own dignity and the individual values of all human beings, and thus restricts one's personal interests. In a civilized culture, one not only thinks of oneself and one's short-term interests, but also considers one's personal interest in cooperating with others and collective action based on the "rational choice" model [8]. Thus, the results of many studies on values and the development show the interaction between evolution in the economic and social structures with values [9- 10].

Review of literature reports a sharp change in values and culture in Iran. On the one hand, theories and many contemporary researches in the analysis of communication technology in different countries indicate the impact of new social networks on culture and various issues [1]. Accordingly, this study seeks to generalize this finding to social development and values and to examine the relationship between the role of new social networks and social development in Iran.

2. Methodology

In terms of the purpose this is an applied research and the method is descriptive and correlational and it used survey for data collection. The statistical population of the study is all the lecturers, professors and experts of communication sciences, around 4000 people. The sample size was estimated to be 384 using Morgan's table and selected using a simple random sampling method. The validity of the data collection tool was performed using formal validity. The questionnaire was approved by the supervisor and a number of communication and social science experts, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaires, which was also acceptable considering the reliability coefficient of the tool (0.77). The information required for the research was collected by survey and referring to the studied individuals. In order to collect the required data, a researcher-made questionnaire was used. The statistical method of descriptive part was using frequency tables and main indices and Pearson coefficients and regression tests in analysis part. These studies indicate there is a relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, after performing a pre-test with a volume of 30 people, first the appropriate items were selected using a data analysis method by removing inconsistent items. Cronbach's alpha analysis of the research variables is shown in the table below:

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for the Research Variables

Variable	Cronbach's alpha
New technologies	0.79
social development aspect	0.89

2.1. Research Variables

Dependent variable - including aspects of social development

2.2. Social Development

Paiva, one of the researchers of social sciences, considers the two main dimensions of social development as; the increase of people's capacity and ability in continuous activity to ensure their own and society's welfare and the evolution of social institutions to meet the needs of people at all levels, especially low levels [11]. In his view, social development is closely linked to social

justice, and the ultimate goal of social development is to achieve a more humane society with institutions and organizations that adequately meet the needs of the people.

Table 2. Operational Definition of Social Development

Variable		Item
Social Development	1	There is always group work in our society
	2	I always like group work.
	3	Most people participate in group work.
	4	Individualism in our society means not progressing.
	5	Group work and participations are the signs of development and progress in country.
	6	Participation in religious affairs is a priority.
	7	If I do my work individually, it makes me more successful.
	8	Group work is nothing but a failure.
	9	There are unity and empathy between different Iranian ethnic groups.
	10	In today's society, the ethnicity is not important and the Iranian nationality matters.

2.3. Dependent variable- Social Network

Social Network

Social networks are created for communication between different people, with different levels of access. Creating group and interpersonal communication, forming virtual communities, informing, exchanging information and opinions are the most well-known functions of these spaces [12]. In this study, by mobile-based social networks, we mean Telegram, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter and other social applications.

Research Hypotheses

- Mobile-based social networks seem to play a role in social attitudes.
- Mobile-based social networks seem to play a role in social welfare.
- Mobile-based social networks seem to play a role in social justice.

3. Findings

The findings of this study are presented in two parts: descriptive analysis and inferential analysis and hypothesis testing:

3.1. Descriptive Findings

According to the findings, 50% of the sample were women and 50% were men and the majority of research samples are married (66%). The majority of people in the research age group are 35-34 years old, and the average age in this study is 36 years old. Social development patterns are considered as dependent variable and mobile-based social networks as independent variables.

3.2. Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to the Amount of Use of Social Media

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to the amount of Use of Social Media

Using Social media	Frequency	Percent
Never	0	0

Less than an hour	20	12
1-2 hours	112	32.8
2-3 hours	88	19.5
More than 3 hours	164	48.2
Total	384	100

This table indicate the frequency distribution of respondents according to the amount of use of social media. Based on this, most of users of social media spend more than 3 hours (48.2).

3.3. Frequency Distribution According to the Purpose of Using Social Media

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to the Purpose of Using Social Media

Purpose of using social media	Frequency	Percent
Academic- educational	98	21.6
Cultural- Social	74	19.4
Political	112	33.4
Economical	52	14.6
Fun	48	11
Total	384	100

The table indicate the frequency of users based on their purpose. It shows that most of them use it for political reasons (112 people- 33.4%) and the least belongs to fun (48 people- 11%).

3.4. Frequency Distribution According to the Type of Social Media

Table 5: Frequency Distribution of Respondents According to the Type of Social Media Based on Their Priority

Type of Social media	Frequency	Percent
Telegram	384	100
Instagram	296	84.5
WhatsApp	88	56.3
Tweeter	19	22.8
Other	115	81.3

The table shows the frequency of users based on the type of social media and their priority. According to the data, Telegram is the most frequent one and Tweeter is the least.

3.5. Frequency Distribution of Social Attitude

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of Social Attitude

Social attitude	Frequency	Percent
Low	26	6.8
Average	246	64.2
High	111	29
Total	383	100
Mean and standard deviation 96 ±18/81	Minimum 46	Maximum 145

The table shows the frequency of users based on the social attitude. According to the results of this table, the social attitude of 6.8% of the respondents is "low", 64.2% of the respondents, is

"average" and 29.0% of the respondents, is "high". The mean of individuals in the variable of social attitude is 96 (in the range of 29 to 145), which shows that the social attitude of the respondents is average to high. The minimum score among respondents is 46 and the highest score is 145.

3.6. Frequency Distribution of Social Justice

Table 7. Frequency Distribution of Social Justice

Social Justice	Frequency	Percent
Low	143	37.2
Average	215	56
High	26	6.8
Total	383	100
Mean and standard deviation 26/78 ±8/46	Minimum 11	Maximum 50

The table shows the frequency of users based on the social justice. According to the results of this table, the social justice of 37.2% of the respondents is "low", 56 % of the respondents, is "average" and 6.8% of the respondents, is "high". The mean of individuals in the variable of social justice is 26.78 (in the range of 11 to 55), which shows that the social justice of the respondents is average to low. The minimum score among respondents is 11 and the highest score is 50.

3.7. Frequency Distribution of Social Welfare

Table 8. Frequency Distribution of Social Welfare

Social welfare	Frequency	Percent
Low	9	2.3
Average	140	36.6
High	234	61.1
Total	383	100
Mean and standard deviation 96.59 ± 13.25	Minimum 48	Maximum 125

The table shows the frequency of users based on the social welfare. According to the results of this table, the social welfare of 2.3% of the respondents is "low", 36.6 % of the respondents, is "average" and 61.1% of the respondents, is "high". The mean of individuals in the variable of social justice is 96.59 (in the range of 26 to 130), which shows that the social welfare of the respondents is high. The minimum score among respondents is 48 and the highest score is 125.

3.8. Analysis of Inferential and Multivariate Data

- **There Is A Significant Relationship Between Social Networks And Social Attitudes.**

Table 9. Pearson Correlation Test to Examine the Relationship between Social Networks and Social Attitudes

Pearson correlation test	Number	Significant level	The correlation coefficient
Gender attitude	384	0.00	+0/28 **
Gender identity	384	0.00	+0/20 **
Social action	384	0.00	+0/19 **

Ethics	384	0.00	+0/22 **
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The table above shows the Pearson's relationship test between the two distance variables of social networks and social attitudes. Since based on the table data, the value of the significance level is equal to 0.0 (less than 0.05), it is inferred that there is a significant relationship between the two variables and since the value of the correlation coefficient is positive, it means that the more social networks are used, the more people's social attitudes increase, and as a result, our second hypothesis is confirmed with 99% confidence.

- **There is a significant relationship between social networks and social justice.**

Table 10. Pearson Correlation Test to Examine the Relationship between Social Networks and Social Justice

Pearson correlation test	Number	Significant level	The correlation coefficient
Social justice (total scale)	384	0/08	0/29 **
Procedural justice	384	0/06	0/28 **
Distributive justice	384	0/28	0/24 **

The table above shows the Pearson's relationship test between the two distance variables of social networks and social justice. Since based on the table data, the value of the significance level is 0.08 (more than 0.05), thus there is no significant relationship between the variables and the hypothesis is rejected.

- **There is a significant relationship between social networks and social welfare.**

Table 11. Pearson Correlation Test to Examine the Relationship between Social Networks and Social Welfare

Pearson correlation test	Number	Significant level	The correlation coefficient
Pearson	384	0/28	0/23 **

The table above shows the Pearson's relationship test between the two variables of social networks and social welfare. Since based on the table data, the value of the significance level is 0.28 (more than 0.05), thus there is no significant relationship between the variables and the hypothesis is rejected.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The current study first evaluated the social development patterns based on factors and conceptual definitions and then determined the relationship between a dependent variable (social development aspects) and dependent variables.

Social development requires an understanding of social ontology, the situation in which we are living in now, and social prospect, which outlines the desired situation and is very normative and finally, the possibility that refers to the restrictions and limitations that we face in the transition from the current situation to the desired one.

The research findings show that among the three aspects of social development, which were measured from the perspective of communication experts in this study, only the social attitude hypothesis was confirmed and two other important aspects, social welfare and justice, were rejected and it seems that the reasons of this rejection need further studies. Researchers' study shows that Iran in terms of community form is a multi-group, diverse, and sometimes contradictory community. This means that organizational and formal communities or organizational affiliations in Iranian society are very weak; associations, political parties, social

councils, and trade unions are consequently very weak, therefore, there is a big gap between the two formal and informal parts of the social life of the Iranian people, which is the main source of social unrest or anomie. The consequences are specific collectivism, selfish individualism, and a variety of perversions and distortions. On the other hand, in Iran, the informal aspects of Iran's social life in the form of groups, social classes, ethnic, family, etc. are relatively strong. In these natural communities, warm, emotional relationships, and attachments are very intense. This type of community constitutes the dominant aspect of the Iranian community and determines the specific cultural and social orientations. In other words, it can be argued that mobile-based social networks do not form in a vacuum, and that harmony, which plays a role in the social attitude of development, is itself affected by the life experience of users and the aspects of social justice and welfare.

This study, considering these approaches as well as new scientific and experimental ones, suggests the need to involve more communication and other aspects of development in social development policy. Khaniki and Shah Ghasemi (2015) in an essay entitled "Conceptual transformation of communications and development in Iran's Development Programs are analyzing the content of the theoretical documentation of the two programs, i.e. the report of the Joint Committee on Information Planning and Mass Communication of the Sixth Plan and the documents of the Fourth Development Plan, "describes and analyzes the concept of communication and their development." According to this research, in the Sixth National Development Plan the country's communication is the development goal and transition from the traditional society to the information society. These two concepts are pursued in the fourth program with the aim of sustainable economic growth in development and knowledge-based society in communication.

According to the theory of Knowledge Gap, it is one of the communication effects that has attracted many researchers, which is presented by Tichenor, Donohue and Olien. The theory indicates that; as the information spread by the mass media in a social system increases, the population with a higher social and economic class gain information faster and more than lower class", as a result, the knowledge gap between the two classes increases rather than decreases. This problem is not unique, there are similar differences in the content of assets and non-assets. Tanberg et al., (1982) call this the public assistance problem. When everyone is given the same amount of information, those who have better access can get the most. Therefore, mass communication acts like many other social institutions, that is, it reinforces or increases existing inequalities, more precisely, there will be no more social justice and welfare, and new mobile-based technologies will only play a role at the individual level and social attitudes.

Iran's social development has special practical and social importance and necessity. Today's Iranian society suffers from social and structural backwardness. We need solidarity, public morality, civil society and social trust, and social harms and uprisings will break out if we do not make an effort for them. Scientific and practical Work on the aspects of Iran's balanced and comprehensive development must be seriously considered.

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