

Chapter 5

Seeking Solutions for Enhancing Social Relations and Communication in Media-Dependent Children of the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

The technological age we're in removes all the temporal and spatial boundaries of communication and continues to provide various opportunities and conveniences for us. However, in this digital age in which individuals face intense information flow every day along with these opportunities, the effectiveness and control power of means of communication also increase. In today's capitalist or modern social order, a child model whose mental processes in a consumption-oriented way, who fully gets hold of the control mechanism and acts as an adult is being created. Parent profile of modern order accepts this model and they expect their children to behave as adults. The aim of this study is to find solutions to problems children—who have increasingly become dependent on communication devices of the digital age—face in socializing, establishing realistic relationships, and getting included within the communicative action of a realistic world to guide and raise awareness within parents for developing new communicative methods and skills with the children who have almost become mechanized.

INTRODUCTION

New inventions and developments realized in communication technologies every day succeed in taking the users under their influence at an unprecedented pace. In this digital age in which regular individuals who are tech-users can immediately be influenced and convinced by technological devices, definitions are re-formed every day, daily habits change quickly, incidents and situations gain new definitions and

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individuals become the carrier and user of a single industrial culture. There are influences, and notions added by each new technological invention and device to social life and individuals from itself. Just as Neil Postman said, each technology has its own agenda and a tendency coming from its own nature. These technological devices with different agendas address individuals mostly by offering the same products and contents as turned into different formats and by reshaping them with its own agenda. However, in this period which makes this current age defined as the digital age, the most common point of technological devices is that they are in search of creating a new consumption market each day by promising to ease the lives of individuals. There is no doubt that in the current digital era, children constitute the largest consumption market. The reason is that children acknowledge and learn everything faster, and they put what they have learned into practice as a lifestyle. However, we should face the fact that this situation has a more negative impact on children than expected. These devices re-produced everyday place children inside the re-defined circle of socialization just like the adults they convinced with the promise of socializing and they drag them into anti-sociality by narrowing this circle every day. Having become media-dependent and started lading value to technological devices as friends instead of a real friend, children of today's digital age rapidly pass through the door to the virtual world and start to move away from a concrete and realistic world rapidly each day. The most distinctive characteristic of the children of this age who become increasingly the same by turning to similar habits and inclinations is that they increasingly become closed to communication and unresponsive. Other actional situations are focusing problems, the tendency to move away from the crowd, introversion, reluctance for group work, quick temper, frequently changing minds, the effort to instantly reach their wishes, inadequacy of self-expression and the inability to use linguistic expressions efficaciously.

The Consumed Nature of Childhood in the Consumerist Societies of the Modern Era

Continuing his/her existence within the need of being part of the society and being always in psychological, sociological and economical needs due to his/her nature, the individual shows a tendency to consume in every area of his/her life, either mandatorily or not. In short, within the reflections of today's modern society, consumption, which can be defined as realizing product and service purchase in the name of meeting the necessities with regards to needs, represents not only meeting the needs but also the provision of psychological satisfaction. Accordingly, within the individuals of today's modern society, a close relationship between consuming-enjoyment-satisfaction is established and the idea that the way to happiness and enjoyment passed through consuming captured the humanity. When the situation is reviewed from the aspects of children and children's socialization, it can be said that any types of tools that pave the way for consumption took the place of traditional institutions and notions such as family, school, friends within this process of socialization. In addition, it can be commented that modern-time parents who see consumption as the source of motivation and happiness and become role models for their children in consuming, became the greatest legitimizing servants of these notions and tools.

The most important factor that legitimizes the action of consuming with motivational promises such as reaching to a better life, moving up the social ladder, gaining privileges and finally becoming the happiest individual and that makes this action rise with a non-stop momentum, is undoubtedly the technological devices of the modern time. In this age in which media, especially television and the Internet have become an indispensable part of life, we should face the fact that media attained a hegemonic power in the subject of consumption, as with every subject. These tools reached such a dominant position in

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