

SELF-DISCLOSURE IN VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT: FACEBOOK

Aysen Temel Eginli^{1*}, S. Didem Özsenler²

¹Assoc. Prof. Dr., Ege University, Faculty of Communication, TURKEY,

aysen.temel.eginli@ege.edu.tr

² Ress.Asst., Ege University, Faculty of Communication, TURKEY, didem.ozsenler@hotmail.com

*Corresponding author

Abstract

Facebook is still the most popular social media tool among all types of social networks. Besides having an influence on managing online relationships, Facebook may also be determinative of people's relationships and interactions in their daily lives. Self-disclosure underpins the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal communication. Social networks, especially Facebook, allow people to comfortably self-disclose. The Uses and Gratifications Theory, which focuses on motives and gains related to the use of media, suggests that the use of social networks also motivates people in terms of meeting some of their social and psychological needs. In this sense, the most important motive may be described as self-disclosure. With its various spaces, Facebook allows people to share their emotions and thoughts about themselves and other people, and this gives them a sense of gratification by creating a real relationship perception in everyday life. As a result of self-disclosure behaviour, various needs, such as information sharing, entertainment, relaxation and social interactions, are satisfied through virtual environment. According to Social Information Theory, the rate of sharing personal information on social networks may be similar to/more than their everyday face-to-face interactions. This study analyzes different methods and ways of self-disclosure through Facebook. With this purpose in mind, the researchers aim to reveal the self-disclosure behaviours through the profiles of their Facebook friends based on pre-designated codes by utilizing qualitative content analysis method.

Keywords: Facebook, self-disclosure, virtual environment.