Are Smartphones Enhancing or Displacing Face-to-Face Communication With Close Ties? A Panel Study Among Adults

# Details

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## Sample

"We carried out a two-wave survey with a private research institute, based on a quota sample, including age, gender, and education in Germany. The present study was conducted as part of a larger project on smartphone use and well-being (see Stevic et al., 2019). Relying on a similar panel survey on smartphone and social media use, we included a four-month interval between the two waves (Yao Zhong, 2014). With this time lag, we could assess possible changes but also keep a low attrition rate. We recruited participants in March/April 2018 (Time 1 = T1) and July/August 2018 (Time 2 = T2). Prior to the survey participation, respondents were asked to sign an informed consent. Main requirements to take part in the survey were age 16 and older, owning a smartphone, and use of at least one social media application on it." (STevic et al., 2021, 799)

## Implications For Parents About

Parenting guidance / support

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

Previous research has revealed inconsistent findings regarding enhancement or displacement of face-to-face (FtF) communication due to social media and smartphone use. We argue that the occurrence of enhancement or displacement effects is contingent on the specific type of smartphone use. Specifically, we tested how adults’ communicative and noncommunicative smartphone uses influence the quantity of FtF communication and quality of relationships with family and friends. Results of a two-wave panel survey (NTime2 = 461) revealed a positive influence of communicative smartphone use on quantity of FtF communication with family and friends, supporting the enhancement hypothesis. Quality of relationships with close ties, however, was not influenced by communicative smartphone use. In line with the displacement hypothesis, we found a negative influence of noncommunicative smartphone use on quantity of FtF communication with close ties, but not on quality of relationships with family and friends.

# Outcome

"Results of a two-wave panel survey (NTime2 = 461) revealed a positive influence of communicative smartphone use on quantity of FtF communication with family and friends, supporting the enhancement hypothesis. Quality of relationships with close ties, however, was not influenced by communicative smartphone use. In line with the displacement hypothesis, we found a negative influence of noncommunicative smartphone use on quantity of FtF communication with close ties, but not on quality of relationships with family and friends." Stevic et al., 2021, 792)