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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SAKARYA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: INSTAGRAM AS A CASE STUDY

Abstract

Social media's primary objective, which is to facilitate communication between people, is now becoming an effective tool to build relations with friends and groups of people who hold the same interests, practices and activities. Also, it became a place to express opinions, and platform where issues are discussed. In fact, social media has transformed people's lives. On one hand, it brings people closer. On another hand, it turns people into antisocial beings by replacing human's face to face communication with platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter. Apparently, the new generation's addiction to social media has a number of effects on their lives including sharing their personal life matters with known and unknown people. This study tries to determine the degree of change made by social media in university students' life. In order to achieve the desired results of quality and high efficiency, the study identifies the influence of social media on students; understands the habits of students while using social media and discovers the attitudes of students towards social media.

Keywords: Social media, impact, habits, attitudes,

Introduction

The emergence of a new type of media (social media) changed the way humans communicate. For decades social media has been playing a major role in communication by giving people an opportunity to exchange, interact and share feelings and time with each other. It has also been providing its users the tools to express themselves and follow influencers and opinion leaders.

Social media is considered as one of the most powerful platforms. It permits the users to express their opinions and assumptions regarding world issues. Thus, people spend a lot of time on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube and Instagram. In fact, social media regroups people all over the world from different social classes, races and ethnicities. Every social network user can share history, status, picture or video. Yet, we should note that not all social networks have the same features and effects. For example, Instagram which was developed by Kevin Strom and Mike Krieger for IOS (iPhone-iPad) in October 2010, is a photo sharing application with high quality filters. It was purchased for 1 billion \$ by Facebook in April 2012 (Wally and Koshy, 2014). Photos and videos prepared with the Instagram application can be shared on Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, and Tumblr. Instagram app makes photos very and appealing to eyes attractive. Its users can create photos with professional looks using various filters in a very practical way. The simplest and most ordinary photo can be dazzling with a few different effects. Due to the appearance of Instagram, satisfaction has been quickly generated and praised by all Instagram users. Therefore, “Instagram became very popular in short time (Fitzsimmons, 2017; Bruner, 2016). Recently, the new generation has become the focus of attention on social media (Alioğlu, 2015; Güngör, 2011). The expansion of social networks among young people created many challenges and problems due to lack of awareness and perception. Young people using social media cannot avoid or control the negative effect of contents shared by social media users and influencers on their life.

Literature Review

All kinds of visual, audio and printed media play a major role in a community's life. The increase of the number and variety of mass media has facilitated the knowledge and increased the ability to receive news and information from many sources (Soydan, 2012). Social media sites are one of the most important of these sources. Social media studies have gained importance as a result of an alarming increase in the rate of behavior-related diseases (Mendi, 2015). A study in 2015 found that there is an increment of more than 20% in social media users worldwide compared to the preceding year (Küçükali, 2016; cited in Ebizmba, 2015; Sputniknews, 2014). Therefore, it is obvious that social media will have a great impact on human being's lives because of both usage mass and frequency of usage. Communication Theory warned of misuse of communication tools. With the rapid development of technology, there is a revolution in communication. As a result of this revolution, the spread of social media can be seen in both Turkey and the world. According to the Ipsos survey, 12 out of every 100 people using mobile internet in Turkey installed mobile phone applications. The same source found that the main purpose of connecting to the internet from the mobile phone is socializing (Özkoşak, 2016). It is seen in Turkey that the active internet user increased by 5% and the active social media user increased by 11% (Küçükali, 2012). Today, young generations are using social media and it became part of their life. Many of them spend their time connected on social media to engage with brands and discuss about products with friends. According to “Young Adult Revealed” 12603 people from 18 to 24 years old among 26 countries engage online with brands; 28% talked about brand on a discussion forum, 19% added brand related content to their homepage on favorite social sites (Ahmed, Salamn & Shafiq, 2015). Social media's revolution makes people think that spending time on platform such as Facebook is much better than family meeting. People on social media share what they did, do and what they are going to do. They don't care about who can see their publications or what reactions will they receive. There is no private life and no sense of responsibility in people's attitude towards all elements. (Ergul and Kurtulmuş, 2014;

Bozdağ, 2008). Recently, the increasing dependency of social media games also is affecting individuals' lives. In social media games, a meaningful relationship was found between exposure or behavior of violent games and aggressive behavior of individuals. Cognitive Theory suggests that violent behavior is rather a learned behavior than an innate behavior (Avcı and Güçray, 2013; Bandura, 1978). It is seen observed that these games temporarily increase the aggression level in individuals and decrease the pro-social behaviors. Negative emotions, depression symptoms and deterioration in human relationships were found in people who play these games more than twenty hours a week (İli, 2013; Parker, 2009).

The Aim and Importance of the Study

This study aim to analyze the impact of social media on young people's lives. It examines the degree of change that social media made on Sakarya University students. today's generation is more connected to the rest of the world than they have ever been before.

Such study contributes to know the degree of change that social media made in people's attitude and behavior. It is important to investigate the impact of social media on young people since they are the most attracted by social networks and technology. Social media connects people, those who never meet in physical world but they are able to communicate and share information. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate about social media and young people. The choice of topic is due to an increased interest in young people's usage of social media.

Methodology of Research

As this study focuses on the impact of social media on people's lives, the methodology used is survey. It is helpful to know the degree of influence that social media has on people's lives . Firstly, the duration of study is based on the academic calendar of 2018-2019 and it was limited to social media users from Sakarya University. The study included male and female students aged between 18- 31 years old. Secondly, the copies of the survey were distributed by hand to the number of individuals required in the university. This way is providing data that permit to know the impact of social media on students' lives. Also, this way permits to reach the target easily and precise idea of the point of their views. Finally, to achieve the desired result a survey was administrated to university students from public relations and advertisement department. The main mass consists of 344 students. Simple random sampling has been used to determines the simple size. 50 copies of the survey has been distributed for the study. 48 students' responses are considered. The survey consists of 19 questions and it is divided into three parts. The first part of the survey contains demographical, level and age of participants. The second part of the survey contains questions about participant's habits and favorite social networks. And the last part of the survey contains questions that identify social media's impact on participants' lives.

Research Questions

- **What is the impact of social media on student's life?**
- **What is the habit and attitude of students while using social media?**

Findings

Table 1. Participants' Gender

What is your gender?	Frequency	%
Male	30	62.5
Female	18	37.5
Total	48	100

To understand and identify social media's impact on participants and to know their habit and attitude toward social media, it is necessary to know the gender of each participant. In this study 62.5% of participants are male while 37.5% are female.

Graphic1. Participants' Gender

Table2. Participants' Age

How old are you?	Frequency	%
Between 18 to 24	42	87.5
Between 25 to 31	6	12.5
Total	48	100

87.5 of students are 18- 24 years old and 12.5% are 25- 31 years old. The study included undergraduate and postgraduate students. 87.5% of the participants are undergraduate and 12.5% are postgraduate students.

Table3. Participants' Level of Study

What is your level of Study?	Frequency	%
Undergraduate Student	42	87.5
Postgraduate Student	6	12.5
Total	48	100

The level of student determines the experience of life. Undergraduate students have less experience, degree of knowledge and awareness than postgraduate students. Undergraduate and postgraduate students have different interests, practices and activities.

Table4. Participants' Internet Use

Do you use internet?	Frequency	%
Yes	100.0	100

All participants in this study are internet users.

Table5. The Reason of Participants' Internet Use

What is the reason for using internet?	Frequency	%
Official services and Bank transaction	12	25.0
Entertainment	4	8.3
Social Media	21	43.8
Shopping and Hobbies	9	18.8
Watching video and download	2	4.2
Total	48	100

43.8% of participants ranked first social media as the reason why they are using internet. 25.0% are using internet for official services and bank transactions, 18.8% of participants to do shopping and for hobbies, 8.3% for entertainment and 4.2% for watching video and downloading. Ranking social media as first reason to use internet mean that social media is important and play a big role in participants' life.

Table6. Average Usage of Internet by the Participants

How often do you connect to internet?	Frequency	%
Every day	44	91.6
3-4 times a week	2	4.2
2times per month	2	4.2
Total	48	100

This question is related to participant's habit to connecting to the internet. It indicates how often participant connect to the internet. 91.7% of the students use the internet every day. 4.2% use internet 3-4 times a week and same number use internet 2 times per month. There is difference between each person's time spending on internet. Those participants who are using internet every day and 3-4 time a week is because they have access to connect and free time. Those using internet 2 times per month don't have access to internet or free time.

Table7. Average Internet Usage of Connected Participants

How many hours do you spend using internet when connected?	Frequency	%
1 hour and less	11	22.9
1- 3 hours	15	31.3
3- 5hours	11	22.9
5- 7 hours	9	18.8
7hours and more	2	4.2
Total	48	100

31, 3% of students spend between 1 -3 hours per day. 22% spend 2-5 to 3 hours and the same number spend 1 hour and less. 18, 8% use internet 7hours and more. One third of participants connect every day and that mean they are influenced by technology and internet.

Table8. Participants' Awareness Regarding Social Media

Do you know what Social Media means?	Frequency	%
Yes	47	97.9
No	1	2.1
Total	48	100

97.9% of participants know what social media means. 2.1% do not know what social media means. Knowing the meaning of social media explains that participants know the first objective of social media creation. It means that participants are using social media to communicate with friends and sharing information and interests.

Table9. Factor Analyses for Identifying Participants' Usage of Social Media

Do you use any of the social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp)?	Frequency	%
Yes	45	93.8
No	3	6.3
Total	48	100

93.8% of participants use at least one of the popular social networks (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter), 6.3% of the participants do not. Social networks used can be different from one person to another and from country or areas to another. But people may agree that Face-

book, Instagram, WhatsApp and Twitter are the ones of the most social networks used in the world. Knowing if participants use any of those networks can be helpful for analyzing.

Table10. Participants' Favorite Social Networks

What is your favorite social network?	Frequency	%
Facebook	12	25
Instagram	16	33.3
WhatsApp	17	35.4
Twitter	2	4.2
Other networks (Pinterest and Snapchat)	1	2.1
Total	48	100

Graphic2. Participants' Favorite Social Networks

35.4% of participants said that WhatsApp is the most social network they are using, 33.3% Instagram, 25.0% Facebook, 4.2% Twitter and 2.1% said other networks (Pinterest and Snapchat). Knowing which social network participant prefer determines the kind of friends they communicate with. Social networks do not the same features and characteristics and there is reason why people prefer one over another. Options in each social network are different. Also, fields and topics covered in each social network are different. For example Twitter is well known for opinion expressing while Instagram is recognized as marketing tool. The fact that participants prefer using whatsapp means they like easy talk and easy sharing of picture and video with friends. For those who prefer Instagram it means they are interesting in shopping more. They like to follow

celebrities, models and marketing influencers to know the latest update of brands. They also like to share their history and daily life using Instagram effects.

Table11. Participants' Habit (Usage of Social Media)

How often do you connect to social media?	Frequency	%
Every day	42	87.5
3-4 day in a week	5	10.4
1-2 time per month	1	2.1
Total	48	100.0

87.5% of participants connect to social media every day, 10.4% connect 3-4 days in a week and 2.1% connect 1-2 time per month. The participants are so addicted to social media. They probably want to know what their friends are posting or sharing. Also, they want to know the latest events and update for the brands and companies they follow.

Table12. Participants' Habit (Average of Social Media Usage when Connected)

How many hours do you spend on social media when connected?	Frequency	%
1 hours and less	15	31.3
1 -3 hours	16	33.3
3 – 5 hours	7	14.6
5 – 7 hours	6	12.5
7 hours and more	4	8.3
Total	48	100

This question completes the above one. It helps figure out the daily habit of students towards their usage of social media. 33.3% of students spend 1-3 hours on social media, while 31.3% of students spend less than 1 hour. The average of most students' usage of social media is around 3 hours.

Table13. The Reason of Participants for Using Social Media

What is your purpose to use social media?	Frequency	%
Making new friend	10	20.8
Entertainment	2	4.2
Chatting	8	16.7
To spy on friend	5	10.4

Passing time and escape from problems	16	33.3
Other (To know the last news, To see what celebrities and influencers share etc.)	7	11.6

Graphic3. Participants' Reasons for using social media

33.3% of participants said that passing time and escaping from problem is the reason they are using social media, 20.8% said to find new friends, 16.7% to chat, 14.6% other reasons such as knowing the last news and seeing what celebrities and influencers share, 10.4% to spy on friends and 4.2% to play games. It revealed that one third of the participants are using social media to pass time and escape from life pressures. Clearly, social media influences them by taking them away from face to face family and friend communications. One fifth of the participants said that they are connecting to social media to make new friends. This obviously means that they are looking for someone to trust and share their personal and private life with. 10% said that they are using social media to spy on their friends. This means one of the three reasons: They are affected by their posts, they want to control them or they want to imitate their lives.

Table14. Factors Identifying Attitude of Participants Toward Social Media (Identity)

Do you use your own name in your social media	Frequency	%
Yes	42	87.5
No	3	6.3
Sometimes	3	6.3
Total	48	100

87% of participants in this study said that they are using their own name. 6.3% said no while another 6.3 said sometimes. Those who are not using their own name on social media mean they

are hiding their identity. They can post and share any content without getting discovered by others. They can share fake information or say bad comment regarding any issue.

Table15. Factors Identifying if Participants Are Close to Friends They Meet on Social Media

Did you meet face to face with people you meet through social networks?	Frequency	%
Yes	27	56.2
No	21	43.8
Total	48	100

56.2% of students meet face to face with the people they meet through social media networks when 43.8 didn't meet face to face with people they meet through social media networks. This means that around half of the participants communicate with friends they never see in real life. Their friendship is based on interests and hobbies.

Table16. Participants' Instagram Use

Do you use Instagram?	Frequency	%
Yes	36	75
No	12	25
Total	48	100

75% of participants use Instagram while 25% do not use.

Table17. Participants Video Share on Instagram

Do you share videos on Instagram using filters?	Frequency	%
Yes	25	52.1
No	23	47.9
Total	48	100

52%, share video on Instagram using filters while 47% do not. This means participants like Instagram's effects and considers Instagram video tools and filters useful.

Table18. Participants Picture Share on Instagram

Do you share photos on Instagram using filters?	Frequency	%
Yes	36	75
No	12	25
Total	100	100

75% of students share picture on Instagram while 25% do not share. This means participants like Instagram's effects and considers Instagram picture tools and filters useful.

Table19. Factors Identifying the Impact of Social Media on Participants' Lives

Which of the following impacts social media has on your life	Frequency	%
Bad influence on environment	2	4.2
Bad habits	6	12.5
Anti-social	2	4.2
Time Wastage	30	62.5
Bad friends	3	6.3
Other (addiction, not paying attention in the class and use of image in false fully)	5	10.4
Total	48	100

Graphic4. Impact of Social media on Participants' Lives

62.2% said that time wastage is the biggest impact that social media has on their lives, 12.5% Bad Habits. 10.4% other (addiction, not paying attention in the class and use of image in false fully), 6.3% Bad Friends, 4.2% Environmental influence and also 4.2 said it makes them antisocial. Clearly, by selecting all of wasting time, bad habits, bad friends, environmental influence and other, Participants agreed that social media has an impact on their lives.

Results

There is no doubt that the revolution of technology changes the way of communication with the invention of internet and social media people can reach each other easily from everywhere around the world. Recently, with the increase usage of internet in all aspects of daily life, young people have a chance to connect to social networks when they want and talk with known and unknown friends. In today's climate, social media became part of young people's lives; so, it can be said that they are the most category influenced by social media. From this case, the survey was conducted on Sakarya University students. Students from public relations and advertisement department have been selected to represent Sakarya University students. For this reason, 50 questionnaire were distributed in department of public relations and advertisement and 48 of them used for the analysis. The survey consisted of 19 questions which are generally based on the communication habits, and attitudes of students toward social media and the influence of social media on university students' lives. According to the results described above it can be said that, most participants in this study use internet and social media every day; 91.6% use internet every day and 87.5% use social media every day. WhatsApp and Instagram networks are the most used social networks by the students. The average time spent by students when connected on social media is between 1 and 3 hours. About half of students didn't meet face to face with people they met on social media (43.7.3%). Three-fourth of students do use Instagram, half share videos using filters (52%, 1) while 75% share pictures. Two-third of students thinks that there is an unnecessary time spends on social media (62%). Those results explain the habits and attitude of students toward social media. To investigate the aim of the study, the factor that analyzing the impact of social media on university students' lives showed that students considered time wastage as the most factors that social media has on their lives (62.2%). According to the results, 10.4% of students, considered other impact such as (addiction, not paying attention in the class and use of image in false fully) as second factor social

media has on their lives. Also, according to the results, 6.3% think that bad friends they meet on social media affecting them in negative way. Moreover, 4.2% of students said that environmental influence is the factor that social media has on their lives. The same percentage 4.2% said that social media makes them become antisocial. Based on these results, it can be said that young people who are students of Sakarya University and public relations and advertisements department, are influenced by social media. Therefore, social media can influence students more and more if they continue spending too much time using social networks for unnecessary objective.

Conclusions and recommendations

The creation of social media in the last half century facilitated the modern communication by constantly bringing people closer. Social media is an obstacle place for social communication. It is also a platform to share information, express opinions and raise awareness. On the contrary, social media is affecting individuals' lives. The rapid expansion of social media represents many challenges for modern society. Now it has become a threat for the new generation.

According to the implications of factor analysis and the results obtained from study, it can be said that social media has an effective impact on university students' lives. From this case, the world of social media needs a strong and effective strategy to protect human from negative influences of social media. When using social media it is recommended to act with sense of responsibility through interactions and activities. It is also recommended to maintain values and avoid bad influences. Furthermore, it is recommended to behave appropriately.

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