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The effects of social media on students' behaviors; Facebook as a case study

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ABSTRACT

Social networks are one of the most used communication methods of today's world. Their use in different fields has been examined in several research studies. This study aims to examine the effects of social media on student's behaviors which will mainly focus on Facebook. Whether there is a positive relationship between confidence, social media participation and social media related behaviors will also be assessed with regard to using Facebook. In order to collect the primary data, a general scanning model was used to observe attitudes of high school students. The participants chosen were 362 high school students from level 9 to 12. The findings highlight that Facebook is used for communication entertainment and sharing news, pictures and songs. In addition, their Facebook profile picture is alone and students were aware that swearing is considered a form of misconduct, which is a good sign. The study also indicates that students were aware of protecting their social identity as their Facebook shares are not public. Furthermore, they respect privacy as they do not use their friend's Facebook account.

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1. Introduction

The first known communication tool/technique was the cave painting. Communication through cave paintings was a very important part of early human society (Morriss-Kay, 2009). While the importance of communication continues, the worldwide penetration of computers and the Internet has resulted online mediums where people can communicate. *Classmates.com* was the first social networking site, founded in 1995 (Meltzer & Philips, 2009). Nowadays, social networking sites give users a form of online identity. The world's largest social network, Facebook, has more than 1.31 billion mobile active users and 1.49 billion monthly active users (Facebook, 2015). Furthermore, recent studies show that 90% of 18–29 year olds in USA use social networks and a high percentage (between 85 and 99%) of students use Facebook (Brenner, 2013; Matney & Borland, 2009). Facebook use and multitasking showed a significant difference and impact on GPA within different levels of undergraduate students in the USA (Junco, 2015). The term “unfriend” was added to the Oxford Dictionary, defined as “To remove someone as a ‘friend’ on a social networking

site such as Facebook” (Gross, 2009). For that reason, this research had been carried out in order to observe the attitudes and Facebook usage of students and to examine behaviors of students on social media, especially Facebook.

1.1. Related research

As social media is about interaction, there is also knowledge management process where social-learning concept analysed by Zhang et al. (2015). Learning via virtual world also had been analysed by Zhang, Zhu, and de Pablos (2012). Krasnova, Hildebrand, Guenther, Kovrigin, and Nowobilaska (2008) stated that the use of social networks can satisfy esteem as users can present themselves to friends who think similarly and have common interests. Tobi, Ma'on, and Ghazali (2013) mentioned the popularity of online social networks and conducted a study assessing if their use had any impact on the social and psychological health of Malaysian students. The authors suggest that it has a positive effect on the health of the students. Tobi et al. (2013) also further mentioned that this has a positive impact of user confidence. In addition, Kimball and Rheingold (2003) and Krasnova et al. (2008) argued that using social networking sites (e.g. Facebook and MySpace) increases user happiness and can reduce depression if Facebook envy is controlled (Tandoc, Ferrucci, & Duffy, 2015). However, it is also argued that

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social network use can depress people (Biachnio, Przepiórka, & Pantic, 2015).

Pearse (2012) suggested that people with a high score on the Narcissist Personality Inventory questionnaire change their profile picture more often, which can be an indication that engagement of people with low scores can be lower on Facebook. Wu et al. (2015) conducted a study on Facebook profile pictures and personalities and declared that collaborative learning happens when the user changes their profile picture. The authors stated that users have a tendency to know what is gaining attention among their friends and upload the same style profile picture to reflect the same positive message. Marshall, Lefringhausen, and Ferenczi (2015) also stated that there is a relationship between narcissism and the number of Facebook updates of an individual. Kauten, Lui, Stary, and Barry (2015) further mentioned that narcissism is notable among social media users. Ortigosa, Carro, et al. (2014) and Ortigosa, Martín, et al. (2014) indicated that users use social networks in order to support existing real-world relationships rather than to look for new virtual social relationships. Moran, Seaman, and Tinti-Kane (2011) carried out a study in a faculty which suggested that 77% of respondents have social media engagement, while 60% stated that they use social media in the classroom. Research by Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, and Witty (2010) highlighted that students are greatly concerned about their privacy, with only 15% declaring that they feel their privacy is invaded when the faculty encourages Facebook use for education. In addition, it is also stated that use of Facebook for education is interesting for students (Roblyer et al., 2010). Blight, Jagiello, and Ruppel (2015) conducted a study on college students and highlighted the fact that students seek support via Facebook: "There is a positive relationship between using Facebook and forming and maintaining social capital, which is defined as 'the resources accumulated through the relationships among people' (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007, p. 1145 cited in Junco, Merson, & Salter, 2010, p. 162). As Facebook enables self-disclosure, it was also mentioned that Facebook use enables higher levels of learning and increase motivation of students (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007).

The above shows that there are both pros and cons concerning Facebook and suggests that further studies are required. From the findings above, the importance of engagement was highlighted. The term engagement has various explanations such as "the amount of student learning and development associated with an educational program is directly related to the quality and quantity of student engagement in that program" and "the effectiveness of any educational practice is directly related to the ability of that practice to increase student engagement" (Astin, 1984, cited in Junco, 2012, p. 164).

1.2. Theoretical background

As mentioned above, starting from cave paintings, people have always used communication. Communication allows us to form relationships with others, which was defined as "social" level needs by Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Dessler, 2008). With the advancement of technology, communication has become easier. Nowadays, people can spread their thoughts and opinions with a couple of clicks via social networks. "...the need to belong is a powerful, fundamental, and extremely pervasive motivation" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p.497). The importance of belonging can be understood from the previous statement and it is mentioned that social networks satisfy the need of belong of individuals (Krasnova et al., 2008; Seidman, 2013). According to Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012) Facebook is also used for self-presentation while Peluchette and Karl (2010) further mentioned that some students share inappropriate materials on Facebook in order to get the

attention of their classmates. Teacher use of Facebook is received to have a positive effect on students where it is argued that it increases their motivation and learning (Mazer et al., 2007). Likewise, there are a variety of studies that have been carried out to demonstrate there is a relationship between Facebook use and individual characteristics ranging from agreeableness to esteem level (Lee, Moore, Park, & Park, 2012; Winter et al., 2014). In addition, Lee, Ahn, and Kim (2014) stated that extroverts use Facebook (status/photo share and using like button) more often than introverts. According to Grieve and Kemp (2015), extraversion and openness are related in the context of Facebook connectedness and Marshall et al. (2015) mentioned that there are more Facebook shares of social activities amongst extroverts. Photo/video sharing and album uploads show significant differences among different personalities (Eftekhar, Fullwood, & Morris, 2014).

2. Purpose of the study

This study aims to examine students' behaviors on Facebook. Whether there is a positive relationship between confidence and social media participation will also be assessed. The drawbacks of using Facebook will also be discussed in the research. It is expected that this study will be useful to highlight student behaviors on social media, as today's students are "digital natives" who were born with new technology and display excessive social network use (Prensky, 2001). Since the 2000s, there has been worldwide Internet penetration and technological advances such as smartphones with free communication methods (Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber etc.). It is argued that shift in student habits will also cause shifts in their behaviors.

The research aims are as follows;

- 1 Determining the social network use of students
- 2 To figure out respondents' behaviors among the Facebook use

3. Methods

3.1. Participants

In order to gather primary data, 362 high school students were surveyed from Türk Maarif Koleji, Bülent Ecevit Anadolu Lisesi and 20 Temmuz Fen Lisesi. 202 participants were female (56%) and 160 were male (44%). 45 (13%) of the respondents were 15 years old, 65 (18%) were 16 years old and the majority 160 of participants were 17 (44%) and 92 (25%) of the respondents were 18 years old as Table 1 demonstrates. The majority of the participants ($f = 138$) were studying Mathematics and Science (AS-Level), followed by Turkish and Mathematics (92) and A-Level courses (57). There were also participants from the Arts (41) and Science (34) fields.

3.2. Equipment

The questionnaire was prepared by the authors and is composed of 51 positive statements in order to evaluate the confidence level, engagement and the effect of educational studies. A 5 point Likert

Table 1
Age of respondents.

Age	(f)	%
15	45	13
16	65	18
17	160	44
18	92	25

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