Full length article

Examining the relationship to gender and personality on the purpose of Facebook usage of Turkish university students

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ABSTRACT

This study examined whether the purposes of Facebook usage is associated with gender and big five personalities in a sample of Turkish university students. Seven hundred and fifty one students filled in a set of questionnaires. While males use Facebook to express themselves, meet new people, and store and organize things more, females use Facebook for educational purposes. Agreeable and conscientious people use Facebook to maintain existing relationship more. It was concluded that gender and agreeableness, which is one of the personality types, are significant variables on the purposes of Facebook usage.

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1. Introduction

Facebook has become one of the most important social trends within the decade (Caers et al., 2013). Social networks like Facebook are generally used for creating a profile, sending content such as photos or videos, updating the status message, communicating with friends and family, and discussing the content (Oeldorf-Hirsch & Sundar, 2015; Shen, Brdiczka, & Liu, 2015).

Facebook, which was opened for public access in 2006, has over 950 million users as of the first month of 2015, while reaching over 500 million daily logins. 30% of the users of Facebook belong to the age group of 25—34 and 53% of the users consist of females (Facebook, 2015). Many researches indicated that almost all of the university students have a Facebook account and Facebook is mostly used by university students (Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2010; Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009). Facebook is used by people from all ages however; the purpose of this usage is differs according to age.

Although Facebook was created for the purpose of allowing users to have communication with their old friends on a network, today Facebook with numerous users has become a tool which can be used for different purposes such as sending and watching videos or photos, tagging, chatting, playing games, updating statuses, sending private messages, commenting, sharing links, informing others, and etc. (Junco, 2013). Frison and Eggermont (2016)

examined Facebook use in three dimensions as active public Facebook, active private Facebook use and passive Facebook use. In these uses, the focus was on the frequency of the usage rather than the purposes of use.

According to the results of the study on the aims of the internet usage conducted by Mark and Ganzach (2014) the internet is used in order to communicate and carry out recreational and academic activities. Facebook can also be described as having the similar uses with the internet. Facebook is found to be used for interacting with individuals who already have a face-to-face contact, communicating with their friends, viewing user profiles and photos, emphasizing their identities such as political ideology and religion, passing time, and preventing boredom (Pempek et al., 2009).

The studies carried out with student revealed that the students use social networks like Facebook in order to maintain their existing relations (Chen & Marcus, 2012; Cheung et al., 2010). Upon the examination of the usage of Facebook in the academic activities, most of the students reported that *Facebook* supports their learning, increases the interactivity, and helps the acquisition of information regarding their lessons (Irwin, Ball, Desbrow, & Leveritt, 2012).

Hew (2011) identified the purposes of using Facebook as to maintain existing relationships, meet new people, be cool, make oneself more popular, pass time, express or present oneself, learn something, and store and organize things (as a task management tool). Hughes, Rowe, Batey, and Lee (2012) and Ross et al. (2009) added socializing and obtaining information to the list of purposes of Facebook usage.

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The purposes of Facebook usage are dealt under seven categories in the current study: a) maintaining existing relationships, b) meeting new people and socializing, c) expressing, presenting, and making oneself popular, d) pasings time, e) storing and organizing things, f) using for educational and informational purposes, and g) using for entertainment purposes. The activities of Facebook users were examined for one month in a study regarding the usage of Facebook, and a significant positive correlation between real usages and self-report was found (Junco, 2013). With this aspect, it can be said that the usage of self-report can give similar results with real usage.

1.1. Personality and Facebook Usage Purposes

Personality type is one of the most important types that shape a person's feelings, opinions and behaviors. Many assessment tools often are used and developed in order to measure and identify the personality types (see in Goffin & Christiansen, 2003). Among these, tools that measure big five personality types and consist of the extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, emotional stability, and openness to experience dimensions come into prominence (Funder, 2015; John & Srivastava, 1999). Big five is one of the best models that explain the personality (Funder, 2015). According to literature, the personality types are related to the personal preferences and tendencies. From perspective aspect, big five is the most preferred model in studies regarding the internet usage (Hughes et al., 2012; Moore & McElroy, 2012; Ryan & Xenos, 2011). Similarly, in the studies that examine the relationship between Facebook usage and personality types, big five personality types are encountered (see in Kuo & Tang, 2014; Nadkarni & Hofmann, 2012). In study, Ryan and Xenos (2011) determined that Facebook users are more extrovert and less conscientious.

1.1.1. Extroversion

When the five big personality types and Facebook usage were analyzed separately (Kuo & Tang, 2014; Wilson, Fornasier, & White, 2010), the extrovert individuals were observed to be using Facebook over for longer periods (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010; Kuo & Tang, 2014; Lönnqvist, Itkonen, Verkasalo, & Poutvaara, 2014; Moore & McElroy, 2012; Shen et al., 2015; Stopfer, Egloff, Nestler, & Back, 2013), and having more Facebook friends and memberships in groups on Facebook (Ross et al., 2009). When the extroverts' purposes of usage were examined, again extroverts were observed to be focusing mostly on social events (Ross et al., 2009) and using Facebook in order to communicate (Correa, Hinsley, & de Zúñiga, 2010; Seidman, 2013), maintain and strengthen their existing connections (Ross et al., 2009), view their friends' pages and comments (Gosling, Augustine, Vazire, Holtzman, & Gaddis, 2011), obtain information (Hughes et al., 2012), share photos more often and update their status messages (Lee, Ahn, & Kim, 2014). In some studies; however, no correlation was found between extroversion and Facebook usage or extroversion and purposes of usage (Bachrach, Kosinski, Graepel, Kohli, & Stillwell, 2012; Simoncic, Kuhlman, Vargas, Houchins, & Lopez-Duran, 2014; Skues, Williams, & Wise, 2012).

1.1.2. Neuroticism (emotional stability)

In studies regarding neurotic personality structure, neurotic individuals were found to be more focused on social media (Correa et al., 2010; Guadagno, Okdie, & Eno, 2008), sharing more photos (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010), and using Facebook for longer periods of time (Moore & McElroy, 2012) while having more people on their friends list (Shen et al., 2015), commenting less (Lee et al., 2014), sharing their personal information less (Ross et al., 2009), and sending out more negative posts (Shen et al., 2015).

When the neurotic individuals' aims of Facebook usage were examined, it was seen that they prefer socializing on Facebook over real life (Kuo & Tang, 2014) while using Facebook for rather obtaining information (Hughes et al., 2012) and communicating with people (Seidman, 2013). In some studies; however, no correlation between being neurotic and using Facebook was found (Ross et al., 2009; Skues et al., 2012; Simoncic et al., 2014).

1.1.3. Openness to experience

According to studies regarding the openness to experience personality, individuals who are open to experience were found to be spending more time on Facebook (Kuo & Tang, 2014; Skues et al., 2012), having more friends (Kuo & Tang, 2014; Skues et al., 2012), and using more of its features (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010) but using the sharing feature less (Lee et al., 2014). When the purposes of using Facebook by the individuals open to experience were examined, it came to light that they use Facebook for acquiring information (Hughes et al., 2012), connecting with others (Skues et al., 2012), and focusing on sports events (Shen et al., 2015).

1.1.4. Agreeableness

In studies regarding the agreeableness personality type, individuals that are agreeable were found to be using Facebook less often while sharing more information regarding themselves (Moore & McElroy, 2012), having less friends on Facebook (Shen et al., 2015), and spending less time on Facebook (Kuo & Tang, 2014). Agreeable individuals generally use Facebook for communication and as a way to maintain their relations (Seidman, 2013).

1.1.5. Conscientiousness

In studies regarding the conscientiousness personality type, the conscientious individuals spend less time on Facebook (Shen et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 2010). They also share less information about themselves (Moore & McElroy, 2012) and comment less (Lee et al., 2014).

Many studies regarding Facebook usage and personality types exist. Vasalou, Joinson, and Courvoisier (2010) examined the Facebook usage and differences among cultures; they found the existence of cultural differences with respect to Facebook usage in different countries. Caers et al. (2013) examining the Facebook articles published between 2006 and 2012 emphasized that although there are studies that examine Facebook usage and personal features, there is a shortage of studies that examine personality features and Facebook usage for more generalizable research. Findings due to the reasons such as taking also other social networks into consideration, not having enough sampling or conducting studies only in the United States of America.

1.2. Gender and Facebook usage aim

Upon the examination of studies regarding gender and internet use, a difference between women and men regarding the use and behavior on the internet was discovered (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012). While women are more of a passive user on Facebook and the internet, men are more active users in a public setting (Frison & Eggermont, 2016). The most essential reason for this is stated as the privacy and safety of the information shared on the internet or Facebook (Acquisti & Gross, 2006; Lewis, Kaufman, & Christakis, 2008; Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012). In the study conducted by Hargittai (2007) with 1060 university freshmen, female participants were found to be more eager to use Facebook. When Facebook usage is analyzed with regards to the gender, females were discovered to be spending more time on Facebook when compared to males, while having more friends and sharing more photos;