Exploring the Relationship between Facebook and Self-Esteem among Turkish University Students

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the use of Facebook and self-esteem among Turkish university students. Research data were obtained by surveying the undergraduate students in the Business Administration and Economics Departments of Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University, in the academic year of 2013-2014. A questionnaire, including Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, was used to collect the data. According to the results of the study, self-esteem of Turkish university students does not have significant association with Facebook use. It was found that there was no statistically significant difference between self-esteem of those who use and those who do not use Facebook. In addition, there was also no relationship found between characteristics of Facebook use and self-esteem among Facebook users either.

Keywords: Facebook, Self-Esteem, University Students

INTRODUCTION

Today, use of Internet and social networking sites has been increased in almost every segment of society, especially among young people, around the world. The widespread use of smart mobile devices and interaction features of social networking sites are important factors in the spread of the use of social networking sites in worldwide. Websites created in the early years of the Internet had a static content and did not have any interaction with their users. The first phase of the Internet is called as Web 1.0. Web 1.0 web sites had the similar features of traditional media which offers only unilateral communication. However, today’s websites allow people to collaborate, share information, and create new products and services in addition to their static features (Laudon & Laudon, 2011: 272). According to Laudon and Laudon (2011: 272), Web
Web 2.0 has four distinctive features: interaction, real-time user control, social participation (sharing) and user-generated content. One of today’s most popular Web 2.0 applications is social media. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is a group of Internet-based applications that allow users to create content and share what they create via these websites. Social media includes different technologies such as wikis, blogs, social networking sites, virtual worlds and video sharing sites (Kane et al., 2014).

Social network sites have the power to affect society with their features such as allowing their users to interact with each other, share pictures, information and interesting things instantly (Mehdizadeh, 2010; Pettijohn et al., 2012; Wilcox and Stephen, 2013). The use of social networking sites is very common throughout the world. There are hundreds of millions of registered active members of the popular networking sites.

Today, Facebook is the most popular social networking site with the highest number of members in the world. Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 for only students of Harvard University, and then gradually became widespread after being used by other users (Steinfield et al., 2008). Today, Facebook is quite popular especially among university students and there are various studies regarding the use of Facebook and university students (Johnston et al., 2013; Kalpidou et al., 2011; Mehdizadeh, 2010; Pempek et al., 2009; Pettijohn et al., 2012; Subramanian et al., 2014; Steinfield et al., 2008). In these studies, the demographics of Facebook users were investigated (Milosevic-Dordevic and Zezelj, 2014; Pempek, 2009) in addition to characteristics of Facebook users (Chen and Lee, 2013; Johnston et al., 2013; Kalpidou et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2014; Steiger et al., 2012; Steinfield et al., 2008) such as loneliness (Apaolaza et al., 2013; Kross et al., 2013; Skues et al., 2012), privacy (Bechmann, 2014; Dinev et al., 2009; Raynes-Goldie, 2010; Saeri et al., 2014; Stieger et al., 2012) and self-disclosure (Chen and Marcus, 2012; Kisekka et al., 2013).

In this study, the relationship between the use of Facebook and self-esteem among Turkish university students has been investigated. For this purpose, the authors explored the self-esteem differences between those who use and those who do not use Facebook, and also the relationship between self-esteem and the characteristics of Facebook users were investigated.

SELF-ESTEEM AND FACEBOOK

Our self-concept includes some elements that can be considered as the overall view of us such as our abilities, attitudes, temperament, appearance and beliefs (Plummer, 2005: 13). According to Rosenberg (1986), self-concept can be defined as the overall thoughts and feelings of a person addressing to oneself as an object (cited as, Mehdizadeh, 2010).

The difference between the ‘ideal’ self and perceived self (self-concept) is an important indication of self-esteem (Plummer, 2005: 14). Plummer (2005: 14) stated that if a person’s perspective of her/himself is similar to what he/she wants to be, and then he/she has a healthy self-esteem. In this regard, the term of “ideal” does not refer to “perfect” all the time; however, a person with low self-esteem can create some unrealistic concepts of him/herself as how he/she wants or thing to be (Plummer, 2005: 14).

Self-esteem, conceptualized as the positive or negative feelings and thoughts of a person about one’s self, can be also defined as an overall self-evaluation of a person of his/her worth (Mehdizadeh, 2010). Adolescence, especially including the university years, is an important period for development of self-concept. The basic elements of self-esteem are self-knowledge, self and others, self-acceptance, self-reliance, self-expression, self-confidence, self-awareness (Plummer, 2005: 20-23). According to Mehdizadeh (2010), sub-areas of self-esteem can be clas-
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