

#Trending Topics on Social Media Researches



Ufuk Bingöl (ed.)

# **#Trending Topics on Social Media Researches**



**PETER LANG**

**Bibliographic Information published by the  
Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available online at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

Cover illustration: © mrgao/istockphoto.com

ISBN 978-3-631-85014-5 (Print)  
E-ISBN 978-3-631-86045-8 (E-PDF)  
E-ISBN 978-3-631-86623-8 (EPUB)  
DOI 10.3726/b18979

© Peter Lang GmbH  
Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften  
Berlin 2021  
All rights reserved.

Peter Lang – Berlin · Bern · Bruxelles · New York · Istanbul ·  
Oxford · Warszawa · Wien

All parts of this publication are protected by copyright. Any utilisation outside the strict limits of the copyright law, without the permission of the publisher, is forbidden and liable to prosecution. This applies in particular to reproductions, translations, microfilming, and storage and processing in electronic retrieval systems.

This publication has been peer reviewed.

[www.peterlang.com](http://www.peterlang.com)

# Preface and Acknowledgments

This book covers deep researches from different perspectives & disciplines upon Social Network on social, legal, economic, cultural issues by successful and expert researchers in their field. In this book, different and rigorous analyses of all areas influenced by Social Media and Social Networks researches were made in order to be one of the emerging reliable sources about the Digital Age literature with various dimensions.

This book consists of three sections. After the introduction, In the first section, there are six chapters about business & financial management and marketing & advertisement researches for social networks. In first chapter, Dr. Akwesi Assensoh-Koduaseek scrutinizes social media and its networking platforms, and how they can be used to run or develop a business in the financial sector. According to research this sector ranges from shadow banks such as mutual funds, leasing companies, brokers and credit insurance companies to any other money market mutual funds. Nevertheless, recent studies in this sector have only focused on the banking sector, but created a vacuum of how social media can be used to run or develop this sector. The social media platform has transformed drastically from being a place for just interaction, to one of buying and selling, forcing many businesses to register on one or two of these medium, to take advantage of the ever growing market potentials it offers. However, it also comes with its own challenges. This chapter highlights how to manage this medium for successful business. The study collected data online from bank clients who ever used this platform to transact financial business. Of the 270 usable responses analyzed for this purpose, with the help of the PLS-SEM, it was crystal clear that, indeed social networks is a platform for running or developing business. In second chapter of first section, Dr. Cemal Çelik evaluates the term as Strategic Social Media and its ties with business models, theory of change and Strategic marketing. According to his findings targeting hidden audience through inbound marketing is a major shift for businesses. The social media rating should reflect the assumptions of “pull-and-stay” marketing. Assessment and measurement efforts need to be linked to helping practitioners design, produce, disseminate and evaluate their social media strategy. And also both quantitative and qualitative measurement of topics, including focusing on the target group and consumer acceptance messages, are subjects pertaining to social media research strategies. In the third chapter Assoc. Prof. Emel Faiz theoretically focuses on the emergence of social media as a means of consumption and its effects on

consumers' purchasing process. Dr. Gülnil Aydın emphasizes the guiding power of social media in the emergence of cynical consumers and negative customer collaboration regarding brands, such as boycotts. After defining and explaining relevant concepts (consumer cynicism, consumer skepticism, anti-consumption, brand boycotts, and digital activism), the study discusses the topic both within the scope of theoretical infrastructure and brand examples. Finally, the study makes suggestions about how businesses could approach this threat. Assoc. Prof. Yasemin Bozkurt examine position of Social Media Influencers in terms of Advertisement industry. She reveals scientific data about the unknown points of influencer marketing, which has been a hot topic for the last few years, will contribute to the success of brands' influencer campaigns. This is important both for the communication literature on branded content and for brands to reach their goals by coming up with successful influencer campaign strategies. As last of this section Dr. Fatma Yasa empirically discusses the attitudes towards social media advertisements and the factors that determine these attitudes. According to her results first things commonly came in to mind for marketing such as type of social network used and the time spent on social networks were not determinative on attitudes towards SMA.

Second section of this book is directly related to researches about management and organizational studies related with social networks. As first chapter of second section, Dr. Onur BAYRAKÇI investigates social network's surveillance practices with the sociological perspective under the panopticon, Synopticon and Omnipicon as the highest stade of surveillance literature. As the second chapter of second section Assoc. Prof. Engin Kanbur and Assoc. Prof. Aysun Kanbur focus on the term "phubbing" in the context of workplace behavior with the excitement of discovering the existence of this concept in employee-oriented behaviors in the workplace in the digitalized human world is emphasized. Another newly attracted term "Cyberloafing" is studied by Assoc. Prof. İlsun Didem Ülbeği on third chapter. She empirically aims to determine the correlates of cyberloafing, serious cyberloafing, and minor cyberloafing using psychometric meta-analysis method. Fourth chapter of second section is about how local governments use social networks with the public perception in Turkey by Dr. Hüseyin Korkut. According to his findings there is an increasing use of social media platforms by all type of municipalities in Turkey as the municipalities have a significant role in Turkish public organizational structure. As the last chapter of second section and the only legal research of this book is from Dr. Merve Ayşegül Kulular İbrahim and Prof. Bülent Kent. They discuss protection of personal data and privacy in the online environment and analyze the impact of the right to be forgotten for protection of personal data and privacy.

Third section of this book comprises various researches with the different disciplines both theoretically and empirically. Tamer Can TALUY & Assoc. Prof. Kivanç Ayca carried out to learn to what extent the musical sensations of children with autism who are interested in music can be improved with effective music education. According to his qualitative study's findings of the study reveal that the solfeggio, piano, and basic vocal training lessons given to children with autism are effective in improving their musical senses. Second chapter of the last section is from a healthcare professional. Dr. Sarper Yılmaz evaluates the impact of social media on hospital emergency services and patient treatment during Covid-19 pandemic. According to his findings disinformation is the biggest adverse effect of social network on treatment and vaccination. Dr. Yasemin Özkent carry on with her chapter with vaccination disinformation regarding Covid-19. In her study, expressions of feelings about the vaccine were depicted through hashtags set in a month's time period, including before and after the date when vaccination began in Turkey. As a result of the analysis, it was observed that Twitter shares about the COVID-19 vaccine intensified at vaccination. It was found that the content of the shares was largely news, humor, and information related, and the proportion of shares with negative content, such as anxiety and criticism, was low. Accordingly, it can be said that the positive shares related to the vaccine dominate. It was also suggested that Twitter is a critical tool in developing a communication strategy to raise public awareness about vaccination.

I would like to thank all the authors and researchers who are experts in their field for their devotion and diligence and hope to help our readers. It is also important to note that all chapters of this book underwent a serious both cross and external double-blind review process. We would also like to thank our external reviewers for their expertise and contribution to our book. We especially appreciate the valuable insights and guidance that has further helped shape our ideas. We also thank the publishing team for their immense support through the phase of publication. It has been an amazing journey so far. Thank you for helping this manuscript bloom from proposal to final publication. At the end of our saying, we also offer our endless gratitude to the families and children who are the source of motivation for us and our authors with their patience and support during the conduct of these valuable works.

Our respect.  
*Editor; Assoc. Prof. Ufuk BİNGÖL*



# Contents

*Preface and Acknowledgments* ..... 5

*List of Contributors* ..... 11

## **Section 1 Business Management and Marketing Researches for Social Networks**

*Akwesi Assensoh-Dobua*

Financial, Economic and Entrepreneurial Researches for COVID-19  
Social Networks and the Platform Economy ..... 15

*Cemal Çelik*

Strategic Social Media Business Model, Theory of Change and  
Strategic Marketing ..... 33

*Emel Faiz*

Social Media and Consumer Behavior ..... 49

*Gülnil Aydın*

Consumer Cynicism, Skepticism, Brand Boycotts and Social Media ..... 61

*Yasemin Bozkurt*

Influencers: A Comprehensive View of the Digital Advertising World,  
From its New Opinion Leadership to its Types ..... 91

*Fatma Yasa*

Determinants Influencing Attitudes towards Social Media Advertising ..... 117

## **Section 2 Management and Organization Researches**

*Onur Bayrakçı*

Surveillance Practices through Social Media: From Strict Surveillance to  
Spontaneous Voluntary Surveillance ..... 133

<i>Engin Kanbur &amp; Aysun Kanbur</i> Phubbing at Workplace .....	147
---	-----

<i>İlksun Didem ÜLBEGİ</i> Cyberloafing in the Workplace: A Meta-Analysis Study .....	161
--	-----

### **Section 3 Legal and Public Administration Researches**

<i>Hüseyin Korkut</i> Social Media Use in Municipalities: Public Perception in Turkey .....	179
--	-----

<i>Bülent KENT &amp; Merve Ayşegül KULULAR İBRAHİM</i> The Right to be Forgotten for Protection of Personal Data and Privacy on the Internet .....	195
--	-----

### **Section 4 Various Researches for Social Networks**

<i>Tamer Can TALUY &amp; Kıvanç AYCAN</i> Improving the Melodic and Rhythmic Hearing Skills in Children with Autism .....	207
---	-----

<i>Sarper Yılmaz</i> Evaluation of the Effect of Social Media on Hospital Emergency Services and Patient Treatment during the Pandemic .....	243
--	-----

<i>Yasemin Özkent</i> Discursive Trends on Twitter about COVID-19 Vaccine .....	259
--	-----

<b>List of Figures and Graphs .....</b>	271
---	-----

<b>List of Tables .....</b>	273
-----------------------------	-----

# List of Contributors

**Dr. Akwesi Assensoh-Dobua**

Durban University of Technology, South Africa

**Assoc. Prof. Kıvanç AYCAN**

Erciyes University, Turkey

**Asst. Prof. Gülnil Aydın**

Bandırma Onyedı Eylöl University, Turkey

**Asst. Prof. Onur Bayrakçı**

Bandırma Onyedı Eylöl University, Turkey

**Assoc. Prof. Yasemin Bozkurt**

Pamukkale University, Turkey

**Asst. Prof. Cemal Çelik**

Bandırma Onyedı Eylöl University, Turkey

**Assoc. Prof. Emel Faiz**

Düzce University, Turkey

**Assoc. Prof. Aysun Kanbur**

Kastamonu University, Turkey

**Assoc. Prof. Engin Kanbur**

Kastamonu University, Turkey

**Prof. Bülent KENT**

Social Sciences University of Ankara (ASBU), Turkey

**Dr. Hüseyin Korkut**

Ministry of National Education, Turkey

**Asst. Prof. Merve Ayşegöl KULULAR İBRAHİM**

Social Sciences University of Ankara (ASBU), Turkey

**Asst. Prof. Yasemin ÖZKENT**

Selçuk University, Turkey

**Assoc. Prof. İlksun Didem ÜLBEĞİ**

Çukurova University, Turkey

**Asst. Prof. Fatma Yasa**

Pamukkale University, Turkey

**Asst. Prof. (MD) Sarper YILMAZ**

University of Health Sciences, Turkey

**Tamer Can TALUY**

Erciyes University, Turkey

# **Section 1 Business Management and Marketing Researches for Social Networks**



Akwesi Assensoh-Dobua

# **Financial, Economic and Entrepreneurial Researches for COVID-19 Social Networks and the Platform Economy**

## **1. Introduction**

Social network and its networking is a multidisciplinary subject with the ability of revealing extraordinary outcomes. It can, when Social Network Services (SNSs) is allowed for the functions of service restricted right into behavioural scientific research. The behavioural science is interested in the underlying philosophies giving insight that notifies researchers about interactions among people, modern technology and company, as well as it enhances the design science study to address the fundamental problems facing the productive application of info-tech (Asongu & Nwachukwu, 2018). In the current economy as well as expertise society, the visions of obtaining competitive benefit have triggered the need to take on details and information and communication technology (ICT) such as social media sites to boost business effectiveness. Because of this, numerous services have set up efficiency systems on web applications, such as online search engine, e-business and also SNS, to attain their aim of running or developing a service version that carries out well. The surge of service activities on online social networks, popularly termed Social network services (SNSs) continues to surge greater, offering opportunities and hazards for a selection of businesses. SNS attributes have triggered social networks, Internet 2.0 and more lately cloud based social applications wherein customer can ubiquitously access the solutions that are given by suppliers. The growth of SNS in terms of subscription and use has expanded dramatically to present significant service opportunities for which, if appropriately managed could deal with most of the issues experienced in current times. Specifically, organization deals conducted online have provided brand-new opportunities, which has:

- changing human perception of traditional business practices
- enabled corporate presence on social media
- improved client support
- place business information at the fingertips of the clients/participant

- reduced costs of running business
- facilitated low start-up costs, and
- provided the capability to do business 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in a world without borders.

Internet-based services, of which one of the most widespread are those utilizing social network solutions (SNSs), have been shown empirically to overtake socialization on social media sites by Assensoh-Kodua (2019). There are difficulties identified by this writer and other researchers (Kayes & Iamnitshi, 2017) though, that confronts this new business model, not failing to remember concerns like use, continuous usage and commitment, by SNS participants. If as lots of as over 100 million individuals are reportedly organized by the LinkedIn SNS as of 2011 (Kopaigorodski & Porat, 2015), Twitter, 106 million users since 2010 (Soric et al., 2017), along with 845 million energetic customers, representing 8 % of the globe's population as of 2012 by Facebook, then, one cannot argue but to agree with Assensoh-Kodua (2019) that, this system constitute a capacity market for company, greater than just socialisation in the future. This fact, according to Pebrianti (2016) study findings (SNS web sites) are placed one of the most widely visited sites by the typical web customer.

These data recommend that SNS have ended up being a basic part of the online experience throughout the world, providing a much required source for service, economic development and platform economy. SNSs are digital areas for customers to create public profiles, interact with good friends and satisfy individuals based on shared interests for social collaborations. This indicates that, traditionally, this social media was not suggested for organization objectives (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019), but to start and maintain connections with the public. This have actually altered, to the degree that LinkedIn as well as Twitter might be stated to have very interesting company models for their customers. Hence, it is no surprise that, social networks are undergoing extreme researches to develop it prospective for running or creating a business. This regardless of, the existing literature has limited information concerning exactly how SNS enables the running or developing an organization. This chapter tried to address this issue by utilizing empirical proof to sustain the concerns forwarded below. In this context, the record considered the communication in between customers and suppliers for organization whereby revenue making is the driving motive.

## 2. Platform Economy

The web is a "pull marketing atmosphere" in which firms try to attract consumers to their brand name websites through internet search engine and social networks (Chaffey & Smith, 2013). In pull advertising, companies make every effort to record the focus of consumers who are already inquiring concerning a product or service. Lately, there has been growing interest on incoming advertising and marketing, in which leaders as well as customers are proactively looking for brands with value, evokes involvement a showcase pertinent material (Halligan & Shah, 2010). As opposed to the old marketing methods of acquiring ads, e-mail listings, and spending for leads, incoming SNS concentrates on creating top quality material that pulls people towards the firm as well as item, where they naturally want to be (Patrutiu-Baltes, 2016). Outbound marketing aims to promote the services and products to the audience, while social media advertising and marketing helps to indirectly highlight items and services, within the context in which the participants can see themselves as the business's marketing target (Patrutiu-Baltes, 2016). Thus, a social media advertising and marketing can record the customer's interest, influencing him/her towards buying (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019; Patrutiu-Baltes, 2016). Social web content, due to its interact nature is capable of utilizing numerous styles and strategies to bring in and/or retain clients. Therefore, web content is of essential relevance for companies seeking to make the most out of their business, by advertising their product or services in a borderless market. Given the essential function of details in decision making, the absence of valuable information hinges upon a strong effectiveness and influence a company can put on its followers (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019). This pressure needs to be useful, comprehensive, perceivable and also interpretable as well as lead the clients to additional value for their wants. To this end, the objective of creating the SNS content should be to draw in and retain customers by developing and providing appealing contents to engage interactions.

Mansour and Barandas (2017) researched entrepreneurial social marketing as well as integrating it within the structure of entrepreneurship from the stand point of innovative business designs whereby, entrepreneurial social material advertising and marketing entrepreneurs in their initial service procedures were about exactly how they buy their abilities and also how they make use of innovative marketing approaches to market technical products under unpredictable circumstances and economic restrictions. The outcome was not far from interactive approach for content.

Companies should make use of social material marketing to influence the usage of several business objectives, such as brand awareness, SNS participant's

attraction and participant connections. Additionally, the interaction through social media sites should supply the participants with the needed relevant details, which enables them to obtain their wanted info with less effort. The platform should likewise enable the participants to voice out their complete displeasure or satisfaction. SNS by its definition, is a tool of internet-based applications built on the Web 2.0, which should permit the production and also exchange of participants views. These take a selection of kinds, including weblogs, social blog sites, mini blog writing, wikis, podcasts, photos, video clip and also social marketing. Material or service production should be the aim of the several phases that need to be effectively completed prior to presenting the site if gaining market share is the prime objective. Shin et al. (2013) penetrated the impact of web site quality on the intent to induce re-purchase in via the moderating variables of fulfilment, influence and also dedication among 230 college students in South Korea utilizing a measurable survey approach. The emerging results showed that, the six measurements of the site quality that influences the participants were simplicity of acquisition, website style, details worth, transaction safety, repayment system and also customer relationship. Djoukanova and Georgieva (2014) explored exactly how electronic web content added to brand understanding and also other variables such as the positive influence of the brand to reinforce brand trust and commitment. Among the data that were collected from social media such as Facebook, Twitter as well as the company internet site, the ability of participants to create, edit and also manage their web content on the internet site stood as the most pressing needs.

Prior to this study, Choi et al. (2008) had recognized factors that had a bearing on participant's contentment (m-satisfaction) and also loyalty (m-loyalty) as the ability to interact participants content reliability, availability and also the purchase procedure of using m-internet were identified as vital elements underpinning consumer commitment and satisfaction. Goh et al. (2013) researched the effect of social media on a company's revenues and reported that user-generated content rather than firm-created web content had a considerable influence on revenues. This was not far from what Kim and Kim (2017) discovered in their study. They examined the resolution of circulation for business value of digital content service providers and found out that the circulation of content value as interactive and dynamic, should develop a functional web content for user interaction. Du Plessis (2017) examined the duty of social web content marketing in social media sites material areas and reported enough proof on exactly how social content could benefit a brand by becoming an indispensable part of social networks conversations. Therefore, web content should be fresh and current

with better economic returns as well as produce heightened understanding or demand.

Aggregating information from Facebook to show that COVID-19 was more likely to spread in between areas with stronger social media network links, Kuchler, Russel, as well as Stroebel, (2021) demonstrated that this was the case during the recent pandemic. Locations with more social connections to two very early COVID-19 "hotspots" (Westchester County, NY, in the united states and also Lodi province in Italy) normally had actually much more verified COVID-19 instances since the end of March. These partnerships hold after regulating for geographic distance to the hotspots in addition to the income and population densities of the regions. According to the authors, as the pandemic advanced in the united states, a region's social distance to COVID-19 instances predicted future outbreaks beyond physical closeness.

These results suggest data on the internet social media networks can be valuable to epidemiologists as well as others hoping to anticipate the spread of transmittable conditions such as COVID-19. However, what is crucial for this chapter to note as far as this result is concerned is then, that, social media has become more than just a virtual platform for the economy but also physically omnipresent among the people creating real impacts in their lives. This should be an eye-opener to the social entrepreneur.

Thinking about the result of the function of social content in today's globe of Internet of Things, sufficient records have shown that, satisfactory content; web content credibility; material availability; content importance; design safety and security and also personal privacy and client relationship matters to the technological savvy generation-Y participants.

SNSs uses social innovations (or social media networks), that provides new efficiency approaches for several companies, consequently boosting their total business competence. Businesses around the world are uncovering just how social networks modern technologies accelerate knowledge partnership, dissemination, and also development in order to enhance performance, and many have benefitted tremendously from using social networking websites for marketing and advertising their products and solutions (Giacomucci, 2014). Per McKinsey Global Institute in 2012 (Dobbs, Manyika & Woetzel, 2015), most financial institutions have only just started to uncover that social media sites could be used to increase productivity, connect with clients, drive deeper understandings into product growth and advertising, review as well as answer emails of both possible as well as present clients, search and gather information on clients and competitors, communicate and work together. The research additionally exposed that social networks, when accompanied by significant administration processes

as well as social makeovers, can improve the efficiency of the financial workers by 20–25 %. Hence, there are advantages for making use of social media sites by the financial institutions.

## **2.1. Some Paybacks of Using Social Media Site to Run the Financial Institutions**

Social media site has good impact in improving customers' solutions and relationships, boosting information ease of access, and also lowering expense in regards to marketing (Parveen, Jaafar & Ainin, 2015). The benefits can be grouped as follows:

### *2.1.1. Rapport Building with Participants*

Financial businesses can make use of social networks to run personality studies. For instance, right from going to university to very first day at the workplace, acquiring first automobiles and also homes, to pension plan financial savings, humans deal with a banks. As these organizations eagerly anticipates build an enduring partnership with individuals around their solutions and also items, the SNSs give the gold system for them to understand this desire, equally as it is the case in the U.S, where Missouri Bank (MoBank), makes use of social networks to favourably offer a photo on their Facebook as an on the internet area that looks after their clients. Structure community relations of this nature to know clients as well as the other way around, absolutely affects the count on of both celebrations for a long-term affair.

### *2.1.2. Structure Customer Base*

Social media technologies such as social networking sites supplies distinct advantages to both the banks and their clients. As connections are deepening via social interaction on SNSs, the financial institutions are likely to produce customers' commitment for profitability, customer base which is inexpensive as compared to the price of developing a brand-new one, reduced purchase prices, expand market sector, ease continuous financial deals, with a decrease dependence on traditional branch organization, and also conserving of time and energy. In short, the adoption of online technologies will use cost much less and benefits for monetary solutions such as influence of social standards. For instance, the DenizBank in Turkey lately announced that they would certainly create a Facebook account to permit clients with Facebook accounts to transact service anytime, while monitoring their daily businesses with the financial

institutions. In this manner, calling clients will be a lot easier, especially via their handheld gadgets to gather their comments. This is because, lots of people have these tools nowadays, therefore, the possibility of it creating a bandwagon effect to comply with the social standard is high.

### *2.1.3. Customer Service*

Per the American Financiers Association, a lot of embed in America are already involving with their customers over social media channels to address their issues. The Bank of America sees much of the exact same questions on Twitter that they get on regular communication channels like telephone or face to face. This means, there would certainly be no requirement for walk- ins or telephonic questions, except for the delicate nature of monetary deals which may not allow customers to make use of social media. Questions about associating with items and online banking could be dealt with on SNSs. This is definitely likely to improve client's fulfilment.

### *2.1.4. Research and Development*

Financial companies can utilize social networks to figure out just how clients view their products and services. This will certainly enable them to fine-tune or develop new product or services that meets client's expectations, and therefore promote their continuance use. As an example, firms can use devices like surveymonkey on social media sites to research their customer's needs and also utilize that expertise to develop new services and products that attends to these demands, in addition to making use of several of these tools to conduct online surveys to develop an economic lifecycle for their clients. This can additionally allow them to determine potential clients in their early ages for future engagements.

## **2.2. Acceptance of SNS by Financial Institutions**

The modern days of ICT have seen extensive adoption in the financial sector particularly the banks. This has taken the form of electronic banking, internet banking and mobile or cellphone banking. However, the use of social networking sites in this industry is still in its infancy, as compared to the anticipated level of usage. An analysis by the social media audit industry report (Wachyudi, 2018; Assensoh-Kodua, 2016) reveals that the financial sectors are falling behind in the engagement of this strategy with their clients on social networking. This could be attributed to lack of knowledge or appreciation of the benefits such medium could garner for

their operations. This documents therefore intends to bring some of the benefits to the fore by theorizing the positions as already started in the preceding sections.

### 2.3. Theorization

The theories in this section are based on user satisfaction and continuance intention from the expectation-confirmation theory (ECT) of the behavioural sciences, due to their vigorous links. Social norm from the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) because of its influence on behavioural intentions, and finally, trust from the theory of socio-cognitive trust (TST) since trust is important in any business endeavour.

#### 2.3.1. *User Satisfaction*

The electronic commerce has looked at the concept of online acceptance and purchase behaviour through SNS and have described user satisfaction as a linear function to define the inconsistency that exist between a user first time-adoption and acts (Kaleem & Zaheer, 2019). It should be noted here that, the relationship between user satisfaction and usage first stems from the formation of continuance intention as a precursor to actual usage (Hsiao, Chang & Tang, 2016). If a financial sector intends to enhance it client service as done by the US Financiers Association, and therefore engages with their clients over SNS to address their problems, it is likely that the satisfaction level of these patrons will be boosted since they will be saved the hustle of traveling to and fro the banking office, granted all other factors are held constant. Following from the above, it could be deduced that a dissatisfied client can discontinue the use of SNS for financial purposes, with the possibilities of influencing others who look up to him/her for directions and vice versa. This influence is exerted through social norm which is pressure to perform or otherwise, a behaviour that important ones would approve or disapprove of. Clients' satisfaction can lead to boosting their trust, which will impact their level of patronage to use SNS for financial transactions. This trust would even develop better when clients have confidence in the integrity of their service providers and would decide to transact with SNS. As a result:

- H1:** Clients' satisfaction with SNSs will positively influence their continuance intention to use SNSs for financial transactions.
- H2:** Clients' satisfaction with SNSs will positively influence others to use SNSs for financial transactions or otherwise.
- H3:** Clients' satisfaction with SNSs will positively influence their trust in SNSs for financial transactions.

### 2.3.2. *Trust*

Trust is defined by the TST as a notion that is appraised by agents, in terms of cognitive ingredients (Hawlitschek, Notheisen & Teubner, 2018). TST treats trust as a relational factor between a trustor (trust giver) and a trustee (trust receivers). When clients trust their financial providers SNS as being safe and reliable, they will have no issues using it for financial transactions and vice versa.

As these clients are happy because of the trust they get from the SNS usage; they can tell their friends and relatives to also use it. As the saying goes: “every satisfied client tells only 1 to 3 others, but a dissatisfied one tells 7 to 15 others.” The greater the perceived trust among clients, the more promising will be the social norm, and information sharing. Consequently, clients can influence others because of this trust, thus:

**H4:** Perceived trust in SNSs will positively influence continuance intention of clients to use SNSs for financial transactions.

**H5:** Perceived trust in SNSs will positively influence the ability of clients to put pressure on others to use SNSs for financial transactions.

### 2.3.3. *Social Norm*

The literature in technology acceptance have shown that, there is a strong link between social norm (SN) and technology adoption, and many other scholars (Hsu & Lin, 2015; Boss et al., 2015) have also supported the relationship between social norm and continuance intention as solid as before:

**H6:** The ability of clients to influence others to use SNSs will positively lead to their continuance intention to use SNSs for financial transactions.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Measurement Model

This document used a quantitative research approach to empirically investigate the issue at stake. Thus the instrument for data collection were structured and hosted online. The Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was then used to analyse adoption and continuance intention to use SNS for financial transactions. PLS is a predictive analytical tool, variance-based, and nonparametric, robust and best for prediction. Thus, when the results of this study is found to be within acceptable values, it will mean SNS and for that matter the arguments presented in this documents supports social networks for running and

developing business. This is because, PLS supports exploratory and confirmatory research (Rodebaugh, 2016; Hoff & Bashir, 2015). A 5Point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to operationalize the data. 3.1.1 Sampling Approach Data was collected from a bank's clients who carry out financial transactions through SNS. A total of 450 participants took part in this study from south African banks, out of which 270 responded to the questions mailed to them for analysis, representing 60 % response rate.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Two hundred (200) responses was used for this chapter. The female population (55 %) surpassed that of the males. Information provided by the respondents on their SNS usage behaviour shows that they were experienced SNS clients. Twenty-eight percent (28 %) of them specified that they have used SNSs between 21 and 50 times, 10 % Just once, 13 % between 2 and 5 times, 25 % between 6 and 20 times, and 24 % said they have used it more than 50 times. 4.2 Analysis of Measurement Model The reliability and validity check of the measurement model was done through the confirmatory factor analysis strategy to establish the extent to which factors, measured with a multiple item scales reflect the exact scores on the factors relative to the error (Raza, Qazi & Umer, 2017). Internal consistency and composite reliability was used to achieve this. The consistent of various responses to items within a scale was assessed with, composite reliability (CR) (Revythi & Tselios, 2019) to offer a more reviewing approach of overall reliability measure of factors in the measurement model and estimates consistency of the factor itself, plus stability and equivalence of the factor (Vendemia, 2017). The CR was estimated to represent correlations between item and factor following suggestions by Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2016).

Since the values of composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha in Tab 1.1, were above 0.7, reliability (Hamari, Sjöklint & Ukkonen, 2016; Hair Jr et al., 2016) of the factors used for this study is unquestionable. The validity test was done to see if the measuring instrument measures exactly what it was meant to measure (Rönkkö, McIntosh & Antonakis, 2015), and this was estimated through convergent and discriminate validity. Per Hamari, Sjöklint, and Ukkonen, (2016) convergent validity can be estimated using a standardized factor loading, which should be above 0.5 as observed from (Tab. 1). Discriminate validity indicates the degree at which a given factor is truly distinct from other factors (Vendemia, 2017) and can be estimated by comparing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE),

with the associated square root (Hamari, Sjöklint & Ukkonen, 2016), which must be greater than the square root of the inter-factor associations (Hamari, Sjöklint & Ukkonen, 2016). Tab. 3 shows the AVE values and the correlations among

**Tab. 1:** Cronbach's a coefficient

<b>Reliability</b>	
<b>Construct</b>	a coefficient
Satisfaction	0.882
Trust	0.8970
Social Norm	0.853
Usage	0.907

**Tab. 2:** Results of factor analysis, Cronbach's a, composite reliability and AVE values

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Standard Factor loading</b>	<b><i>t</i></b>	<b>Cronbach's a</b>	<b>Composite reliability</b>	<b>Ave</b>
Trust	T1	.823	11.260	.993	.931	.801
	T2	.885				
	T3	.810				
	T4	.793				
Social norm	SN1	.874	8.497	.882	.989	.756
	SN2	.908				
	SN3	.882				
	SN4	.811				
	SN5	.720				
Usage	CI1	.846	2.389	.917	.951	.931
	CI2	.859				
	CI3	.903				
	CI4	.901				
	CI5	.758				
Satisfaction	CS1	.878	3.811	.993	.821	.797
	CS2	.877				
	CS3	.825				
	CS4	.735				

**Tab. 3:** Divergent validity of research constructs with Fornell and Larcker matrix

Construct	SN	CS	PT
SN	1.000		
CS	.842	1.000	
PT	.788	.704	1.000
CI	.502	.542	0.685

factors, with the square root of the AVE on the diagonal. Since these values are greater than the inter-factor correlations, the test of discriminate validity is passed (Hair Jr. et al., 2016). Given the values of both convergent and discriminate validities in this study, it can be concluded that, measurement scales have sufficient validity and demonstrate high reliability

## 5. Discussion

This document aimed at assessing client acceptance and usage of social networks to enable running and developing business. It found that, social norm, perceived trust and client satisfaction are the most influencing factor predicting social media usage for financial business in that order. The social norm factor is found to be the most determinant factor. Consequently, this study is of the view that financial institutions, which intend to win more clients and have the magic of making them to like their social media sites should do so, so that they keep coming back. They should adopt the strategy of peer pressure to motivate users to use their websites. In particular, the popularity of social media can be explored to create interpersonal interactions on blogs and in networking communities. After they come to the financial institutions social networking sites, the business should do all it takes to assure privacy and security of the users, as well as provide them with improved services and products. They should also adopt group banking strategies, whereby risk can be shared among clients in a networking manner (e.g. through swaps: a contract to exchange the difference between two cash flows at one or more settled future dates between parties). This can be used to manage interest and exchange rates threats. Swaps can also be used to (i) lessen funding overheads, or gaps with groups, (ii) enter new monetary markets, and (iii) avoid controlling limits. Products or services discounted as special packages for groups, to drum home social norm effect of banking is another benefit of the swap strategy. This is an indirect pressure to create a group norm among clients. The majority of clients who use social media are young

**Tab. 4:** Research hypotheses

		Path coefficient	p-value	Results
User satisfaction —	► SNS usage	.172	0.002***	Confirmed
User satisfaction —	► Trust	.614	0.001***	Confirmed
User satisfaction —	-> Social norm	.551	0.001***	Confirmed
Trust —	-> SNS continuance intention	.353	0.002**	Confirmed
Trust —	► Social norm	.270	0.001***	Confirmed
Social norm —	► SNS continuance intention	.099	0.052*	Confirmed

Note: SE (standard error), ns (not significant), \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$  (two-tailed t-tests)

people according to this study (between the ages of 18 and 35). Before making any decision to use social media for financial business, young people are far more likely to consult their social networks for advice. For these young people, social media mirrors the social groups established by the older generations, and therefore rely on the word-of-mouth concept from their peers. Perceived trust was the next important, direct determinant of social media continuance plan.

On one hand, users might fear supplying their credit card information to any money-making service provider, because of online security threats. On the other hand, a commercial financial service provider may fear the effort of network hackers. This cycle of suspicion obviously borders on trust, which is an important issue to be considered when talking about online financial transactions. This finding is therefore of no surprise that, perceived trust emerged the second most influencing factor that will compel clients to use SNS for financial transactions. Given the percentage of clients who have used SNS for financial services only once (10 %), it can be deduced that these will only deal with SNSs that they perceive to be trustworthy. If they do not find a financial institution to meet this need, they will switch to another or at worst, revert back to traditional banking methods. This will be a blow for the SNS crusade for banking. Trust does not happen overnight, but through a process and continuous interactions between a particular provider and taker. This study, therefore recommends that, financial institutions on social networks search for holistic strategies to build the trust that clients are looking for in order to keep them coming back for continuous usage. This will certainly improve the number of clients undertaking financial transactions than the statistics shown above. The third most important direct determinant according to this document, is client satisfaction. These findings

give credence to that of Bhattacharjee and Lin's finding. Thus this document provides the backing that client satisfaction is a post-purchase attitude, formed through a mental comparison of service and product quality expected from an exchange, as well as the level of service/product quality clients perceive from that exchange. From documentary reviews, it was discovered that, most social media fans are not happy about their financial services websites and as such, refrain from patronage. This study, therefore contributes to the body of client satisfaction knowledge that social media financial institutions should strive to make clients happy by reversing CS1-CS4 (Tab. 1.1) to know what causes clients dissatisfaction for improvement.

## 6. Limitations and Conclusions

The document did not see similar studies nor model to compare the current findings with, despite recent surge in SNS research, thus, denying it the chance to match bricks and mortar financial operations to social networking type as elucidated here. It therefore, recommends further studies in this regard since many financial institutions and businesses are trying to move to digital form of operations on social media. Aside this, some downsides of social networks and how these can be handled to develop business are recommended below:

**Credibility:** The involvedness and imminence nature of social media sites needs that, a specialized and team with creative as well as human connections abilities be presents online to guard an on-line brand existence, companies' status and guarantee. Offer delicate nature of this service, and also safeguard the risks of their company credibility. Banks need to ensure that, the ideal person or team are selected to deal with social media content, determine old and false info suggested by participant to stain online reputation, as well as make sure that the company tone and brand name are consistent.

**Hackers:** Professional hackers that make a living from these destructive activities abounds online 24/7, looking for possibility to release their diabolic doings. They can take over a company's web page for their selfish interest. Hence, good safety controls and preventive measures require to be applied to relieve the concerns of customers who reject to do monetary purchases via social media networks due to cyberpunks.

**Unfavourable public relations:** The greatest obstacle that confronts SNSs is the uncontrollable nature of this platform. Participants can publish anything at all to create injury to companies before such could be seen for retraction. To manage this kind of hazards, companies are suggested to designate full-time

workers whose duty will certainly be to represent the organization online. Communicating and advertising the interest with curious customers who wants to find out more concerning the business. In this fashion, trust will certainly be established and the clients would additionally have the chance to collect realities at first-hand from the firm. It will after that be simple for the firm to market its suggestions, services and items to such clients on their social room with little or no hustle, as the trust would have been developed. While companies hope for affirmative on-line client partnership, it will need a well thought and trained employees to construct this connection, due to the fact that social networks could be utilized to "make or break."

## 7. Conclusion

In closing this chapter, predictive variables that can enable on-line SNS to run and also establish organization, the technology companies/platform providers (e.g. Facebook Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn etc.) need to be consistent in the future and should be considered very vital to the survival of the platform economy. Studies should consider that the success of this platform economy principles additionally depends upon their continual venture to offer the system for business.

## REFERENCES

- Asongu, S. A., & Nwachukwu, J. C. (2018). Openness, ICT and entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa. *Information Technology & People*, 31(1), 278–303.
- Assensoh-Kodua, A. (2016). Determinants of Online Social Networks for Successful Business. <https://www.laboutiqueafricavivre.com/livres-specialises/161870-determinants-of-online-social-networks-for-successful-busines-9783659694165.html>.
- Assensoh-Kodua, A. (2016). Marketing potentials of the social media tools in the banking market of an emerging country. *Risk Governance & Control: Financial Markets & Institutions*, 6(4-2), 257–267.
- Assensoh-Kodua, A. (2019). This thing of social media! Going business or socialisation? Solving the great dilemma. foresight. Available at: <https://scholar.google.com/scholar?>
- Bhattacharjee, A., & Lin, C-P. (2015). A unified model of it continuance: Three complementary perspectives and crossover effects. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 24(4), 364–373.

- Boss, S., Galletta, D., Lowry, P. B., Moody, G. D., & Polak, P. (2015). What do systems users have to fear? Using fear appeals to engender threats and fear that motivate protective security behaviors. *MIS Quarterly (MISQ)*, 39(4), 837–864.
- Chaffey, D., & Smith, P. R. (2013). *eMarketing eXcellence: Planning and Optimizing your Digital Marketing*, Routledge, New York, NY.
- Choi, J., Seol, H., Lee, S., Cho, H., & Park, Y. (2008). Customer satisfaction factors of mobile commerce in Korea. *Internet Research*, 18(3) 313–335.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications NY, USA.
- Djoukanova, A. and Georgieva, A. (2014). “Content marketing: New opportunities for building strong brands online”, MS, Lund University, June 2.
- Dobbs, R., Manyika, J., & Woetzel, J. (2015). The four global forces breaking all the trends. McKinsey Global Institute, 1–5.
- Du Plessis, C. (2017). The role of content marketing in social media content communities. *South African Journal of Information Management*, 19(1), 1–7.
- Geldes, C., Felzensztein, C., & Palacios-Fenech, J. (2017). Technological and non-technological innovations, performance and propensity to innovate across industries: The case of an emerging economy. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 61, 55–66.
- Giacomucci, M. (2014). “Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Media in Business.” *Technology and Communication*. Spring 2014, 9(1), 7–9.
- Goh, K.-Y., Heng, C.-S., & Lin, Z. (2013). Social media brand community and consumer behavior: quantifying the relative impact of user-and marketer-generated content. *Information Systems Research*, 24(1), 88–107.
- Hair Jr, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C., & Sarstedt, M. (2016). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)*. Sage publications NY, USA.
- Halligan, B., & Shah, D. (2010). *Inbound Marketing*, Wiley Publishing, Hoboken, NJ.
- Heckler, D. E. (2005). High-technology employment: a NAICS-based update. *Monthly Labor Review*, 128(7), 57.
- Hair Jr, J. F., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Gudergan, S. P. (2017). *Advanced issues in partial least squares structural equation modeling*. Sage Publications NY, USA.
- Hamari, J., Sjöklint, M., & Ukkonen, A. (2016). The sharing economy: Why people participate in collaborative consumption. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 67(9), 2047–2059.

- Hawliczek, F., Notheisen, B., & Teubner, T. (2018). The limits of trust-free systems: A literature review on blockchain technology and trust in the sharing Economy. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 29, 50–63.
- Hoff, K. A., & Bashir, M. (2015). Trust in automation: Integrating empirical evidence on factors that influence trust. *Human Factors*, 57(3), 407–434.
- Hsiao, C. H., Chang, J. J., & Tang, K. Y. (2016). Exploring the influential factors in continuance usage of mobile social Apps: Satisfaction, habit, and customer value perspectives. *Telematics and Informatics*, 33(2), 342–355.
- Hsu, C. L., & Lin, J. C. C. (2015). What drives purchase intention for paid mobile apps? -An expectation confirmation model with perceived value. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 14(1), 46–57.
- Kaleem, M. M., & Zaheer, A. (2019). Measurement of online user information literacy satisfaction: An empirical study. *Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities (1994–7046)*, 27(1).
- Kayes, I., & Iamnitchi, A. (2017). Privacy and security in online social networks: A survey. *Online Social Networks and Media*, 3, 1–21.
- Kim, C., & Kim, D. J. (2017). Uncovering the value stream of digital content business from users' viewpoint. *International Journal of Information Management*, 37(6), 553–565.
- Kock, N., & Hadaya, P. (2018). Minimum sample size estimation in PLS-SEM: The inverse square root and gamma-exponential methods. *Information Systems Journal*, 28(1), 227–261.
- Kopaigorodski, A., & Porat, M. (2015). From analogue signals to digital information. In *The Third International Conference on Digital Information Processing, E-Business and Cloud Computing (DIPECC2015)* (p. 70).
- Kuchler, T., Russel, D., & Stroebel, J. (2021). JUE Insight: The geographic spread of COVID-19 correlates with the structure of social networks as measured by Facebook. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 103314.
- Mansour, D., & Barandas, H. (2017). High-tech entrepreneurial content marketing for business model innovation: a conceptual framework. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 11(3), 296–311.
- Parveen, F., Jaafar, N. I., & Ainin, S. (2015). Social media usage and organizational performance: Reflections of Malaysian social media managers. *Telematics and Informatics*, 32(1), 67–78.
- Patrutiu-Baltes, L. (2016). Inbound Marketing-the most important digital marketing strategy.

- Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov. Economic Sciences. Series V, 9(2), 61.
- Pebrianti, W. E. N. N. Y. (2016). Web attractiveness, hedonic shopping value and online buying decision. *Pertanika International Journal of Economic and Management (IJEM)*, 10, 123-134.
- Raza, S. A., Qazi, W., & Umer, A. (2017). Facebook is a source of social capital building among university students: Evidence from a developing country. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 55(3), 295–322.
- Revythi, A., & Tselios, N. (2019). Extension of technology acceptance model by using system usability scale to assess behavioral intention to use elearning. *Education and Information Technologies*, 24(4), 2341–2355.
- Rodebaugh, T. L., Scullin, R. B., Langer, J. K., Dixon, D. J., Huppert, J. D., Bernstein, & Lenze, E. J. (2016). Unreliability as a threat to understanding psychopathology: The cautionary tale of attentional bias. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 125(6), 840.
- Rönkkö, M., McIntosh, C. N., & Antonakis, J. (2015). On the adoption of partial least squares in psychological research: Caveat emptor. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 87, 76–84.
- Sorice, S. C., Li, A. Y., Gilstrap, J., Canales, F. L., & Furnas, H. J. (2017). Social media and the plastic surgery patient. *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*, 140(5), 1047–1056.
- Shin, J. I., Chung, K. H., Oh, J. S., & Lee, C. W. (2013). The effect of site quality on repurchase intention in internet shopping through mediating variables: the case of university students in South Korea. *International Journal of Information Management*, 33(3), 453–463.
- Vendemia, M. A. (2017). When do consumers buy the company? Perceptions of interactivity in company-consumer interactions on social networking sites. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 71, 99–109.
- Wachyudi, N. (2018). A study of the relationship marketing effect in banks: The case of an emerging market. *Journal of Governance & Regulation*, 7(1), 26–39.

Cemal Çelik

# Strategic Social Media Business Model, Theory of Change and Strategic Marketing

## 1 Introduction

During the pandemic, existing marketing strategies and methods underwent a paradigm shift. Due to the closure of shopping centers, such as malls, and the fear of an epidemic, consumers have turned to shop over the Internet, and many businesses have begun to look for ways to provide services in a virtual environment. With the realization that social media plays an important role in any communication work that will be established with consumers, it appears that businesses are paying more attention to social media-oriented marketing actions (Deneçli, 2015:4,6).

The digital platform of social media can be said to be the most prominent marketing channel in the virtual environment, which is open to different marketing tools and areas. The most important factor in the effectiveness of digital social media platform as a marketing and advertising tool is that products and customers are visible within the same environment. The structural feature of social media tools and social media's openness to all interactions, unlike other traditional communication tools (Babacan, 2014:135), suggests that it can be easily directed as an effective marketing tool.

In the virtual market, where competition is high, the success of enterprises depends on the effectiveness of communication and shopping tools used. From the perspective of consumer and management, social media has become an important communication and interaction tool and, thanks to its nature, has made it possible for messages to reach a myriad of people swiftly (Hasiloglu, 2019:279).

Entrepreneurs who trade through social media platforms manage their existing corporate and individual accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) by consulting with advertising firms to reach consumers more easily and increase sales volume. Although traditional media literates (Altınpulluk, 2019:231) make page arrangements for various marketing initiatives with blog types called personal web publishing tools (Duermyer, 2017), Tumblr (Haimson et al., 2019:2), Pinterest (Hall and Zarro, 2013), Facebook (Ainin and Jaafar, 2015) and other

social media software, it does not seem possible to increase brand value and sales volumes without support from digital advertising solutions.

The contribution of the marketing sector to the development of web publishing cannot be underestimated. While the marketing industry is occupied with developing a social media strategy, it is necessary to first understand the different functions and structures of social media (Meghan Mahoney and Tang Tang, 2017:26).

## 2 Conceptual Framework of Social Media

Technological advances are developments that enable new software and hardware products to be put into service. Social media softwares are among the technologies that have emerged as a result of these developments. The main function of social media software is to carry and show the purpose and philosophy underlying the sharing of feelings and thoughts found within the communication concepts below.

In his book, Oskay (1992:15) expresses the concept of communication as “the declarations of attitudes, judgements, thoughts, feelings realized within the community or communal life formed by people who carry similar emotions and express them to one other”.

In another definition, Sezer (2019:8) emphasizes that communication includes actions such as being informed, informing, educating, persuading, managing, having fun, and entertaining.

The concept of social media refers to a wide-ranging concept for web-based software and services that allow users to come together in the form of any social interaction, such as going online, exchange, participation, communication, and discussion (Kayabaşı, 219:180). Social media is further expressed by the author as advanced and highly sensitive scalable and accessible technologies or techniques, which make it possible for each individual to easily influence groups of other individuals.

Some key features of social media include an online space where users can create, share, and evaluate content for the purpose of social interaction through social software (Meghan Mahoney and Tang Tang, 2017:27).

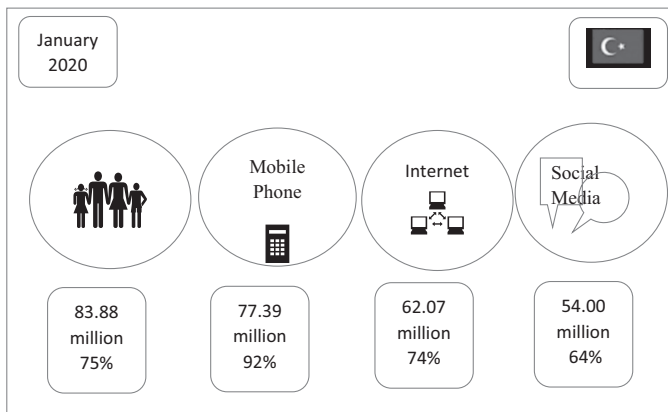
Social media produces multifaceted information dynamics that push organizations in unexpected directions, redraw boundaries, and change relationships. Due to the widely perceived benefits of social media, the use of social media for corporate and organizational communication and public relations by private and public sector organizations has been increasing (Macnamara and Zerfass, 2012).

### 3 Effects of Social Media Technologies and Numerical Evidence

It has been recognized by all components that social media technologies have a decisive impact on business processes such as sales, branding, product development, human resource management, customer service and information management (Kwayu et al., 2020). These effects have a significant impact on practices and performance within organizations. Moreover, we can explain how these effects change different aspects of the business culture developed through organizational processes with the various characteristics of social media. Titles related to the characteristics of social media technologies (Kayabaşı, 219:180) are listed as follows in the text.

- Independence from Time and Space
- Ease Of Use
- Interaction
- Access and Accessibility
- Innovation
- Permanence
- Scalability

The prevalence and impact of social media technologies can be seen with numerical data as one of the important channels in realizing the goals and objectives of all companies and institutions, especially the marketing sector.



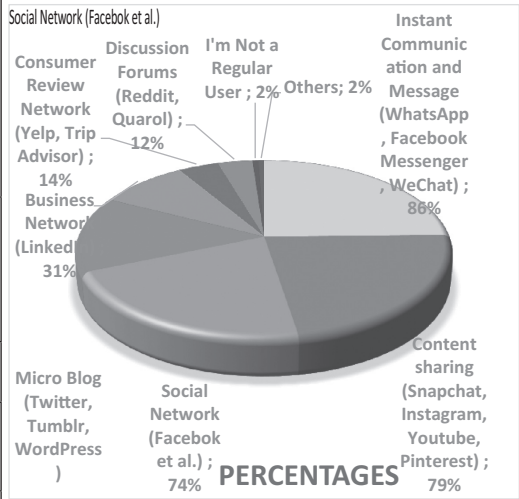
**Visual 2.1.** Turkey data in the global e-commerce market

*Source:* Hootsuite – We Are Social Digital 2019 Report <https://wearesocial.com/global-digital-report-2019> (accessed 15.05.2019)

You can see the rates of social media usage habits in our country according to the population and the total number of internet users in Tab. 2.1 and the graph attached to it in the international report, where the rates of usage of social media for which functions are listed.

**Tab. 2.1.** Software technologies and usage types

Software Technologies	Percentages
Instant Communication and Message (WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, WeChat)	86 %
Content sharing (Snapchat, Instagram, Youtube, Pinterest)	79 %
Social Network (Facebok et al.)	74 %
Micro Blog (Twitter, Tumblr, WordPress)	48 %
Business Network (LinkedIn)	31 %
Consumer Review Network (Yelp, Trip Advisor)	14 %
Discussion Forums (Reddit, Quarol)	12 %
I'm Not a Regular User	2 %
Others	2 %



Source: Statista <https://www.statista.com/forecasts/1002992/social-media-usage-by-platform-type-in-turkey> (accessed 01.01.2021)

Businesses have to plan and organize their technological infrastructure and investments, apart from determining future competitive strategies according to the data in the reports regarding the social media usage of the customers

evaluating gender, age groups, duration of use and the most preferred technology applications. For example, according to the TUSIAD 2019 E-commerce report (Dicle et al., 2019:11), the number of social media users will reach approximately 75 % of the total internet users by the end of 2019. The ease of reaching millions of people in such a short time and cost, once again, reveals the importance of technologies such as social media for businesses and all sectors.

In a report on Turkey prepared by Statista in June 2020, Tab. 2.2 also stated the forecast report on the rate at which social media users will increase over the next 5 years.

According to the data in Tab. 1.2, according to the estimated data, each internet user will appear as a social media user. All stakeholders in the marketing industry need to strategically read and analyze data well and participate in all areas of social media technologies with appropriate content stories to access end users.

#### **4 Convergence and the Concept of Content**

The greatest skill of social media is sharing networks that bring different users together on a single platform and allow them to communicate and share. In their articles on this subject, Kaplan and Hainlein (2010) refer to social media as the sharing of content between users of online platforms, applications, web tools and technological systems and the collaboration of tools. Collaboration and integration on a single platform is called convergence in the literature.

Convergence means bringing a myriad of things together. In mass communication technologies, it denotes different technologies coming together to form a hybrid technology. According to the concept of convergence, “with the effect of digitalization, different content and services transmitted through different transmission networks can be interactively received from different devices without transmission interruption”, as a result of the removal of the borders between the telecommunication, broadcasting and information sectors (İspir: 2013).

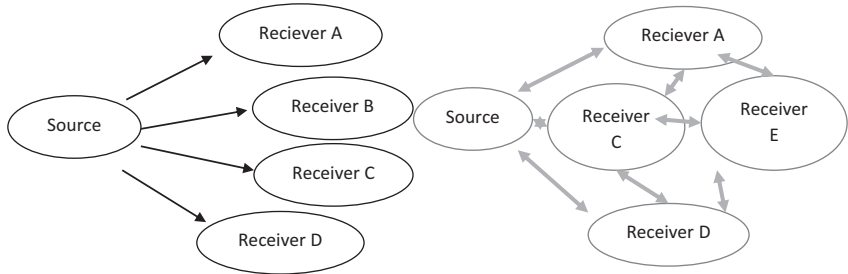
As far as communication is concerned, it is widely accepted that social media facilitates and improves communication between businesses and customers. All products that enable similar goals and objectives within the concept of communication to be explained in the digital language are dubbed digital content. The format of digital content is defined as any piece of information containing stationary/moving image, short-length animation, or sound. The expression of these formats using encoding made with digital language is also called digital content.

**Tab. 2.2.** 5-year social media user growth rate 2017–2025

Social network user penetration approximate rate estimation in Turkey 2017–2025	
Years	Percentage %
2017	53.52
2018	58.72
2019	61.4
2020	64.44
2021*	67.1
2022*	69.5
2023*	74.16
2024*	80.49
2025*	82.4

Source: Statista <https://www.statista.com/search/?q=social+media+turkey&Search=&q&Kat=search> (accessed 01.01.2021)

Social media technologies, (Tess, 2010) are low-budget projects compared to classic media technologies. In addition, the passivity between the source and the recipient has changed; in technologies called the age of transformation, the recipients can not only consume the information provided, but also share any information they want in the new media environment by interfering with whatever content. This, in turn, gave buyers the adjectives “producer” or “digital laborers” (Fuchs, 2013:98).



**Visual 2.2:** Social media user and traditional media: The role of source-receiver traditional media, new media

Source: *Mass Communication in Traditional Media and New Media* (Vivian, 2007:202)

In Visual 2.1, communication models between traditional media and social media were attempted to be explained using visuals. It is observed that people participating in communication activities communicate more effectively and transiently between source-user, user-user, user-source in social media technologies.

## 5 Social Media and Business Models

In the field of digital media, business models are defined as different projects that enable businesses to increase and manage their revenue by optimizing social media channels (Hayes and Graybeal, 2011:20).

Business models are models built for the development of business processes in enterprises (Magretta, 2002). In particular, they serve as a basis for communication professionals and managers to share their understanding. They help reduce the weaknesses while maximizing the company's strengths in terms of long-term sustainability of the business. In this regard, Magretta (2011) mentioned that for business models, there is no single strategy that deals with company, product, marketing and pricing decisions in order for individual companies to achieve their goals. The author also sees business models as varying designs that enable developing different models on social media channels to generate above-average revenue.

They (Stewart and Zhao, 2015:290), (Mahoney and Tang Tang, 2017:161) have listed the topics of interest of the business models developed for the management and marketing of products on social media in their articles and books as follows.

- Value Proposition
- Customer Segment
- Competition Strategy
- Marketing Strategies
- Revenue Stream
- Cost Structure
- Business Model Development Action Plan
- Organizational Development

Social Media's Return On Investment.

## 6 Social Media Marketing

Implementation of marketing techniques and strategies through social media technologies in digital media activities are called social media marketing. Marketing, advertising, public relations and branding are under the broader

umbrella of strategic communication. In today's ever-changing digital environment, a strategic communication vision is more vital than ever for a company's brand (Howard, 2012).

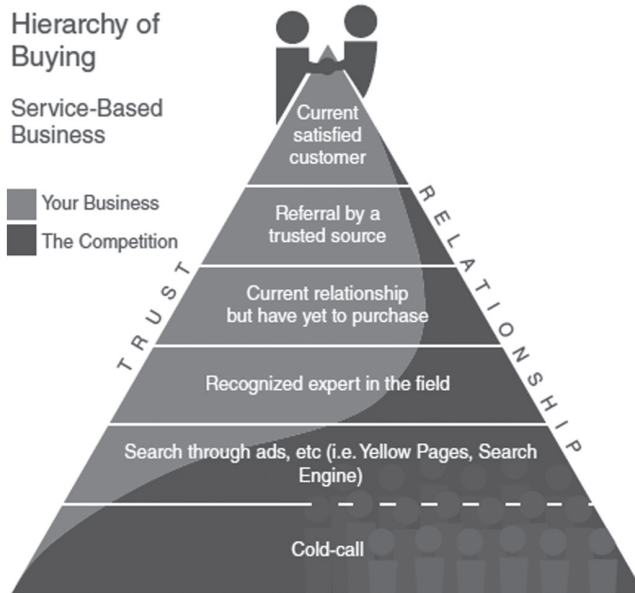
Social media is seen as an important digital market area for companies to participate in to generate more sales, increase brand value and effectively manage customer relationships. Companies that want to be successful in the field of digital market and carry out their commercial activities must apply marketing activities and technologies developed for social media to the company's processes. The competition approach mentions that organizations which do not meet the technology, competition, characteristics and conditions that the environment and the times call for will be eliminated. In the competitive approach, better goods and services, cheap and quality products, error-free service to customers in less time are targeted (Koçel, 2007:278). The future of the business world will be owned by companies which can read those traces, calculate and analyze them well and draw conclusions from them.

## **7 The Power of Social Media Marketing and Behavior Change Theory**

One of the biggest features of social media is that it has the power to create a huge impact on both firms and consumers. Behavior change communication is a concept referred to in social media theory. Behavior change communication is an evidence-based and research-based process of using communication to promote specific predetermined behaviors through an appropriate mix of interpersonal, group and mass media (Mahoney and Tang, 2017:14). Social learning theory also suggests that people learn by modeling the behavior of others. We are heavily influenced by the people in our daily lives (Bandura, 2004). According to this theory, real-life interpersonal relationships and cultural norms provide quite powerful models for how we act. Hearing a friend's advice is far more convincing than a character in a television commercial. This is why the power of community is so important to practitioners of social media marketing. For this reason, in models of marketing generated through social media channels, companies have begun to realize the potential to see the lifestyle and preferences of the audience as the main component of behavior change, instead of focusing only on the product or the message of the media (Thackeray et al., 2008:340).

Marketers spend millions of dollars on Search Engine Optimization (SEO), celebrity endorsements and traditional mass media ads. However, marketing and communication theories show how few of these methods actually lead to behavior change. We are way more influenced by our friends, family and those we trust. As

consumers, we rely on the opinions of others when making purchasing decisions for most of our transactions (Trusov et al., 2009:95). Word-of-mouth marketing is 30 times more powerful than media marketing. Especially when it comes to acquiring new customers, word-of-mouth marketing has a significant impact. In online marketing, firms need to deal with network approvals as a strategy.



**Visual 2.3.** Purchasing hierarchy

*Source:* (Stratten: 2016)

As for the pyramid ranking in Visual 2.2, ads from search engines have exceeded \$10 billion. It further stands for 50 % of the interactive advertising market (Parker, 2012:1). Companies are trying to be number one in search engines. In addition to this, in order of Stratten (2016) importance, the marketing strategies that provide the highest return on investment, or the benefit of an investment divided by the cost of the investment, include the following.

1. Existing Satisfied Customers
2. Direction From a Trusted Source;
3. Current Relationship but Not Yet Acquired;
4. Recognized Expert in the Field;

5. Search Engine Scanning
6. Cold Calls.

## **8 Strategic Theory Application**

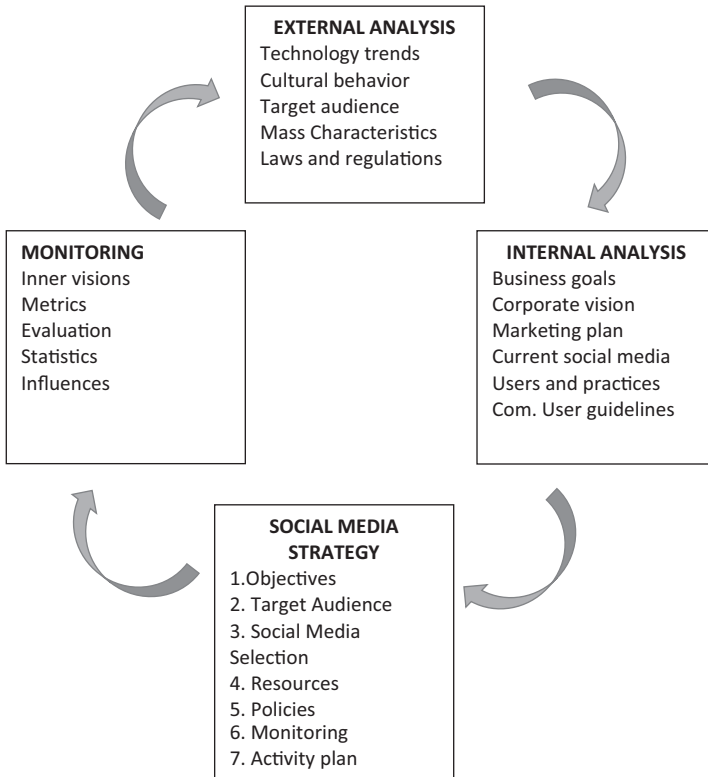
There is a specific social media strategy behind current marketing campaigns. It helps to make predictions about return on investment for years to come. When creating a social media strategy, it is important to consider a design framework that includes goals, target audience, social media selection, resources, policies, monitoring and activity plan (Effing, 2013).

The design framework action Plan of strategic theory application is listed in the following headings.

### **Stages of Design Framework Action Plan**

- 1 Purpose
- 2 Target Followers
- 3 Social Media Channel Selection
- 4 Resources
- 5 Policies
- 6 Monitoring and observation
- 7 Active Plan

Social media strategy is management practices that enumerate a series of actions that include strategic plans and practices for technological networks, where the use of social media technologies is not an adequate practice for businesses. In their work, Effing and Spil (2016:2) discussed the importance, challenges and advantages of social media strategies for companies within the framework of competition. By definition, the authors considered social media strategy as a targeted planning process for creating user-generated content, driven by a group of internet applications, to create a unique and valuable competitive position. Mentioning social media (Woodard et al., 2013:538) as a special part of strategic decision-making based on digital resources, they talked about its effects on the decision support process in strategic management. The author also refers to Porter (1980) in his social media strategy, arguing that in positioning logic, managers should choose a profitable position in their industry and implement their firm's competitive strategy through cost leadership, differentiation or market segmentation.



**Visual 2.4.** Social media strategy design

**Source:** Social Media Strategy Design (Effing, and Spil: 2016:2)

Visual 2.4 attempts to convey the cycle of actions to be taken in a social media strategy. According to the figure, it is understood that firms should consider multiple stakeholders and variables when creating a social media strategy. Social media strategy is a business strategy that needs to be addressed in different technological and managerial dimensions. Social media is an important milestone in digital decision-making (Woodard et al., 2013:538).

Based on what is mentioned above, we can define a social media strategy as a well-defined and tightly focused social media action plan with clear business goals, specific policies, desired audience, desired resource and pre-defined criteria to measure social media impacts (See-Pui Ng and Wang, 2013:4). Therefore, a social media strategy will define the action plan with specific goals,

provide the direction of achieving a specific goal, and determine best practices for social media.

## 9. Brand Social Experience

When you have a social media strategy that takes action, you might consider incorporating a branded experience into one or more of your objectives. A brand experience is conceptualized as sensations, emotions, cognitions, and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communication, and environment. A brand experience has four dimensions: sensory, emotional, intellectual, and behavioral (Brakus et al. 2009). Social media provides opportunities to maximize each of these areas. Humans are producers of social systems, not just products. We can grasp our environment, organize it, and assign meanings to what we see (Bryant and Oliver, 2009).

Emotional experiences enable customers to connect emotionally with your product. Companies aim to create positive experiences for customers by placing tools and methods of creating a sense of community within strategic marketing. Sense of community, brand and business oriented things can help to achieve an emotional experience for users. Companies define their brands, businesses and people by facilitating human interaction through social media.

## 10 Evaluation and Research in the Social Media Market

Social media has significantly changed the way businesses produce and share media messages in their marketing activities. Today, the best marketing professionals understand research activities as the most critical factor in a successful social media strategy.

Research and measurement studies are vital at every stage of marketing strategy, such as creativity, production, dissemination, evaluation or measurement. Today's social media market metrics are enhanced by new technologies. By measuring the change in social media users with more hybrid approaches, how the change occurs is discovered (Mahoney and Tang, 2017:197).

A strong social media strategy is essential for marketers to design, analyze, make sense of and implement data analytics techniques. Mass media research is defined as the systematic study of media content (Folkerts and Lacy, 2003:79). The authors tried to explain the systematic study and formation of media content, the tools that shape content, how and why people should use media, the

importance of researching and measuring media content and the impact of media institutions on individuals and society in the social media market.

Research experts try to reach accurate analysis results with different applications and methods on how to collect data in the social media market and what type of questions there should be. In social media research, all research can be categorized as quantitative, qualitative or hybrid approaches.

Quantitative data analysis is collected by a variety of methods, including surveys, experimental studies, and secondary data or technology-assisted data analysis (Babbie, 2010). Qualitative data analysis is collected through participant observation, open-ended surveys, speeches, and textual analysis. The hybrid method is a mixed method that uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Customer lifetime value, customer reviews, ratings, brand volunteers, customer satisfaction rates, customer change rate, customer testimonials are among the criteria evaluated among these measurement tools (Kayabaşı, 2019:191).

In order to perform social media analysis, different software and technologies are developed to bring together the right products and consumers at the right time for marketing activities. Analysis software such as Buzzo Sumo, Shared Count, Back Tweet, Topsy, Followerwonk, Tagboard, Mention, Trackur, Klout, Ubertv are used by research firms to achieve these goals. (*Source: www.sibelhos.com*). FRY is a popular form of quantitative social media measurement (Blanchard, 2011). Other popular social media measurement tools, such as Radian6, can track and measure live social media conversations taking place by thousands of people.

Quantitative measurement includes research topics such as search, traffic, retention, brand metrics, sales, and profit (Hudspeth, 2012). On Facebook, for example, focusing on quantity means more views, likes, comments and sharing. On Twitter, marketers deal with the number of retweets and favorites each promotional tweet generates. Bloggers include social media platform widgets so that users can easily share each article on their social network. In contrast to calculating the number of followers or fans in traditional media practices, social media marketers observe the way their consumers interact with media messages (DiStaso et al., 2011).

Businesses use inbound marketing strategy to increase site traffic and attract more visitors. Content strategies are used to encourage consumers to take the first action in response to questions about how customers who do not know, hear or see the company's activities are allowed to visit the business. One of the first actions to be taken in strategic social media management is to optimize business web content for search.

Search engine optimization (SEO) helps drive traffic to a website by raising the site's ranking in the results that a search engine generates (Halligan and Shah, 2009). In other words, it is expressed as the work of harmonizing the web content of a business for search engines (*Source*: <https://www.sempeak.com/seo>). To provide another definition, SEO is the art, craft, and science of directing web traffic to websites (Davis, 2006).

There are different methods and techniques in SEO research and application processes. In studies on this subject (Miller, 2020:46),(Halligan and Shah, 2009), (Malaga, 2007:69), activities such as fine-tuning the title tag of company or institution sites, enabling search engines to easily index the company website, and conducting extensive keyword research to determine what consumers are looking for when they are interested in the product are presented as suggestions. Apart from these, in SEO-related studies, an attempt is made to optimize your company page and social networks with applications such as technical optimizations, content optimizations and off page.

It is important to note that SEO is not a successful marketing strategy in itself and should be integrated into a larger strategic marketing plan. Targeting your hidden audience through inbound marketing is a major shift for businesses. The social media rating should reflect the assumptions of "pull-and-stay" marketing. Assessment and measurement efforts need to be linked to helping practitioners design, produce, disseminate and evaluate their social media strategy.

Activities such as quantitative and qualitative measurement of topics, including focusing on the target group and consumer acceptance messages, are subjects pertaining to social media research strategies.

## References

- Ainin, S. N. M., & Moghavvemi, S. (2015, 12 18). *Facebook usage, socialization and academic performance*. Computers & Education: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.12.018>
- Altunpulluk, H. (2019). *Web Yayıncılığı Araçları* (p. 231). Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi.
- Babacan, M. E. (2014). Sosyal Medya Sonrası Yeni Toplumsal Hareketler. *Birey ve Toplum*, 135.
- Babbie, E. R. (2010). *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Blanchard, O. (2011). *SocialMedia ROI:Managing and Measuring Social Media Efforts in Your Organization*. Boston: Pearson.
- Deneçli, S. (2015). *Markaların Sosyal Medya Yönetimi*. İstanbul: Kriter.

- DiStasoa, M. W., McCorkindale, T., & K. Wright, D. (2011). How Public Relations Executives Perceive and Measure the Impact of Social Media in their Organizations. *Public Relations Review*, 37(3): 325–328.
- Duermyer, R. (2021, January 29). *What is Blogging?* What Is Blogging?: <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/blogging-what-is-it-1794405>
- Ebru Dicle, Y. E. (2021, 1 31). E-Ticaretin Gelişimi, Sınırların Aşılması ve Yeni Normlar. İstanbul: Türkiye.
- Effing, R. (2013). Social Media Strategy Design. *2nd Scientific Conference Information Science in an Age of Change 2013 – Warsaw*.
- Effing, R., & Spil, T. (2016). The Social Strategy Cone: Towards a Framework for Evaluating Social Media Strategies. *International Journal of Information Management*, 36(1): 1–8.
- Folkerts, J., & Lacy, S. (2003). *The Media in Your Life: An Introduction to Mass Communication*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Fuchs, C. (2013). Digital Prosumption Labour on Social Media in the Context of the Capitalist Regime of Time. *Time & Society*, 23(1): 97–123.
- Haimson, O. L., A. D., & Richter, Z. (2019). Tumblr was a Trans Technology: The Meaning, Importance, History, and Future of Trans Technologies. *Feminist Media Studies*, 21(3): 345–361.
- Hall, C., & Zarro, M. (2013). Social Curation on the Website Pinterest.com. *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 49(1): 1–19.
- Halligan, B., & Shah, D. (2009). *Inbound Marketing: Get Found using Google, Social Media, and Blogs*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Haşiloğlu, S. B. (2019). Sosyal Medya Pazarlaması ve Ölçümü. Web Tasarımı Satış Ve Pazarlama (p. 179). Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi.
- Hayes, J., & Graybeal, G. (201). Synergizing Traditional Media and the Social Web for Monetization: A Modified Media Micropayment Model. *Journal of Media Business Studies*, 2011, 8(2): 19–44.
- Howard, S. (2016, June 6). *The Changing Face of Strategic Communication*. <https://cla.umn.edu/sjmc/news-events/news/changing-face-strategic-communication>
- Hudspeth, N. (2012). Building a Brand Socially. *Journal of Brand Strategy*, 1(1): 25–30(6).
- İspir, B. (2013). *Dijital İletişim Ve Yeni Medya* (p. 6). Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi.
- Kaplan, A. M., & Michael Haenlein. (2010). Users of the World, Unite! the Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, 59–68.

- Kayabaşı, D. A. (2019). *Web Tasarımı Satış Ve Pazarlama* (p. 180). Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi.
- Koçel, T. (2007). *İşletme Yöneticiliği*. İstanbul: Arıkan.
- Kwayu, S., Lal, B., Ismagilova, E., & Dwivedi, Y. (2020). *Digital and Social Media Marketing* (s. 6). Swensea: Spring.
- Macnamara, J., & Zerfass, A. (2012). Social Media Communication in Organizations: The Challenges of Balancing Openness, Strategy, and Management. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 6(4): 287–308.
- Magretta, J. (2002, 05 05). *Why Business Models Matter*. Why Business Models Matter: <https://hbr.org/2002/05/why-business-models-matter>
- Mahoney, L. M., & Tang, T. (2017). *Strategic Social Media: From Marketing to Social Change*. Malden: Wiley.
- Ng, C. S.-P., & Wang, W. Y. (2013). Best Practices in Managing Social Media for Business. *Thirty Fourth International Conference on Information Systems* (p. 4). Milan: <http://celesteng.mis.yzu.edu.tw/>. <http://celesteng.mis.yzu.edu.tw: http://celesteng.mis.yzu.edu.tw/papers/Best%20practices%20in%20managing%20social%20media%20for%20business.pdf>
- Osokay, Ü. (2011). *İletişimin ABC 'si*. İstanbul: DER.
- Parker, P. (2012, 10 20). *Digital Marketing Report*. Digital Marketing Report: <https://searchengineland.com/iab-search-still-on-top-accounting-for-nearly-half-of-interactive-ad-spending-136426>
- Sezer, N. (2019). Etkili İletişim Becerileri . N. Sezer in, *Etkili İletişim Becerileri* (p. 7). İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi.
- Stratten, S., & Stratten, A. (2016). *UnMarketing: Everything has Changed and Nothing is Different*. Wiley US.
- Tess, P. A. (2013). The Role of Social Media in Higher Education Classes, 60–68.
- Thackeray, R., Neiger, B. L., & Hanson, C. L. (2008). Enhancing Promotional Strategies Within Social Marketing Programs: Use of Web 2.0 Social Media. *Health Promotion Practice*, 9(4): 338–343.
- Vivian, J. (2007). *The Media of Mass Communication*. USA: Pearson.
- Woodard, J., Woodard, J., Tschan, F. T., & Sambamurt, V. (2013). Design Capital and Design Moves: The Logic of Digital Business Strategy. *MIS Quart*, 37(2): 537–564.

Emel Faiz

# Social Media and Consumer Behavior

## 1 Introduction

With the advent of the internet, there has been a rapid increase in both the speed at which this technology spread as well as the number of internet users. Internet usage continues to spread across a wide range, covering different professional areas and different consumer groups. With the spread of the internet to a wider audience every day as well as the technological advances that have accompanied it, the concept of social media is rapidly making an entrance the lives of people. The fact that social media can be easily used by people leads to its spread much faster than the internet usage rate, and its adoption by a wide audience in a short time. In this aspect, social media becomes a very wide network with millions of consumers within different age groups and socioeconomic backgrounds as well as businesses in different sectors, sizes, and organizational structures. According to a report by WeAreSocial, 4.5 billion people are internet users in the world today, while 3.8 billion people are active social media users (<https://wearesocial.com/digital-2020>).

When compared to the emergence and spread of the internet, it is possible to see how quickly social media usage has spread. The most important reason behind the adoption of social media, which happened even faster than the adoption of internet, is that it is a dynamic environment in which its user produces content, shares it, and receives instant feedback. More than just communicating with others, social media users like to be able to create an environment, a space of their own, and to be able to participate in the spaces of the people they follow. Shortly after social media became a channel utilized by businesses as well, the advent of a market environment followed suit. In this manner, social media becomes a pleasant medium that includes both the consumer and the business and responds to the desire to communicate instantly on both sides. In addition to their traditional communication channels, businesses are beginning to pay attention and allocate budget for digital communication channels such as social media. Today, a large number of businesses use social media platforms both as a communication tool and a marketing tool in their operations. This makes social media become an effective tool in identifying their target audience, constantly communicating with them, and developing specific marketing strategies for them. Social media also turns consumers into an active component of

the marketing process. Consumers become an active part in the marketing cycle with their own content and with instant feedback.

Academics have also started focusing on issues relating to the development of social media and its effects on the business world and its benefits to businesses, and studies are conducted on the influence of social media on consumers as social media is utilized more and more as a marketing channel by businesses and becomes more of a center for consumption. In light of these developments, the following section focuses on the emergence of social media as a means of consumption and its effects on consumers' purchasing process.

## 2 The Concept of Social Media

Although the concept of social media has entered the lives of individuals in the recent past, its history dates back to the 1970s. In 1979, Duke University students Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis created Usenet, a worldwide discussion system that allows internet users to send messages to society at large (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010:60). The social media usage as the world knows it today, however, begins with the creation of a social networking site that Bruce and Susan Abelson called "Open Diary" about 20 years ago. With the spread of internet use and increasing personal access to the internet, the world witnessed further creation of social networking sites such as MySpace in 2003 and Facebook in 2004. Thus, the popularization and dissemination of the concept of social media began.

The concept of social media does not have a single definition in the literature, and it seems that various definitions try to explain the concept of social media from its different aspects. Definitions explaining the concept in its technical aspect identify social media with the concept of Web 2.0. Bruns and Bahnisch (2009:5) define social media as "*websites which build on Web 2.0 technologies to provide space for in-depth social interaction, community formation, and the tackling of collaborative projects.*"

More specifically and simply, Roberts and Kaynak (2008) define the concept of social media as "*online content that allows collaborative and user-based creation.*" Similarly, Comm and Taylor (2015:2) refer to it as "*content that has been created cooperatively with its audience.*"

Based on these definitions, it is possible to conceptualize social media as a collaborative, highly interactive new type of online media in which the user can create content and plays an active role in the digital media environment.

## 2.1. The Benefits of Social Media to Business

With its different structure compared to traditional media channels, social media is a platform that many businesses prefer and continue to use. Since it brings many advantages compared to traditional media platforms, it has become a platform where many brands, from global businesses to local businesses, allocate a good portion of their promotion budgets.

- **Getting instant feedback**

Comments on posts created by businesses on social media allow businesses to receive immediate feedback from the consumers on their products, the opportunities they offer, and the discounts and promotions they create. Consumers who actively use and follow social media are individuals who are sensitive to the posts from the businesses. Sharing posts on social media facilitates the businesses' job as it provides instant feedback on many issues related to the product, the price of the product, the features related to the product, or even the sales process. Businesses that take feedback into account become better able to make further steps about their products.

- **Addressing the right target audience**

The majority of consumers who are followers of businesses on social media consist of individuals who are personally interested in and purchase the products of the business. This eliminates doubts about whether the posts created reach the target audience that the business has set.

Compared to traditional media, it is clearer to reach the target audience and make the business' voice heard. Consumers who are present on social media are not passive followers, rather, they are active followers who constantly post and follow people. Consumers can share a lot of information about themselves and their lives on social media. This information is invaluable data for businesses. Businesses that try to obtain this sort of data often have to allocate serious budgets, while social media platforms often present the opportunity to access this data for free.

- **Presenting an active and dynamic environment**

Social media has a separate agenda in and of itself. Social media followers are sensitive to current events and recent developments and they are individuals who can share posts instantly and follow. This dynamism of individuals keeps the general environment dynamic and pushes businesses towards adapting to

this structure. It is almost impossible for businesses that remain out of touch with the current events to stay relevant on social media.

- **Doing marketing**

The new world offers new media, new channels and new markets (Akar, 2009:52). By using new media channels in their marketing, their access to new markets becomes a necessity rather than a competitive edge in today's world. Platforms like social media that provide an intermediary and effective way to the end consumer also offers incredible opportunities for marketers.

## **2.2. The Benefits of Social Media for the Users**

Users can adopt and tell more people about social media platforms where they are active, mutual interaction is high, and they can create content themselves, in a short amount of time

- **Supporting creativity**

Users can explore their creative side with the various tools that social media platforms offer them. For example, a person who likes writing can develop his writing ability by creating his own blog and deliver his writing to a wide audience. By starting blogs, he can access the opportunity to share his views, knowledge, and skills.

- **Providing social interaction**

Social media focuses heavily on the social aspect, which allows users to interact with each other. Users follow up on each other on a daily basis, making comments on others' posts and thus socializing. Most importantly, this socialization transcends time and distance. People can communicate with users they do not know with similar interests and find shared interests, thus creating new relationships from all over the world with no regard to physical borders (Duygun, 2020:28).

- **Enabling personal branding**

Social media is an effective platform for users who want to create their personal brands. Thanks to social media, people can share their knowledge, abilities, and skills with millions of people and bring them together under the name of their brand identity (Hepekiz and Gökaliiler, 2019:769).

- **Creating impact**

Social media is a medium that allows the user to be active, not passive. Every piece of information or experience shared through interactions on social media has an impact on many users and has the power to affect the image and entire reputation of a business.

### **3 Social Media and the Purchasing Behavior of the Consumer**

Characteristics, behaviors and consumption habits of consumers change every day. In the digital world that caused this change change, the power and influence of social media is undeniable. Social media is a space in which consumers can create their own content and share their experiences, opinions and comments. Consumers are no longer in a passive position thanks to social media (Uyar, 2019:138). For consumers, social media is a medium in which they can influence the audience in which they interact as well as businesses and brands. Social media becomes a powerful tool that affects consumer behavior when the power of influence and the speed of its spread are noticed by the consumer. Purchasing behavior may be affected positively or negatively when consumers express their feelings, thoughts, their perceptions about the products they use (Bacaksız, 2016:44).

#### **3.1 The Social Media Power of Consumers**

In the 21st century, social media has become an important factor influencing various aspects of consumer behavior such as raising awareness, obtaining information, purchasing behavior and post-purchase communication and evaluation (Mangold and Faulds, 2009:358). Social media provides mutual communication, interaction and also allows the production, evaluation and comparison of information about goods and services. People receive information about the goods and services they need from online platforms and perform their consumption activities through the internet or through social media.

Social media provides two-way communication. Consumers can communicate directly and quickly with businesses, and at the same time, businesses provide consumers with the opportunity to find out instantly about relevant information, promotions and events (Güzel, 2019:106). Businesses first use social media to interact with consumers, identify and categorize them, and measure their perceptions. Secondly, businesses prefer social media to be able to continue marketing activities, sell products, increase sales and to create brand loyalty.

Consumers can easily access the products they want through social media and perceive social media as a consumption medium, going beyond using it as a means of interaction. It has become easier for consumers to negotiate and evaluate goods and services with people who are consumers like themselves (Mangold and Faulds, 2009:357). With social media, consumers are aware of where they can find what they need and how they can supply them in the most appropriate ways. Having raised their awareness level by the increased digitalization, consumers who make consumption a way of life determine their preferences by following marketing strategies such as product, price, promotion (Cop and Oyan, 2010:98). Conscious consumers see social media as a means of achieving the customer value they are looking for, and for this reason they communicate with businesses.

Another issue that consumers are more aware of is the power they have over businesses through social media. Consumers can show through social media how they can increase the reputation, image, and reputation of businesses in a positive sense, and on the flip side of the coin, how they can reduce and eliminate them in a negative sense. A negative comment made by consumers on social media platforms, a problem they complain about, or sharing a defective product they received can spread very quickly and can damage the image of businesses and brand value. Consumers who are aware of this power can sometimes use it to compensate for the damage done by the business, while sometimes it is a show of force.

Consumers now trust and believe the comments of social media users rather than sales representatives or their immediate environment (Kwahk and Kim, 2017:804). Their interactions through social networks allow a common ground for shared values, creating social support, and this in turn has a positive effect on building trust (Wu et al., 2010:1027; Hajli, 2013:393). Hence, a comment about a business can easily come back to the business in the form of positive or negative feedback. Negative feedback exhibits a faster spread than positive feedback, and reach a serious audience on social media more quickly.

### **3.2 The Effect of Social Media on Purchasing Decision Processes of Consumers**

Consumers need to evaluate the purchase decision process in three stages. Consumers go through stages as a needs analysis before the purchase decision, conducting research on product information and alternatives, and evaluating alternatives (Odabaşı and Barış, 2002:332). Consumers who have gone through these stages make decisions by moving to the purchase stage. However, the process does not end with the purchase stage. The next stage begins with the

consumer's satisfaction or dissatisfaction after the purchase. The process is complete if the consumer is satisfied with the product; however, if the consumer is not satisfied with the product, they might have to go back to the very beginning.

When deciding to purchase any goods or services, the customer gathers information from many sources regarding available goods and services that align with their personal preferences and tastes, and prefer businesses with the most appropriate payment, order and delivery process so that they minimize problems in the process (Ceyhan, 2017:223). Purchasing decision processes are influenced by many factors, including internal and external. Kotler (2011) notes that group memberships and social networks also influence consumers' purchasing processes. Social media acts as a means of rapid socialization between individuals, providing a wide range of product information and reviews. Thus, it facilitates both educating oneself and gathering knowledge about products for individuals (Gersoff and Gita, 2006; Taylor et al., 2011).

With the development of the internet, smartphones and mobile devices, social media platforms, which are accessible to the majority of consumers, are also utilized by businesses through making consumers feel that they are on their side throughout these stages, allowing the businesses to directly affect the purchasing stages. The use of social media by businesses is a valuable tool to increase businesses' chances of survival through making word-of-mouth marketing a more active component (Rassega et al., 2015:4).

The strength of social media connections and the intensity of social media use are associated with pre-and post-purchase behavior on social media. As consumers' social media connections increase in strength and intensity of use, the rate of pre-and post-purchase activity in social media also increases (Yanar and Yilmaz, 2017:38). Consumers have started to spend more time on social media platforms before buying products, and the use intensity of social media has increased. Consumers conduct research through social media before purchasing by tracking the comments, suggestions and complaints of the people they interact with. The social media usage intensity after purchase is also on the rise among consumers. In this step, they also make personal reviews of the products they buy and share them with their followers. Consumers' posts post-purchase concern not only their followers, but also the businesses involved. This is because while consumers provide positive feedback by tagging the businesses from which they bought their products when they are satisfied, they also tend to communicate with the businesses about the products they are dissatisfied with and provide negative feedback.

Relevant research in the literature shows that social media affects consumers' purchasing decision processes. Hudson and Thal (2013) demonstrate

the strong influence of social media on consumer purchasing decision making in the travel industry. In the service sector, of which travel industry is a part, consumers mainly believe and trust social media posts in evaluating the quality of services and comparing their performance. Khatib (2016) finds that social media has an influence at different stages of the consumer purchasing decision process, and adds that the most intense influence on this behavior occurs at the stage of collecting information and evaluating alternatives in the pre-purchase process. Nolcheska (2017) also investigated the impact of social media and found a similar pattern to Khatib (2016), as they state that the impact occurs most often in the stage of gathering information and alternatives. Furthermore, it shows that consumers' positive attitudes towards social media are positively associated with consumers being more influenced at the purchase stage. Finally, Kyriakopoulou and Kitsios (2017) also find in their study of the impact of social media on consumer buying behavior that the consumer is affected and decides to make a purchase especially through social media advertisements.

## 4 Conclusions

Considering the basic needs of individuals, one of their most important needs after food and shelter is to communicate. Individuals socialize by communicating and enjoy socializing in their daily lives. With the developments in technology, socialization is not only carried out through traditional spaces where individuals come together face to face, but also through different tools in online spaces. Social media is a platform of the 21st century in which people can socialize with their friends and relatives as well as people they have never known but who share their interests. Social media is a very wide online space that is loved by individuals and has been able to include individuals from every age group and socio-economic class in a short time.

Since it was quickly adopted by individuals, it also attracted the attention of businesses and is the focus of their interests. This is because it is important for businesses to be able to communicate effectively with their target audience and to ensure that this communication is bi-directional. By their nature, businesses must not only communicate with their consumers, but also continue their efforts to redirect them and convince them to buy their goods. Thus, social media becomes a tool for business marketing activities because it allows for two-way communication and can do it instantaneously. Thanks to social media, businesses can continue their marketing and sales activities, while consumers can collect information about the products they need, see comments

on social media for reviews of alternative products, and reach out to businesses conveniently. For both businesses and consumers, social media is becoming the center of consumption and plays a role in influencing consumer buying behavior.

The impact of social media on both businesses and consumers has also managed to attract attention in academia. The intensification of social media and marketing activities, especially promotion and sales through social media also caused the focus of the literature to shift in this direction. The fact that social media is non-stop with 24/7 operation hours and the people who engage with it do it constantly with no regard for time and location is also the starting point of many studies. This study examined social media from the consumer behavior angle. Future studies can focus on consumer behavior by studying not only in terms of purchasing decision stages, but also in terms of environmental factors affecting consumer behavior.

## References

- Akar, E. (2009). "Web 2.0'la Değişen Pazarlama ve Yeni Kuralları". *Pazarlama ve İletişim Kültürü Dergisi*, Bahar, 50–55.
- Bacaksız, P. (2016). "Sosyal Medyada Tüketim Algısı ve Kadın Tüketicilerde Satın Alma Davranışına Olan Etkisi". *Yorum-Yönetim-Yöntem Uluslararası Yönetim-Ekonomi ve Felsefe Dergisi*, 5(1), 43–54.
- Bruns, A. and Bahnisch, M. (2009). "Social Media: Tools for User-Generated Content Social Drivers Behinde Growing Consumer Participation in User-Led Content Generation", Smart 12.11.2020 Services CRC Pty Ltd, Australia. (<http://www.smartservicescrc.com.au/>)
- Ceyhan, Ç. (2017). "Sosyal Medyanın Tüketim Gücü". *Yeni Medya Elektronik Dergi*, 1(3), 221–226.
- Comm, J. and Taylor, D. (2015). *Twitter Power 3.0 How to Dominate Your Market One Tweet at a Time*. Google Play Books, Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons. Inc.
- Cop, R. and Oyan, D. (2010). "Küçük Yerleşim Yerlerindeki Tüketicilerin İnternette Ürün Satın Alma Davranışları Üzerine Bir Uygulama". *Niğde Üniversitesi İİBF Dergisi*, 98–115.
- Duygun, A. (2020). *Örneklerle Sosyal Medyada Tüketici Davranışları*. Birinci Baskı, İstanbul: Hiperlink Eğitim İletişim Yayınları.
- Gersoff, A. D. and Gita, V. J. (2006). "Do You Know Me? Consumer Calibraton of Friends' Knowledge". *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32, 496–503.

- Güzel, I. (2019). *Lüks Markalarda Sosyal Medya Pazarlamasının Marka Değeri ve Satın Alma Niyetine Etkisi*. Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.
- Hajli, M. N. (2013). "A Study of the Impact of Social Media on Consumers". *International Journal of Market Research*, 56(3), 387–404.
- Hepekiz, İ. ve Gökalliler, E. (2019). "Sosyal Medya Aracılığıyla Yaratılan Kişisel Markalar ve Benlik Sunumu". *Erciyes İletişim Dergisi*, 6(1), 761–782.
- Hudson, S. and Thal, K. (2013). "The Impact of Social Media on the Consumer Decision Process: Implications for Tourism Marketing". *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 30(1–2), 156–160.
- Kaplan, A. M. and Haenlein, M. (2010). "Users of the World, Unite! the Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media". *Business Horizons*, 53, 59–68.
- Khatib, F. (2016). "The Impact of Social Media Characteristics on Purchase Decision Empirical Study of Saudi Customers in Aseer Region". *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 7(4), 41–50.
- Kotler, P. and Armstrong, G. (2011). *Principles of Marketing*. 14th Edition, Prentice Hall.
- Kwahk, K. Y. and Kim, B. (2017). "Effects of Social Media on Consumers' Purchase Decisions: Evidence From Taobao". *Service Business*, 11, 803–829.
- Kyriakopoulou, E. and Kitsios, F. (2017). The Influence of Social Media on Consumers' Behavior. Proceedings of 6th International Symposium and 28th National Conference on Operational Research, Thessaloiniki, Greece, 62–66.
- Mangold, G. W. and Faulds, J. D. (2009). "Social Media: The New Hybrid Element of the Promotion Mix". *Business Horizons*, 52, 357–365.
- Nolcheska, V. (2017). "The Influence of Social Networks on Consumer Behavior". *Balkan and Near Eastern Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(4), 75–87.
- Odabaşı, Y. and Barış, G. (2002). *Tüketici Davranışları*. İstanbul: MediaCat Kitapları.
- Rasgega, V., Troisi, O., Torre, C., Cucino, V., Santoro, A. and Prudente, N. (2015). "Social Networks and the Buying Behavior of the Consumer". *Journal of Global Economies*, 3(4), 1–6.
- Roberts, R. R. and Kraynak, J. (2008). *Walk Like a Glant, Sell Like a Madman*, 2nd Edition. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Taylor, D. G., Jeffery, E. L. and David, S. (2011). "Friends, Fans and Followers: Do Ads Work on Social Networks? How Gender and Age Shape Receptivity". *Journal of Advertising Research*, 51, 258–276.

- Wu, J. J., Chen, Y. H. and Chung, Y. S. (2010). "Trust Factors Influencing Virtual Community Members: A Study of Transaction Communities". *Journal of Business Research*, 63(9-10), 1025-1032.
- Yanar, K. and Yılmaz, K. G. (2017). "Sosyal Medyanın Satın Alma Öncesi ve Sonrası Tüketici Davranışına Etkisi Üzerine Bir Araştırma". *Yönetim, Ekonomi ve Pazarlama Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 1(2), 24-40.



Gülnil Aydın

# Consumer Cynicism, Skepticism, Brand Boycotts and Social Media

## 1 Introduction

Web 2.0 offers users a communication platform where they can exchange ideas, create content, and offer criticism. Social media alternatives that emerge with the Web 2.0 infrastructure increase the number of participants every day. Social media allows different people to communicate with each other and can allow people to shape their attitudes and behaviors on any topic in a positive or negative way (Yilmaz, 2018).

The “digital age” refers to a time where information in many forms is ready, available, accessible and instantly shareable. Today, consumers can share their thoughts about businesses and brands through their social media, and sometimes even cause serious problems to businesses with their negative shares. Usually consumers’ negative attitudes, dissatisfaction, and insecurities lie at the root of negative posts. The concept of cynicism, which is mainly associated with negative attitudes such as distrust, dissatisfaction and skepticism, can also be considered among the reasons for these shares (Çetinkaya and Ceng, 2018).

Consumer-brand relations are affected by doubts about the reputation of the business, the perception that there are hidden intentions, or failures of products and services. In most studies, negative word-of-mouth (WOM) is evaluated as a result of product and service failure, and it is stated that negative WOM has a greater effect on consumers’ attitudes and evaluations than positive WOM. (Laczniak, DeCarlo and Motley, 1996; Chang, Hsieh and Tseng, 2013). In addition to that, some studies see negative WOM (eWOM) in digital platforms as a factor that seriously affects marketing communication, especially on social media (Amezcuca and Quintanilla, 2016).

It is possible for a person to simultaneously follow a large number of social media accounts and quickly share their ideas, lives from these platforms. The fact that individuals share their consumption experiences and ideas about products/services on a digital environment provides us with the electronic form of word-of-mouth communication (eWOM), which is of great importance for marketing practitioners. Today, individuals have serious motivations to share on social

media. One of these motivations is that the production of information in electronic media is now possible to be provided by consumers. With the start of the use of social media, the power to create and share content has passed from businesses to individuals. Creating questioning platforms in the legal framework related to the activities of businesses has become much more doable than offline environment. It has become quite easy to track whether there is a difference or mismatch between the promises and performances of businesses and to express if there is a mismatch. With social media providing the appropriate environment, a personal complaint can turn into a collective form of resistance and hostility with serious implications for the brand, and cynical attitudes can spread (Amezcuca and Quintanilla, 2016).

According to Helm, Moulard and Richins (2015), cynical consumers have various beliefs. One of them is the belief that consumers have a responsibility to shape the market by rewarding and punishing businesses, raising awareness, and mobilizing other consumers. Another belief is that the main reason for dissatisfaction with a product or service is that the businesses act with their own interests in mind. These beliefs can cause consumers to blame businesses for some of their practices and, as a result of this, to exhibit a tendency to respond (Chu and Chylinski, 2006). Although consumer reactions to unsatisfied results are not a new issue, consumer behavior, which can occur in the form of hatred and retaliation or revenge, is called 'dysfunctional responses' and is growing day by day (Aron, 2016).

In line with these explanations, the definition and foundations of consumer cynicism, the concepts seen as related to consumer cynicism, the causes and consequences of cynicism will be mentioned in this chapter. Consumer cynicism will be evaluated in the context of social media and information about the strategies and activities that businesses can implement for cynical activities that are gaining momentum in social media will be given.

## **2 The Concept and Foundations of Consumer Cynicism**

The concept of cynicism is based on the Cynicism school of thought, active in Ancient Greece circa 500 BC. It represents more of a way of thinking and a way of life. It bases itself on not trusting people's beliefs and behavior (Andersson and Bateman, 1997; Chylinski and Chu, 2010).

Among the important names within this school of thought are Antisthenes<sup>1</sup> and Diogenes<sup>2</sup>, the founder of the philosophy, who followed in the footsteps of Socrates. Looking at the philosophy and lifestyle of the cynics, it is possible to say that individual wisdom, self-sufficiency and an attitude of abstaining from the blessings of the world are dominant. They question and criticize the values, laws and traditions of the majority (Mantere and Martinsuo, 2001). At the core of the philosophy lies the government of self. In this direction, it is expected that the individual will recognize and express themselves by being free from social phenomena (Odou and Pechpeyrou, 2011).

While it indicated an approach of living an idealistic life by abstracting yourself from society in ancient Greece, the concept is now more associated with negative attitudes caused by insecurity, dissatisfaction and unmet expectations (Chu and Chylinsky, 2006). Abraham (2000) states that the basic belief in cynicism is that the principles of honesty, justice and sincerity are sacrificed in the interests of advancing in leadership. It is thus believed that such sacrifices lead to actions based on hidden motives and deception.

The concept of cynicism, arising from a philosophical teaching, over time has evolved into a different dimension than its structure at the time it first appeared, taking on a structure that is discussed in different disciplines. Looking at social sciences, it is worth noting that most research conducted on the concept of cynicism is focused specifically in the field of management. However, the concept of cynicism has been discussed and explored more recently in marketing as well. Reflections of cynicism in the individuals' evaluations of businesses and especially of marketing activities are particularly interesting (Indibara and Varshney, 2020).

Incidents such as seeing that there is actually no discount on the products after a discount announcement, receiving a product that is very different to the

- 
- 1 Antisthenes; the Greek philosopher who lived between 444–365 BC and founded the School of Cynicism. He was first a student of Gorgias and then Socrates. After Socrates, he founded his school and referred to Socrates as an exemplary person of his philosophy (felsefe.gen.tr).
  - 2 a. Diogenes was an ancient philosopher who pioneered the Cynic philosophy and lived between 412–323 BC. Born in Sinop, Diogenes rejected civilization and tried to live in but also far from it. He followed the footsteps of Antisthenes (felsefe.gen.tr).  
b. “They ask Diogenes, who walks with a lantern in his hand during the day: What are you doing, why are you walking with a lantern, even though it is not dark, Diogenes’ answer emphasizes the point of cynicism at that time: I am looking for an honest person (man/Justice)”

advertised product while shopping online, or signing up for free services only to be charged later on without the customer's knowledge can cause consumers to develop negative attitudes about brands and businesses. Consumers' tendency towards grudge-holding and developing negative attitudes towards businesses may increase in direct proportion to the number and severity of their negative experiences (Bunker and Ball, 2008). At the root of these increasing trends that lead individuals to making negative judgments and having negative views towards businesses, marketing work, and brands lies the *concept of consumer cynicism*.

Various researchers have defined the concept of consumer cynicism in different ways: Chu and Chylinsky (2006) define cynicism as an attitude in which consumer suspicion is combined with the idea that businesses are only pursuing their own interests, and then directing these suspicions to the market. Mikkonen et al. (2011) state that cynicism is a kind of psychological compensation strategy that allows consumers to realize that they are being doubted, disappointed, and deceived by the market or the businesses within the market. Consumer cynicism, largely defined by doubt and distrust, is explained by the belief that businesses are almost never interested in the needs and desires of consumers, and are only interested in their own interests (van Dolen, de Cremer and de Ruyter, 2012). According to Helm, Moulard, and Richins (2015), what defines consumer cynicism is the learned attitude of an individual consumer, which is characterized by the perception that businesses are generally opportunistic, and that opportunism creates a harmful consumer market.

While cynicism is a personality trait according to some researchers, some assessments describe it as a judicial situation or an attitude, to which people are exposed to as a result of their experience. In fact, although the ancient Greek philosophers and those who first conceptualized the phenomenon of cynicism treated cynicism as a personality trait, according to some other authors, for example, Andersson and Bateman (1997:450), cynicism was "in addition to frustration and disillusionment; a person's general and specific *attitude*, which is characterized by negative feelings and distrust, towards a group, ideology, social structure or institution". Similarly, Chylinski and Chu (2010:799) defined consumer cynicism as "the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional response processes that the consumer tries to express through suspicion, defense, and alienation".

By defining cynicism as an attitude, attitude components are used for consumer cynicism in the same way and cynicism is studied, just like attitude, in cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions. The cognitive dimension of cynicism includes distrust and doubt, the emotional dimension includes dissatisfaction and alienation, and the behavioral dimension includes resistance and hostility (Andersson and Bateman, 1997; Chylinski and Chu, 2010). Therefore, consumers' doubts about brand messages and efforts arise in the cognitive

dimension, their distancing from brands with feelings of frustration and despair occurs in the emotional dimension, and their negative reaction to brand efforts and their boycotts occur in the behavioral dimension.

At this point, the questions “Who are cynical consumers? How can we recognize them?” may come to mind. “Measurement” is of great importance in order to understand and conduct studies on consumer cynicism. The Consumer Cynicism Scale was first discussed in Helm’s study (2006) and developed as a 49 item (7-point Likert) scale consisting of four sub-dimensions. In subsequent simplification studies, the fourth dimension was removed and evaluated in three sub-dimensions (opportunism in general terms, opportunism and deception aimed directly at consumers). However, after applying the scale and conducting statistical analyses, it was determined that this scale consists of one dimension and eight substances. The consumer cynicism scale, developed by Helm, Moulard, and Richins (2015), and the social cynicism scale, used by Kanter and Wartzel (1985), are included at the end of the chapter.

It would be better to provide information about the basic concepts associated with consumer cynicism before talking about the causes and consequences of it, which is conceptually evaluated in detail. Of the concepts, which will be explained in detail below, *consumer skepticism* is related to the causes of cynicism, whereas *consumer boycotts*, *anti-consumption* and *digital activism* are related to the consequences of consumer cynicism

### 3 Concepts Related to Consumer Cynicism

#### 3.1 Skepticism, Consumer Skepticism

Trust is of great importance in establishing long-term healthy interpersonal relationships, as well as on individual decisions and choices (Aydin, Ar and Taskin, 2014). The perception of social trust is based on the idea that people are generally fair, reliable and benevolent. Skeptics assume that others think of their own interests and act in accordance with these, believe that they want to take advantage of other people, and exhibit a low level of trust (Bozoklu and Ermeç, 2020). Therefore it is possible to say that, there is a close relationship between the concepts of consumer skepticism and consumer cynicism (Koslow, 2000).

Over time, there has been a significant decline in both social trust and membership to social groups. Over the past 40 years, the rate of respondents who agreed with the phrase “most people can be trusted” has fallen by about 40 %. Today’s younger generations have much lower social trust than their predecessors (Cappela, 2002). Previous research on the subject has also emphasized the decline in social trust and highlighted that this decline is more intense,

especially in the younger generations (Rahn and Transue, 2002). Edelman's (2020) Trust Barometer shows that only 55 % of the global population considers businesses to be trustworthy. In addition to this, the proportion of those who think that the information shared in the media is not reliable is 57 %, while the proportion of those who worry that false or even fake news can be spread is 76 %. These findings indicate that today, skepticism is growing at a serious rate.

Consumers' doubts, specifically about marketing communications, are based on the belief that communication messages can be biased and problematic in terms of accuracy in order to persuade the target audience. Although this type of skepticism is seen negatively in the first place, on the other hand, it can also be characterized as a consumer skill developed and needed through socialization (Helm, 2004). From this perspective, skepticism, as well as with its negative aspects, can be seen as a necessity of being a conscious consumer.

At the root of cynicism lies distrust and skepticism. Odou and Pechpeyrou (2011) saw cynical attitudes as a defensive, psychological tool that required constant skepticism towards the marketing techniques of businesses. However, there are differences between the concepts of cynicism and skepticism. Cynicism is often seen as a persistent disbelief towards others, arising from the idea that people act solely on the basis of selfish motives. On the other hand, in the event of lack of evidence, skepticism is used to explain the state of being unsure of what others are saying or doing. In other words, "skeptics doubt the essence of communication, while cynics doubt not only what is said, but also the reasons why it is said" (Kanter and Mirvis, 1989; Mohr, Eroglu and Ellen, 1998). Therefore, skepticism can decrease as the level information increases or evidence is presented, however in cynicism attitude can be very difficult to change. The concept of consumer skepticism is linked to the 'disbelief' (cognitive) component of cynicism, but does not include the extreme negative effects of cynicism (Güven, 2016).

As can be seen from the above evaluations, skepticism is a related concept to cynicism, that can be considered among the causal factors involved in it, but cannot be used in the same sense. Nevertheless, many studies on consumer skepticism help to understand cynicism. The impact and decisive role of skepticism will be discussed in forthcoming sections regarding the causes of consumer cynicism.

### **3.2 Anti-consumption, Voluntary Simple Lifestyle and Culture Jamming**

Anti-consumption and consumer cynicism are seen as two very close concepts. Because cynicism requires a strong critical approach. It is stated that consumer cynicism should be considered as a part of global anti-consumption, as well as

the attitude of individuals towards marketing activities (Dobscha and Ozanne, 2001; Odou and Pechpeyrou, 2011).

So, how is anti-consumption defined? Anti-consumption in some cases can occur as a form of resistance to certain brands or products, whereas sometimes it is seen as the resistance to the ideology of consumption as a whole. Anti-consumption lifestyles give importance to the individual self-expression and to the sense of authenticity. Resistance is strongly associated with anti-consumption (both as an attitude and behavior). However, anti-consumption is not as simple of a concept as resistance, and is used to describe a way of life and ideology (Agarwal, 2013).

Anti-consumption is explained by different typologies, depending on the way it is defined as a lifestyle/form. Iyer and Muncy (2009) expand on these typologies with a behavioral classification based on what purpose the anti-consumption arises for and focuses on. There are two dimensions that Iyer and Muncy (2009) take into account in their classification: the purpose of anti-consumption and object of anti-consumption. Anti-consumption occurs in different forms in terms of the dimensions taken into consideration. In general, *global consumption opposition*<sup>3</sup> is mentioned in negative attitude towards consumption and social issues in the foreground, *voluntary simplicity* is mentioned in an antipathetic view towards consumption in general, and *market activism* is mentioned in the opposition that emerges by taking social issues regarding specific products and brands into account. Individuals who do not buy a specific brand or product by keeping personal issues at the forefront are defined as *anti-loyal* consumers.

Consequently, anti-consumption may occur in the form of not only buying one or a few brands, but also in a structure that evolves towards non-consuming or consuming less in a more general sense. This non-consumerism is sometimes complemented by activist actions such as Burning Man<sup>4</sup> events. At Burning Man,

---

3 In his classification of anti-consumption, Choi (2011) named this group “enlightenment anti-consumption”. It is stated that this kind of anti-consumption is spreading rapidly around the world through blogs and social media.

4 The festival, which has become popular in Turkey with the influence of social media, is located in the Black Rock Desert in Nevada, USA. During the week-long stay in the desert, participants whose first priority is to survive, strengthen their creativity and social awareness in desert conditions. The rules of the festival are not to leave any garbage behind, to stay in a caravan or a tent, to make your own meals and not to trade because money is considered insignificant (Hurriyet, 2019). At the end of the Burning Man festival, which attracts about 50,000 spectators and has been held since 1986, a 40 ft (12 m.) puppet is burned.

practices used to drive consumers away from the market include discourses that support belonging to a community and humiliate market logic, and positioning consumption as a kind of art of self-expression (Kozinets, 2002).

The concept of *voluntary simplicity* emerges when anti-consumption is defined as a non-consuming state in general by considering individual principles/beliefs. Voluntary simplicity is a belief system that is “put into practice by minimizing the consumption of material goods, relying on self-confidence, improving one’s intelligence, and prioritizing other intangible aspects of human existence”. An anti-consumption lifestyle avoiding consumption by buying less and/or using resources efficiently is voluntarily adopted by individuals. Some researchers find ethical or spiritual components in the anti-consumerist beliefs of simplifiers. Simplifiers do not use brand names and fashion as a status. Rather, they use them as value-for-money identifiers. It is expressed that the main motivations for reducing consumption arise in environmental, self-oriented and spiritual dimensions (Agarwal, 2013).

Voluntary simplicity encompasses many different lifestyles that arise with different motivations. The main factor in the adoption of these lifestyles is seen to be linked to ethical preferences, rather than a ‘rebellion’. Dobscha (1998) conducted a study on women who chose to position themselves as opposed to a culture of consumption that they believed promoted waste and environmental degradation. The study showed that the interviewed opponents of consumption exhibited this behavior partly due to a deep skepticism of market practices. Dobscha (1998) stated that consumers were reacting to marketing work, but marketers did not consider this reaction to be a strong social movement.

Many anti-consumerism actions have been carried out over time. Examples include the “Don’t Buy Anything Day” initiated by Adbusters, a nonprofit organization in Canada, the “A Day Without Shoes” initiative aiming to empathize with children living in poverty without shoes, the aforementioned Burning Man meetings, and wearing only six clothing items a month for the “Six Items or Less” campaign, which encourages shopping diet (Choi, 2011).

Many different studies have been conducted to explain why individuals resort to anti-consumption actions (Elgin and Mitchell, 1977; Dobscha, 1998; Dobscha and Ozanne, 2001; Cherrier, 2009; Choi, 2011). In some of these studies, one of the concepts used along with anti-consumption is “culture jamming”. Culture jamming, which is said to be spreading rapidly around the world, has not been studied in detail in its conceptual sense even though it manifests itself in basic publications such as Kale Lasn’s<sup>5</sup> book *Culture Jam*, and in different actions as a

---

5 The owner of Adbusters magazine is the co-founder of Adbusters Media Foundation. He is the author of the books *Culture Jam* and *Design Anarchy*.

social movement (Bakir and Celik, 2013). Cultural distortion is also defined as a form of rebellion against the advertising and marketing culture, which keeps the motivations of consumption alive in parallel with the anti-consumption. In parallel with the digitized world, it is now integrated into the new media (Demir, 2020).

Both anti-consumption and culture jamming are concepts associated with consumer cynicism. It is possible to say that these concepts originated and conceptualized as the results of consumer cynicism. In the forthcoming assessment of the results of consumer cynicism, the examples and effects of anti-consumption will be discussed.

### 3.3 Consumer Boycotts and Digital Activism

*“Nonviolence (ahimsa) is an active force of the highest order.  
It is soul force or the power of Godhead within us.”<sup>6</sup>  
Mahatma K. Gandhi*

Consumer boycotts are a type of “anti-consumption” action aimed at discouraging the consumption of certain products or services due to environmental, political, ethical, or social issues (Makarem and Jae, 2016). Given that anti-consumption has a more general perspective, consumer boycotts have a narrower coverage and are aimed at specific institutions or organizations<sup>7</sup>. Friedman (1999:97) defines the boycott as “an attempt by one or more parties to achieve certain goals by encouraging individual consumers to refrain from making certain purchases in the marketplace.”

The development of social media has also increased the potential for individuals to show their reactions to developments in the political and social sphere. In their model of consumer boycotts Balıkcıoğlu, Koçak and Özer (2007) stated that, word-of-mouth communication increases the perceived effectiveness of the boycott and the perceived effectiveness of the boycott is decisive in participation to the boycott.

---

6 a. Ahimsa is one of the basic teachings of Hinduism, which means respecting all living beings and abstaining from all forms of violence.

b. In accordance with the “Ahimsa”, Gandhi organized a 400 km march (Salt March) in 1930 to protest the British salt monopoly. In this context, Gandhi’s 24-day “Salt March” is considered an example of a consumer boycott, as it is a direct non-violent action (Balıkcıoğlu, Kocak and Ozer, 2007).

7 Boycotts are among the methods that market activists from anti-consumption groups can apply (Makarem & Jae, 2016).

There are many examples of consumer boycotts whose scope and rate of spread have increased with the impact of social media. Swedish retail clothing brand H&M is one of the examples. Criticisms that spread rapidly on social media due to the sharing on the online sales site of pictures of a black boy model wearing a sweatshirt with “the coolest monkey in the jungle” written on it has caused protests around the world. Company officials apologized to the New York Daily News after growing reactions, a global call for a boycott on social media, and heavy criticism (H&M Boykot, 2018).

In 2016, Watson’s faced a similar crisis. The giant cosmetics retailer was subjected to fierce reaction and criticism in one of its branches, after a customer was searched for theft by store officials under improper conditions and conduct. There have been calls for a boycott of Watson’s over social media. The total number of messages sent using the #watsonsboykot hashtag was determined to be 200. A very large part of these were shared the day after Watson’s first statement (Ürkmez, 2020).

As can be seen from the examples above, boycott behavior can be defined as an action triggered by anger. Consumer Anger is defined as an emotional state resulting from the loss of rights due to an unfair, threatening or harmful consumption experience perceived by a consumer. These consumption experiences include interactions with the company, its products or services and/or its employees. Given that anger is a key and fundamental emotion, the concept is a central element in social behavior (Koc et al., 2017). Of all emotions, anger is one of the most common. Researchers point out that most people are generally angry from a few times a day to a few times a week (Robbins, 2000; Funches, 2016). Anger arises when a person interprets an event as harmful and frustrating and it can target another person, institution, situation, or self.

The anger that often arises as a result of social violations is typically due to the need of restoring equality and justice (Averill, 1983). Anger is a special emotion because it comes with a tendency to act. Anger-inducing experiences can also lead to behavioral tendencies, such as the urge to react strongly, the desire to injure, and the punishment of criminals. These tendencies can result costly for firms (Funches, 2016).

The rapid development of social media and digital platforms not only has created a suitable basis for consumer boycotts, but also brought new concepts to the agenda. One of these concepts is digital activism. Digital activism is defined as “taking advantage of the rapid diffusion of network structures and information technologies in cases where individuals defend or oppose by designing and implementing actions on social and political issues such as freedom of expression, human rights or the environment” (Ürkmez, 2020). As can be understood

from the definition of the concept, digital activism does not only emerge for businesses and their activities, but can also be a tool for any issue that is generally opposed (political decisions, environmental practices, etc.). The term digital activism is generally used to describe any kind of activist activity carried out in the digital environment.

Types of digital activism are mentioned according to the goals and chosen methods of activists: party/awareness activism, clicktivism/slacktivism, hacktivism are concepts used as types of digital activism. The ice-bucket challenge can be given as an example for the party/awareness activism (Turhan, 2017). Ice-bucket challenge was initiated to raise awareness for the ALS disease. In this campaign, one person pours a bucket of ice water down her/his head, asking another person to show if she/he can do the same. The person being challenged is also expected to take the same action within 24 hours and/or donate \$100 to the ALS patients association. According to the report shared by RTI International, an independent research organization, donations from the 2014 ALS Ice Bucket Challenge resulted in a 187 % increase in the annual funding allocated by the ALS Association for research worldwide (ALS Association, 2019).

Hacktivism is an activist movement in the form of blocking access to the website in order to raise awareness to a social problem. In hacktivism, the goal is not to engage in a digital attack that will cause serious damage, but to simply express a reaction or discomfort. Web-hacking, email bombarding and sending viruses for this purpose are considered a form of hacktivist action (Denning, 2001). Although the goal is not to cause serious damage, hacktivist activities within the scope of cyber-crime exist (Kelly, 2012; Yegen, 2014).

Slacktivism (Digital Laziness-Passive Activism), a digital action in which some social media users show their support using online platforms without being directly involved in a social movement, is a combination of the words 'slack' and 'activism'. Slacktivism can also be used to criticize digital activists. In a similar sense, clicktivism is defined as the activity of participating, supporting and organizing social movements from the keyboard, rather than physically participating in them. Clicktivists who perform clicktivism or slacktivists can refrain from buying from a brand by organizing this movement in a digital environment, in addition to organizing petitions in which a social benefit is tried to be achieved (Urkmez, 2020).

#### **4 Reasons for Consumer Cynicism**

A large number of factors influence the emergence of cynicism. Accurate identification and understanding of these factors is of great importance. Because

correct identification or diagnosis of these causes will be able to contribute to the solution of problems that may arise in consumer-brand relationships.

Studies about the causes of consumer cynicism indicate negative attitudes, especially among consumers who experience dissatisfaction and distrust as a result of unmet expectations (Chu and Chylinski, 2006). Consumers are often thought to develop cynical attitudes as a result of these negative (unfair, insincere or even dishonest) experiences.

The failure to meet expectations, which causes consumers to develop cynical attitudes, corresponds to the widely accepted theory of expectation confirmation (Kramer and Yoon, 2007). As is known, satisfaction is evaluated in relation to expectations rather than performance criteria in an objective sense. Researchers point out the negative disconfirmation of expectations as the primary mechanism of customer dissatisfaction (Oliver and Bearden, 1985). Unmet expectations and constantly encountering negative consequences can lead to generalization behavior in consumers, and cause negative expectations for the future (Summers and Granbois, 1977). Unmet expectations can create a kind of 'breach of psychological contract' effect. From a consumer's perspective, breach of psychological contract is essentially considered as unfulfilled promises or a betrayal of trust. This betrayal can cause consumers to give intense emotional reactions and turn to negative behavior. Consumers who believe to have a close relationship with a brand will be able to view their dissatisfaction as an abuse of that relationship and take the actions of the business personally (Funches, 2016). According to Indibara and Varshney (2020), when it comes to expectations, not only products and services should come to mind. Especially in underdeveloped or developing countries, individuals may expect businesses to provide an alternative space away from social problems. Consumers expecting a support from businesses that will save themselves from social problems, despite the businesses' main goals of survival and growth, can create an 'asymmetry of expectations'.

However, it would not be suitable to associate cynical behavior only with dissatisfaction. Apart from expectations, messages that are incompatible with the values that consumers have are also effective in development of cynical attitudes in consumer. When consumers perceive a discrepancy between their own values and the values that businesses think they have, a sense of misapprehension may arise (Chilinski and Chu, 2010; Goktas, 2019).

The perception of justice is of great importance in consumer-business value mismatches (Ar and Aydın, 2020). Taking into account the variables of consumer cynicism, Atılgan, İnce, and Yılmaz (2017), price transparency and procedural justice, found that consumers who have a perception of fairness in pricing decisions did not have cynical tendencies and their purchasing intentions were

positively affected, but in the opposite cases, consumers can display trends of not buying a brand or boycotting it.

Çetinkaya and Ceng (2018) categorized the consumer reactions to Black Friday discounts in Turkey using sentiment analysis. The analysis identified three groups of categorically negative emotions about Black Friday in consumers: *value mismatch*, *skepticism-distrust*, *destructiveness-aggression*. In value mismatch, it is possible to say that consumers appear to have a highly cynical attitude because they think that businesses are insensitive to their values in a linguistic, religious, and cultural sense. As a matter of fact, Black Friday has been considered contradictory to the religious and cultural values of the consumers of Turkey. The skepticism-distrust dimension describes consumers' distrust to brands/businesses and their concern for sincerity. Destructiveness-aggression constitutes the basis of behaviors exhibited in a spectrum from spreading the emotions and thoughts of consumers to calling for a boycott (Çetinkaya and Ceng, 2018).

Consumers can close themselves to up-to-date information about brands and businesses if they have negative experiences in the past. Therefore, in this case, businesses and brands will prefer to resort to their largely outdated experiences in purchasing decisions, rather than different sources of information (Oates et al., 2008). Perhaps for this reason, older consumers shop more attentively than young people, studying information about products more slowly or more carefully (Tokgöz, 2020).

In the light of all these evaluations, it is possible to summarize the reasons that may lead to cynical tendencies in consumers as follows (Güven, 2016);

1. Negative consumption experiences and unmet expectations due to deceptive advertising messages and different factors,
2. The mismatch between businesses' and consumers' values and the desire for control over the perception of being used by businesses,
3. The need to develop a defense mechanism against the marketing activities of enterprises that are believed to always prioritize their own interests.

Cynical attitudes based on the reasons described in detail above can have some consequences that can reach serious levels for businesses. In the following section, the results will be mentioned in detail.

## 5 Consequences for Consumer Cynicism

The behavior of consumers who develop cynical attitudes for different reasons is also shaped according to these attitudes. Helm (2004) mentions behaviors

caused by consumer cynicism as disparaging, withdrawal, taking precautions and seeking retribution. Therefore, a consumer who exhibits cynical behavior will develop a condescending and negative discourse towards the business or the entire market, take some kind of measures to protect themselves and the environment by trying to spread such rhetoric, attract themselves due to a negative view, or resort to a boycott with the intention of punishing it (Laczniak et al., 1996). In the study carried out by Tokgöz (2020), it is stated that consumers may intend not to buy the products of the business or the brand, in other words, withdraw from the market as a result of the adverse events they experience. Similarly, according to van Dolen and others (2012), a person with a negative attitude can exhibit behavior such as retreat and distance for protection, because of the fact that an institution or business is located in a structure that is far from honesty, and is selfish, meaning that it only thinks of itself.

Behavioral consequences of cynicism include disparaging behavior as well as withdrawal (Helm, 2006). Disparaging discourses can sometimes be face-to-face, in the form of negative WOM, or in the style of e-WOM in online environments (Güven, 2016). Disparaging discourses or negative WOM, depending on the intention of the consumer, can be considered in two categories: firstly, it is seen as a kind of retaliatory action against businesses and is displayed as aggressive complaint behavior with the intention of harming a particular business (Cheng, Lam and Hsu, 2006). Retaliation behaviors also include creation of a cost/loss, vandalism, creating confusion, stealing, and personal attacks (Aron, 2016). Secondly, it is a simple communication mechanism that is used to prevent others from experiencing the same distress.

It can also be seen that, especially in retaliatory behavior, disparaging discourse may turn into a consumer movement over time. For example, rebellion against the market, especially against big businesses, and the passive role of the consumer, is a central theme in the activism movement called Burning Man. As previously stated under the heading of anti-consumption, the participants of this movement cover up their brand names and logos, and at the same time, display condescending behavior towards businesses and consumers (Kozinets, 2002). The severity of the reactions that will arise among consumers is determined by the severity of the experiences with businesses or brands and the feelings of being deceived (Ketron, 2016:34 as cited in Tokgöz, 2020).

Cynical consumers who sense betrayal instead of trust and think that they are being deceived can sometimes convey their complaints to the masses, for example through a website, thereby creating a culture of cynicism. These websites created by consumers can be means to retaliation or revenge (Helm, 2006).

Summarizing these results as follows, which address different aspects of different studies, will help see the results of consumer cynicism more clearly (Güven, 2016):

1. Abandoning business/brand, vilifying/negative WOM,
2. Violent protests that sometimes can lead to vandalism,
3. Creating anti-brand groups, boycott organizations,
4. Being more meticulous and conscious about the act of buying.

Consumers tend to share their negative comments about brands on social media with different contents. These shares, which can reach a quite high level from time to time for brands, are a way of consumers reflecting their cynical attitudes. In particular, it is possible to observe that comments made by consumers on social media about brands, firms or the entire market order often contain anger, resentment and distrust (Çetinkaya and Ceng, 2018). In the following section, the reflections of consumer cynicism on social media will be mentioned in detail.

## 6 Social Media and Consumer Cynicism

*"Dave Carroll, an English musician living the last days of his career as of 2008, arrived at an airport to begin a journey with United Airlines for a Nebraska concert. As usual, he took his very valuable custom-made guitar with him on his journey and checked it in. After settling in his seat, as he looked out of the window of the plane, he noticed that baggage handlers randomly threw items onto the plane, sometimes dropping them. Unfortunately, as a result of this, his guitar was severely damaged. Due to his concert schedule, he was only able to file a complaint with United Airlines 3 days later and asked them to reimburse the repair costs. But the firm rejected Carroll's request, saying he was late. Carroll decided to announce this negative experience with United Airlines to the world with a music video. After sharing his song "United Breaks Guitars" on YouTube, 150 thousand people watched the video on the first day. A few weeks later, the number reached 5 million. Even though the airline tried to call Carroll and apologize by presenting him with a \$1200 flight voucher upon this growing response, it did not help their case. Unfortunately, this time, United Airlines was too late..."*

*The number of views on the video reached 20 million (20,497,713) in 2021" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YGc4zOqozo>*

With the widespread use of the Internet, accessing information has become very easy. In this context, any information that may create a negative attitude in the consumer can quickly reach other users, whether it is true or not (Cetin and Toprak, 2016). The answer to the question "How much content is generated on social media in 60 seconds?" draws attention to the importance of this platform: in 60 seconds, 54 million Whatsapp messages, 294 billion emails,

350 million tweets are shared, and 4.4 million Google searches are performed (Chaffey, 2020). Consumers' experiences with brands are also included in these contents. Consumers who are uncomfortable with any brand behavior, create anti-brand slogans, spread brand claims, and create disgruntled brand communities and organize various activities through social media (Chylinski and Chu, 2010).

It is not possible to ignore the short-term results of negative Wom (Cheng, Lam and Hsu, 2006). Negative attitudes of consumers who have lost confidence in the brand pose a major threat to the brand's reputation, credibility and preference (Güven, 2016). Especially with the widespread use of the internet, consumers use social media to punish brands they do not like. The destructive potential of consumer cynicism may be better understood, given that negative beliefs that perhaps began with a small number of consumers can reach a very large customer base under the influence of social media with the influence of a domino effect (Güven, 2016).

Nike, one of the brands that the consumer has a cynical attitude towards, has been subject to criticism for a long time due to the presence of child workers among its employees and the fact that it employs workers under poor conditions. In addition to the protests of not purchasing from the brand, its stores were also physically attacked (Özkaya and Ülker, 2020). The gradual growth of all these reactions has led to a serious decline in the brand's profit (Persson, 2008). In order to change the negative attitude of the consumers, the brand donated to an institution that defends workers' rights, published the "Business Responsibility Report" in 2005 and shared the list of its manufacturing factories all over the world in this report. The purpose of this list sharing has been explained as means to help make more effective observations about working conditions (BBC Turkish, 2005).

The crisis experienced by Onur Air, one of the private airlines of Turkey, is also a different example that can be given in this regard. After the earthquake in Van in Turkey in 2011, the brand launched a campaign on its Facebook page, announcing that it would donate ₺0,5 for each follower on Facebook to be sent to earthquake victims in Van, and donate the same amount for each new follower. The aim of the campaign is to donate ₺250,000, which will also help the firm to reach 500,000 followers. Following the campaign announcement, the firm was subject to rapidly increasing negative comments, first on Facebook and then on Twitter and Ekşisözlük. Its followers accused the brand of insincerity and opportunism, thinking that it was using a disaster for its own benefit (Bat and Yurtseven, 2014).

Consumers who are not satisfied or were not attempted to be recovered for their dissatisfaction, are able to react with the simplest behaviors, as well as resort to exhibiting extreme behaviors to recover these dissatisfactions. One of the most moderate and common ways to do this is to join online consumer groups and share their dissatisfaction with others (Bailey, 2005:66, as cited by Güven, 2016). Establishing group communication through social media has a huge impact on individuals' decisions. Because this interaction creates a social impact on individuals by fulfilling various functions such as reducing perceived risk, providing expert reference and individual approval. This is also explained by the social-identity theory. Individuals have a social identity outside of their personal identity through membership in different groups, in accordance with the classes existing in the social system. The theory suggests that people define self-concepts by using their connections to social groups (Chang, Hsieh, and Tseng, 2013).

The injustice suffered by one consumer increases the cynical behavior of other consumers, which emerges in their buying tendencies. In addition, this effect occurs not only for consumers with a pro-social (behaviors such as helping, sharing, cooperating, empathizing, protecting, relieving, consoling by considering the well-being of another human) value orientation, but also for self-oriented consumers (van Dolen, de Cremer, and de Ruyter, 2012).

In their study, Amezcua and Quintanilla (2016) evaluated comments from consumers regarding a social responsibility activity carried out by Coca Cola against obesity through social media. The result of the study points to three forms of cynical consumer communication styles: *sceptical*, *passive-aggressive*, and *warrior* eWOM. Passive-aggressive users do not directly express that they are disappointed, mad, or even angry. Sometimes they are defined as consumers who can even give a image of them thinking positively. Warriors, on the other hand, can engage in an effort to mobilize other individuals, as well as share their ideas to condemn and react to the inconsistency and insincerity that they perceived in businesses' activities. The study identified two groups of warriors: *stealth busters* and *brand busters*. Although today viral *stealth marketing* techniques are a common practice on the internet, questions have risen about how successful and ethical this strategy is. Especially in *stealth marketing* techniques, they use people who receive sponsorship from the brand through social media and share in favor of the brand without saying that they have been sponsored. The basic logic is to create eWOM and appear like ordinary consumers, who express their opinions on social media and want to sincerely share how much they like a particular brand/product. *Stealth marketing busters* share posts that expose and criticize such marketing work. Businesses may prefer the

use of hidden intermediaries, because users believe more in the advice of other users than corporate promises. However, social media is under surveillance by stealth marketing busters to expose such initiatives. At the more extreme level of consumer cynicism, people are able to lie and spread unreal ideas to undermine the image of companies and label them as bad and encourage consumers to boycott them. These consumers, on the other hand, are classified as brand busters.

The growing influence of consumer-produced eWOM has given consumers an unprecedented share in product promotions. In general, WOM plays a role as one of the critical components of marketing communication, as they are perceived as more reliable and less biased than advertisements produced by the businesses. In one study, an evaluation was made regarding the effect of visual and verbal sharing in WOM, and although the visuals in offline channels are of great importance in order to attract attention and awareness, it was stated that the situation in online environments and social media may be different and the visuals may not have the expected effect. According to the research findings; for example, for a luxury brand, it has been explained that an opinion/verbal evaluation of the unethical activities of the brand owner business can have more impact than sharing a negative image of the brand (Hoffman and Daugherty, 2013).

Disparaging discourse and negative comments seriously affect consumers' views of businesses. Consumers who think they are being approached opportunistically by businesses can also look for ways to trick businesses. For example, a consumer who wants to return a product that he or she purchased will be able to claim that the product is defective even though it is not (Helm, Moulard, and Richins, 2015).

As can be seen from the aforementioned explanations, the repercussions of consumer cynicism on social media platforms can reach a quite serious level. Against these situations, the measures that businesses will take and the strategies that they will implement are of great importance. Suggestions and strategies to be considered for businesses to cope with these problems are presented in the next section.

## **7 Business Strategies against Negative Consumer Reactions Developed on Social Media**

From the perspective of the businesses, digital age has brought both great opportunities and significant challenges. The ability to access big data and use powerful analysis methods has enabled access to more information about consumers and, in particular, their buying behavior. This information provides marketers with effective segmentation, targeting and positioning opportunities. At the same

time, the consumer has the chance to notice and follow many changes thanks to the opportunities offered by the digital environment. For example, they have gained access to more information, have much more alternatives and have the opportunity to compare these alternatives quickly and in detail, give feedback more easily, and quickly share both negative and positive views. This situation even caused businesses to bribe (!) their customers for positive comments (Aron, 2016).

Considering the company and brand work, it is now seen as essential for businesses to learn and follow the thoughts, feelings and attitudes of their target audiences about themselves. In this context, the impact of social media is of great importance. Tracking and researching consumers' social media shares should be adopted as a basic strategy (Çetinkaya and Ceng, 2018). Businesses should be aware that consumers have more power online (Amezcuca and Quintanilla, 2016).

For example; in their study, Çetinkaya and Ceng (2018) encouraged businesses in Turkey to conduct in-depth research on consumer expectations and values, and advised them to opt for a language that is more appropriate for the cultural, religious and moral values of the consumers for the 'Black Friday' discounts in which consumers display their cynical attitudes over social media. As a matter of fact, in the research conducted, it was observed that users made positive comments when some businesses developed a proactive attitude and carried out their current campaigns under different names (like Legendary Friday or Auspicious Friday).

Therefore, understanding the expectations of consumers is of great importance. It is stated that expectations may arise not only about products and services, but also in some cases, for example, regarding social justice (Indibara and Varshney, 2020).

Considering the possibility of cynical consumer reactions turning into a crisis, businesses should act proactively. The only way to overcome crises caused by social media is to include social media in crisis communication strategies. It is important how the business communicates with its target groups and what communication strategies it implements. After all, its reputation improves through the information stakeholders receive about the business. According to Coombs (2007), who is known for his work on crisis management and reputation, holding businesses accountable for any negative situation will lead to emergence of negative feelings and behaviors associated with them. This conclusion is an implication based on the attribution theory. In such a situation, it is inevitable that crisis response strategies will come into question both in order to clarify the interpretations of responsibility and out of reputation anxiety. Coombs (2007) classified crisis response strategies as primary and supplemental. Primary strategies may

be based on *denying the crisis* (attack the accuser, ignore the crisis, or blame someone or a group outside the organization). It can also be applied on the basis of *minimizing/reducing the crisis* (create excuses to reduce liability, underestimate the damage caused by the crisis) or *repairing* (make a payment/compensation, apologize). Supplemental strategies, on the other hand, can be carried out in the form of reminding of positive activities in the past or resorting to victimage discourses.

The question that comes to mind here is what strategy would be appropriate in a crisis environment: is it to ignore the crisis, to minimize its effects, or to resort to repairing or reconstructing processes? Although it is not possible to give a clear answer to this question, repair strategies can be evaluated positively, as they are more conciliatory. However, research indicates that rebuilding strategies do not offer a greater advantage over other strategies in the process of restoring the reputation of businesses (Coombs, 2007).

A different classification of strategies that businesses will resort to for cynical behavior and negative discourse was also made by Thomas et al. (2012). These strategies are classified as *delay, response, partnership, legal action and censorship*. Businesses can simultaneously resort to one or more of these strategies against the negative reactions they are exposed to.

The delay strategy is based on the belief that the bad discourse shared about the business will be forgotten quickly by being replaced with the new agenda, if the business does not react. In this way, the business will also have a chance to gain time. For example, in 2009, Domino's Pizza took a "wait and see" approach to a video its employees shared on YouTube about preparing food while ignoring hygiene rules. In about 24 hours, the video has received over a million views and mostly negative 5000 comments. It has also been the subject of numerous Twitter posts and searches on Google. An apology message issued by the company manager 2 days after the incident, failed to prevent the damage to the brand's reputation. According to YouGov (an online research firm), the perceived brand quality of Domino's changed from positive to negative within 48 hours (Vogt, 2009).

Response strategy includes listening to negative feedback generated through social media and taking it into account. It is possible to give some product recall practices as an example of this strategy. In 2010, Toyota experienced a problem related to a faulty accelerator pedal and decided to recall a product, while also providing an interactive communication environment through social media that would allow customers to ask questions to the company's spokesperson. With this execution, Toyota may not have been able to quickly change the perception of quality from negative to positive, but it was able to protect its brand from a

serious damage. It is possible to say that this strategy is more advantageous than the 'wait and see' policy. The biggest disadvantage of the response strategy is the possibility of disagreement with consumers if negative discourse is based on false or erroneous information (Thomas et al., 2012).

The partnership strategy includes a relationship and cooperation approach. The business chooses a consumer or other person from outside of the organization as a partner to communicate brand messages. In this way, by providing transparency, it can get the chance to appear reliable. But there may be a possibility of difficulty in maintaining control. Resorting to legal action is a strategy, in which control advantage is higher. In the censorship strategy, the business seeks ways to eliminate negative discourses with legal methods. But in contrast, the censorship strategy can be regarded as a slightly less transparent practice. For example, subjected to criticism of harming nature due to palm oil production, Nestle attempted to remove the negative video shared by Greenpeace from social media on the grounds that its copyrights (packaging, name, logo, etc.) were violated. This attempt at censorship of the brand has caused more reactions (McEleny, 2010).

Businesses feel the need to take precautions before the negative discourse spreads too much on social media. In order to prevent consumer's tendency to hold grudges or move away from the brand, business managers and marketers can use a variety of methods, such as consumer-specific sales offers or advertising work. However, this will not matter much to a consumer who has a negative attitude towards the business. In such cases, businesses are advised to resort to indirect methods, such as mobilizing loyal customers. For a consumer who intends to distance themselves from the brand, a conversation with a loyal customer or exposure to a positive WOM may work better than a personalized offer by the business (Huefner and Hunt, 1992).

What other approaches do brands adopt, different from those mentioned above, towards the cynical attitude that occurs on social media? Rather than experiencing events that will escalate cynical behavior on social media, businesses can be sensitive about taking precautions before they happen. In addition, businesses can identify consumers who display cynical attitudes towards their brands, communicate with them and try to turn their negative experiences into positive by conducting research on detecting cynical attitudes towards their brands or by using "monitoring" software (Özkaya and Ülker, 2020).

In the service industry, behaviors of cynical consumers, especially in terms of service failure and recovery, have also been the subject to some studies and findings that can guide business strategies have been obtained. Cynical consumers may evaluate the service failure recovery efforts carried out by businesses

negatively and think that businesses are trying to manage the process for their own benefits. For this reason, the level of satisfaction of cynical consumers after service failure recovery is low. In addition, it is paradoxically stated that the positive effects of perceived justice on satisfaction in service improvement decrease among customers with a high level of cynicism. On the other hand, in a study conducted by Balaji et al. (2018), it was found that the participation of cynical consumers in recovery processes reduces negative views and increases satisfaction.

The findings of a different study on service failure and recovery are also remarkable. According to the results of Andreassen's (2001) study, customers who complain and receive service recovery as a result of their complaint, develop a more positive attitude and purchasing intentions towards the service business compared to the customers who are dissatisfied and never complain. According to the results of the same research, it was additionally found that there was no complete repair/restore process for those who had problems and complained, compared to customers who had never had problems. In other words, it is not possible to reset negative emotions in consumers who have problems. The results of the study also show that 40 % of dissatisfied customers are dissatisfied with the handling of complaints, in other words, with service recovery efforts. The third finding of the study is that the attitudes of the customers who complain about the business and their repurchase intention do not exceed the consumers who have never experienced any dissatisfaction (Andreassen, 2001).

Brands are increasingly resorting to online communication activities, which are conducted by disguising commercial identities, as a way to circumvent the advertising mass and bypass consumer cynicism against traditional advertising. In other words, they perform covert marketing practices. Covert marketing is used to describe situations where the commercial source is hidden and the marketing message is conveyed as news or another type of communication in order to minimize the individuals' skepticism towards the message or even gain their trust. But unfortunately, it has the opposite effect. As mentioned earlier, research shows that these covert actions reduce trust and commitment of brand users. For this reason, covert marketing campaigns aimed at reaching consumers make reaching the target audience more difficult (Ashley and Leonard, 2009).

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Just as consumers have reasons to buy any product or service, they also have reasons not to buy them. In terms of businesses, the aim is to try to reduce the reasons or justifications of consumers not to buy their products and to increase

their enthusiasm and desire to buy them. The efforts of businesses for this purpose can sometimes create an image of a company that 'only pursues the interests, but actually does not care about individuals' and can lead to cynical attitudes. With the effect of negative experiences with businesses, individuals may tend to spread and convey their negative opinion and attitude, sometimes for preventive purposes, sometimes as retaliation, and sometimes with the motive to warn and protect other people.

Today, sharing ideas, opinions and attitudes with other people can be done much faster and easier. Social media has put this power at the service of consumers. As a concept that has been discussed and alive for centuries, cynicism has found a very suitable and new platform to grow and spread. This platform, which is ironically up-to-date with the historical structure of the concept, has features that businesses should follow carefully, including dangers as well as advantages.

Today, the destructive effect of anti-consumption, consumer skepticism, boycotts and disparaging behaviors on businesses, which are unlikely to be ignored, is increasing with the support of social media. Social media can contribute to the spread of consumer cynicism in two different ways: (a) by enabling cynical consumers to express themselves and share their attitudes, (b) by enabling shared negative discourses to reach individuals who may not be cynical but may be affected by them. For this reason, from their social media follow-ups, businesses need to identify cynical consumers, monitor their posts, and take measures against the creation of new cynical individuals from these negative discourses.

Consumer cynicism is associated with many negative concepts such as distrust, doubt, injustice, discrimination, opportunism, and unethicalness. Individuals mentioning a business with any of these concepts may lead to very different reactions in both cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions. Individuals' perceptions and experiences can enable them to develop a cynical attitude. Therefore, cynicism emerges as a result of the complex interactions between the activities of businesses and the reactions of individuals. In order for businesses to cope with these situations, it is of great importance that they carefully address the causes of cynicism and the consequences of it that may arise.

There are a few important points that businesses can take into account in this regard. One is to ensure that consumers' expectations and insights are defined and researched in a healthy way. Expectations are of great importance in the emergence of consumer cynicism. Negative experiences of consumers whose expectations are not met, leave permanent marks and shape the subsequent behaviors. In addition, a good understanding of the values that consumers care

about, will provide directional information both in the production of services and products, and in the relations of the business with its stakeholders. However, businesses should always follow a communicative path towards consumer reactions. Problems in communication may increase doubts and confuse the consumers with contradictory information that may arise from different sources. Businesses should avoid using deceptive practices and making promises that are not backed by performance in order to reach and influence consumers.

Not every business activity will be interpreted in the same way by all consumers. For example, for a business activity or communication study, one group of consumers may speak of unethicalness, while a different group may react in the opposite way by expressing an opinion in favor of the business. For this reason, it is important to be open to all the different evaluations and approaches between consumers and to be able to capture all the differences.

Social media is known to have numerous advantages for businesses. With these advantages, businesses can get to know consumers better and have many ways and methods of transmitting information about their products and services to them. However, along with these advantages, it is necessary to be prepared for the threats that may arise and to be able to respond with relevant strategies as appropriate.

## References

- Abraham, R. (2000). Organizational cynicism: Bases and consequences. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs*, 126(3), 269–292.
- Agarwal, R. (2013). Anti-consumption: A literature review, 3rd. Biennial Conference of the Indian Academy of Management (IAM), 12–14 December, Calcutta, [http://vslir.iima.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/11718/11488/1/CB-PP-214-Anti-Consumption-12-Agarwal\\_b.pdf](http://vslir.iima.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/11718/11488/1/CB-PP-214-Anti-Consumption-12-Agarwal_b.pdf)
- ALS Association (2019). Ice Bucket Challenge dramatically accelerated the fight against ALS. <https://www.als.org/stories-news/ice-bucket-challenge-dramatically-accelerated-fight-against-als>12.10.2020
- Amezcuca, B. & Quintanilla, C. (2016). When eWOM becomes cynical. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 40, 290–298.
- Andersson, L. M. & Bateman, T. S. (1997). Cynicism in the workplace: Some causes and effects. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 18, 449–469.
- Andreassen, T. W. (2001). From disgust to delight do customers hold a grudge. *Journal of Service Research*, 4(1), 39–49.

- Ar, A. A. & Aydin, G. (2020). Justice and related theories in service encounters, in *Current Approaches to Social Sciences*, ed. Hasan Çiftçi, IKSAD Publishing, 5–36. ISBN: 978-625-7139-70-0.
- Aron, D. (2016). Digital Dysfunction: Consumer grudgeholding and rejection in the digital era. *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, 29, 119–129.
- Ashley, C. & Leonard, H. A. (2009). Betrayed by the Buzz? Covert content and consumer-brand relations. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 28(2), 212–220.
- Averill, J. R. (1983). Studies on anger and aggression: Implications for theories of emotion. *American Psychologist*, 38(11), 1145.
- Aydin, G., Ar, A. A. & Taşkın, Ç. (2014). The role of brand trust on parents' purchase intentions of baby-care products. *Doğuş Üniversitesi Dergisi*, 15(2), 165–180.
- Bakır, U. & Çelik, M. (2013). Tüketim toplumuna eleştirel bir yaklaşım: Kültür bozumu ve yıkıcı reklamlar, *Selçuk İletişim*, 7(4), 46–63.
- Balaji, M. S., Jha, S., Sengupta, A. S., Krishnan, B. C. (2018). Are cynical customers satisfied differently? Role of negative inferred motive and customer participation in service recovery. *Journal of Business Research*, 86, 109–118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.01.023>
- Balıkçioğlu, B., Koçak A., & Özer, A. (2007). Şiddet içermeyen bir eylem olarak dolaylı tüketici boykotlarının oluşum süreci ve Türkiye için Değerlendirme. *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*.
- Bat, M. & Yurtseven, Ç. T. (2014). Sosyal medyada kurumsal kriz yönetimi: Onur Air örneği. *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Dergisi*, 2(3), 197–223. <https://doi.org/10.19145/guifd.74720>
- BBC Turkish (2005). Nike'den 'şeffaflık' raporu. 11.02.2021. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/news/story/2005/04/050413\\_nike\\_report.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/news/story/2005/04/050413_nike_report.shtml)
- Bozoklu, Ç. P. & Ermeç, A. (2020). Tüketici Sinisizmi Ölçeğinin Türkçeye Uyarlanması; Güvenilirlik ve Geçerlilik Araştırması. *Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi IIBF Dergisi*, 22(2), 440–459.
- Bunker, M. P. & Ball, D. (2008). Causes and consequences of grudge-holding in service relationships. *Journal of Service Marketing*, 22(1), 37–47. DOI:10.1108/08876040810851941
- Cappela, J. N. (2002). Cynicism and social trust in the new media environment. *Journal of Communication*, 52(1), 229–241.
- Chaffey, D. (2020). What happens online in 60 seconds? <https://www.smartinsights.com/internet-marketing-statistics/happens-online-60-seconds/>

- Chang, A., Hsieh, S. H., & Tseng, T. H. (2013). Online brand community response to negative brand events: The role of group eWOM. *Internet Research*, 23(4), 486–506.
- Cheng, S., Lam, T., & Hsu, C. H. C. (2006). Negative word of mouth, communication intention: An application of the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 30(1), 95–116. DOI:10.1177/1096348005284269
- Cherrier, H. (2009). Anti-consumption discourses and consumer-resistant identities. *Journal of Business Research*, 62, 181–190.
- Choi, S. H. (2011). Anti-consumption becomes a trend. *SERI Quarterly*, 4(3), 117–120.
- Coombs, W. T. (2007). Protecting organization reputations during a crisis: The development and application of situational crisis communication theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(3), 163–176.
- Chu, A. & Chylinski, M. (2006). A model of consumer cynicism – antecedents and consequences. *Proceedings of the Australian and New Zeland Marketing Academy*, 1–9.
- Chylinski, M. & Chu, A. (2010). Consumer cynicism: Antecedents and consequences. *European Journal of Marketing*, 44(6), 796–837.
- Çam, M. S. (2019). Öyküleyici Reklamlar ve Tüketici Sinizmi İlişkisi Üzerine Deneysel Bir Çalışma, Selçuk Üniversitesi SBE, yayınlanmamış doktora tezi.
- Çetinkaya, Ö. A. & Ceng, E. (2018). Türkiye'deki Black Friday Etkinliğinin Tüketici Sinizmi Bağlamında Bir Değerlendirmesi. *Manas Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 7(4), 167–180.
- Demir, S. T. (2020). Tüketimcilik Karşıtı Küresel İnsiyatif ve Manifestolar: Gerekler, Gereççeler, Gerçeklikler. *Birey ve Toplum Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 10(1), 185–205.
- Denning, D. E. (2001). Activism, hacktivism, and cyberterrorism: The Internet as a tool for influencing foreign policy. In *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, ed. Arquilla, J. & Ronfeldt D., 239, 288. RAND Corporation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mr1382osd>
- Dobscha, S. (1998). The lived experience of consumer rebellion against marketing. *ACR- North American Advances*, 25, 91–97.
- Dobscha, S. & Ozanne, J. L. (2001). An ecofeminist analysis of environmentally sensitive women using qualitative methodology the emancipatory potential of an ecological life. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 20(2), 201–214.
- Edelman Trust Barometer (2020). <https://www.edelman.com/trust/2020-trust-barometer>

- Elgin, D. & Mitchell, A. (1977). Voluntary simplicity. *The Co-Evaluation Quarterly*, 3(1), 4–19.
- Enterprise, K. He., Ince, T. & Yılmaz, P. (2017). Tüketicilerin satın alma niyetleri ve boykota yönelik tutumlarının tüketici sinizmi, fiyat şeffaflığı ve fiyat adaleti bağlamında incelenmesi, *Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 26(3), 34–44.
- Friedman, M. (1985). Consumer boycotts in the United States 1970–1980: Contemporary events in historical perspective. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 19(1), 96–117.
- Funches, V. (2016). A model of consumer anger. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 4(1), 31–42.
- Göktaş, B. (2019). Tüketici Sinizmi Kavramı ve ağızdan ağıza pazarlama eylemlerinin sinik tüketici davranışlarına etkisi konusunda bir uygulama. *Uluslararası Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 13(9), 1651–1692.
- Güven, E. (2016). Tüketimde sinik tutum, tüketici sinizminin sebep ve sonuçları. *İşletme Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 8(2), 152–174.
- Helm, A. (2004). Cynics and Skeptics: Consumer Dispositional Trust, in NA – *Advances in Consumer Research*, 31, eds. Barbara E. Kahn and Mary Frances Luce. Valdosta, GA: Association for Consumer Research, 345–351.
- Helm, A. E. (2006). Cynical consumers: Dangerous enemies, loyal friends (Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia).
- Helm, A. E., Moulard, J. G., & Richins, M. (2015). Consumer cynicism: Developing a scale to measure underlying attitudes influencing marketplace shaping and withdrawal behaviours. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 39, 515–524.
- H&M Boykot (2018). <https://www.ntv.com.tr/yasam/dunya-capinda-baslatilan-boykot-cagrisinin-ardindan-ozur-geldi,ieXH5ubxn0aVen0X1vWz8Q> (08.01)
- Hoffman, E. & Daugherty, T. (2013). Is a Picture Always Worth a Thousand Words? Attention to Structural Elements of Ewom For Consumer Brands within Social Media, in NA – *Advances in Consumer Research*, eds. Simona Botti and Aparna Labroo. Duluth, MN: Association for Consumer Research, 41, 326–331.
- Huefner, J. C. & Hunt, H. K. (1992). Brand and store avoidance: The behavioral expression of dissatisfaction. *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, 5, 228–232.
- Indibara, I. & Varshney, S. (2020). Cynical consumer: How social cynicism impacts consumer attitude. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 38(1), 78–90.
- Iyer, R. & Muncy, J. A. (2009). Purpose and object of anti-consumption. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(2), 160–168.

- Kelly, B. B. (2012). Investing in a centralized cybersecurity infrastructure: Why hacktivism can and should influence cybersecurity reform. *BUL Rev.*, 92, 1663.
- Koç, E., Aydın, G., Ar, A. A. & Boz, H. (2017). Emotions and emotional abilities in service failures and recovery. In Koç, E. (ed.) *Service failures and recovery in tourism and hospitality: A practical manual*, 42–55, CABI.
- Koslow, S. (2000). Can the truth hurt? How honest and persuasive advertising can unintentionally lead to increased consumer skepticism. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 34(2), 245–268.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2002). Can consumers escape the market? Emancipatory illuminations from Burning Man. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(1), 20–38. <https://doi.org/10.1086/339919>
- Kramer, T. & Yoon, S. O. (2007). Approach-avoidance motivation and the use of affect as information. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 17(2), 128–138.
- Laczniak, R. N., De Carlo, T. E., & Motley, C. M. (1996). Retail Equity perceptions and consumers' processing of negative word-of-mouth communication. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 4(4), 37–48.
- Makarem, S. C. & Jae, H. (2016). Consumer boycott behavior: An exploratory analysis of twitter feeds. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 50(1), 193–223.
- Mantere, S. & Martinsuo, M. (2001). Adopting and questioning strategy: Exploring the roles of cynicism and dissent. 17th. EGOS- European Group for Organization Studies Colloquium. July 5–7, Lyon, France.
- McEleny, C. (2010). Nestle faces backlash over social media response. *Marketingweek*, <https://www.marketingweek.com/nestle-faces-backlash-over-social-media-response/> (erişim tarihi: 07.02.2021).
- Mikkonen, I., Moisander, J., & Firat, A. F. (2011). Cynical identity projects as consumer resistance—the Scrooge as a social critic? *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 14(1), 99–116.
- Mohr, L. A., Eroğlu, D., & Ellen, P. S. (1998). The development and testing of a measure of skepticism toward environmental claims in marketers' communications. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 32(1), 30–55.
- Oates, C., McDonald, S., Alevizou, P., Hwang, K., Young, W., & McMorland, L. (2008). Marketing sustainability: Use of information sources and degrees of voluntary simplicity. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 14(5): 351–365.
- Odou, P. & De Pechpeyrou, P. (2011). Consumer cynicism: From resistance to anti-consumption in a disenchanting world? *European Journal of Marketing*, 45(11/12), 1799–1808.
- Oliver, R. L. & Bearden, W. O. (1985). Disconfirmation processes and consumer evaluations in product usage. *Journal of Business Research*, 13(3), 235–246.

- Özkaya, B. & Ülker, Y. (2020). Markaların sosyal medyada oluşan sinik tutuma yönelik yaklaşımları. *Manas Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 9(1), 115–128.
- Persson, L. (2008). Ethics and environment in the coffee sector- linking CSR to the consumer's power in the context of sustainable development. Faculty of Social and Life Sciences Department of Environment and Health. D-level Degree Project Honours Program in Environmental Science.
- Rahn, W. M. & Transue, J. E. (2002). Social trust and value change: The decline of social capital in American Youth, 1976–1995. *Political Psychology*, 19(3), 545–565.
- Summers, J. O. & Granbois, D. H. (1977). Predictive and normative expectations in Consumer dissatisfaction and complaining behavior. NA- Advances in Consumer Research, 4, 155–158.
- Thomas, J. B., Peters, C. O., Howell, E. G., & Robbins, K. (2012). Social media and negative word of mouth: Strategies for handling unexpected comments. *Atlantic Marketing Journal*, 1(2), 87–108.
- Tokgöz, E. (2020). Tüketicinin kin tutma eğiliminin pazardan geri çekilme niyeti üzerinde etkisi: Tüketici sizinminin aracı ve düzenleyici rolü. *Yönetim ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 18(1), 36–58.
- Turhan, D. G. (2017). Dijital Aktivizm, Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 26(1), 26–44.
- Ürkmez, D. (2020). Dijital aktivizm olarak sosyal medyada boykot çağrıları: Watsons krizi örneği. *İstanbul Gelişim Üniversitesi SBE Dergisi*, 7(1), 106–125.
- van Dolen, W., de Cremer, D., & de Ruyter, K. (2012). Consumer cynicism toward collective buying: The interplay of others' outcomes, social value orientation, and mood. *Psychology & Marketing*, 29(5), 306–321.
- Vogt, P. (2009). Brands Under Attack: Marketers Can Learn From Domino's Video Disaster, *Forbes.com* (accessed on February 07, 2021), <https://www.forbes.com/2009/04/24/dominos-youtube-twitter-leadership-cmo-network-marketing.html?sh=2edfb642434d>.
- Yegen, C. (2014). Dijital aktivizmin bir türü olarak Hacktivizm ve "Redhack". *Intermedia International E-journal*, 1(1), 118–132.
- Yılmaz, Ö. (2018) Sosyal medya pazarlaması, *Sosyal Medyanın İş yaşamındaki Yeri (içinde)*, ed. H. Yıldız, Beta Yayınları, 113–133.

### **The Scale of Consumer Cynicism (Helm, Moulard & Richins, 2015)**

1. Most companies do not mind breaking the law. They just see fines and and lawsuits as a cost of doing business.

2. Most businesses are more interested in making profits than in serving consumers.
3. Companies see consumers as puppets to manipulate.
4. Manufacturers do not care what happens once I have bought the product.
5. If I want to get my money's worth, I cannot believe what a company tells me.
6. Most companies will sacrifice anything to make a profit.
7. To make a profit, companies are willing to do whatever they can get away with.
8. Most businesses will cut any corner they can to improve profit margins.

*The Scale of Social Cynicism Kanter and Wortzel (1985)(as cited by Çam, 2019)*

- 1 *Most people prefer to lie if it can provide an interest.*
- 2 *Only few of those who claim to be virtuous stick to their values when it comes to money.*
- 3 *People pretend to care more about each other than they do.*
- 4 *In today's world, selfish people win.*
- 5 *Most people only think about their own interests.*
- 6 *People do not like being contacted to help others.*

Yasemin Bozkurt

# **Influencers: A Comprehensive View of the Digital Advertising World, From its New Opinion Leadership to its Types**

## **1 Introduction**

According to the 2021 Digital World and Turkey report prepared by We Are Social and Hootsuite, there are 4.2 billion active social media users in the world (53.6 % of the population) and 60 million in Turkey (70.8 % of the population). In terms of the number of social media users, it was determined that there was a growth of 13.2 % in the world and 11 % in Turkey compared to the previous year. When examined in terms of time spent on social media, it has been determined that the average hours spent in the world is 2 hours and 25 minutes, while the number is 2 hours and 57 minutes in Turkey (<https://wearesocial.com/blog/2021/01/digital-2021-the-latest-insights-into-the-state-of-digital>, 2021). Therefore, it is seen that the frequency of social media use and the time spent in this environment is high both in the world and in Turkey. In addition to this result, with the opportunities offered by technology, there have been some important changes in consumers, and they have become more active, participatory and productive. These changes that have occurred in them have also changed their expectations in the way they are being approached. In other words, they expected brands, which wanted to reach and communicate with them, to change their point of view towards them, and as consumers, to involve them in an active, productive and interactive role in the planning and implementation of all communication and behavior processes. Brands, too, did not remain indifferent to the changes experienced by the consumer and what is expected of them, and tried to reach their goals by realizing the desired interaction with a wide variety of and impressive applications on digital platforms, especially advertising applications.

On the other hand, when brands succeeded in attracting the attention and interest of consumers on all internet platforms by exposing them to advertisement bombardment with traditional advertising practices, this time in order to catch consumers, they exposed them to many similar or unrelated advertising practices online. At this point, technology, which introduces innovations to communication applications, has also offered a new and effective escape route,

especially for consumers who are drowning in advertisements and constantly trying to escape. This new solution is known as ad blocking programs.

Looking at the world ranking, Turkey ranks 15th with the use of ad blocking programs by 42.5 %. It has been determined that internet users use these programs due to the fact that there are too many advertisements in online environments (22.5 %), they are exposed to many unrelated or disturbing advertisements (22.3 %), and they do not trust advertisements (19.9 %) (<https://wearesocial.com/blog/2021/01/digital-2021-the-latest-insights-into-the-state-of-digital>). According to the results of Bozkurt's (2019) research to reveal consumer reactions to ad blocking programs, internet users in Turkey stated that although they do not have enough information about these programs, if they have knowledge, they have a positive attitude about blocking programs and will use them. Based on this research result, it can be said that the rate of use of these programs will increase in the following years.

There are, on the one hand, brands that try to reach their consumers and connect with them, and on the other hand, there are consumers who especially escape advertising applications. This lead the brands to search for something different. The increasing influence of social media on consumers' purchasing decisions has forced the advertising industry to develop different and remarkable new methods. In particular, consumers expecting brands to communicate with them individually, and beyond the fact that they want them to reach them with personalized messages, but also having a trust problem for messages coming directly from brands, has forced brands to update and change their online presence. It has become the most important issue for brands to establish emotional bonds, capture interaction and develop a special relationship with consumers who seek to communicate with them on the basis of more sincere, more intimate and more private relationships. One of the most popular applications in recent years that meets this quest and purpose is the influencer marketing.

Influencers are active social media users who communicate and interact with their followers by sharing the content they created by using their ideas, knowledge, skills and experiences on the topics and situations they are particularly interested in. Influencers, who act with the goal of gaining a large number of followers with their shares and establishing strong ties with these followers, can have strong effects on the people who follow them, and can also direct these people. Due to this power they have and the followers they have gathered, they have become the focal points for brands in the recent years, therefore often making various collaborations with them. Brown and Hayes (2007:1) suggest that there are three options for brands to leverage influencer marketing. The first of these suggestions is to market to influencers, which means increasing the

awareness of the brand within the influencer community. The second is marketing, which is done by using influencers to increase the awareness of the brand among the target consumers and is carried out through the influencer. The last option is marketing with influencers by turning them into brand advocates.

When we look at the influencer applications made in recent years, the prominent situation is that the influencers, who act on behalf of the brands by staying on the invisible side and place the brand messages in the sincere and natural relationship they have already established with a sense of trust, become the representatives of the brands on the social media platforms.

Research shows that 92 % of consumers trust the recommendations of their personal connections, while only 33 % trust ads (Buyer, 2016). According to sectoral research on influencer-focused communication studies that take place as a personal connection, 49 % of consumers give importance to the thoughts of influencers, and 89 % of them have made a purchase with the recommendation of an influencer (Creatorden, 2021). While influencer marketing is estimated to have a market size of \$9.7 billion in 2020, it is expected to grow to \$13.8 billion in 2021 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). Even these results reveal the importance of influencers in brand communication and why they should be included in these studies.

## **2 Persuasive Intermediary Values in Digital Advertising: Influencers**

Influencers with different follower numbers and characteristics are encountered on many different social media platforms and in categories such as fashion, health, beauty, fitness, travel, nutrition, cooking/baking, child care, and video games. The concept of influencer, which means influencing and affecting, can be used to characterize any person who can have an impact on a certain group (Doyle, 2011). In its broadest sense, “influencers are opinion leaders who have a very large or high level of regular followers, have popularity over this audience, gain trust on digital platforms with their often reliable actions, and encourage and persuade their followers to make certain choices” (Górecka-Butora; Strykowski & Biegun, 2019:11).

From the marketing and advertising perspective, influencers are people who have the power to influence their followers’ attitudes and purchasing decisions due to their authority, knowledge, position or relationship with them. Also, what defines a person as an influencer is having followers in a particular niche (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). Moreover, the point that emerges in the definition of influencer is not to be followed by a large number of people, but to

interact with these followers, that is, to have a high impact-response power. Therefore, as well as being a well-known famous person, people who have a recognition in line with their interaction power are also characterized as influencers. Influencers directly or indirectly include the message to be conveyed about the brand/product/service in their content and share it with their followers through their own social media accounts.

Grave (2017) defines social media influencers as opinion leaders of digital social media and states that these opinion leaders communicate with a mass of followers. Lou and Yuan (2018), on the other hand, define influencers as individuals who have the power to influence other people's thoughts on social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, and Youtube. Since they have gained a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a particular subject by making regular posts about that on their preferred social media accounts, they have gained a loyal follower base that takes their thoughts and behaviors very seriously, and loves them (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). Therefore, by using digital media channels such as blog pages, Twitter and Instagram, they have the power to shape the attitudes of the audience that follow them (Fredberg, 2010:1).

Bandura explains the influence of influencers on their followers with social learning theory. Bandura (1971) emphasized that in the social learning process, new behavior patterns can be acquired either through direct experiences or by observing the behavior of others (Bandura, 1971:2–3). In line with this explanation, it is possible to say that consumers follow the shares of influencers and take them as an example, and as a result of their observations, they can shape their attitudes towards the brand.

Influencers, on the one hand, try to increase the number of their followers with the content they create and share on social media platforms, and on the other hand, they aim to provide brands with some recognition by promoting them in their content. Brands are trying to establish a connection on their behalf through influencers, with consumers who avoid the persuasive messages prepared by them, do not trust the content, and cannot establish the desired brand-consumer bond due to the insincerity, unnaturalness, and lack of interaction of traditional advertisements. From this point of view, influencers can be called social relationship entities that brands can collaborate to achieve their marketing goals (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021).

From the placement of the brand in the content of the influencer's post, the title to be used, the music, the background, and the tone to be reflected from the scene where the advertisement takes place, many important elements are planned and applied to its finest detail in order to maximize brand recognition

(Glucksman, 2017:84). Because the content being natural, sincere, convincing and realistic in accordance with the nature and culture of the application, and the target audience's orientation to the brand by understanding message requires a fine balance. It is only possible to achieve set goals if that balance is found. Otherwise, the risks of followers being disturbed by the influencer-brand cooperation and shared posts, rejecting the message, or even displaying a negative attitude towards the brand and/or influencer may arise.

### **3 The Importance and Effects of Influencers from the Beginning of the Interaction to Persuasion**

Social media platforms have contributed to brands carrying out a direct, sincere, natural and interactive communication process with their consumer masses, and as a result, establishing strong bonds. Considering the functioning process, social media influencers share some sections of their private lives through the platforms they use and, in a way, include their followers in their personal lives. By placing the brands they are representing or have agreements with in their content, they are directing their followers towards the brand, and help their followers, who believe that they are like them or trust them because they think they are experts, associate it with their own lives. Thus, on the one hand, the followers become aware of and learn about the brand through the personal life of the influencers, and on the other hand, they can turn towards the brand by taking the influencers as a reference. As a result, influencers fulfill the task of creating a real and reliable connection between a brand and its consumers.

The brand's use of influencers in its communication studies gives impressive results as there is a two-way relationship. First of all, through the content prepared in connection with the area of influencers' interest, the target audience can be easily accessed by making precise and accurate decisions. By the means of two-way communication, the effect and trustworthiness of the influencers is utilized for conveying the persuasive messages about the brands, and the opportunity to reach the target audience that brands want to reach, especially niche groups, as the followers of the influencers. What enables this is the belief of the influencer's followers, who are the target audience of the brand, about the fact that the influencers they follow will not approve a product that they do not personally believe in, and therefore will not promote it (Buyer, 2016).

Each person has different persuasion and buying processes. Because people's thresholds of persuasion differ from each other. Because some people are difficult to convince, they scrutinize and seek information from different sources about a product or a service. They are not content only with the information

they obtain from the relevant personnel at the point of sale or from the brand's website and product advertisements, which are information and communication sources that are under the control of the brand. Apart from these, they can consult people whose opinions they trust, look at consumer comments, and scan different sources from search engines. In addition, in their mental processes, they compare the product with the features of the competitors, make price-performance analysis, and examine the relationship of price-value perception. Therefore, for people who have such a difficult persuasion and purchasing process, the impact of the advice and suggestions of even those who have influence on them, may not be sufficient. Some people, on the other hand, seem to be much easier to convince. The product recommendation of a famous person whom the follower love very much, follow their every step and trust what they do and say, with the contribution of a certain level of knowledge that the follower has about this product, can be enough to convince them to buy that product.

In this context, it would be incorrect to say that influencers have a full direct influence on consumers to convince them and cause their purchasing behavior. On the other hand, from being aware of a brand or a product to purchasing said product, it can be stated that they have a very important and significant effect in the process (<https://girisimcikafasi.com/influencer-marketing-nedir-ve-nasil-yapilir/>, 2020).

Brands prefer social media influencers because influencers can create trends related to their field and encourage their followers to buy the products they promote (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). On the other hand, brands want influencers who trust them to promote their products. Because if influencers trust the products they are promoting, this sense of trust can be reflected to their followers more realistically, convincingly and clearly when they mention these brands in their posts. In this case, it is assumed that more trust towards the brand will be formed. It is thought that this sense of trust in the followers creates a more lasting effect, and with this effect, the followers may be more willing to try or use the product (Glucksman, 2017:84).

Crammer (2015) states that brands often collaborate with influencers to bring awareness to their products. This approach can be accepted because people make their purchasing decisions according to their emotions or logic (Grundey, 2008). From the perspective of this approach, receiving a product-related message from a loved one is considered as appealing to the emotional aspect of the purchasing decision. Additionally, showing the products through a person whom the followers trust and like, and transferring the beneficial results related to the usage of said product appeals to the logic side. Research has shown that when consumers want to buy something, they rely heavily on the information

they receive from people in their networks (Sadovykh, Sundaram & Piramuthu, 2015). This situation lays the groundwork for the formation of brand/product awareness.

One of the benefits of collaborating with influencers in communication studies is the connection between the content shared in the social media of the influencer and his/her followers. Thanks to the influencer, the followers have confidence in the message conveyed. Thus, a relationship is established between the brand and its followers through influencers (Odell, 2015; Gorecka et al., 2019; Solis, 2016). In addition, influencers always design even branded content in their own style, and uniquely and completely personalized (Buryan, 2018). Therefore, perception of reality in these posts are high.

Branded contents shared by the influencers are created and shared by the owner of the platform after using the product/service. Therefore, since there is no brand or business behind the message, it seems more authentic and reliable (Odell, 2015:2). Since the branded content is prepared in the natural advertising format, it has a design that will not disturb the consumers. In addition, it is thought that the reliability of the source has an effect on the message being not rejected or on the absence of any negative reaction. Followers trust influencers. Because they are one of them: real, normal individuals with a normal life. People follow influencers because they believe that they have real opinions about the product and they are honest. With this sense of trust and sincerity, they become a part of the community (Odell, 2015:2). When the opinion leader of this community talks about the brand to the other members of the group, firstly, the brands become a member of the community, and then, depending on the process, the brand include these followers into its own community through the new bond they have established.

The more followers the influencers have, the lower the level of one-to-one communication and interaction with them, as they cannot allocate enough time to each and every one of them. In this context, online users can establish a stronger and more sincere relationship with influencers who have fewer followers. On the other hand, influencers with a wider follower base are more frequently seen and recognized on social media. Brands can increase their brand awareness on a wide audience by making use of famous influencers, and they can turn very specific and niche nano followers into consumers by collaborating with a nano influencer and establishing a strong bond with their followers (Odell, 2015). Whatever the goal they want to achieve, they can increase the possibility of achieving that goal by including different types of influencers in their communication studies.

One of the least known benefits of influencer campaigns is the opportunity for brands to rank themselves or their products higher in search engine results through influencers. Influencers can put a link to the brand's website in their posts, so that they appear at the top of the search rankings and increase recognition (Buryan, 2018).

Another important advantage of the influencer advertising is that the applications made are not susceptible to ad blocking programs. Since it has natural advertising qualities the created content can reach its target audience since no ad blocking program can detect influencer ads yet. Thus, when it comes to programs that prevent the advertisements from meeting its target audience, there is no loss of effort, time and money for the brands and the advertisers.

Brands spend large amounts of money to gain followers to their social media accounts. The return on investment in these applications is not always at the desired level. However, influencers, who are followed voluntarily on the base of trust, can have a follower base without spending money. Therefore, brands can reach their target consumer audience through influencers at a lower cost. In addition, it seems more meaningful to pay for the content, that influencers talk about their brand and product's features, which is more powerful and reliable for the audience, compared to traditional advertisements, which cost more although they are likely to be overlooked by consumers.

As a result, influencer-brand collaborations has very important goals such as, increasing the reputation of the business/brand, raising the awareness of the target audience in their online activities, following the comments and feedbacks of the target audience about the brand, establishing strong and reliable relations between the target audience and the brand, being the voice and power of the brand in social media, reaching new target audiences, being at the forefront of online content and dialogues compared to its competitors, and increasing the awareness rate by conveying information about a certain product/service or brand (Booth & Matic, 2011:3; Wielki, 2020). Businesses use influencer marketing campaigns to achieve these goals. Studies show that businesses use influencer marketing to raise the awareness about their brands and products/services, and to support their sales (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021).

Since businesses and brands are aware of the advantages of influencer advertising, more and more influencer-oriented communication works are allocated every year. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, there has been significant growth in influencer marketing (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). Ninety-two percentage of marketers believe influencer marketing is effective, and 75 % of American businesses use influencer marketing in their strategy (Audrezet & Charry, 2019). According to another study, 67 % of brands work with influencers

in their advertising campaigns for their products. 90 % of the brands consider influencer marketing to have an equal or higher rate of return than other marketing strategies. In fact, studies have found that every 1 unit spent on influencer marketing provides 6.5 units of return, supporting the ideas of brands on returns (Creatorden, 2021). As a result, positive approaches of businesses and brands to influencer marketing are seen.

#### **4 When and Which Influencers? Brand Options and Approaches in Influencer Selection**

It is necessary to bring the right influencer together with the right audience at the right time with the brand in order for influencer marketing to achieve the desired success. Social media offers numerous alternatives of influencer options for brands to collaborate with. Although the selection of an influencer seems very easy due to the existence of many alternatives, it is a very difficult and time-consuming process that requires making various analyzes and comparisons. The majority of brands (67 %) think that finding the most suitable influencer for their campaign is the most difficult stage of the campaign (Creatorden, 2021). First of all, as in all persuasive communication studies, it is necessary to analyze and recognize the target audience very well, to identify the influencers they love and follow, and to choose the most suitable one among these influencers. It is also very important that the influencer really knows the brand he/she will cooperate with and loves the product.

One of the biggest problems of influencer marketing is that some accounts and profiles that follow influencers do not belong to real people, and influencers attempt to present their number of followers higher than it actually is by buying fake accounts. It is thought that one of the most important reasons for this situation is that some businesses make their choices about influencer campaigns by evaluating the influencer's effect according to their number of followers. However, one of the most important points for brands that want to influence their audience through influencers is to determine the most suitable influencer for themselves and their products. According to Colliander and Dahlén (2011), the number of followers is one of the indicators taken into account to determine the suitable influencer. Another point that brands should consider when choosing an influencer is the influencer's impressiveness. Godes and Mayzlin (2004) argue that the impressiveness of influencers is determined by the influencer's relationship with the brand and their credibility.

Although influencers are generally divided into categories according to their number of followers, there are various classifications coming from different

perspectives. In general, it is possible to categorize digital influencers as in Fig. 5.1 (Wielki, 2020:5; Toresch, 2019; Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020; Buryan, 2018):

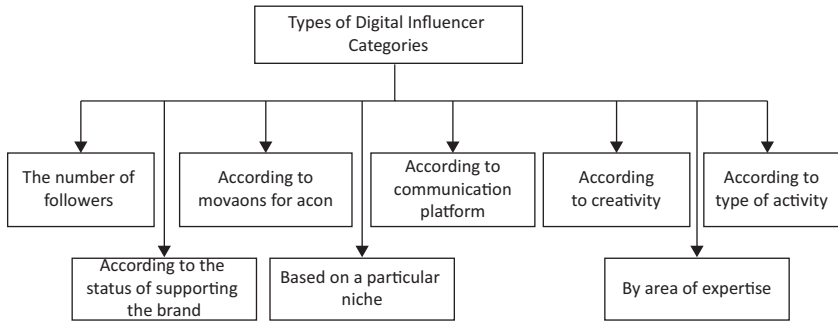


Fig. 5.1. Influencer typography

a. **Types of influencers by their number of followers:** The most well-known category type is the classification of influencers according to the number of people that follow them. It is examined under four sections: (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021; Wielki, 2020:5; Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020; Steele, 2017).

a.1. **Mega Influencers/Celebrities:** Mega influencers with more than 1 million followers usually consist of famous and well-known people such as actors, musicians, movie artists, and social media icons. They are well known to a wide audience due to their popularity and recognition, and are accepted by this large online audience for their work and lifestyle. When considered in terms of consumers, celebrities are considered as social models with different lifestyles that distinguish them from normal people, that provoke a desire in people (Bernazzani, 2019).

Because the public envy and trust famous people, and consider them as role models, today there are many examples where brands use famous influencers to advertise their products. So when mega influencers should be used? Although the engagement rate of the followers is low, branded content reaching more than 1 million people contributes greatly to brand awareness (Steele, 2017). Glover (2009) states that when brands include a famous influencer in their communication activities, many benefits occur, such as attracting the attention of the target audience for the brand/product/service, gaining credibility support, increasing the level of recall, creating synergy between the product brand and the personal

brand of the celebrity, increasing brand awareness, positioning and brand recognition. Trusted famous influencers can also influence perceptions about the quality of products. Because the image of the celebrity is associated with the approved product (Hollensen & Schimmelpfennig, 2013). Being approved by a celebrity contributes to the exclusive and special perception of the brand with the halo effect (Influency, 2018). On the other hand, number of people that will buy that product should be taken into account, when a mega-influencer's share about a brand reaches more than 1 million people and gets liked. Since they have such a large number of followers, accordingly they have a very high level of engagement. Despite this, since their followers are generally passive, it has been determined that the engagement rates are between 2 and 5 % (Steele, 2017).

One of the most important disadvantages of using celebrities as influencers is that there may be a perception that celebrities share about the brand just because they get paid for it. However, in the perception of other influencer types, for example bloggers, there is a remarkable evaluation as they are more reliable and have better expertise than celebrities because they are perceived as experts on the subject (Forrest & Cao, 2020:94). Therefore, source credibility, expertise and sincerity facilitate the acceptance of the persuasive branded message.

Studies show that the probability of purchasing a product based on the advice of a blogger is twice as high as the advice of celebrities (Odell, 2015:6). Similarly, it has been determined that 70 % of young people give importance to the views of influencers rather than celebrities (Creatorden, 2021). Because, as it has been said before, influencers are seen trustworthy. Consumers don't trust celebrities due to the fact that they create positive and biased content about the brands even if they do not use or try the products/brands, become the representatives of the brands they have never used for the sake of making money, and publish edited content, especially the visual kind, rather than publishing them in their natural state.

**a.2. Macro influencers:** The number of followers they have is between 100,000 and 1,000,000,000 (Wielki, 2020:5). Unlike mega-influencers, this category usually includes opinion leaders such as social media stars, bloggers, vloggers, youtubers, and podcasters, who all have gained fame in online environment. In addition to having a diverse audience with a wide reach, they also have an established position and influence on this audience, which they have acquired over a long period of time and which they have a certain level of relationship with (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). Due to this position and influence, they have a higher participation rate than celebrities with 5–25 % (Steele, 2017). In addition to all these, the fact that they can group their followers around a certain area of

interest, places them among the influencers that brands often prefer. Therefore, they have experience working with brands (Buryan, 2018).

The best time to turn to macro influencers is when brands want to engage a little deeper with their target audience, but are still in the recognition stage and primarily aiming to reach a large audience (Brown, 2019). Therefore, these influencers can be used to increase the brand's recognition and the engagement and reach rate for the brand (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020).

**a.3. Micro influencers:** Influencers with 10,000–100,000 followers on social media are in this group (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). Although their number of followers is low, their engagement and reach rates are very high (Creatorden, 2021). Due to their low number of followers, they can interact with them with more interest. They can easily express themselves privately and personally to their followers, and establish a real, natural and close-knit relationship with their followers. They also have a more targeted follower base than other influencers with higher numbers of followers (Bernazzani, 2019). Most of the time, they have engagement rates with followers that exceed 25 % (Steele, 2017). As the effectiveness of influencer marketing shifts from the number of followers to engagement and conversion, micro-influencers have come to the forefront more (Creatorden, 2020).

Generally, they tend to specialize according to their special interests (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). They produce and share content on their social media accounts according to these special interests, hence their areas of expertise. They often have niche followers with interests in travelling, fashion, beauty, photography, and video games. By creating niche content concepts, influencers can create audiences who are interested in more specific topics. Consumers identify themselves with micro-influencers because they resemble normal people, are often perceived as real, and have an interest in the same field as them. On the one hand, they have a loving and close relationship with their followers, and since they have a high command of the subjects they are experts in, their reliability is also very high, this way they can easily gain the trust of their followers and persuade them (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020).

Therefore, working with these influencer groups can have positive results. For example, brands can expand their reach in niche areas more economically through micro-influencers (Bernazzani, 2019). In other words, brands can reach their target audiences through micro-influencers. Moreover, these very specific and niche areas can directly interact with brands and products/services that are promoted through a trusted micro-influencer and increase their brand recognition level. In addition, tagging the brand in the content created by the micro-influencer can help increase the traffic in the brand's website by making it appear

higher in the search engine results. One of its most important advantages is that, through the established brand-influencer representation relationship, consumers can ask questions about the brand and products/services and get instant feedback with the high engagement and strong communication process. At the same time, through the brand-influencer representation relationship, the sincere and reliable perception towards micro-influencers can also be transferred to the brand (Üçhisarlı, 2019).

**a.4. Nano influencers:** Nanos (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020), who have 1000–10,000 followers, are a new type of influencer. They have a lower follower rate compared to other influencers. In turn, they are opinion leaders who are influential to their local communities. Since they know most, if not all, of their few followers, mutual trust is at its highest level (Medium, 2019). In addition, since they have a small follower base, there is a friendly, familiar and intertwined relationship between nanos and their audiences. They have a very close relationship with their followers, as they especially take the time to interact with them (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). Since they know their followers well, they can produce original content that is a reflection of both themselves and their followers. All these qualities bring along a very high level of engagement.

They have little or no experience working with brands. As ordinary people, nanos act towards impressing their family and friends through content related to a brand's products/services shared through their social media accounts (Medium, 2019). Because they often share content about brands they love and admire (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020), their followers have a high confidence in their suggestions and comments. Therefore, their power to influence them can be high. They are suitable influencers with low cost and high return on investment for small budgets, startups or small businesses (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020).

Although choosing a nano influencer is not suitable for brands that want to reach large audiences in order to gain recognition; the existence of a realistic, sincere, strong and reliable relationship nanos have with their followers can ensure that a similar perception is transferred to the brand and it is seen as original.

The level of engagement shown by an influencer's followers is very important. Because the highness of this level shows how much the influencer's audience is interested in their content, how persuasive the influencer is and how much they can make their followers take action. Therefore, it can also be considered as the degree of influencers' effectiveness. In each social media platform, it is evident that there is a different type of influencer that stands out in terms of the level of engagement of their followers, when it comes to number of these followers. Research shows that micro-influencers on Instagram are the influencers with

the highest engagement rate, while type with the lowest engagement is mega. On the other hand, although all engagement rates on Youtube are low, it has been determined that micro-influencers, among all of the influencer types, have more engagement. In TikTok, where the most important difference is, micro influencers have shown to macro influencers that they dominate the platform at a very high level in terms of engagement. It is important for brands to consider the level of engagement, since it is a very effective factor in the success of a campaign. It is seen that businesses and brands who are aware of this situation, mostly work with and give importance to micro-influencers on Instagram and YouTube, while they mostly prefer medium-level influencers on TikTok (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). Also, in terms of influence, Shau and Gilly (2003) stated that influencers are more accessible and have more influence than more well-known famous people, because they share various moments from their personal daily lives and interact with their followers more easily.

**b. Types of influencers according to their status of supporting the brand:**

Influencers in this classification are evaluated under three sub-categories as advocates, referrers and loyalists. As a special category of influencers, advocates are social media users who use a product/service to promote and create positive content about the brand and fight on behalf of the brand. Referrers, on the other hand, are people who can attract followers to the product, business website or brand profile through a strong and reliable recommendation about the product/service (Brown, 2019). Since the referrer type influencers are very reliable, their recommendations are also perceived as such, which gives them the ability to leave a strong impact on people. The third and most important type in this category, loyalists, include followers, fans, consumers, etc., who contribute to the brand throughout its entire process, from the creation of brand recognition to its last stage of the campaign. In addition to being the target audience of the brand, loyalists are also important supporters of all strategies and goals of the brand (Brown, 2019).

**c. Types of influencers according to their motivations for action:** The types of influencers in this classification are idols, experts, lifestyle experts, activists and artists. While idols focus on themselves in their content, they include other topics in these messages. Experts refer to people who are recognized as authorities in a particular field or subject due to their knowledge and skills. The third group, lifestyle experts, shape the message of their content on a certain lifestyle and leisure activities such as fashion, beauty, health, interior decoration, cooking, and travel. Activists, who differ from others with their world views, share content about issues such as environmental protection,

minority rights, women's rights, and animal rights. The last group, artists, focuses on creating materials with high aesthetics and visual appeal about travel, architecture, nature and people through various platforms such as photoblogs and Instagram (Wielki, 2020).

- d. **Influencer types based on a certain niche:** Another way to classify influencer types is based on their niche. Influencers in this category share high-quality, niche-specific content to gain a loyal and highly engaged audience (Troesch, 2020). Social media users such as sports and fitness influencers; beauty, gaming, travel, fashion, parent, CBD (on human health) influencers; bloggers and vloggers; and activists are all active people in their specific niches.
- e. **Types of influencers according to the communication platform used:** Influencers use various social media platforms to communicate and interact with their followers (Wielki, 2020). Influencers can be classified according to their use of social media channels such as blogs, Youtube, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, or Twitter.

Businesses consider Instagram to be the most important and accurate social media platform for influencer advertising. Instagram is followed by Facebook and Youtube. However, interestingly influencer usage has grown at a high level in 2020 on TikTok and Twitch, which wasn't even on the list last year (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). On the other hand, when it comes to the preferences made by considering the number of followers on these platforms, it can be seen that businesses mostly work with and give importance to micro-influencers on Instagram and YouTube, while they prefer medium-level influencers on TikTok (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021).

- f. **Types of influencers according to their creativity:** This classification is made according to the types of content created by the influencers (Troesch, 2020). Gamers, bloggers, vloggers, virtual influencers (CGI characters, whose personalities and images are computer-generated), photographers, etc. are all included in this category.
- g. **Types of influencers according to their expertise:** Another way to classify influencers is to categorize them according to the work they do in real life, apart from publishing content on social media platforms and blogs (Troesch, 2020). This classification includes actors/actresses, models, journalists, singers, athletes, doctors, etc.
- h. **Types of influencers according to the type of activity:** In this group, which is divided into active and passive influencers, the influencers targeted by companies to promote their products/services are defined as active, and

those not directly targeted by businesses are defined as passive influencers (Wielki, 2020).

According to eMarketer (2015), the main challenges of influencer campaigns are identifying the right influencers, finding the right targeting tactics, and measuring the performance of an influencer campaign. In this context, the first challenge faced by the brands in these campaigns at the beginning is identifying the right influencer.

One of the values that consumers care about most in their relationships with influencers is sincerity. Consumers may have the perception that especially celebrity-brand collaborations are constructed and based on interest. However, because influencers know that they can lose their followers if they are not honest and sincere, they tend to stay away from all kinds of behaviors that may create false and obvious advertising perceptions in their followers, which may result in a negative reaction.

Looking at the approaches of businesses and brands to influencer types and selection, businesses stated that they had an average level of difficulty in finding the right and suitable influencer for their campaigns. First, most brands begin the influencer selection process by narrowing down the possibilities of influencers in a particular niche (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). For example, a beverage brand is less likely to work with a beauty influencer, no matter how high their follower count or engagement rate with their followers is. It has been determined that the most important factor that businesses consider when planning to collaborate with an influencer is their relationship with their followers. The influencer's potential for content production and distribution of brand content through their followers are other factors to consider (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021).

In the researches, it is seen that the majority of the businesses work with the same influencers in different campaigns, while the rest prefer to use different influencers. The results regarding the number of influencers they work with show that they work with multiple influencers in 2020. However, although their number is low, businesses that prefer to work with influencers on a much larger scale are working with 100–1000 influencers. These are brands that have realized the importance of working with a large number of nano or micro influencers with small but dedicated audiences to deliver their message (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021). As a result, it is necessary to consider that each type of influencer is a supporting force that will contribute to the achievement of different goals of the brand.

As mentioned earlier, businesses and brands collaborate with influencers to achieve a number of goals. It is observed that the criteria that most businesses

use to evaluate influencers to choose one, do not fully match the goals they set. It is seen that the most important evaluation criteria for businesses in selection process are the engagement rate and the number of clicks of the influencers' followers to the posts. Other criteria were found to be views/access/display and content type/category of influencer's posts. On the other hand, it is surprisingly seen that the factors that evaluate the success of these applications, which benefit from influencers, are conversion/sales rates, engagement or clicks for sharing and access/display figures (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021).

## **5. An Overview of Industry and Academic Studies on Influencer Types**

As the rapid rise of influencers in the social media environment and their effects on other users became evident, and the rates of brands working with them increased, influencers attracted the attention of both the private sector and the academic field. First of all, various researches and analyzes are carried out in the face of changes and developments in many aspects such as the regular changes and developments in influencer marketing every year, the effects of influencer marketing on brands and consumers, the regulations in their classification, the benefits they offer to businesses and brands, the new methods and possibilities in the selection of the most effective and correct influencer, the measures of their success, and the procedures to be followed in the selection of an influencer. In addition, in the private sector various researches are carried out to determine the most successful influencers in different categories each year, the audience characteristics that follow the influencers, the measurement and results of the engagement performances of the influencers, the brands they work with the most or the influencers that the brands most prefer. These results are updated and presented in annual or monthly periods, and thus contribute to the due diligence of influencer marketing. However, it is seen that one of the prominent issues in the recent researches conducted in the private sector, focuses on the types of influencers, their characteristics, the measurement of their success and the effects of these types on the brand and their followers. These studies and their results are frequently mentioned in the sections above (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021; e-Marketer, 2015; Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020; Creatorden, 2020; Influencity, 2018; Creatorden, 2020. See influencer types).

While the private sector showed such intense interest in influencer marketing, the academic field could not remain indifferent. Especially in the last few years, it is seen that many studies on influencer marketing have been carried out. In these studies, the focus has been on the strategic uses and effects of opinion-leading

influencers on social media platforms, through different perspectives. In these studies, when the aforementioned academic studies are examined, it has been determined that different variables (factors such as influencers' attitude, reliability, perceived expertise level, perceived harmony, attractiveness, similarity with their followers; different consumer groups and product categories consumed by groups, etc.) are examined by considering very different issues such as the effects of different variables on brand awareness, purchasing behavior, purchase intention, consumer perceptions towards influencer marketing, general effects of influencer marketing, influencer consumer product perception relationship, effects on consumer generations, and the influencer's effect on destination promotion and preference (Hollensen & Schimmelpfennig, 2013; Johansen & Guldvik, 2017; Lou ve Yuan, 2018; Lisichkova & Othman, 2017; Dogra, 2019; Lou ve Yuan, 2019; Kadekova & Holiencinova, 2018; Lee & Kim; Yodi, Widyastuti & Noor, 2020; Bognar, Puljic & Kadezabek, 2019). In these studies, to obtain data, a wide range of research and data collection methods were used, such as experimental design, content analysis, focus group interviews, and survey method.

As in the private sector, it has been observed that, in the academic field, the influencer types and the effects and relationships of these types from different perspectives have been discussed in the last 2 years. Looking at the literature, it has been determined that the effects of the relationship between influencer types and various variables (factors such as sponsored content warning, influencer's approval, identification, credibility, product categories, personal presentation, perceived brand image, perceived similarity, interaction, attractiveness, credibility, etc.) on purchasing and brand attitude, and the effects of influencer types are examined in terms of product placement, labeling policies, follower numbers, and follower interactions (Glover, 2009; Gräve, 2017; Hollensen, S. & Schimmelpfennig, 2013; Theocharis & Papaio-Maou, 2020; Rios, Casais & Camilleri, 2021; De Vierman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017; Britt, Hayes, Britt, Park, 2020; Kay vd, 2020; Coursaris, Wietske & Kourganoff, 2018). It has been determined that all of these studies have been examined according to the number of followers.

Looking at the results of some of the studies, it is seen that consumers trust and give importance to influencers' ideas more than traditional advertisements (Rolens et al., 2016; Creatorden, 2021). In addition, consumers think that other influencers, rather than celebrities, are more realistic in sponsored posts (Creatorden, 2021). Research shows that consumers not only trust the thoughts of influencers and find them realistic, but also determine their behaviors (Johansen & Guldvik, 2017) and purchasing decisions according to influencers

(Creatorden, 2021; Pornpitakpan, 2004). For example, according to the Harvard Business Review (2019), in 2018, 19 % of American consumers and 36 % of the consumer group under the age of 25 purchased a product or service as a result of a digital influencer recommending it. Reliability is considered as one of the most important factors of online persuasion, especially when the consumer does not have the opportunity to really feel and touch the product, and do not have the opportunity to try it (Pornpitakpan, 2004). On the other hand, the results of the research conducted by Lisichkova and Othman (2017) show that although originality, reliability, influencer's expertise and honesty have positive effects on purchasing behaviors, only the characteristics of an influencer are not enough for the consumer to buy a product without thinking about it. In addition to these features, it shows that other factors such as the need for the product, the price of the product, and the suggestions made for the product are also effective in the purchase decision.

The confusion of brands about when and which influencer type should be chosen show that there are many unknown points about influencer types and their effects, which need to be addressed. For example, no research on nano influencers in terms of the number of followers has been conducted. Also, influencers are divided into types not only in terms of numbers, but also from different aspects such as their expertise, creativity in their content creation, and niche. It is thought that examining these aspects by making comparisons will contribute to the brands making the right choices. The effects of many variables such as product categories, consumer generations, influencer's attitudes, and product perception differences that can affect purchasing decision and engagement, which are two of the most important points on the basis of influencer types, are unknown. It is suggested that future studies should contribute to the literature by addressing these open points.

## Conclusion

It is a known fact that traditional advertisements no longer work as well as they used to. Research shows that consumers boycott brands due to their excessive use of advertising. Another result of the research is that 66 % of consumers suffer from advertisements ([https://www.tapinfluence.com/tp\\_resource/influencer-marketing-care/](https://www.tapinfluence.com/tp_resource/influencer-marketing-care/)). Despite the fact that digital advertisements appeared as a solution for brands in contrast to traditional advertisements, this time ad blocking programs started to pose as a problem for brands. Influencer advertising is among the most impressive communication applications due to its ability to reach both cost and consumer audience, create the desired interaction and connection, and

have a higher return on investment compared to traditional advertising. In addition to the many benefits mentioned above, the return on investment is 11 times higher compared to traditional advertising ([https://www.tapinfluence.com/tp\\_resource/influencer-marketing-care/](https://www.tapinfluence.com/tp_resource/influencer-marketing-care/)). Because of the many benefits that brand-influencer collaborations bring, brands from many different parts of the world are using influencer marketing and advertising to gain targeted consumer perception and support, and increase sales.

As of 2020, influencer marketing is estimated at approximately 10 billion dollars (Creatorden, 2021). According to industry research, brands stated that they will allocate a budget for influencer marketing for the next year, and most of them are considering increasing their budgets for collaborations with influencers, and 84 % of businesses announced that they plan to work with names from social media in their upcoming campaigns (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021; Creatorden, 2021). For 2021, it looks like the growth rate of influencer marketing will continue to increase exponentially.

Influencer advertising, which is essentially word of mouth advertising, is one of the impressive methods of reaching the consumer audience, who has built a wall against traditional and some digital advertisements, in a reliable, original and natural format. On the other hand, as in every advertising application, there are many factors that affect the success of influencer advertising campaigns. It is very important to make a selection by taking all these factors into account. For example, in order for the branded content to be attractive and persuasive to the followers, it is very important that the content shared about the brand offers a value factor and benefit that can meet the needs and wishes of these followers as consumers. Another important point is that this value and benefit offered is based on facts and that the brand has the performance potential to meet these needs. In order for the followers who are not aware of the brand/product/service or who are not convinced yet to believe in the shared branded content, the influencer must be found reliable by the audience and consumers.

Another important point is that the identity structure of the influencer and the brand overlap with each other and support the brand's position. In addition, it is important that the influencer's image and the brand image are compatible in order for the expected transfers to take place.

In order for the Influencer advertising campaign to be successful, the brand must know its target audience very well, and have a command of the audience's identity and personality traits. Analyzes on topics such as their special interests, the social media platform/platforms they use, which influencers they follow, which influencers they are influenced by, who they prefer to interact with, whom they trust, etc. should be done at a sufficient level. In addition, in the selection

of an influencer, it is important to pay attention to the fact that the followers have similar characteristics with the customers of the brand and that their values coincide with the values of the brand.

Contrary to popular belief, finding the right influencer for a brand requires intense effort and time. According to researches, brands believe that there may be some problems with brand safety before and during communication process with influencers. While some brands think that these problems in brand security may occur only occasionally, others believe that there may always be security-related problems (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021).

Although some studies show that influencer marketing has positive effects on consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions, there are also studies that indicate that this application is not more effective than other online advertising applications and does not have a direct effect on consumers' purchase intentions (Johansen & Guldvik, 2017; Lisichkova & Othman, 2017). It is thought that conducting studies on what kind of effects different types of influencers have when it comes to different product categories and target audiences, will give clearer and more significant results on the subject.

Because each type of influencer has their own dynamics, positive and negative characteristics and effects. Brands can determine which type of influencer is the most appropriate and suitable for their campaign by considering factors such as number of followers, engagement levels, content quality, professionalism and cost. In addition, various software and applications have taken their place in the industry, enabling brands to choose the right influencer. On the other hand, academic studies should also do their part and give the necessary support in order for this choice to be made correctly. Revealing scientific data about the unknown points of influencer marketing, which has been a hot topic for the last few years, will contribute to the success of brands' influencer campaigns. This is important both for the communication literature on branded content and for brands to reach their goals by coming up with successful influencer campaign strategies.

## References

- Audrezet, A., & Charry, K. (2019). Do influencers need to tell audiences they're getting paid? *Harvard Business Review*: Brighton, MA, USA. <https://hbr.org/2019/08/do-influencers-need-to-tell-audiences-theyre-getting-paid>
- Bandura, A. (1971). *Social Learning Theory*. New York: General Learning Corporation. [http://www.ascib.ase.ro/mps/Bandura\\_SocialLearningTheory.pdf](http://www.ascib.ase.ro/mps/Bandura_SocialLearningTheory.pdf)

- Bernazzani, S. (2019). Micro influencer marketing: A comprehensive guide. 16 October. <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/micro-influencer-marketing>
- Booth, N., & Matic, J. A. (2011). Mapping and leveraging influencers in social media to shape corporate brand perceptions. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 16(3), 184–191.
- Bozkurt Y. (2019). Reklamlara karşı reklam engelleme programları: Tüketici tepkilerine yönelik bir araştırma. *Galatasaray Üniversitesi İletişim Dergisi*, 30, June, 117–146.
- Britt, R. K., Hayes J. L., Britt, B. C., & Park, H. (2020). Too big to sell? A computational analysis of network and content characteristics among mega and micro beauty and fashion social media influencers. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 20(2), 111–118.
- Brown, D., & Hayes, N. (2007). *Influencer Marketing: Who Really Influences Your Customers*. London: Routledge.
- Brown, D. (2019). 6 types of influencers (Mega, macro, micro, advocates, referrers, loyalists). *Sensei Marketing*, 20 July. <https://bondai.co/blog/6-types-of-influencers/>
- Buryan, M. (2018). *Influencer Marketing on Social Media: A Beginner-friendly Guide*. 11 June. <https://www.socialbakers.com/blog/influencer-marketing-on-social-media-guide>
- Buyer, R. (2016). *PR Under the Influence: Why Influencer Marketing is all the Buzz*, January. <https://socialprchat.com/pr-under-the-influence-why-influencer-marketing-is-all-the-buzz/>
- Colliander, J., & Dahlén, M. (2011). Following the fashionable friend: The power of social media weighing the publicity effectiveness of blogs versus online magazines. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 51(1), 313–321.
- Coursaris, Contantinos K., Van Osch, W., & Kourganoff, C. (2018). Designing the medium and the message for sponsorship recognition on social media: The interplay of influencer type, disclosure type, and consumer culture. *SIGHCI 2018 Proceedings*. 15. <https://aisel.aisnet.org/sighci2018/15>
- Cramer, T. (2019). *Online Influences: The New Word-of-Mouth*. <https://www.thetilt.com/content/commentary/online-influencers-word-of-mouth>
- CreatorDen. (2020). *Why are Micro Influencers so Important for Your Brand?* 10 July. <https://creatorden.com/mikro-influencerlar-markaniz-icin-neden-cok-onemli/>
- CreatorDen. (2021). *What is Influencer Marketing? Influencer Marketing Statistics*. <https://creatorden.com/influencer-marketing-nedir-influencer-marketing-istatistikleri/>

- De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828.
- Dogra, K. (2019). The impact of influencer marketing on brand loyalty towards luxury cosmetics brands: Comparison of generation z and millennial, *Master Thesis*. Vienna: Modul University.
- Doyle, C. (2011). *Dictionary of Marketing*, 4. Edt, Oxford University Press, e-ISBN: 9780191727962. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199590230.001.0001/acref-9780199590230-e-0897?rskey=pd8naw&result=895>
- e-Marketer (2015). *Marketers Pair Up with Influencers – and it Works: Content Creation, Promotion the Leading Tactics for Influencer Engagement*. <https://www.emarketer.com/Article/Marketers-Pair-Up-with-Influencersand-Works/1012709>
- Forrest, E., & Cao, Y. (2010). Social media: Opinions, recommendations and endorsements: The new regulatory framework. *Journal of Economic and Public Policy*, 5(2), 92–103.
- Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K., & Freberg, L. A., et al. (2010). Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. *Public Relations Review*. DOI:10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.11.001. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251582746\\_Who\\_are\\_the\\_social\\_media\\_influencers\\_A\\_study\\_of\\_public\\_perceptions\\_of\\_personality](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251582746_Who_are_the_social_media_influencers_A_study_of_public_perceptions_of_personality)
- Glover, P. (2009). Celebrity endorsement in tourism advertising: Effects on destination image. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 16, 16–23. DOI: 10.1375/jhtm.16.1.16. <https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:202007>.
- Glucksman, M. (2017). The rise of social media influencer marketing on lifestyle branding: A case study of Lucie Fink. *Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 8(2), 77–87. [https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/communications/journal/wp-content/uploads/sites/153/2017/12/08\\_Lifestyle\\_Branding\\_Glucksman.pdf](https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/communications/journal/wp-content/uploads/sites/153/2017/12/08_Lifestyle_Branding_Glucksman.pdf)
- Godes, D., & Mayzlin, D. (2004). Using online conversations to study word-of-mouth. *Communication Marketing Science*, 23(4), 545–560.
- Górecka-Butora, P., Strykowski, P., & Biegun, K. (2019). *Influencer Marketing Od A Do Z*. Bielsko-Biała: WhitePress, Poland, 1–53. <https://www.whitepress.pl/userfiles/ebooki/pdf/159134117772657700.pdf>
- Gräve, J. F. (2017). Exploring the perception of influencers vs. traditional celebrities: Are social media stars a new type of endorser?. *8th International*

- Conference on Social Media & Society*, Association for Computing Machinery, July 28–30, 2017, Toronto.
- Hollensen, S., & Schimmelpfennig, C. (2013). Selection of celebrity endorsers: A case approach to developing an endorser selection process model. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, 31(1), 88–102.
- Influencer Marketing Hub. (2020). *12 Types of Influencers You Can Use to Improve Your Marketing*, 3 December. <https://influencermarketinghub.com/types-of-influencers/>
- Influencer Marketing Hub.(2021). *What is an Influencer? – Social Media Influencers Defined*. <https://influencermarketinghub.com/what-is-an-influencer/>, 2021
- Influencer Marketing Hub.(2021b). *The State of Influencer Marketing 2021: Benchmark Report, 15 February*. <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-benchmark-report-2021/>
- Influicity. (2018). *The Difference Between Micro, Macro and Mega Influencers*. 3 March. <http://www.influicity.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/MegaMacroMicro-Whitepaper-min.pdf>
- Johansen, I. K., & Guldvik, C. S. (2017). Influencer Marketing and Purchase Intentions: How does influencer marketing affect purchase intentions? *Master Thesis in Marketing and Brand Management*, Norwegian School of Economics. <https://openaccess.nhh.no/nhh-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2453218/masterthesis.PDF?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Kadekova, Z., & Holiencinova, M. (2018). Influencer marketing as a modern phenomenon creating a new frontier of virtual opportunities. *Communication Today*, 9(2), 90–105.
- Lee, S., & Kim, E. (2020). Influencer marketing on instagram: How sponsorship disclosure, influencer credibility, and brand credibility impact the effectiveness of instagram promotional post. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 11(3), 232–249.
- Lisichkova, N., & Othman, Z. (2017). The impact of influencers on online purchase intent. *Master Thesis*. <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1109584/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*. <https://sci-hub.se/https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501>

- Medium. (2019). *Mega-, Macro-, Micro- And Nano-Influencers – What's The Difference, And Which Should You Use For Your Brand ?* 18 april. <https://medium.com/@notsureanymore/mega-macro-micro-and-nano-influencers-whats-the-difference-and-which-should-you-use-for-9839bb3055ae>
- Odell, P. (2015). *The Power of Influencers*. Chief Marketer <https://www.chiefmarketer.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/26966-CM-10232015-Special-Report-PDF-Influencer-Marketing1.pdf>
- Pornpitakpan, C. (2004). The persuasiveness of source credibility: A critical review of five decades' evidence. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 34(2), 243–281.
- Rios, I., Casais, B., & Camilleri, M. (2021). *The Effect of Macrocelebrity and Microinfluencer Endorsements on Consumer–brand Engagement in Instagram*. 10.1108/978-1-80071-264-520211008.
- Roelens, I., Baecke, P., & Benoit, D. F. (2016). Identifying influencers in a social network: The value of real referral data. *Decision Support Systems*, 91, 25–36.
- Sadovykh, V., Sundaram, D., & Piramuthu, S. (2015). Do online social networks support decision-making?. *Decision Support Systems*, 70, 15–30.
- Schau, H. J., & Gilly, M. C. (2003). We are what we post? Self-presentation in personal web space. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30, December, 15–30. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251926758\\_We\\_Are\\_What\\_We\\_Post\\_Self-Presentation\\_in\\_Personal\\_Web\\_Space](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251926758_We_Are_What_We_Post_Self-Presentation_in_Personal_Web_Space)
- Solis, B. (2016). *The Influencer Marketing Manifesto*. Tapinfluence. [https://www.tapinfluence.com/tp\\_resource/future-influencer-marketing/](https://www.tapinfluence.com/tp_resource/future-influencer-marketing/)
- Steele, M. (2017). *Understand the Three Tiers of Influencers to Save Time and Money*. July 24. <https://www.waxmarketing.com/3-tiers-of-influencers/>
- Theocharis, D., & Papaioannou, E. (2020). Consumers' responses on the emergence of influencer marketing in Greek market place. *International Journal of Technology Marketing*, 14(3), 283–304.
- Troesch, D. (2020). *11 Types of Influencers You Should Know About*. 5 March. <https://bettermarketing.pub/11-types-of-influencers-you-should-know-about-2f8d46e548f3>
- Üçhisarlı, C. (2019). Markalar neden mikrolarla daha sık çalışır?. *Pazarlamasyon*, 4 Ocak. <https://pazarlamasyon.com/markalar-micro-influencere-lara-daha-sik-calismali>
- Wielki, J. (2020). Analysis of the role of digital influencers and their impact on the functioning of the contemporary on-line promotional system and its sustainable development. *Sustainability*, 12(17), 7138. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12177138>

Yodi, H. P., Widyastuti, S., & Noor, L. S. (2020). The effects of content and influencer marketing on purchasing decisions of fashion Erigo Company. *International Journal of Economics, Finance & Accounting*, 1(2), 345–357.

<https://wearesocial.com/blog/2021/01/digital-2021-the-latest-insights-into-the-state-of-digital>

<https://girisimcikafasi.com/influencer-marketing-nedir-ve-nasil-yapilir/>

[https://www.tapinfluence.com/tp\\_resource/influencer-marketing-care](https://www.tapinfluence.com/tp_resource/influencer-marketing-care)

Fatma Yasa

# **Determinants Influencing Attitudes towards Social Media Advertising**

## **1 Introduction**

With the emergence of Facebook in 2004, social networks are used more and more every day, their diversity is increasing rapidly, and they have become an integral part of consumers' daily lives today. According to the report titled "Digital 2019 in Turkey", which includes internet and social media statistics prepared by WeAre Social and Hootsuite companies every year, 63 % of the Turkey's population are active social media users, and people spend an average of 7 hours a day on the internet, and 2 hours and 46 minutes out of these 7 hours on social media (Dijilopedi, 2019).

In parallel with this, the focus of marketing communication practices is concentrated on the social media axis in order to adapt to the changing communication style of the consumer today (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). According to the 2018 "Estimated Media and Advertising Investments in Turkey" report of the Turkish Advertisers Association, while the digital advertising market grew by 14.8 % compared to 2017, social media advertising investments increased by 21 % (Marketing Turkey, 2019).

Considering that social network users are constantly exposed to various advertising contents, consumer attitudes towards advertisements in these channels are important in terms of advertising effectiveness. Considering the researches made especially in Turkey, it has been observed that the studies on social media advertisements (SMA) are mainly on the axis of demographic, social media usage habits etc. It has been understood that studies revealing attitudes towards SMA and the belief factors underlying these attitudes are limited. In this context, within the scope of this research, attitudes towards SMA and the factors that determine these attitudes were tried to be determined.

## **2 Relationship between Advertising and Attitudes**

It is important to identify consumers' attitudes towards advertising because these attitudes are determinative on purchase intention and attitudes towards brands (Durvasula and Lysonski, 2001; Mehta, 2000; Mitchell and Olson, 1981). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) argue that attitudes (as the total evaluation of the

perceived characteristics of an object/situation and the consequences it causes) consist of beliefs and the beliefs are the basis of attitudes. In this context, beliefs about advertising also determine attitudes towards it (from Bauer and Greyser, 1968 as cited in Mir, 2012).

Bauer and Greyser's (1968, as cited in Pollay and Mittal, 1993) study involving 1846 participants is a pioneering study in terms of revealing attitudes towards advertising and the factors underlying them. In the study, the seven items on the scale were classified under two factors: "economy" and "social". This study pioneered subsequent studies, and other researchers tested this two-dimensional seven-item scale on different sample groups. The most important and consistent result in all research using this scale is the criticism of the social damage caused by advertising while appreciating its economic value (Greyser and Reece, 1971; Anderson, Engledow, and Becker, 1978; Haller, 1974). Research results revealed that many people have conflicting thoughts between the individual and economic benefits provided by advertisements and the deterioration it creates on cultural values (Pollay and Mittal, 1993:99).

When it comes to SMA (social media advertising), it is understood that the factors of informing, entertaining, contributing to the economy, reliability, degeneration, perceived benefit and hedonism are determinative on attitudes towards SMA (Raktham, Chaipooirutana, and Combs, 2017; Wang and Sun, 2010). According to Mir's (2012:265) research results, while information and economy factors are determinants on attitudes towards SMA, positive attitudes towards SMA also have a positive effect on ad clicking behavior. According to the research of Yemez (2016), the factors of informing, disturbing, curiosity and reliability are determinative on attitudes towards SMA. Akkaya, Akyol, and Şimşek's (2017:361) research results show that the providing information, entertainment and contributing to the economy factors have a positive effect and the degeneration factor has a negative effect, while the reliability factor has no effect on attitudes towards SMA.

According to the results of another study, it was determined that attitudes towards SMA were shaped positively as the time spent on Facebook and the rate of attention spent on advertisements increased (Kazançoğlu et al., 2012). Similarly, the results of Akar and Topçu's (2011:59) research revealed that as the rate of use of social media increases, attitude towards marketing activities in social media also changes positively. In the same study, it was also found that the gender factor was not a determinative variable on attitudes towards social media marketing practices (Akar and Topçu, 2011:35).

In this respect, it is understood that the elements of information, entertainment and economy are generally determinative on positive attitudes towards

SMA. On the other hand, it can be said that the factor of corruption of social values is mainly effective on negative attitudes towards SMA.

### 3 Purpose of the Research

The main purpose of this study is to reveal the attitudes of individuals towards social media advertisements and the factors that determine these attitudes. In this context, answers to the following questions were sought:

- How much time do participants spend on social networks?
- What social networks do participants use?
- Which social networks do the participants use most frequently?
- How many different social networks do participants use?
- What are the participants' attitudes towards SMA?
- Which belief factors determine the participants' attitudes towards SMA?
- Is there a difference in the attitudes of the participants towards SMA according to the gender variable?
- Is there a difference in the attitudes of the participants towards SMA according to the type of social network they use?
- Is there a difference in the attitudes of the participants towards SMA according to the time they spend on social networks?
- Is there a difference in the attitudes of the participants towards SMA according to the number of social media they use?
- Do the content and comments about a brand on social media affect the participants' decision to purchase from the brand?

Is there a difference between the attitudes of participants towards SMA, who are affected and not affected by content and comments about a brand in social media?

### 4 Findings

All of the participants consist of students studying at Pamukkale University. 62.4 % (n:162) of the participant group were female and 36.4 % (n:94) were male. Considering the age variable, it was observed that the ages of the participants varied between 17 and 26 (19 years and under: 36.4 %, n:94; 20–25 years: 61.2 %, n:158; 26–30 years: 0.4 %, n:1).

One of the questions directed to determine social media usage habits is how much time the participants spend on social media on average per day. Thirty-six percentage (n=93) of the participants stated that, in a day, they spend 4–5

hours, 29.1 % (n=75) spend 2–3 hours, and 15.1 % (n=39) spend 6–7 hours on social media. It has been determined that 22 people (8.5 %) spend more than 7 hours a day on social media, while 24 people (9.3 %) spend only 1 hour or less than 1 hour. In the light of these findings, it can be said that the participants spend a significant part of their daily time on social media.

When the type of social media used by the participants was examined, it was determined that the level of Instagram usage (95.3 %, n=246) had the highest rate among other channels. Almost all participants use Instagram. This is followed by Twitter in second place (n=159) with 61.6 % and Facebook in third place (n=103) with 39.9 % usage rate. Other social media platforms used by the participants are as follows: Foursquare (Swarm) (18.2 %, n=47), Tumblr (10.1 % n=26), LinkedIn (9.7 % n=25), Pinterest (% 2.7 n=7), Snapchat (2.3 % n=6), Other (5 %, n=13).

Participants were asked to rank their social media accounts according to their frequency of use. When the answers were examined, 70.2 % of the participants (n=181) placed Instagram in the first place in terms of frequency of use. In terms of the most frequently used social media type, the rate of those who stated that Twitter was the first was 11.2 % (n=29), while the rate of those who stated that they used Facebook the most frequently was 2.3 % (n=6). It was understood that Facebook was the most frequently used social media type, mainly being in the second (16.3 %, n=42) and third (12 %, n=31) rank. Similarly, Twitter was stated as the second most frequently used social media platform (30.6 %, n=79). In the light of these data, it has been understood that Instagram is the most frequently used social media type, followed by Twitter and Facebook.

When the number of social networks used by participants was examined, it was observed that 19.4 % (N=50) used one, 30.2 % (n=78) used two, 28.3 % (N=73) used three and 14.3 % (n=37) used four different social media networks. The number of people using five or more social networks is 15 (5.8 %). It is understood that the use of two to three different social media platforms is the dominant situation.

In order to determine the participants' attitudes towards SMA and the belief factors underlying these attitudes, factor analysis was performed on the scale items to reduce the number of and to classify the variables (Tab. 6.1). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was used to test the suitability of the data set for factor analysis. The KMO number above 0.80 was classified in the "very good" category by Kalaycı (2010). The obtained KMO value was 0.839, and it was determined that the data were suitable for factor analysis. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale used in the research is 0.816. The reliability value of each factor is as follows: entertainment 0.901; values 0.830; information 0.781; economy 0.693. The scale used in the research meets the reliability requirement.

**Tab. 6.1.** Attitudes and belief factors towards social media ads

	N	Mean	Std. D.	Factor Loadings	Eigen values	% of Variance
<b>Entertainment</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>0.90</b>		5.177	32.356
Social media advertising is entertaining	258	3.03	1.16	0.854		
Social media advertising is pleasing	257	2.95	1.06	0.862		
Social media advertising is interesting	257	3.21	1.06	0.699		
Social media advertising is enjoyable	254	2.98	1.04	0.879		
Social media advertising is fun to use	254	3.17	1.08	0.676		
Social media advertising exciting	254	2.74	1.01	0.749		
<b>Values</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>2.70</b>	<b>0.80</b>		3.028	18.926
Social media advertising promotes undesirable values in our society	252	2.75	0.96	0.722		
Social media advertising distorts the values of youth	255	2.47	1.02	0.814		
There is too much sex in social media advertising	256	2.49	0.99	0.745		
Some products/ services promoted in social media advertising are bad for society	258	2.88	1.04	0.777		
Social media advertising isolates children from their parents	253	2.90	1.06	0.804		
<b>Information</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>0.73</b>		1.579	9.872
Social media advertising tells me which brands have the features I am looking for	255	3.64	0.87			
Social media advertising helps me keep up to date about products/ services available in the marketplace	256	3.80	0.88	0.835		
Social media advertising is a convenient source information	257	3.64	0.84	0.718		
<b>Economy</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>2.92</b>	<b>0.80</b>		1.092	6.828
Social media advertising raises our standard of living	257	2.73	0.87	0.860		
Social media advertising results in better products for the public	256	3.11	0.93	0.734		

1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree

In the factor analysis, items with low common variance (below 0.50) are excluded from the analysis and re-performing the analysis allows both the KMO test results and the explained variance value statistics to be higher (Kalaycı, 2010:329). In this direction, as a result of factor analysis, the Community value (common variance) of an item (Social media advertising has positive effects on the economy) was determined as 0.30 and this item was excluded from the analysis. "When obtaining factors, factors with eigenvalue statistics greater than 1 are considered significant. Factors whose eigenvalue statistics are less than 1 are not taken into account" (Kalaycı, 2012:322). The 16 item eigenvalue statistics included in the scale were collected under 4 factors greater than 1. These four factors explain 67,981 % of the total variance.

By examining the percentages of explaining the total variance of each factor, it was understood that entertainment was the most determinative factor on attitudes towards SMA. This is followed in the second place by the values factor. In other words, in order for the attitudes towards SMA to be positive, these advertisements should be perceived primarily as entertaining and the consumer's thoughts about them not harming the values should prevail. It has been understood that the Information factor is the third determinant on attitudes towards SMA. Economy factor, on the other hand, is the least determinative factor on attitudes towards SMA.

It was determined that the mean value of the Entertainment factor was close to the neutral value of 3 (Mean: 3.07; Std.D.:0.90). In this respect, it can be said that the belief of SMA being generally fun is neither positive nor negative. While not strong, participants have a positive disposition that SMA is interesting (Mean: 3,21; Std.D.:1,06) and fun to use (Mean: 3,17; Std.D.:1,08). However, on the other hand, there are participant opinions that SMA is not pleasing (Mean: 2,95; Std.D.:1,06), enjoyable (Mean: 2,98; Std.:1,04) and exciting (Mean: 2,74; Std.D.:1,01). In this respect, it has been understood that the opinions that SMA is not generally fun to use are predominant.

Participants disagree with the view that SMA corrupts the values of young people (Mean: 2,47; Std.D.:1,02), promotes undesirable values in society (Mean: 2,74; Std.D.:1,01), and that there is too much sexuality in SMA (Mean: 2,49; Std.:0,99). Considering that the overall average of the Values factor is 2.70 (Std.D.:0,80), it can be said that SMA is not seen as an advertisement type that harms social values.

Among the four factors in the scale, the highest mean value belongs to the Information factor (Mean:3,69, Std.:073). Participants have a tendency to think that SMA is informative. Participants especially agree with the view that SMA

provides access to up-to-date information about the products/services available in the market (Mean: 3.80; Std.D.:0.88). SMAs are seen as a convenient resource in terms of information (Mean: 3,64; Std.D.:0,87), and they are thought to provide information about which brands have the desired features (Mean: 3,64; Std.D.:0,84).

It has been understood that attitudes towards the economic effects of SMA are not positive. Participants stated that they did not agree with the view that SMA raises their living standards (Mean: 2.73; Std.D.:0.87). It has been understood that there is a positive, albeit weak, trend that SMA leads to the emergence of better products for society (Mean: 3,11; Std.D.:0,93). However, based on the average value of the Economy factor (Mean: 2,92; Std.D.:0,80) in general, it would not be wrong to say that the attitudes in this component are negative.

“T-test is used to investigate whether there is a difference in means between two sample groups. The t-test determines whether the mean in one group differs significantly from the mean in the other group” (Ak, 2012:74). In this direction, Independent-Samples T-Test was used to determine whether there is a difference in the users’ attitudes towards SMA according to the gender variable. The t-test results for belief factors towards SMA and gender variable revealed that there was no difference between male and female participants in attitudes towards SMA in terms of Entertainment (Sig.:0,127; Female Mean: 3,14, Std.D.:0,81; Male Mean:2,96, Std.D.:1,04) and Values (Sig.:0,863; Female Mean: 2,70, Std.D.: 0,74; Male Mean:2,68, Std.D.:0,89) factors. In other words, participants of both genders have similar attitudes in terms of the effects of SMA on values and its ability to be entertaining. On the other hand, it was understood that women (Sig.:0,02; Female Mean:3,77, Std.D.:0,60; Male Mean:3,55, Std.D.:0,91) found SMA more informative than men. Although the participants do not think that SMA provides economic benefits, it is understood that women have a more positive attitude when it comes to the Economy factor compared to men (Sig.:0,01; Female Mean:3,02, Std.D.:0,73; Male Mean:2,73, Std.D.:0,86).

A t-test was applied to reveal whether there was a difference between the attitudes of the participants towards SMA according to the type of social media network used. Then, the averages obtained from the attitude scale of those who use and do not use any social network were compared. It has been determined that all of the Sig.(2-tailed) values obtained as a result of the t-tests for each social network type are greater than 0.05 and that there is no difference between the attitudes towards SMA between those who use and do not use the social networks specified within the scope of this research. In this context, it can be said that the type of social network used is not determinative on attitudes towards SMA.

One-way ANOVA analysis “tests whether there is a difference between the means in the dependent variable according to the groups (Antalyalı, 2010:132).” Accordingly, the participants were grouped according to the time they spent on social media in a day and a One-Way ANOVA analysis was conducted to reveal whether there was a difference in their attitudes towards SMA, and if there was, between which groups. The basic assumption of One-Way ANOVA is homogeneity of variances. According to Levene’s Test results, p values obtained for all factors were found to be greater than (Sig.),0.05 (Entertainment 0,87; Values: 0,34; Information: 0,93; Economy: 0,46). The data is in accordance with the basic assumption of the variance analysis and is suitable for ANOVA analysis. As the p (Sig.) values obtained for all factors as a result of the analysis of variance were greater than 0.05 (Entertainment 0,28; Values: 0,54; Information: 0,75; Economy: 0,53), it was understood that there was no significant difference in the attitudes of the participant groups towards SMA according to the time spent on social networks.

One-Way ANOVA analysis was applied to examine whether there was a difference in attitudes towards SMA among the participant groups according to the number of social networks they used. Before the analysis, the number of social networks used by the participants was re-coded. The data were organized by re-coding the number of social networks used in three separate groups: 1–2, 3–4, and 5 or more. According to Levene’s Test results, p values obtained for all factors were found to be greater than (Sig.),0.05 (Entertainment 0,54; Values: 0,88; Information: 0,23; Economy: 0,15). The data is in accordance with homogeneity of variances, which is the basic assumption of the variance analysis. As a result of the variance analysis, the p (sig) values obtained for all factors were found to be greater than 0.05 (Entertainment 0.13; Values: 0.15; Information: 0.36; Economy: 0.75). In other words, it has been revealed that the number of social networks used is not determinative on attitudes towards SMA.

When asked whether the content and comments about the brands in the social media affect their purchasing decision from the relevant brand, 55.4 % of the participants (n=143) answered “yes” and stated that such content affects the purchasing decision. While the rate of those who answered “no” to this question was 15.9 % (n=41), the rate of those who answered “neither yes nor no” was determined as 26.7 % (n=69). It can be said that branded contents on social networks affect the purchasing decisions of the majority of individuals involved in this research.

The t-test was applied to determine whether there is a difference in the participants’ attitudes towards SMA, who are affected and not affected by the contents and comments towards the brands. In this context, the answers of

“neither yes nor no” were recoded as “no” and the participants were divided into two groups, thus the data set was made suitable for the t-test. It was understood that there was no difference between the attitudes of the participants belonging to both groups regarding the Values (Sig.: 0.25; “Yes” Mean: 2.63, Std.D.: 0.73; “No” Mean: 2.75, Std.D: 0.88) and Economy (Sig.: 0.64; “Yes” Mean: 3.00, Std.D.: 0.79; “No” Mean: 2.82, Std.D: 0,78) factors. On the other hand, it was determined that people who say that the content and comments of brands on social media affect their purchasing decision, find SMA more informative (Sig.:0,00; “Yes” Mean: 3,87, Std.D.: 0,55; “No” Mean:3,45, Std.D:0,86) and fun to use (Sig.:0,01; “Yes” Mean: 3,20, Std.D.: 0,90; “No” Mean:2,89, Std.D:0,88) than people who say that they do not affect their purchasing decision.

## 5 Conclusion

According to the results of the research based on the advertising attitude scale developed by Bauer and Greyser (1968, cited in Pollay and Mittal, 1993), Economy and Values factors are highly determinative on attitudes towards advertisements (Anderson et al., 1978; Haller, 1974; Greyser and Reece, 1971). Although it was not possible to talk about SMA in those years, it is understood that these two factors were also determinative on attitudes towards SMA. While Information and Economy factors are determinative on attitudes towards SMA according to Mir’s (2012) research results, Entertainment and Values factors are found to be determinative on attitudes towards SMA according to the results of this research. In this context, Economy and Values factors, which are determinative on general attitudes towards advertising, maintain their determinativeness on attitudes towards SMA along with other factors. On the other hand, according to the results of this study, based on the percentages of variance, the economy factor is the least determinative on attitudes towards SMA. It should be examined whether the participant group being young is one of the possible reasons for this situation.

Information and Entertainment factors are crucial to the value of any advertisement that is perceived by consumers (Aaker et al. 1992; Ducoffe, 1996). According to Schlosser and Shavitt (1999), consumers’ attitudes towards internet advertisements are affected by the information content of the advertisement and the benefit they offer. Akkaya, Akyol, and Şimşek’s (2017) research results indicate that the providing information, entertainment and contributing to the economy factors have a positive effect on attitudes towards SMA, while the degeneration factor has a negative effect. According to the results of this research, the participants do not find SMA fun to use, and they do not agree with the views

that these advertisements harm social values and provide economic benefits. On the other hand, they largely hold the view that SMA is informative.

There are studies showing that attitudes towards marketing activities and advertisements in social media change positively as the time spent on social media and the rate of social media usage increase (Akar and Topçu, 2011; Kazançoğlu et al., 2012). However, the results obtained from this study revealed that the type of social network used and the time spent on social networks were not determinative on attitudes towards SMA, and that there were only differences in certain factors in terms of gender and purchasing intentions. In this context, in contrast to men, female participants think that SMA is more informative, and they also show a more positive tendency in terms of the Economy factor. These findings contradict with the research findings of Akar and Topçu (2011) who investigated the effects of gender in social media marketing practices. According to the results of Akar and Topçu's (2011) research, the gender variable is not determinative on attitudes towards social media marketing practices.

Branded contents on social media networks affect the purchasing decisions of the majority of individuals included in this research. On the other hand, it was found that people who say that the content and comments about brands on social media affect their purchasing decision, find SMA more informative and entertaining than those who say that their purchasing decision is not affected by those. In this context, it can be said that when the level of seeing SMA as informative and entertaining increases, the purchasing intentions may also increase accordingly.

Although the type of social network used and the time spent on social media networks do not make a difference on attitudes towards SMA, it is noteworthy that young individuals spend a significant part of their time in these networks and use two to four different types of them. The social network with the highest frequency and rate of use is Instagram, followed by Twitter and Facebook, respectively. Therefore, considering social media network usage habits in reaching the target audience is important in terms of advertising effectiveness.

In summary, it has been understood that in order for the consumer attitudes towards SMA to be shaped positively (especially if the target audience is young), the rate of informative content of the advertisement should be high, the consumer should find it fun to use and be entertained, and the perception of the advertisement not harming social values should be maintained.

In future studies, this study should be repeated with a highly representative sample that includes participants from different age groups and it should be examined whether the factors that determine the attitudes towards SMA vary according to age. In addition, it should be investigated whether there is a difference

between the attitudes towards advertisements in different social media networks (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc.).

## References

- Aaker, D. A., Batra, R., and Myers, J. G. (1992), *Advertising Management*. London: Prentice-Hall International.
- Ak, B. (2010), Parametrik hipotez testleri, In Kalaycı Ş. (Eds.), *SPSS Uygulamalı Çok Değişkenli İstatistik Teknikleri*, (pp: 404–420). Türkiye, Ankara: Asil Yayın Dağıtım.
- Akar, E., and Topçu, B. (2011), “An Examination of the Factors Influencing Consumers’ Attitudes Toward Social Media Marketing”, *Journal of Internet Commerce*, (10)1, 35–67, doi: 10.1080/15332861.2011.558456
- Akkaya, D. T., Akyol, A., and Şimşek, G. G. (2017), “The Effect of Consumer Perceptions on Their Attitude, Behaviour And Purchase İntention in Social Media Advertising”, *Marmara University Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, 39(2), 361–387.
- Anderson, R. D., Engledow, J. L., and Becker, H. (1978), “How Consumer Reports Subscribers See Advertising”, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 18, 29–34.
- Antalyalı, Ö. L. (2010), Varyans analizi (anova-manova), In Kalaycı Ş. (Eds.), *SPSS Uygulamalı Çok Değişkenli İstatistik Teknikleri*, (pp. 404–420), Türkiye, Ankara: Asil Yayın Dağıtım.
- Chi, H-H. (2011), “Interactive Digital Advertising vs. Virtual Brand Community: Exploratory Study of User Motivation and Social Media Marketing Responses in Taiwan”, *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 12(1), 44–61.
- Dijilopedi (2019, February 6), “2019 Türkiye İnternet Kullanım ve Sosyal Medya İstatistikleri”, Retrieved July 27, 2019, From <https://dijilopedi.com/2019-turkiye-internet-kullanim-ve-sosyal-medya-istatistikleri/> 04.09.2020
- Ducoffe, R. H. (1996), “Advertising Value and Advertising on the Web-Blog@ Management”, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 36(5), 21–32.
- Durvasula, S., and Lysonski, S. (2001), Are there global dimensions of beliefs toward advertising in general: A multicultural investigation, In Rao, C. P. (Eds.), *Globalization and its Managerial Implications*, (pp. 184–202), USA: Quorum Books.
- Erdoğan, İ. (2012), *Pozitivist Metodoloji ve Ötesi: Araştırma Tasarımları, Niteliksel ve İstatiksel Yöntemler*, Turkey, Ankara: Erk.

- Fishbein, M., and A. Ajzen. (1975), *Belief, Attitude, Intention and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research*, USA: Addison- Wesley, Retrieved from <https://people.umass.edu/aizen/f&a1975.html>
- Greyser, S. A., and Reece, B. B. (1971), "Businessmen Look Hard at Advertising", *Harvard Business Review*, 49(May-June), 18-27.
- Haller, T. F. (1974), "What Students Think of Advertising", *Journal of Advertising Research*, 14 (Feb), 33-38.
- Kalaycı, Ş. (2010), Faktör analizi, In Kalaycı Ş. (Eds.), *SPSS Uygulamalı Çok Değişkenli İstatistik Teknikleri* (pp. 321-334), Türkiye, Ankara: Asil Yayın Dağıtım.
- Kaplan, A. M., and Haenlein, M. (2010), "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media", *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
- Kazançoğlu İ., Üstündağlı E., and Baybars M. (2012), "Tüketicilerin Sosyal Ağ Sitelerindeki Reklamlara Yönelik Tutumlarının Satınalma Davranışları Üzerine Etkisi: Facebook Örneği", *International Journal of Economic and Administrative Studies*, 4(8), 159-182.
- Marketing Türkiye (2019), "Türkiye'de Tahmini Medya ve Reklam Yatırımları 2018 Yılı Sonu Raporu", Retrieved July 20, 2019 from: [http://www.marketingturkiye.com.tr/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/PRINT-190329-RD-Medya-ve-Reklam-Yatirimlari-2018-Raporu\\_Final.pdf](http://www.marketingturkiye.com.tr/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/PRINT-190329-RD-Medya-ve-Reklam-Yatirimlari-2018-Raporu_Final.pdf)
- Mehta, A. (2000), "Advertising Attitudes and Advertising Effectiveness", *Journal of Advertising Research*, 40(3), 67-72.
- Mir, I. A. (2012), "Consumer Attitudinal Insights About Social Media Advertising: A South Asian Perspective", *The Romanian Economic Journal*, 15(45), 265-288.
- Mitchell, A. A., and Olson, J. C. (1981), "Are Product Attributes the Only Mediator of Advertising Effects on Brand Attitude?", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(3), 318-332.
- Pollay, R., and Mittal, B. (1993), "Here's The Beef: Factors, Determinants, and Segments in Consumer Criticism of Advertising", *Journal of Marketing*, 57(3), 99-114.
- Raktham, W., Chaipoo Pirutana, S., and Combs, H. (2017), "Factors Influencing Consumer Attitudes toward Social Media Advertising", In *International Conference on Humanities, Social Sciences and Education (HSSE)*, London (UK), (pp. 20-21).
- Schlosser, A. E., and Shavitt, S. (1999), "Survey of Internet Users' Attitudes toward Internet Advertising", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 13(3), 34-54.

- Wang, Y., and Sun, S. (2010), "Assessing Beliefs, Attitudes, and Behavioral Responses toward Online Advertising in Three Countries", *International Business Review*, 19(4), 333–344.
- Yemez, İ. (2016), "Doğrulayıcı Faktör Analizi İle Sosyal Medya Reklamlarına Yönelik Tutum Ölçeğinin Yapı Geçerliliğinin İncelenmesi: Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İİBF'de Bir Uygulama", *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi*, 17(2), 97–118.



## **Section 2 Management and Organization Researches**



Onur Bayrakçı

# **Surveillance Practices through Social Media: From Strict Surveillance to Spontaneous Voluntary Surveillance**

## **1 Introduction**

The recent increase in the number of various information communication techniques has also changed the context of socialization and communication. The previously face-to-face communication and socialization activities in real space have now been moved to the virtual space. With the relationships moving spaces, the individual, who was monitored by the authorities in the preceding periods and controlled through surveillance practices, is now both the monitor and the monitored. The individual who supervised and supervised through social media networks is now both the convicted and the judge. The developments humanity has seen have now taken societies into a new phase called the digital surveillance society. The first practices of surveillance are Panopticon, which is the practice of the modern period, while the later ones are Super-panopticon, Synopticon and finally, Omniprison, which is the highest stage of surveillance used today.

## **2 Surveillance/Supervision Practices**

It would not be wrong to state that the history of humanity is actually the history of surveillance. Surveillance is not a concept that stands by itself, and thus it must be analyzed together with the concept of supervision. Bauman (2015) suggests that humanity has been trying to socialize since day one and that this process of socialization brings about the necessity of supervision. Surveillance has two basic elements: keeping and preventing individuals from harmful behavior towards the society and directing the individual to perform the desired behavior. In short, the merits of these two elements are based on the rules of 'prevention and encouragement' (Bauman, 2015:19).

The cycle of surveillance in history can be summarized as follows:

The first period, based on supervising agriculture, tax, labor, and nomads is pastoral supervision.

The form of surveillance of the second period is a form of surveillance carried out by modern societies aimed at controlling the social order through technical supervision and maintaining the survival of the state.

Surveillance today is surveillance based on science and information technologies (Temiztürk & Taner, 2015:37).

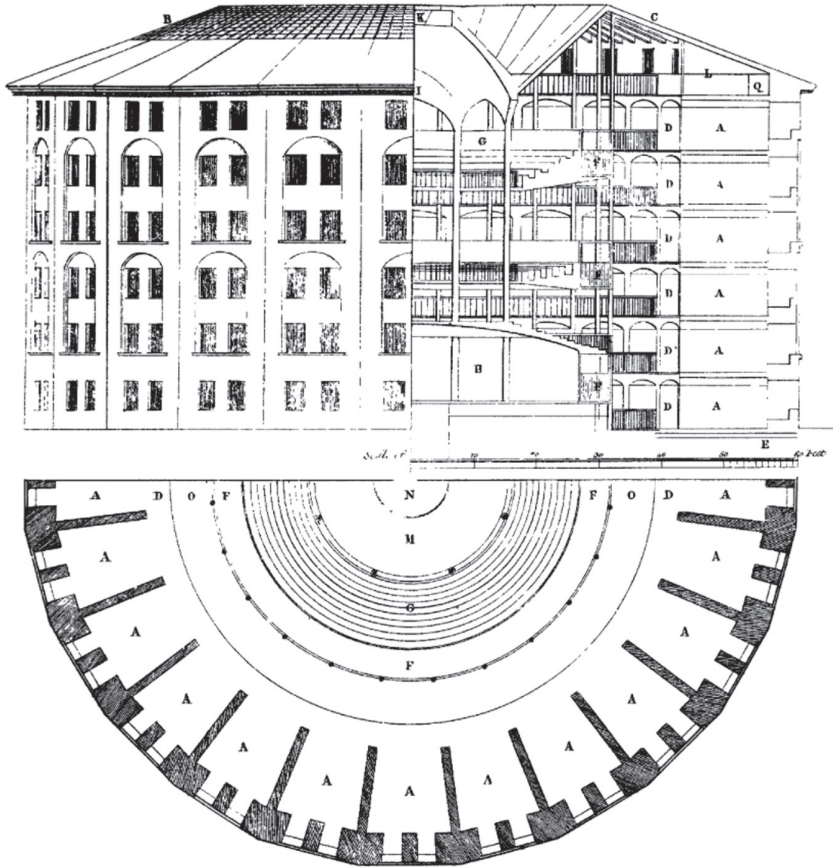
We find the first example of an explanation regarding audit practices based on supervision in Marx's *Capital*, Volume I. According to Marx, the main reason for the failure of previous production systems is due to the inability of the system to establish adequate control and supervision mechanisms over workers (Marx, 2011:453–454). What Marx emphasizes when talking about surveillance is that within the new form of production that is capitalism, the value of constant capital necessary for production such as machines, business tools, raw materials and so on needs to be maintained and used productively by workers. In order to gain and use surplus value, i.e. profit without waste, in order for the production process needs to be completed regularly and in full, the worker must be supervised, and to that end, the workers must be supervised by the capital. (Marx, 2011:1033–1034).

In the new form of production, in which speed and regular/disciplined work becomes a necessity, arbitrariness as seen in previous production systems should be out of the question. The continuity and gravity of production is strategically determined by professional intermediary workers that is, by people directly involved in production, organized by bourgeois employers. This briefly shows us that Management Sciences were born at that point. The birth of Management Sciences is a sign that surveillance and supervision through surveillance is now institutionalized (Lyon, 1997:54–55). Marx summarizes this as follows:

*“If capitalist direction is thus twofold in content, owing to the twofold nature of the process of production which has to be directed - on the one hand a social labor process for the creation of a product, and on the other hand capital's process of valorization - in form it is purely despotic. As co-operation extends its scale, this despotism develops the forms that are peculiar to it. Just as at first the capitalist is relieved from actual labor as soon as his capital has reached that minimum amount with which capitalist production, properly speaking, first begins, So now he hands over the work of direct and constant supervision of the individual workers and groups of workers to a special kind of wage-laborer. An industrial army of workers under the command of a capitalist requires, like a real army, officers (managers) and N.C.O.s (foremen, overseers), who command during the labor process in the name of capital. The work of supervision becomes their established and exclusive function”* (Marx, 2011:452–453).

Another person who played an important role in the initial analysis of surveillance is Max Weber. We can call the basis of Weber and his successors' understanding of modernity the registration and collection of data (Kahya, 2015:281). However, the main reason for bureaucratic reporting and recording is to pave the way for capitalist investment, ensure efficiency, and most importantly, to increase profitability in order to establish a certain amount of supervision on the workers (Lyon, 2006:64). In this sense, factories, which are the symbol of the capitalist system, are also a symbol of supervision. Lyon (2006) suggests that there are two aspects of bureaucratic supervision and surveillance. The first is due to the fact that the world is designed to be more habitable than in the previous periods. The other reason for supervision and surveillance is to properly and fairly meet the rights, interests and demands of citizens (ibid: 65).

The bureaucratic surveillance and supervision discussed by Weber and his successors was more focused on organizational structures. However, Foucault extended surveillance and supervision over surveillance to the entire society, further developed the concept of surveillance, and linked it to the concept of power. Foucault suggests that power is now internalized and invisible, that power does not have a single focus, but is actually everywhere (Foucault, 2012:74). Between the 18th and 20th century, practices of power were based on the need for the body to be taken over and disciplined. It is thus that the body needed to be surrounded, removed from the visible, that is, from the public, and imprisoned behind the walls. Bodies pulled away from the public were kept in schools, hospitals, barracks, workshops and sites (Foucault, 2012:41). However, putting bodies behind walls was a costly and difficult process of supervision. There had to be an easier and more practical way of this process, whereby bodies could be inspected both cost-free and undetected. More importantly, surveillance should have become widespread throughout the community. Thus, the easy and cost-effective way of controlling the society was hidden in an architectural structure that is called "Panopticon" by J. Bentham. Figure 7.1 shows how the Panopticon looks like:



**Picture 7.1.** Panopticon image

Source: <https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panoptikon#/media/Dosya:Panopticon.jpg>

Foucault defines the Panopticon as such:

*“It is an annular building. There is a courtyard in the middle and at the center, a tower. This tower is divided into cells that have two windows, one on the inside and the other on the outside. In each cell, in accordance with the institution’s goals, there is a **schoolboy**, a **worker**, a **condemned man**, and a **madman**. There is a guardian in the central tower. Since each cell is has two windows looking both in and out, the supervisor’s eye can capture the entire cell, there are no dark spots. As a result, everything that an individual does is open to the supervisor’s view; he supervises*

*through the venetian blinds and partitions, so that he can see everything, but the individual sees nothing. According to Bentham, a number of institutions can use this small and wonderful architectural trickery. The panopticon is, in fact, a utopia of a certain kind of society and power*" (Foucault, 2011:224). The Panopticon is the most important indicator of a form of society based on disciplining punishment. Panopticism, which is the grounded systemization of Panopticon, is the invisibility of power. At that point, the punishment to the body in the visible sense has ended, and instead the constant supervision of the chiefs and principals of enclosed areas such as schools, workshops, factories, barracks on individuals has come into effect. Thus, as Foucault states, a new type of information based on surveillance emerges. This new information, generated through panoptic surveillance, measures whether individuals follow the rules and internalize power. Foucault bu durumu şöyle özetler: *"Thus, a completely different kind of new knowledge, a surveillance and inspection knowledge organized around the norm through the supervision of individuals throughout their lives, as opposed to the great investigative knowledge that was organized in the middle of the Middle Ages through the state appropriation of justice, which consisted of acquiring the means of re-activating facts through testimony."* (Foucault, 2011:225). Bentham describes the purpose of his project as creating states of anxiety and making individuals believe that they are being watched or not knowing whether they are being watched. According to him, this project is the punishment for those who are not reformed in any other institutions, the supervision of the madmen, the forced labor for the lazy, and so on. In short, it is a project to reform all segments of the society that cannot be disciplined, cause problems to the system and cannot be included in production processes (Bentham, 2008:12–13). The Panopticon Bentham is trying to create is in fact a project to level the entire society and to make people nervous with a sense of surveillance.

To sum up, Foucault claims that in the capitalist systems of society of the 20th century, the visible power of central absolute authorities, kings, or those who hold absolute power is over. Instead of concrete, visible punishments imposed by power based on individual authorities, there is now an invisible power in which individuals control themselves. Power has shifted from concrete practices to abstract sanctions. The new power is no longer the power of one person but the "Power of the Eye". The soul, not the body, is being punished (Özgel, 2012:25).

Nowadays, surveillance and surveillance-based control mechanisms differ considerably compared to previous periods. Although Foucault's surveillance analysis was conducted in accordance with his era, it no longer holds validity. This is because now, especially since the beginning of the 1970s, the developments in

information and communication technologies have brought the power of the “eye” to a different point (Vurgun, 2020:1137).

### 3 Super-Panoptic Surveillance

Since the 1970s, surveillance and supervision techniques have developed rapidly and started to become drastically different from its precedents. The first stage of surveillance and supervision practices is super-panoptic surveillance, which is the digital monitoring of individuals by the government, institutions, and companies. The most important feature of this type of surveillance is that the citizens’ data regarding their financial situation, health records, financial transactions by the phone, eligibility to receive social welfare, residence, and education is all stored in the government databases, through hiding behind the idea of making things more convenient (Lyon, 1997:120). In addition, Poster suggests that in the super-panoptic society, the individual has internalized being highly passive and obey. In a voluntary relationship, the individual does not resist the collection and classification of his personal information, on the contrary, he helps this process. He uses his credit card without reservations, answers surveys, and looks forward to buying the means of communication through which monopolies and capitalist forces can easily monitor themselves (cited in: Doru, 2018:71). Individuals’ information keeps circulating and the privacy or confidentiality of the information is not relevant to this. On the one hand, everyone’s personal information can be found in government intelligence units and government agencies, while on the other hand, this information is also used by companies. User personal data are used to analyze consumer habits by the companies, and consumption trends are accordingly determined, thus, the individuals are supervised and directed (Dolgun, 2005:129–131).

In this age of surveillance, unlike Panopticon surveillance, there is now a new way of persuasion. As Lyon states, “*the power of surveillance has become a spectrum from tight and oppressive control to loose and light seduction, from necessity to influence. That is, the social orchestration revealed by contemporary surveillance practices, just like music, is both soft and hard, and politely trying to get support, as well as direct and commanding*” (Lyon, 2006:113).

According to Karakehya and Usluadam, surveillance in the public sphere has a certain logic in our age, and this logic has been legitimized by the authorities over the masses on a number of grounds. Indirect and direct surveillance is carried out by states by making it an issue of safety (cited in: Demircan, 2019:2038). It is no longer very difficult for states to create consent on individuals using terrorism and other threats. In a globalized world where the life safety of individuals has

become important, states have also switched to new surveillance and supervision mechanisms (Mattelart, 2012:256–257).

Both technological changes and social changes have required a change in the practice of surveillance and supervision of individuals. One of these surveillance and supervision practices is the type of surveillance called ‘Synoptic surveillance’.

#### 4 Synoptic Surveillance

While Foucault’s Panopticism is a method used by the minority to control the majority, today, the majority now oversees the minority. The concept of synopticon was put forward by Thomas Mathiesen and is a new type of power that conceptually derives its powers based on surveillance through technology (Vurgun, 2020:1137).

‘Synoptic surveillance’ defines a form of surveillance in which individuals are active and the institutions passive, unlike ‘super-panoptic surveillance’. Mass media such as radio and especially television form the basis of Synopticon, where the many watch the few. Television, radio and newspapers are the most basic components of the cultural industry and their messages are the same for everyone (Öztürk, 2013:140). In essence, Synopticon is a case of transporting individuals from the concrete world to the virtual world through tools such as television, cinema, and providing the desired messages in the virtual environment. The audience is connected to each other through the heroes, events, and experiences in the movies. Firstly, a mental and emotional commonality is achieved. Through this commonality, the intended messages are transmitted, that is, “*through the relationship established with symbols, the majority follows the world of the minority*”. The most crucial feature that distinguishes Synopticon from Panopticon is the fact that the observed has now been manipulated into becoming the passive observer. In this setting, the Panopticon’s physical position being limited to a particular place has disappeared, and people are now supervised while they are having fun, and the ruling power has started to impose their messages through an entertaining environment without making itself felt. Television and cinema are operated as ideological devices. A variety of shows are aired, famous people and athletes often enjoy a great amount of screen time and the continuation of the system is provided making the observers envious and by giving them the message “You could also be like this” (Öztürk, 2013:142).

It is also possible to take the concept of Synopticon within Althusser’s concept of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA). ISA differs from the State Apparatus in terms of the use of violence. The latter shows the existence of the state physically by using violence through law enforcement, while the former (ISA) uses soft

power, that is, it approaches matters ideologically (Althusser, 2014:52–53). In panoptic surveillance and supervision, violence appears more often, while synoptic surveillance and supervision are very strategic, and the state's relations of production are further reproduced in an ideological dimension.

According to Saykozof, the most important feature of the Synopticon is the impressive and guiding power of the few. The many unwittingly demonstrate the power to adapt to the system and the order by complying with the sanctioning power and indoctrination of the few. The sanctioning power of synopticon is directly proportional to the multiplicity of means of communication and the frequency of their use. The fact that people are visually and sensually influenced by the people they follow actually shows that surveillance is digitized through indoctrination and discourse, and that people are voluntarily sentenced to a virtual prison (cited in: Kalaman, 2019:582).

The missing parts of the synoptic surveillance and supervision practices, in other words, the activation of passive individuals and their self-presentation to the public, have been achieved in a process called 'Omniticon surveillance'.

## 5 Omniticon Surveillance

Created as the first stage of electronic surveillance, the synoptic society was a society that was pacified and one that complied with the messages fed to them. However, this system of surveillance still contained problems. An individual who unwittingly internalized rhetoric could somehow hide themselves or hide their actions. The individual had to reveal and show themselves, that is, they had to be an active individual. Everything – from physical appearances and likes to thoughts and actions should be open to public, everyone should follow everyone, and as a result of this pursuit, everyone should be under control, that is, there should be nothing hidden or intimate. Public and private should be intertwined, what happens behind closed doors should be taken outside, and what happens outside should be taken inside, and all the walls should be demolished. The final stage in digital surveillance was for everyone to broadcast everything they do and watch everything others do, thus creating a space where everybody surveils everybody else. Thus, the name of this system, in which everyone follows everyone through internet technologies, is 'Omnitikon'. The concept was first used by Jeffrey Rosen in his 2004 work *The Naked Crowd*. Rosen used the concept to highlight the role of the internet in social surveillance. According to Rosen, the digitized world of today is surveiled and supervised through the internet. The internet has eliminated the boundaries of space and time, and has brought everything together. Now, everything and everyone is visible. In this

virtual world where everyone follows everyone and where the reality is followed through, no one is left unfollowed, and “*The boss follows his worker, the worker his fellow workers, the mother her child and the baby sitter, the ruling power the people and the people the ruling power, the famous the non-famous, and the non-famous the famous, the friend his friend, an individual living in Africa another in Europe, the politician the voter, and the voter the politician*” in short, everyone is under supervision and everyone can follow everyone through internet at the comfort of their houses or their work places, or even while walking (cited in: Kalamani, 2019:582–583).

The characteristic that distinguishes Omnipicon, the control and surveillance model of the postmodern era, from Panopticon, the classical control/surveillance method, is the production of consent of individuals through entertainment and pleasure-based activities located on these social networks. While the domain of Panopticon is local, Omnipicon is global through networks. The main objective being to have fun ensures that individuals do not take surveillance and supervision seriously, or notice it (Okmeydan, 2017:46–47).

## 6 Social Media-Focused Surveillance

Bauman and Lyon aptly analyse the era, stating that our lives are “*divided into two universes, online and offline, and become bi-centered to the point of no return*” (2013:44) in their work “Liquid Surveillance”. Since everything is now digital, everyone is involved in this process, whether voluntarily or reluctantly. Relationships established through the internet and information technologies, which have entered all areas of our lives, have begun to replace face-to-face relationships. The most defining of these relationships is social media. The easy access through one’s phone to social media, which replaces classic relationships, also brings a number of problems, and perhaps most importantly, the issue of surveillance and supervision of individuals.

Most studies related to social media focus on and affirm its positive sides such as the democratizing effect of these internet-based relations and social networks as well as the freedom of speech. But the common feature of approaches that affirm all social media and internet networks is the fact that they have studied and evaluated the visible side. However, criticism coming from various thinkers such as Marcuse, one of the leading thinkers of the Frankfurt School, is important in criticising and understanding the problem regarding social media. Marcuse considers social media and network relations in the context of power. According to him, all networks of relationships and social phenomena in societies have integrity, and this integrity derives its meaning from the relationships of power

and given power. When this approach is taken in the context of social media, it is necessary to take into account the negative aspects of social media as well as the positive aspects. While social media contains features that strengthen democracy, as pointed out before, it also multiplies power relations. Authorities perform surveillance and supervision functions through social media. Today, outside of its personal use, social media and networks have become spaces where companies and states monitor, control, and audit, and where strategies are determined. The presence of individuals as well as institutions and companies on the internet and surveillance of the information flow are indicative of the existence of asymmetric relationships on the internet (Eşitti, 2013:162–163).

Nowadays, all social media applications are surveilled and managed by different power groups. This surveillance often develops outside the will and knowledge of the user, all personal information of users is violated in many ways and their privacy is invaded. On the one hand, the users' information is being analyzed and sorted according to whether it contains any threat by those who hold political power, while on the other hand, social media application companies sell users' information in order to obtain material benefits. User information provided to companies by social media applications is also used in different areas illegally without the users' permission. The area where individuals' privacy is most violated is social media, which is the most used medium by people all over the world (Kalaman, 2019:590–591).

Facebook is also the best example of the surveillance of individuals and the use of individuals' information against their will. The basis of surveillance of Facebook users is to sell users' information to customers in advertisement. Facebook tries to store as much information from its users by trying to get as many people as possible to share posts. The founder and CEO of the platform Mark Zuckerberg pushes users to share with "the concept that the world will be better if you share more", and states that the goal of the platform is to make the world better and more democratic. Zuckerberg has repeatedly said that he does not care about profit, but that he wants to help people through Facebook and create an open society. In order to convince users, Zuckerberg said: "the purpose of the company is to make people share more in order to promote understanding among the people and make the world more open". In a nutshell, surveillance on Facebook is not only an interpersonal process in which users view the information about other individuals; this is primarily an economic surveillance, meaning the data collected through personal data collection, storage, evaluation, and commodification, user behavior and the data that is generated by the user for economic purposes. Facebook and other Web 2.0 platforms are

large advertisement-based capital accumulation machines that achieve their economic goals through economic oversight (Fuchs, 2012:35–36).

Niedzviecki's approach to social media platforms is not driven by economic worries. He suggests that the most important feature of the platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, which put the sense of sight to the fore, is the emergence of a 'peeping' culture. But the surveillance of users is bidirectional by the nature of the platform, that is, "the observer is observed". Adorno suggests that the reason for this "peeping culture" is the "culture industry". According to Adorno, the characteristic of the pleasure-based entertainment culture of this new era is the phenomenon of surveillance and the fact that users volunteer to achieve this pleasure. According to Niedzviecki, individuals' passion for pleasure overtakes privacy. In these platforms, where feelings of pleasure, observation and observation are experienced deeply, individuals can experience disruptions to the routines of their daily lives. Posts shared can sometimes inadvertently hit obstacles in the context of public spaces or private life (İvren, 2019:127).

Toprak's approach to social media platforms is based on the idea that people creating content on networks plays a similar role to the advent of printing press when it comes to sharing information. According to him, the feature that distinguishes social media networks and platforms from classic media is that in the context of content production, users are not passive, but on the contrary, active, they play an active role in creating information. It would not be wrong to say that Andy Warhol's famous words "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minute" came true in the context of social media. Social media is a platform where all kinds of thoughts can be found and examined, where all actions are geared towards or created. When the content of social media is examined superficially, it can be considered that it pioneered the creation of an open society and raised the bar for democracy. According to Foucault, this is exactly the part that should be questioned. The more users appear, the more intense the surveillance is. When users seek freedom on this site, all parts of their posts, personal information, feelings, in short, their identity and subjectivity are commodified by the system and turned into a product of the market. Another important point to note is the memory of social media. Social media's ability to store the past should also be considered when thinking of its potential to create problems for its users by confronting them in the future (Yanık, 2017:794).

## Conclusion

The concept of surveillance is one of the most important phenomena, and it has existed since the early days of humanity. What makes this concept important

is the existence of another concept that complements it, namely the concept of 'supervision'. In surveillance, the goal has always been the same: to supervise. In the early stages of supervised surveillance, the emphasis was on living conditions or nature, whereas this emphasis shifted towards people in the later stages. We see the first examples of supervision-based surveillance of people in applications from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period. Between these two ages, practices have been focused on the human body. The practices of the earlier periods were limited to punishment of the body and torture; while later practices began to put more pressure on the body and mind duo, and this development brought schools, barracks, hospitals and prisons into operation. This body and mind surveillance and supervision has been replaced by digital surveillance with the advent of information technologies. The internalization of information technologies by societies and the inclusion of this technology in all areas of life have brought the concepts of surveillance and supervision to a very different scale. Today, we can roughly study digital surveillance in three areas. First of all, states: individuals/users are often surveiled by states through information technologies and digitalization with the aim of providing security or faster and more reliable services. Secondly, the use of individuals' information by social networks and social sharing platforms and the sharing of this information with companies leads to the commodification of individuals and their transformation into a part of the market. The final point is where social media users watch and follow each other, voyeurizing each other in a way. It is an environment in which everyone watching and watched keeps their guard up in relation to the others. These surveiled environments, in which people are actively and passively involved, actually form social control in a way.

Communication has also changed in quality. Face-to-face relationships have increasingly become virtual ones through social media platforms. As a result of the heavy use of social media, which invokes feelings of pleasure and fun, individuals have now stopped hiding themselves and voluntarily submit all their personal information to the public. The fact that individuals voluntarily present themselves on social media not only increases surveillance practices, but also makes them open to all kinds of supervision.

In summary, while technological developments create new areas of freedom and socialization for people, they also increase surveillance practices. Digitalized lives now make it either impossible or very hard for individuals to have privacy. Given that everything from the fact that shopping transactions in daily life are done with credit cards, to the use of online government services and similar applications in situations involving the state, from the use of biometric identification cards to socialization activities leaves a digital trail, the situation does

not look very good, and it shows that the course of the world is directed towards supervision and surveillance societies.

## References

- Bauman, Z. (2015). *Özgürlük*. (K. Eren, Çev.). İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.
- Bauman, Z., & Lyon, D. (2013). *Akışkan Gözetim*. (B. Doğan, Dü., & E. Yılmaz, Çev.) İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.
- Bentham, J. (2008). Panoptikon Ya Da Gözetim Evi. J. Bentham, C. Watkin, S. Werret, B. Çoban, & Z. Özarslan içinde, *Panoptikon Gözün İktidarı* (B. Çoban, & Z. Özarslan, Çev., 1 b.). İstanbul: SU Yayınları.
- Demircan, G. (2019). gözetim Ve Gözetimin Toplumsal Meşruiyeti Üzerine Bir İnceleme. *D.E.Ü. Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, 21(Özel sayı), s. 2033–2062.
- Dolgun, U. (2005). *ENFORMASYON TOPLUMUNDAN GÖZETİM TOPLUMUNA 21. yüzyılda gözetim, toplumsal denetim ve iktidar ilişkileri*. Ankara: Ekin Kitapevi.
- Doru, İ. (2018). Türkiye’de Sosyal Medya Alanında Yaşanan Gözetim Sorunları: Twitter Üzerinden Bir İnceleme. Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Radyo Televizyon ve Sinema Anabilim Dalı İletişim Bilimleri Bilim Dalı I.
- Eşitti, Ş. (2013). *Gözetim toplumunda sinoptikon ve sosyal medya*. İstanbul: T.C. Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Gazetecilik Ana Bilim Dalı.
- Foucault, M. (2011). *BÜYÜK KAPATILMA* (3 b.). (F. Keskin, Dü., I. Ergüden, & F. Keskin, Çev.). İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.
- Foucault, M. (2012). *İktidarın Gözü* (3 b.). (F. Keskin, Dü., & I. Ergüder, Çev.) İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.
- Fuchs, C. (2012). Critique of Political Economy of Web 2.0 Surveillance. C. Fuchs, K. Boersma, A. Albrechtslund, & M. Sandoval içinde, *Internet and Surveillance* (s. 31–70). Newyork- London: Routledge.
- İvren, B. (2019). Sosyal Medyada Gözetim: Facebook Veri Politikasına Yönelik Kullanıcıların Gizlilik Endişeleri ve Gözetim Farkındalığı Üzerine Bir Araştırma. T.C EGE ÜNİVERSİTESİ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Kahya, Y. (2015). Üniversitede Gözetim ve Kontrol. S. M. Değirmencioğlu, & K. İnal içinde, *Yüksek Öğretimin Serbest Düşüşü: Özel Üniversiteler* (s. 280–296). İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.
- Kalaman, S. (2019). Yeni Medya ve Dijital Gözetim: Türkiye’deki Sosyal Medya Kullanıcıları Üzerine Bir Araştırma. *YÖNETİM VE EKONOMİ*, 26(2), s. 575–594.

- Louis, A. (2017). *İdeoloji ve Devletin İdeolojik Aygıtları* (6 b.). (A. Tümertekin, Çev.) İstanbul: İthaki yayın.
- Lyon, D. (1997). *Elektronik Göz* (1 b.). (D. Hattatoğlu, Çev.) İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi.
- Lyon, D. (2006). *Günlük Hayatı Kontrol Etmek Gözetlenen Toplum* (1 b.). (G. Soykan, Çev.) İstanbul: Kalkedon Yayıncılık.
- Marx, K. (2011). *Kapital I Ekonomi Politikinin Eleştirisi* (1 b., Cilt 1). (M. Selik, & S. Nail, Çev.). İstanbul: Yordam Yayıncılık.
- Mattelart, A. (2012). *Gözetimin Küreselleşmesi-Güvenlileştirme Düzeninin Kökeni*. (O. Gayretli, & E. S. Karacan, Çev.). İstanbul: Kalkedon Yayınları.
- Okmeydan, S. B. (2017). Postmodern Kültürde Gözetim Toplumunun Dönüşümü: 'Panoptikondan 'Sinoptikon' ve 'Omniptikon'a. *AJIT-e: Online Academic Journal of Information Technology*, 8(30), s. 45-69.
- Özdel, G. (2012, Ocak). Foucault Bağlamında İktidarın Görünmezliği Ve "Panoptikon" İle "İktidarın Gözü" Göstergeleri. *The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art and Communication*, 2(1), s. 22-27.
- Öztürk, S. (2013). Filmlerle Görünürlüğün Dönüşümü: Panoptikon, Süperpanoptikon, Sinoptikon. *İle tişim Kuram ve Araştırma Dergisi*, (36/0), s. 132-151.
- Temiztürk, H., & Taner, E. (2015, Temmuz). Gözetleyen İktidardan Gözetlenen İktidara: Yeni İletişim Teknolojilerinin Güç Paylaşımına Etkisi. *Atatürk İletişim Dergisi*, (9/1), s. 25-54.
- Vurgun, Ş. (2020, Ağustos). Panoptik Bir Toplumdan Sinoptik Bir Topluma Dönüşüm: Cesur Yeni Dünya Ve Öjenik Uygulamalar. *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 13(72), s. 1131-1139.
- Wikipedi. (2020, Ekim 10). *Wikipedi özgür ansiklopedi*. Ekim 20, 2020 wikipedia.org: <https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panoptikon>, 20/10/2020
- Yanık, A. (2017, Eylül). Bir Süperpanoptikon Olarak Yeni Medya: Yeni Medya Işığında Gözetimin Eleştirisi. *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Elektronik Dergisi*, 5(2), s. 784-800.

Engin Kanbur & Aysun Kanbur

# Phubbing at Workplace

## 1 Introduction

Humanbeing needs to communicate in life. It is required not only to share information or express feelings and thoughts but also helps them for establishing and maintaining relationships with others. It plays a vital role in life as well as in the workplace, where people spend most of their time. Nowadays, it becomes more complex than ever before due to the increase in technology-driven life of people. Different tools advanced technology brings us, especially our smartphones, make us live at the touch of a button through the ease of use for doing everything. We can see people looking at their phones everywhere, and smartphones have become an integral part of us. Communication process got its share from this. In today's digital society, new communication problems that disrupt the interpersonal linkages of face-to-face interaction are gained based on the use of mobile tools. A new problem has been added to these communication problems in recent years, which is conceptualized as phubbing.

Phubbing can be thought as a modern social phenomenon that is commonly experienced by people. It is the term that is used for explaining the behavior of people looking at their phones instead of being active in social interaction with others. We began to speak this term due to the intensive usage of smartphones. When phubbing occurs, smartphones added the interaction between two side as a third person. It may be hurtful for a person being phubbed, affect social interaction and become the reason for negative psychological outcomes. It can be seen as threatening for the relationships. It is also possible for people to become phubbee (victim of phubbing) or phubber (perpetrator of phubbing). This type of behavior can be commonly observed everywhere with the growing number of phubbees and phubbers day by day.

Phubbing increasingly has turned into a social subject for the workplace (Goodman, 2018). This unpleasant behavior is encountered so often in the workplace that many people now suggest this concept should be evaluated within the field of organizational behavior (Martin, 2019). Phubbing has taken its roots from the social relationships of adolescents, parents, and partners. It is discussed in the literature for them. However, it is now beginning to speak for the workplace. Smartphones make working easier for the employees by changing the way they communicate and help them to do the works they do on the internet

or computers easily. Ultimately, like in other parts of life, this leads people to use their smartphones extensively for doing work or life-related things and interacting socially in work or life-based relations in the workplace. Thus, people experience phubbing in the workplace and it becomes essential to understand this social phenomenon from an organizational and managerial perspective.

Specifically, this study focuses on the term “phubbing” in the context of workplace behavior. Based on this purpose, the study is structured as follows: it begins with introducing the nature of the concept and describes the term. It proceeds by arguing the theoretical background of phubbing and explores different aspects of phubbing by defining them. Then, presents its antecedents and consequences with a particular emphasis on the findings of researches conducted to understand this notion. Finally, the excitement of discovering the existence of this concept in employee-oriented behaviors in the workplace in the digitalized human world is emphasized.

## **2 Nature of Phubbing**

In the technology age, we are in, the internet, computer, and smartphone are in our lives as indispensable elements of daily life. With the facilities it offers, the demand for using smartphones is constantly increasing (Geçgel, 2020). Although it was initially used to meet the need for communication easily and to make individuals accessible, the features of mobile phones have changed day by day and the need for communication has given its priority to functions such as entertainment, socializing, and running daily work. Accordingly, meeting the need for socialization with such an easily accessible technology has caused various problems in face-to-face relationships and one of the problems mentioned in the literature on these issues is phubbing (Orhan Göksün, 2019). The increasing trend of using smartphones is the basis of phubbing.

Phubbing is inextricably blended with smartphone use (Çikrikci, Griffiths & Erzen, 2019). Phubbing refers to the sudden and unexcused interruption of conversations with the use of smartphones that interfere in the face-to-face interaction process, and verbal and nonverbal characteristics in the phubbing behavior create moments of interpersonal disregard (Nunez, Radtke & Eimler, 2020). When a person interacts with her/his smartphone and ignored the surrounding people (i.e., dealing with the phone and escaping from interpersonal communication), this situation can be explained as phubbing (Metsirtrakul et al., 2016). Being phubbed can be considered as an experience of being ignored (David & Roberts, 2017). Through smartphones, individuals share their real lives on social media and follow the posts of their friends, this can negatively

affect school, work, or private life, reduce the communication of individuals with those around them, and every individual becomes a candidate for phubbing with phones that are not left out for popular applications (Büyükgöbüz Koca, 2019). In the 21st century, a significant and ever-growing number of people have experienced this phenomenon (Aagaard, 2020).

Phubbing behavior can be visualized as an ordinary scenario of social life as follows. You are talking to someone (your friend, colleague, or anyone else) and you capture that s/he is looking at the phone (sending a message, checking social media, etc.) or s/he is despising you via looking on the phone during the conversation. This means that you have been phubbed (David & Roberts, 2017). Images of people looking at their phones while walking on the road, taking public transportation, eating in restaurants constitute a Phubbing Society (Metsiritrakul et al., 2016). Researches show that phubbing is common and in recent years the notion that phubbing harms conversation quality has been supported (Vanden Abeele, Hendrickson, Pollmann & Ling, 2019). Phubbing is a concept that includes many possible dynamics such as disrespectful attitude towards the person or persons communicated with, disregarding them, and preferring the virtual environment to real-life (Yıldırım & Ünal, 2020). This situation, which can be seen in all strata of society, reflects the determination to prioritize the smartphone in communication (Escalera-Chavez, Garcia-Santillan & Molchanova, 2020). It is a type of multi-tasking whereby the person divides attention on real-life interaction and virtual interaction as two concurrent tasks in her/his phone usage (Vanden Abeele, Hendrickson, Pollmann & Ling, 2019).

Phubbing is a phenomenon that occurs when a person suddenly turns his gaze down slightly and disappears on her/his phone in social interaction (Aagaard, 2020). It is worth looking closely at this word. The word was born as part of a campaign by the Macquarie Dictionary. In May 2012, the advertising agency behind the “Melbourne McCann” campaign invited several lexicographers, authors, and poets to form a new word to describe this type of behavior. The word has appeared in media around the world and was popularized by the “Stop Phubbing” campaign created by McCann. This campaign is accepted as the beginning of the term discussed and observed in all parts of life (Ugur & Koc, 2015). Phubbing is a portmanteau (forming a word as a result of combining two or more distinct words) of the words of ‘phone’ and ‘snubbing’ (David & Roberts, 2017). In the phubbing process, the person becomes a victim, but s/he is also the perpetrator (Latifa, Mumtaz & Subchi, 2019). Accordingly, an individual who is the recipient of this type of behavior is accepted as ‘phubbee’ and an individual who starts and exhibits this type of behavior is accepted as ‘phubber’ (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018).

This phenomenon has negative consequences that affect psychological well-being (Tekkam, Bala & Pandve, 2020).

Being phubbed creates being ignored, feelings of social exclusion, and ostracization, which in turn increases the need for attention. Phubbees experience depression and their overall well-being decrease and they will try to regain their feeling of loss of power and the feeling of being valued (David & Roberts, 2017). Phubbees characterize phubber's behavior as disrespectful and phubbing damages relationships between individuals (Büyükgebiz Koca, 2019).

### **3 Theoretical Background of Phubbing**

Information and communication technologies have become an inseparable part of our lives. However, they can lead to addiction among individuals. This can be supported by the Theory of Optimal Flow. The experiences in information and communication technologies are so enjoyable for the individuals that they want to continue being there even at its high costs (Salehan & Negahban, 2013). Therefore, the theory of optimal flow is reasonable to expect phubbing behavior from individuals who find it enjoyable to use their phones not considering its negative side effects. On the other hand, according to Self-Determination Theory, one of the basic psychological needs of people is autonomy, which explains the individual's freedom of choice. This freedom means that the individual can determine her/his behavior and make independent decisions, and individuals who make their own choices may prefer to be busy with their telephone. The fact that this occupation occurs constantly, frequently, and at inappropriate times can also disrupt social relationships and results in different problems that can lead to the emergence of behavioral problems. The most important behavioral situation that can cause this problem to occur is the phubbing behavior that arises with the inappropriate use of smartphones (Parmaksız, 2020). One of the theories related to social communication is Uses and Gratification Theory. This theory explains that users want to fulfill their needs by media and the more the needs are met, the higher satisfaction is provided (Mehrad & Tajer, 2016). Adopting this theory into the intention to the usage of technology or phone might explain how can a person tends to use a phone during in face-to-face communication and allows phubbing for maintaining the satisfaction.

Phubbing behavior can be commonly observed and the presence of phubbers and phubbees everywhere raises the discussions on how and why phubbing has become the norm. In this type of behavior, individuals who are ignored from the interaction in phubbing process maybe tend to reciprocate it in an intentional or unintentional manner. Thus, individuals are phubbed and they may

have also become the phubbers like victims and protagonists. In support of this notion, reciprocity, and perpetuation of phubbing cause such behavior to be perceived as a behavioral norm (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016). Regardless of where they are, at work or any social interaction, individuals expect undivided attention from others, therefore, Expectancy Violation Theory can also be employed for phubbing (Roberts & David, 2020). This theory explains that the outcomes of a communication process are based on expectations. When appropriate behaviors or expectations are violated, the person affected in the process will lead to negative outcomes. Phubbing can be seen as a violation behavior. An individual expecting other's attention in interpersonal communication may feel excluded due to the violation in phubbing (Hao et al., 2020). When phubbing behavior in the workplace is thought, some other theories also give support. In terms of boss phubbing, Social Presence Theory can be considered. This theory focuses on the non-verbal cues in interaction and explains that these cues show clear signs of attention. A distracted conversation partner does not display these important nonverbal cues. When the manager exhibits phubbing behavior, s/he signals the employee that his or her input is not valuable, and this leads to negative organizational outcomes (Roberts & David, 2020).

#### **4 Different Aspects of Phubbing**

Phubbing can be encountered wherever we have daily activities (meal, meeting, lecture, or a social gathering with friends and family) (Tekkam, Bala & Pandve, 2020). It is possible to see phubbers and phubbees everywhere. This situation brings out different phubbing discourses. When the current literature is examined, the types of phubbing that have been emphasized so far are accepted as parent phubbing, adolescent phubbing, partner phubbing, co-worker phubbing, and boss phubbing.

Parent phubbing can be explained as parents' use of their smartphones or their distractions due to smartphones when communicating with their children around them (Bai et al., 2020). Besides, phubbing manifests itself as an epidemic case among young people, and problematic phone use by young people draws attention. Smartphone addiction, which is more common in teenagers, is the best predictor of phubbing behavior (Parmaksız, 2020). This aspect of phubbing can be called as adolescent phubbing. Adolescent phubbing and parent phubbing were both positively related to depressive symptoms of adolescents (Bai et al., 2020). Phubbing can also be seen amongst partners. Partner phubbing can be explained as the phubbing behavior performed by a spouse or a romantic partner, couple of an intimate relationship (Cizmeci, 2017). Researches have shown that

partner phubbing had an indirect positive effect on depression through relationship satisfaction among married couples more than 7 years (Wang et al., 2017) and it was significantly related to relationship satisfaction for high self-esteem adults (Wang, Zhao & Lei, 2019).

Phubbing can manifest itself everywhere, and it is also important to reveal phubbing trends in business (Yıldırım & Ünalın, 2020). Nowadays, phubbing increasingly has become a social phenomenon in the workplace (Goodman, 2018). Co-worker and boss or supervisor phubbing may occur in the workplace. Phubbing behaviors among co-workers destroy trust and eventually engagement (Roberts & David, 2017). With the development of smartphones in this age where many factors such as communication are conducted over the phone, it is not possible not to mention the phubbing between employees and supervisors. In general, phubbing can be expressed as one taking care of the phone while individuals are talking among themselves, while boss phubbing can be expressed as the manager taking care of the phone when the employee and the manager are together (Özdemir, 2020). Boss phubbing can be defined as the perception that an employee will be distracted by the smartphone of the supervisor while talking to the supervisor or when they are close to each other in the work environment. Supervisors who exhibit phubbing behavior cannot focus on the subject or problem that their employees are telling (Roberts & David, 2017). Boss phubbing should be examined in researches questioning the effect of technology on relations in the workplace. Boss phubbing identifies the perception of an employee that his/her immediate supervisor is distracted by her/his smartphone while they are in an interaction (Roberts & David, 2020). A trusting relationship between an employee and her/his supervisor is critical to employee involvement, and if an employee's attempts to communicate with her/his supervisor are disrupted by the supervisor's phone use, this can weaken the important relationship (Özdemir, 2020). Ultimately, boss phubbing can be evaluated as the perception of the employee's phubbing behaviors that s/he is exposed to in her/his communication with the manager.

## **5 Antecedents of Phubbing**

Phubbing should be considered as a multi-dimensional concept with smartphones that have the features of the computer and we should be aware of this phenomenon due to its prevalence and destroying potential effects (Karadağ et al., 2015). Nowadays, smartphones are different from their old style, and this differentiation stem from their usage with an Internet connection, therefore it is possible to do everything we do on the internet with smartphones (Cizmeci,

2017). Primarily, smartphone addiction leads to phubbing behavior (Yam & Kumcağız, 2020). The increasing use of smartphones has turned into a form of addiction over time, which has led to mental, clinical, and social problems, and phubbing can be seen as one of these problems (Büyükgebiz Koca, 2019). Information and communication technology usage has multiplied the usage of smartphones and advanced technology of smartphones generates addiction to them, which in turn causes phubbing. Decreasing the quality of interaction between individuals, smartphone addiction can be considered as one of the most important predictors of phubbing in terms of its technological addition and addition of psychological potential motives such as stress, loneliness, and anxiety (Chatterjee, 2020). Prior researches have also identified different factors responsible for phubbing behavior.

Phubbing can be evaluated as the sum of several virtual addictions. Its most prominent determinants were mobile phone, SMS, internet addiction, and social media; additionally, gender and smartphone ownership were remarkable moderators of the impact of these determinants on phubbing (Karadağ et al., 2015). Internet addiction, fear of missing out, and self-control predicted smartphone addiction, which in turn predicted phubbing behavior and the extent to which people are phubbed (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016). Boredom and fear of missing out are determinants of phubbing behavior (Al-Saggaf, 2020). Factors that cause phubbing are not limited to virtual addictions (Ergün, Göksu & Sakız, 2020). Trait boredom determines the frequency of phubbing even when controlled for age and geographical location (Al-Saggaf, MacCulloch & Wiener, 2019). Emotional support from social media was positively related to phubbing, and fear of missing out and problematic social media use were mediating the relationship between emotional support from social media and phubbing behavior (Fang, Wang, Wen & Zhou, 2020). Trait fear of missing out and neuroticism were related to phubbing through state fear of missing out and problematic Instagram use (Balta, Emirtekin, Kircaburun & Griffiths, 2020). Further, people may look at their smartphones in interaction due to an inadequacy to maintain their attention (Al-Saggaf, MacCulloch & Wiener, 2019). Narcissistic vulnerability can be seen as a reason for preferring online interactions, which in turn become the reason for phubbing (Grieve, Lang & March, 2021). Besides, phubbing determine the extent to which phubbing was perceived to be normative, and gender moderated the effect of being phubbed on the perceived social norms of phubbing (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016). Gender and age were seen as a powerful factor in phubbing and researches emphasized that females became phubber more frequently than males (Aydoğdu & Çevik, 2020; Balta, Emirtekin,

Kircaburun & Griffiths, 2020) and younger people had higher levels of phubber behaviors compared to older people (Al-Saggaf, MacCulloch & Wiener, 2019).

## 5 Consequences of Phubbing

Phubbing has experienced by every individual in today's world and work life. It is seen that phubbing has started to carry all types of addiction from the computer to smartphones, and in addition to this, unlike computer-related addictions, it is seen that all these addictions begin to surround the individual at every moment of life (Karadağ et al., 2016). The tendency to exhibit phubbing behavior negatively reflects on the relationships in daily life and its functioning and harms interpersonal communication (Yıldırım & Ünal, 2020). Phubbing brings resentful and negative reactions and negatively impacts the quality of communication (Chatterjee, 2020). Anxieties concerning the harmful side of phubbing are based on the observations that phubbing behaviors interfere with interactional processes (Vanden Abeele, Hendrickson, Pollmann & Ling, 2019). There are negative multiple outcomes related to phubbing.

Phubbing creates a range of negative results, such as lower conversation intimacy and depression (Fang, Wang, Wen & Zhou, 2020). Phubbing can be thought of as a particular type of ostracism or social exclusion that threatens the fundamental needs of belongingness, self-esteem, meaningful existence, and control. It is harmful to feelings of people, fallen mood, creates a negative emotional experience, and has a negative effect on the quality of communication and relationship satisfaction (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2018). Additionally, partner phubbing endangered relationship satisfaction, then impaired life satisfaction and ultimately increased signs of depression (Roberts & David, 2016). Previous researches on phubbing have emphasized that phubbing predicts social disconnectedness (Ang, Teo, Ong & Siak, 2019).

High levels of phubbing are related to high levels of depressive moods and phubbing has a mediating role in the relation between mobile phone addiction and depression (Ivanova et al., 2020). Distinct negative consequences such as anger, low-quality interactions, dissatisfaction, loss of confidence, and disappointment occur via phubbing due to people feeling less close to the person they are interacting with. Besides, intensive phone usage leads to divergent pathologic effects such as memory/eye/hearing problems, postural dysfunctions, headache, back pain, thumb disorders, and carpal tunnel syndrome (Escalera-Chavez, Garcia-Santillan & Molchanova, 2020). Phubbing is a type of smartphone-based social exclusion and an observer indicates stress and negative affect when this behavior is observed by her/him being as a third person in the situation (Nunez,

Radtke & Eimler, 2020). When people are exposed to phubbing in their environment, they questionize the necessity of being in that environment and they get a sense of anger and worthlessness (Parmaksız, 2020). There is a positive and significant relationship between being a phubber and loneliness and exposing to phubbing (Aydoğdu & Çevik, 2020). Many of the researches interested in the effects of phubbing on 'phubbees', phubbing can actually ruin the social interaction and mental health of the phubbees. However, the mental health of the phubbers can also become suffering from the damages phubbing creates in face-to-face communication (Bai et al., 2020).

Extant studies about phubbing have also shown that it generates different negative reactions in the workplace. Roberts and David (2017) investigated phubbing on the relations between supervisors and employees and pointed out that boss phubbing undermined job-related results. According to their findings, boss phubbing significantly and negatively affects employee engagement through the trust in the supervisor and then psychological circumstances of meaningfulness. Employees who have experienced boss phubbing are less likely to feel valued by their supervisor, which may, in turn, impact their overall performance, morale, and productivity (Martin, 2019). Boss phubbing has a negative relationship with employee job performance through the trust in supervisor and job satisfaction (Roberts & David, 2020). Many people agree that phubbing is not acceptable. However, this awareness does not prevent the excessive performance of this behavior (Ergün, Göksu & Sakız, 2020). In the context of the consequences of phubbing, it is crucial for businesses to think about how to reduce the potential negative results of workplace phubbing (David & Roberts, 2017).

## Conclusion

Social life requires living together. As humans, individuals need interaction with others. A social interaction explains an exchange or a mutual relation between individuals and it refers the essence of the dynamic communication process. It has a vital role in daily life and also in the workplace where people spent much of their time. Communication inevitably lived at all levels (between co-workers or manager and staff) in a workplace. Besides, technology-driven tools affect social interactions at work as in life. At this juncture, examining the extensive smartphone usage and its effects takes attention. Smartphones not only combine the Internet and computers in our hand with their ease of use but also they create visual-based addictions. Under the discussions whether they are beneficial or harmful, new concepts arisen for the literature due to their heightening negative

effects. Thus, “phubbing” has been begun spoken for every aspect of human life as a modern social phenomenon.

In the workplace, communication is important for effectiveness being an integral part of working. Positive interactions lead to positive outcomes whereas negative interactions lead to negative outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary not to ruin the quality of the communication. However, phubbing creates a negative interaction through adding smartphones in the communication as a third person. Phubbees may feel being disregarded, phubbers may feel guilty or phubbees may become phubbers whereas phubbers may become phubbees during the interaction or another time. Unfortunately, for individuals in the workplace, phubbing will create negative outcomes. It should be outlined that phubbing will create negative outcomes for organizations, too. In line with this, it is necessary to make much more researches for understanding the work-related nature of this phenomenon, the reasons behind it, and its different effects on employees and organizations.

The importance of establishing and maintaining good relationships in the workplace is examined and emphasized many times in organizational researches. Being an essential tool for success, it is always on the agenda of organizations. However, unfavorable behaviors damage the relations and organizational system. People need to be aware of phubbing as the newest problem of healthy relationships at work. It has been suggested that organization-based discussions on future phubbing studies should also turn into searching the ways to stop it and to overcome its difficulties surrounding us. As a consequence, it must be kept in mind that phubbing means more than just “looking at the phone”.

## References

- Aagaard, J. (2020). Digital akrasia: A qualitative study of phubbing. *AI & Society*, 35, 237–244.
- Al-Saggaf, Y. (2020). Phubbing, fear of missing out and boredom. *Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science*, 6, 1–6.
- Al-Saggaf, Y., MacCulloch, R., & Wiener, K. (2019). Trait boredom is a predictor of phubbing frequency. *Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science*, 4(3), 245–252.
- Ang, C. S., Teo, K. M., Ong, Y. L., & Siak, S. L. (2019). Investigation of a preliminary mixed method of phubbing and social connectedness in adolescents. *Addiction & Health*, 11(1), 1–12.
- Aydoğdu, F., & Çevik, Ö. (2020). The examination of the effect of phubbing behaviors of school psychological counselors on being phubbed and loneliness. *Humanistic Perspective*, 2(3), 219–230.

- Bai, Q., Lei, L., Hsueh, F. H., Yu, X., Hu, H., Wang, X., & Wang, P. (2020). Parent-adolescent congruence in phubbing and adolescents' depressive symptoms: A moderated polynomial regression with response surface analyses. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 275, 127–135.
- Balta, S., Emirtekin, E., Kircaburun, K., & Griffiths, M. D. (2020). Neuroticism, trait fear of missing out, and phubbing: The mediating role of state fear of missing out and problematic Instagram use. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 18(3), 628–639.
- Büyükgebiz Koca, E. (2019). A literature review on smartphone addiction and phubbing. *Eurasian J. of Researches in Social and Economics*, 6(6), 399–411.
- Chatterjee, S. (2020). Antecedents of phubbing: From technological and psychological perspectives. *Journal of Systems and Information Technology*, 22(2), 161–178.
- Chotpitayasunondh, V., & Douglas, K. M. (2016). How “phubbing” becomes the norm: The antecedents and consequences of snubbing via smartphone. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 63, 9–18.
- Chotpitayasunondh, V., & Douglas, K. M. (2018). The effects of “phubbing” on social interaction. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 48(6), 304–316.
- Çikrikci, Ö., Griffiths, M. D., & Erzen, E. (2019). Testing the mediating role of phubbing in the relationship between the big five personality traits and satisfaction with life. *Intern. Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 17, 1–13.
- Cizmeci, E. (2017). Disconnected, though satisfied: Phubbing behavior and relationship satisfaction. *The Turkish Online Journal of Design, Art and Communication*, 7(2), 364–375.
- David, M. E., & Roberts, J. A. (2017). Phubbed and alone: Phone snubbing, social exclusion, and attachment to social media. *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 2(2), 155–163.
- Ergün, N., Göksu, İ., & Sakız, H. (2020). Effects of phubbing: Relationships with psychodemographic variables. *Psychological Reports*, 123(5), 1578–1613.
- Escalera-Chavez, M. E., Garcia-Santillan, A., & Molchanova, V. S. (2020). Phubbing behavior: Is there a gender difference in college students? *European Journal of Contemporary Education*, 9(3), 546–551.
- Fang, J., Wang, X., Wen, Z., & Zhou, J. (2020). Fear of missing out and problematic social media use as mediators between emotional support from social media and phubbing behavior. *Addictive Behaviors*, 107, 1–7.
- Geçgel, H. (2020). Investigation of smartphone addiction levels of Turkish pre-service teachers with regards to various variables. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 16(3), 1415–1442.

- Goodman, N. (2018). Micro-aggressions and phubbing in the age of FoMO. *Training*, March/April, 54–55.
- Grieve, R., Lang, C. P., & March, E. (2021). More than a preference for online social interaction: Vulnerable narcissism and phubbing. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 175, 110715.
- Hao, L., Lv, Q., Zhang, X., Jiang, Q., & Ping, L. (2020). Avatar identification mediates the relationship between peer phubbing and mobile game addiction. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 48(10), 1–15.
- Ivanova, A., Gorbaniuk, O., Błachnio, A., Przepiórka, A., Mraka, N., Polishchuk, V., & Gorbaniuk, J. (2020). Mobile phone addiction, phubbing, and depression among men and women: A moderated mediation analysis. *Psychiatric Quarterly*, 91, 655–668.
- Karadağ, E., Tosuntaş, Ş. B., Erzen, E., Duru, P., Bostan, N., Mızrak-Şahin, B., Çulha, İ., & Babadağ, B. (2016). Sanal dünyanın kronolojik bağımlılığı: Sosyotelizm (phubbing). *Addicta: The Turkish Journal on Addiction*, 3(2), 223–269.
- Karadağ, E., Tosuntaş, Ş. B., Erzen, E., Duru, P., Bostan, N., Şahin, B. M., Çulha, İ., & Babadağ, B. (2015). Determinants of phubbing, which is the sum of many virtual addictions: A structural equation model. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 4(2), 60–74.
- Latifa, R., Mumtaz, E. F., & Subchi, I. (2019, November). Psychological explanation of phubbing behavior: Smartphone addiction, empathy and self control. In 7<sup>th</sup> CITSM (7, pp. 1–5). IEEE.
- Martin, G. (2019). Smart-phone snubbing can damage workplace culture and expose bosses' double standards. *Canberra Times*, February-02, 10.
- Mehrad, J., & Tajer, P. (2016). Uses and gratification theory in connection with knowledge and information science: A proposed conceptual model. *Intern. Journal of Information Science and Management (IJISM)*, 14(2), 1–14.
- Metsiritrakul, K., Puntavachirapan, N., Kobchaisawat, T., Leelhapantu, S., & Chalidabhongse, T. H. (2016). UP2U: Program for raising awareness of phubbing problem with stimulating social interaction in public using augmented reality and computer vision. In 13<sup>th</sup> JCSSE (pp. 1–6). IEEE.
- Nunez, T. R., Radtke, T., & Eimler, S. C. (2020). A third-person perspective on phubbing: Observing smartphone-induced social exclusion generates negative affect, stress, and derogatory attitudes. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 14(3), 1–22.
- Orhan Göksün, D. (2019). Adaptation of general scales of phubbing and being phubbed into Turkish. *Afyon Kocatepe University Journal of Social Sciences*, 21(3), 657–671.

- Özdemir, S. (2020). Boss phubbing: A scale adaptation study. *Dicle University, Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, 10(19), 134–145.
- Parmaksız, İ. (2020). Phubbing in communication and relationships. *The Journal of Turkish Social Research*, 24(2), 359–372.
- Roberts, J. A., & David, M. E. (2016). My life has become a major distraction from my cell phone: Partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction among romantic partners. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 54, 134–141.
- Roberts, J. A., & David, M. E. (2017). Put down your phone and listen to me: How boss phubbing undermines the psychological conditions necessary for employee engagement. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 75, 206–217.
- Roberts, J. A., & David, M. E. (2020). Boss phubbing, trust, job satisfaction and employee performance. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 155, 1–8.
- Salehan, M., & Negahban, A. (2013). Social networking on smartphones: When mobile phones become addictive. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(6), 2632–2639.
- Tekkam, S. D., Bala, S., & Pandve, H. (2020). Consequence of phubbing on psychological distress among the youth of Hyderabad. *Medical Journal of Dr. DY Patil Vidyapeeth*, 13(6), 642.
- Ugur, N. G., & Koc, T. (2015). Time for digital detox: Misuse of mobile technology and phubbing. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 195, 1022–1031.
- Vanden Abeele, M. M. P., Hendrickson, A.T., Pollmann, M. M. H., & Ling, R. (2019). Phubbing behavior in conversations and its relation to perceived conversation intimacy and distraction: An exploratory observation study. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 100, 35–47.
- Wang, X., Xie, X., Wang, Y., Wang, P., & Lei, L. (2017). Partner phubbing and depression among married Chinese adults: The roles of relationship satisfaction and relationship length. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 110, 12–17.
- Wang, X., Zhao, F., & Lei, L. (2019). Partner phubbing and relationship satisfaction: Self-esteem and marital status as moderators. *Current Psychology*, 1–11.
- Yam, F. C., & Kumcağız, H. (2020). Adaptation of general phubbing scale to Turkish culture and investigation of phubbing levels of university students in terms of various variables. *Addicta: The Turkish Journal on Addictions*, 7(1), 48–60.
- Yıldırım, O., & Ünalın, D. (2020). The evaluation of digital native sociotelism (phubbing) trends. *Gumushane University e-journal of Faculty of Communication*, 8(1), 276–297.



İlksun Didem ÜLBEĞİ

# Cyberloafing in the Workplace: A Meta-Analysis Study

## 1 Introduction

The introduction of the Internet into our lives contributed to work life with positive aspects, changed the way we do business, increased productivity, reduced costs and increased efficiency (Anandarajan, Simmers & Igbaria, 2000; Teo & Too, 2000; Liberman, Seidman, McKenna & Buffardi, 2011). This global network with almost unlimited “information and communication facilities” (lexico.com/definition/internet) has integrated into every area of our lives, including the good, the bad, and the ugly. Therefore, benefits of the convenience, speed, and opportunities might also bring the unfavorable part to individuals and organizations. While deviant behaviors occur in various types in organizational life (e.g., mobbing, abusive supervision, incivility), Internet brought distinctive forms of these unwanted behaviors (e.g., Internet addiction, cyberbullying, Internet stalking). Formerly social loafing identified as a deviant behavior in the workplace whereas cyberloafing emerged additionally with specific characteristics to Internet use.

Cyberloafing is defined as using the Internet during the working hours for non-work-related personal purposes (Kim & Bryne, 2011). Several studies referred the phenomenon as “cyberslacking” (Lavoie ve Pychyl, 2001; Whitty & Carr, 2006; Vitak, Crouse & LaRouse, 2011), “cyberdeviancy” (Weatherbee, 2010), and “cyberbludging” (Mills, Hu, Beldona & Clay, 2001). Cyberloafing activities engage employees and prevent them doing their job approximately three hours a week to two and a half hours a day (Mills et al., 2001; Greenfield & Davis, 2002).

Cyberloafing is assessed as a deviant behavior related to efficiency of employees due to the productivity loss (Lim & Chen, 2012). Several studies examined the effect of cyberloafing on productivity and displayed that cyberloafing activities decreases productivity (e.g., Bilgin Demir, Ürek & Uğurluoğlu, 2017; Güğercin & Çavuş, 2021) whereas other studies suggest a positive effect as a coping strategy (e.g., Oravec, 2002; Coker, 2011; Lim & Chen, 2012). Researchers also studied the relationship between cyberloafing and job performance. According to several research findings cyberloafing decreases job performance (e.g., Erdem, 2020;

Özüdoğru & Yıldırım, 2020), however Afacan Fındıklı (2016) showed both positive and negative effects in two different samples. Moreover, Mercado, Giordano, and Dilchert (2017) identified an insignificant correlation between cyberloafing and performance ( $\rho=-0.05$ ).

Moreover, regarding cyberloafing and job satisfaction relationship, research also indicates contradictory findings. Vitak et al. (2011) found no significant relationship with job dissatisfaction, however they concluded that texting and using social network sites activities increase with a decrease in employees' job satisfaction levels. Additionally, in their meta-analysis study Mercado et al. (2017) identified an insignificant ( $\rho=-0.04$ ) correlation between cyberloafing and job satisfaction. Moreover, Çetin & Akyelli (2020) reported a positive relationship, whereas Yıldırım (2018a) reported a negative relationship between cyberloafing and job satisfaction.

In this context, this study aims to determine the correlates of cyberloafing, serious cyberloafing, and minor cyberloafing using psychometric meta-analysis method. Considering the contradictory findings, this meta-analysis attempts to clarify these relations. In this regard, by examining and compiling cyberloafing studies in Turkish samples, the effect sizes of these correlations will be revealed. Since conflicting findings exist regarding the power and direction, this meta-analysis study will provide a base for future studies.

## 2 Background

Cyberloafing is defined as deliberate use of Internet by employees for individual, non-work-related purposes both with organizational and personal devices during work hours (Kim & Bryne, 2011:2272; Henle & Kedharnath, 2012:560). Cyberloafing is regarded as a deviant behavior due to the violation of the organizational norms (Warren, 2003; Blanchard & Henle, 2008). According to this approach, cyberloafing behaviors that violate the norms are regarded as unacceptable and deviant whereas behaviors that do not violate the norms are regarded in the acceptable category (Kim & Bryne, 2011:2272). Blanchard & Henle (2008:1071) categorized two forms of cyberloafing based on Robinson & Bennet's (2008) deviant workplace behaviors typology. According to this approach acceptable activities are minor cyberloafing behaviors, and deviant ones are serious cyberloafing behaviors (Blanchard & Henle, 2008:1071).

Cyberloafing activities can include sending and receiving personal e-mails (i.e., family, friends), posting on social networking sites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), gaming online, watching videos (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo), shopping online, visiting news channels, gambling online, downloading music, games,

videos, chatting online, visiting auction sites, watching movies or shows, hunting a new job online, trading stocks, buying car or house (Stewart, 2000; Mills et al., 2001; Blanchard & Henle, 2008; Chen, Chen & Yang, 2008; Liberman et al., 2011). According to Blanchard and Henle's (2008) typology illegal or decremental activities to the organization (e.g., online gambling, torrenting, etc.) are considered as serious cyberloafing whereas legal and common use of Internet activities are considered as minor cyberloafing (e.g., e-mail sending-receiving).

Cyberloafing activities can lead various damaging effects on the organization. Cyberloafing decrease employees' productivity due to wasting time on these non-work-related activities rather than work itself (Weatherbee, 2010; Henle & Kedharnath, 2012). Additionally, due to the cyberloafing of employees, the organization faces the risk of liability in legal aspect (Stewart, 2000; Mills et al., 2001; Liberman et al., 2011). Moreover, excess use of the organization's computer system will affect the bandwidth negatively (Stewart, 2000; Mills et al., 2001; Weatherbee, 2010; Henle & Kedharnath, 2012). Cyberloafing also exposes organizations to cyber-attacks and risks such as viruses, trojans, and malware. In addition to these threats, employees' interaction on social media or via e-mail (e.g., racist jokes, harassment, hate-speech on social media posts, cyberstalking a coworker or customer) (Scheuermann & Langford, 1997; Liberman et al., 2011).

Cyberloafing relation with performance has been a conflicting discussion in the related literature. In several studies, cyberloafing has been regarded as a facilitator for knowledge transfer, coping mechanism (i.e., stress, boredom) (Belanger & Van Slyke, 2002; Stoddart, 2016), and a recovery tool (Reinecke, 2009; Coker, 2013), leading to better results like better performance (Cao, Guo, Vogel & Zhang, 2016). Askew (2012) showed no significant correlations regarding performance however found that cyberloafing with long breaks has a negative relationship with performance, and short breaks displayed no significant relation. According to Blanchard & Henle (2008), cyberloafing has no effect on performance under certain conditions. According to this approach, since employees have certain amount of work, and engage cyberloafing after they complete their tasks (Askew, 2012). In their meta-analysis, Mercado et al. (2017) found no significant relationship between cyberloafing and performance. Also, a variety of studies found negative correlations between cyberloafing and performance (e.g., Erdem, 2020; Özüdoğru & Yıldırım, 2020).

Regarding the discussion of whether cyberloafing affects productivity positively or negatively, one approach suggests that cyberloafing increases productivity and creativity (Belanger & Van Slyke, 2002; Oravec, 2002; Garrett & Danzinger, 2008) while another suggests that cyberloafing is a deviant work behavior that negatively affects productivity. Bilgin Demir et al. (2017) found

negative correlations between productivity and serious and minor cyberloafing. Additionally, Güğərçin and Çavuş (2021) reported their results in the same direction.

Several individual and organizational (Anandarajan et al., 2000) causes for cyberloafing have been discussed in the literature. Askew (2012) found a negative and negligible correlation between cyberloafing and job satisfaction, however in the same study she showed a negative and significant relationship between cyberloafing on a cellphone and job satisfaction. Çetin and Akyelli (2020) found a positive relationship between cyberloafing and job satisfaction. Moreover, Öztürk, Akman Dömbekci, and Yeşildal (2018) identified positive correlation between cyberloafing and job satisfaction as well. On the other hand, Stanton (2002) found no significant relationship between personal internet use and job satisfaction. Additionally, Mastrangelo, Everton, and Jolton (2006) identified no correlation between nonproductive use of Internet and job satisfaction.

One reason for cyberloafing has been suggested as employees' injustice perceptions (Vitak et al., 2001). Lim (2002) found a negative relationship between cyberslacking and distributive, interactional, and procedural justice. Blau, Yang, and Ward-Cook, (2006) showed a significant and negative relationship between cyberloafing and organizational justice perceptions. In their study with 238 employees, Restubog, Garcia, Toledano, Amarnani, Tolentino, and Tang (2011) identified that interactional justice and procedural justice are both negatively related with self-reported cyberloafing and co-worker rated cyberloafing.

Personality traits have been suggested as an antecedent of cyberloafing. Jia, Jia, and Karau (2013) showed that cyberloafing were correlated with conscientiousness, emotional stability, and agreeableness negatively, however they could not find significant correlations with extraversion and openness to experience. Mercado et al. (2017) found similar results in their meta-analysis study.

Aghaz and Sheikh (2016) showed that cyberloafing behaviors were correlated with emotional exhaustion and cynicism positively. Additionally, Koay (2018) found a positive relationship between cyberloafing and emotional exhaustion. Yildiz Durak and Saritepeci (2019) also identified a positive relationship between burnout and cyberloafing. Özüdoğru and Yıldırım (2020) showed that cyberloafing was correlated with job stress positively. However, Stanton (2002) found no significant relationship between personal internet use and stress. Similarly, Garrett and Danzinger (2008) identified no relationships between personal Internet use during work and job stress.

Stanton (2002) displayed no significant relationship between personal Internet use and organizational commitment, whereas Garrett and Danzinger (2008) found a low but significant negative correlation. Babadağ (2018) showed

that cyberloafing was correlated significantly with work alienation. Similarly, Yıldırım (2018b) also found a positive relationship between cyberloafing and work alienation. However, Seçkin (2020) reported a negative correlation between cyberloafing and work alienation.

Another predictor of cyberloafing has been examined as ethical climate in the organization. Çiçek (2020) identified negative relationship between cyberloafing and ethical climate while Kayapalı Yıldırım and Karabey (2017) found that cyberloafing was correlated negatively with ethical climate. Psychological contract has been also investigated regarding its relationship with cyberloafing. In a study, Agarwal and Avey (2020) showed a positive relationship between cyberloafing and psychological contract breach. Similarly, Yıldırım (2018) found that cyberloafing was correlated with psychological contract breach positively. Yıldız, Yıldız and İyigün (2016) identified that cyberloafing was correlated with relational and transactional psychological contract perceptions.

### 3 Method

I conducted a literature search to reveal relevant research studies for this meta-analysis. First, I used “Dergipark National Academic Journals database” for the keywords “cyberloafing” and “cyberslacking”. Second, I searched in Google scholar academic search engine for the same keywords. Third, I explored “Council of Higher Education National Thesis Center”. Lastly, I conducted a manual search for two annual conferences in Turkey, “National Management and Organization Congress (2004–2020)” and “Organizational Behavior Congress (2013–2019)” for relevant studies. These searches yielded 160 studies regarding cyberloafing in total. I developed a coding sheet for recording the data from relevant studies. This sheet included the author(s) name(s), article’s publishing year, sample size, correlation coefficient(s), reliability coefficients (if reported), and study type.

I have considered various inclusion criteria as to which of these studies I will make a part of this meta-analysis. I used the research studies that fit the criteria in the analysis. I included only empirical studies, studies using an employee sample, (excluded student samples), reporting Pearson correlation coefficients, t or F values between variables, and examining cyberloafing as a composite construct, and with two dimensions, serious cyberloafing and minor cyberloafing.

I examined the research studies according to the inclusion criteria, and this yielded to 38 research articles, 14 unpublished master’s dissertations, and 2 conference papers, in total 54 studies. Most of the research about cyberloafing in Turkey was conducted in 2020 (13 studies), in 2018 (12 studies) and 2019 (9 studies). Two studies have already been conducted in 2021, and this can be

considered as an indicator of the continuation of research on cyberloafing. It is possible to state that the number of studies on the subject has increased in recent years, especially the rise of different kinds of social media tools and the increase in the extensive usage of Internet for various purposes induce cyberloafing behavior which brings the need for more investigation.

I calculated the effect size between the correlates of serious cyberloafing, minor cyberloafing, and cyberloafing reported in 54 studies. Research in North America generally examines cyberloafing as a composite construct and therefore report accordingly, however studies in Turkey mostly assess the subdimensions and present those relations. Therefore, in this study, correlates of sub-dimensions serious cyberloafing, minor cyberloafing and cyberloafing as a composite construct were explored in different analyzes.

I used psychometric meta-analysis method by Hunter and Schmidt (2004) and conducted the analyzes by using "Software for Hunter-Schmidt meta-analysis methods, Version 2.0" (Schmidt & Le, 2014) and Microsoft Excel. I conducted three separate set of analyzes regarding serious cyberloafing, minor cyberloafing, and cyberloafing, and corrected both for sampling errors and unreliability of scales. Several studies have not reported the reliability coefficients, in this case I used the average value of the reliability coefficients.

## 4 Results

Tab. 9.1 shows the results regarding serious cyberloafing. Minor cyberloafing displayed a high-level positive relationship with serious cyberloafing ( $\rho=0.72$ ) indicating employees experiencing serious cyberloafing will also engage in minor cyberloafing behaviors. Regarding personality dimensions, only conscientiousness showed a significant but low-level negative relationship ( $\rho=-0.15$ ) whereas other dimensions (neuroticism, agreeableness, extraversion, and openness) demonstrated no significant correlations with serious cyberloafing since 95 % confidence intervals including zero.

Serious cyberloafing was correlated with job performance and productivity moderately negatively ( $\rho=-0.42$ ,  $\rho=-0.46$ , respectively) indicating employees showing serious cyberloafing behavior will have low level of performance and productivity. The correlation between serious cyberloafing and ethical climate resulted moderately negative level ( $\rho=-0.31$ ) meaning employees in organization with an ethical climate do not engage in serious cyberloafing behaviors.

Regarding the employee perceptions, transactional and relational psychological contract perceptions related to serious cyberloafing moderate and low level respectively ( $\rho=0.34$ ,  $\rho=0.27$ ). I also examined the relationships between

attitudes and cyberloafing. Job satisfaction and continuous commitment produced no significant results, however affective commitment showed a significant moderate positive relationship ( $\rho=-0.44$ ).

Tab. 9.2 presents the results concerning minor cyberloafing. Similar to serious cyberloafing openness showed no significant relationship, whereas extraversion and agreeableness displayed low level results ( $\rho=0.25$ ,  $\rho=-0.19$ , respectively). Job satisfaction showed a low positive correlation ( $\rho=0.13$ ) whereas continuous commitment displayed no significant relationship with minor cyberloafing. Unlike serious cyberloafing, minor cyberloafing demonstrated a moderately positive correlation with work alienation ( $\rho=0.36$ ).

Distributive and interactional justice showed moderate level negative relationships with minor cyberloafing while procedural justice demonstrated low level correlation ( $\rho=-0.39$ ,  $\rho=-0.33$ ,  $\rho=-0.27$ , respectively). Similar to serious cyberloafing, minor cyberloafing displayed moderate negative relationship with productivity ( $\rho=-0.38$ ). Moreover, emotional exhaustion showed moderate positive correlation with minor cyberloafing ( $\rho=0.39$ ).

Tab 9.3 presents the analyzes results regarding cyberloafing. Cyberloafing displayed no significant relationships between job satisfaction, work alienation, and organizational justice since 95 % confidence intervals including zero. However, job performance and organizational cynicism demonstrated moderate correlations ( $\rho=-0.34$ ,  $\rho=0.37$ , respectively), while job stress displayed a low-level positive relationship ( $\rho=0.28$ ).

Tab. 9.1. Meta-analysis results (serious cyberloafing)

Serious Cyberloafing	k	n	$\rho$	SDo	SDp	80 % CR		95 % CI		Var %
						Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	
Minor Cyberloafing	42	11273	0.72	0.21	0.20	0.45	0.98	0.65	0.78	5.17
Neuroticism	7	2008	0.09	0.20	0.19	-0.14	0.34	-0.05	0.25	13.38
Agreeableness	4	1303	-0.14	0.23	0.22	-0.42	0.15	-0.36	0.09	8.69
Extraversion	4	806	0.11	0.20	0.18	-0.12	0.34	-0.09	0.31	19.39
Work Alienation	4	1251	0.22	0.38	0.38	-0.27	0.70	-0.16	0.59	2.53
Job Satisfaction	3	1114	0.12	0.16	0.15	-0.07	0.31	-0.06	0.30	15.07
Affective Commitment	3	582	-0.44	0.36	0.35	-0.89	0.01	-0.84	-0.03	3.99
Openness	2	343	0.02	0.40	0.39	-0.48	0.52	-0.53	0.57	4.75
Conscientiousness	2	795	-0.15	0.02	0.00	-0.15	-0.15	-0.18	-0.12	586.36
Productivity	2	576	-0.46	0.01	0.00	-0.46	-0.46	-0.47	-0.44	2822.28
Ethical Climate	2	605	-0.31	0.07	0.03	-0.35	-0.26	-0.41	-0.21	77.53
Continuous Commitment	2	342	-0.42	0.37	0.36	-0.88	0.05	-0.93	0.09	5.01
Job Performance	2	313	-0.42	0.27	0.26	-0.75	-0.09	-0.80	-0.04	9.97
Transactional Psychological Contract	2	554	0.34	0.02	0.00	0.34	0.34	0.31	0.36	1648.27
Relational Psychological Contract	2	554	0.27	0.09	0.05	0.21	0.33	0.15	0.39	69.99

Note: k = total number of studies, n = total sample size,  $\rho$  = weighted average corrected correlation, SDo = observed standard deviation of corrected correlations, SDp = estimated true/residual standard deviation of corrected correlation, %80 GR = %80 credibility interval centered on average corrected correlation, % 95 GA = lower and upper limits % 95 confidence interval constructed around the uncorrected N-weighted mean correlation, Var % = Total variance percentage due to the corrected sampling error and measurement unreliability

**Tab. 9.2.** Meta-analysis results (minor cyberloafing)

Minor Cyberloafing	k	n	$\rho$	SD $\rho$	SD $\rho$	80 % CR		95 % CI		Var %
						Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	
Job Satisfaction	3	1114	0.13	0.06	0.09	0.01	0.25	0.06	0.20	30.23
Work Alienation	3	1014	0.36	0.05	0.26	0.03	0.69	0.29	0.42	4.33
Extraversion	3	564	0.25	0.04	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.21	0.29	534.04
Agreeableness	2	504	-0.19	0.08	0.00	-0.19	-0.19	-0.32	-0.08	134.28
Openness	2	493	0.28	0.28	0.26	-0.06	0.62	-0.10	0.67	8.73
Distributive Justice	2	308	-0.39	0.08	0.00	-0.39	-0.39	-0.50	-0.28	104.83
Interactional Justice	2	308	-0.33	0.02	0.00	-0.33	-0.33	-0.35	-0.31	1975.81
Procedural Justice	2	431	-0.27	0.06	0.00	-0.27	-0.27	-0.35	-0.18	164.64
Productivity	2	576	-0.38	0.01	0.00	-0.38	-0.38	-0.40	-0.36	1335.91
Continuous Commitment	2	342	-0.37	0.33	0.32	-0.79	0.04	-0.84	0.08	6.09
Emotional Exhaustion	2	229	0.39	0.09	0.00	0.39	0.39	0.26	0.52	1027.23

Note: k = total number of studies, n = total sample size,  $\rho$  = weighted average corrected correlation, SD $\rho$  = observed standard deviation of corrected correlations, SDp = estimated true/residual standard deviation of corrected correlation, %80 GR = %80 credibility interval centered on average corrected correlation, % 95 GA = lower and upper limits % 95 confidence interval constructed around the uncorrected N-weighted mean correlation, Var % = Total variance percentage due to the corrected sampling error and measurement unreliability

**Tab. 9.3.** Meta-analysis results (cyberloafing)

Cyberloafing	<i>k</i>	<i>n</i>	$\rho$	<i>SDo</i>	<i>SD<math>\rho</math></i>	80 % CR		95 % CI		Var %
						Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	
Job Performance	5	1403	-0.34	0.28	0.27	-0.68	0.01	-0.58	-0.10	5.22
Job Satisfaction	4	1506	0.05	0.31	0.30	-.034	0.45	-0.26	0.36	3.49
Organizational Cynicism	4	770	0.37	0.01	0.04	0.32	0.41	0.36	0.38	81.31
Job Stress	2	790	0.28	0.05	0.00	0.28	0.28	0.21	0.36	103.15
Work Alienation	2	789	0.32	0.32	0.31	-0.08	0.73	-0.12	0.77	2.78
Organizational Justice	2	468	-0.12	0.52	0.51	0.78	0.55	-0.84	0.61	1.72

*Note.* *k* = total number of studies, *n* = total sample size,  $\rho$  = weighted average corrected correlation, *SDo* = observed standard deviation of corrected correlations, *SD $\rho$*  = estimated true/residual standard deviation of corrected correlation, %80 GR = %80 credibility interval centered on average corrected correlation, % 95 GA = lower and upper limits % 95 confidence interval constructed around the uncorrected N-weighted mean correlation, Var % = Total variance percentage due to the corrected sampling error and measurement unreliability.

## 5 Discussion

The aim of this meta-analysis study was to examine cyberloafing in the workplace in Turkey. Findings showed notable results since certain correlates of cyberloafing have been inconsistent in the literature. Productivity and job performance correlations with serious cyberloafing ( $\rho=-0.42$ ,  $\rho=-0.46$ ), productivity correlation with minor cyberloafing ( $\rho=-0.38$ ), and performance correlation with cyberloafing ( $\rho=-0.34$ ) were all negative, suggesting that employees engaging in any kind of cyberloafing lead to low levels of productivity and performance. (e.g., Afacan Fındıklı, 2016; Bilgin Demir et al., 2017; Erdem, 2020; Özüdoğru & Yıldırım, 2020; Güğerçin & Çavuş, 2021) Regarding the conflicting debate that cyberloafing might result in positive performance and productivity outcomes did not apply according to these findings.

Personality traits displayed significant correlations with cyberloafing and two dimensions. Agreeableness showed negative correlations whereas extroversion displayed positive correlations with serious and minor cyberloafing. Neuroticism indicated negligible positive relationship with only serious cyberloafing while openness to experience revealed negligible negative relationships with both

dimensions. Conscientiousness showed negative correlation with only serious cyberloafing. (e.g., Jia et al., 2013; Mercado et al., 2017)

Study results revealed the role of employees' perceptions in cyberloafing. Psychological contract breach perceptions (transactional-relational) showed positive relationships with serious cyberloafing ( $\rho=0.34$ ,  $\rho=0.27$ ) indicating that perceptions of unfulfilled obligations lead employees to cyberloafing. (e.g., Yıldız et al., 2016; Yıldırım, 2018b; Agarwal & Avey, 2020). Organizational justice perceptions displayed negative negligible correlation with cyberloafing while distributive, interactional, and procedural justice showed negative relationships with minor cyberloafing. These findings indicate that employees facing injustice perceptions reduce their efforts by engaging cyberloafing. (e.g., Lim, 2002; Blau et al., 2006; Restubog et al., 2011)

Continuous commitment displayed negative but insignificant correlations with serious and minor cyberloafing while job satisfaction showed negligible positive correlations with serious cyberloafing and cyberloafing. Affective commitment indicated a negative relationship with serious cyberloafing, and job satisfaction revealed a positive relationship with minor cyberloafing (e.g., Garrett & Danzinger, 2008; Çetin & Akyelli, 2020). As employees' commitment to the organization increases, their cyberloafing behaviors decrease. Theoretically dissatisfied employees are expected to engage cyberloafing. However minor cyberloafing behaviors are generally perceived harmless, satisfied employees might display these behaviors similar to reading a newspaper or having a short break (Blanchard & Henle, 2008).

Work alienation showed positive correlations with cyberloafing, serious cyberloafing, and minor cyberloafing which suggests alienated employees from work display a variety of cyberloafing behaviors (e.g., Babadağ, 2018; Yıldırım, 2018b). Job stress and cynicism showed positive relationships with cyberloafing. This result indicates that high levels of job stress and cynicism lead to cyberloafing (e.g., Aghaz & Sheikh, 2016; Özüdoğru & Yıldırım, 2020). Emotional exhaustion displayed a positive correlation with minor cyberloafing revealing that burnout employees use personal Internet at workplace likely as a coping mechanism (e.g., Aghaz & Sheikh, 2016; Koay, 2018).

Minor cyberloafing showed a positive and high-level relationship with serious cyberloafing. This finding suggests that employees engaging in minor cyberloafing participate also serious cyberloafing or vice versa. Ethical climate displayed a negative correlation with serious cyberloafing indicating that ethical procedures, perceptions, and approaches in the organization prevent employees from serious cyberloafing (e.g., Kayapalı Yıldırım & Karabey, 2017; Çiçek, 2020).

Literature on cyberloafing is a developing field in its early phases. Studies on cyberloafing in the literature are not small in number, however show an unfocused and scattered approach which has led to the limitation of conducting this meta-analysis with a small number of studies. Additionally, studies generally examined the dimensions of cyberloafing, failed to assess the composite construct. Since only a limited number of studies could be included, only several relationships were analyzed. Another limitation is the lack of moderator analysis due to insufficient sample size. Moreover, the analyzes were conducted with available studies, unattainable research could not be included.

Future studies on cyberloafing should examine the composite construct and the sub-dimensions simultaneously. Additionally, current relationships need to be explored further especially focusing on conflicting subjects regarding productivity and performance. Moreover, unaddressed relationships such as leadership styles, withdrawal, organizational support, self-efficacy, and locus of control should be examined in future studies.

This study aimed to review the cyberloafing studies in Turkey. Results displayed current appearance and provided insight regarding controversies in the literature. Findings revealed existing relationships and recommended a viewpoint for further studies. Cyberloafing literature in Turkey needs to expand in this context and this meta-analysis findings can contribute as a guidance for studies in the future.

## References

- Afacan Fındıklı, M. (2016). Relationship between cyberloafing and work performance: Comparison of health and textile industry workers. *International Journal of Social Inquiry*, 9(1), 33–62.
- Agarwal, U. A., & Avey, J. B. (2020). Abusive supervisors and employees who cyberloaf. *Internet Research*, 30(3), 789–809.
- Aghaz, A., & Sheikh, A. (2016). Cyberloafing and job burnout: An investigation in the knowledge-intensive sector. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 62, 51–60.
- Anandarajan, M., Simmers, C., & Igbaria, M. (2000). An exploratory investigation of the antecedents and impact of internet usage: An individual perspective. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 19, 69–85.
- Askew, K. (2012). The relationship between cyberloafing and task performance and an examination of the theory of planned behavior as a model of cyberloafing (Order No. 3519206).
- Babadağ, M. (2018). İşe Yabancılaşmanın Sanal Kaytarma Üzerindeki Etkisi. *Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 21(39), 207–239.

- Belanger, F., & Van Slyke, C. (2002). Abuse or learning? Communications of the ACM, 45(1), 64–65.
- Bilgin Demir, İ., Ürek, D., & Uğurluoğlu, Ö. (2017). Sağlık Çalışanlarının Sanal Kaytarma Davranışlarının İşte Üretkenliklerine Etkisi. *AJIT-e: Bilişim Teknolojileri Online Dergisi*, 8(30), 291–303.
- Blanchard, A. L., & Henle, C. A. (2008). Correlates of different forms of cyberloafing: The role of norms and external locus of control. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 24(3), 1067–1084.
- Blau, G., Yang, Y., & Ward-Cook, K. (2006). Testing a measure of cyberloafing. *Journal Allied Health*, 35(1), 9–17. PMID: 16615292.
- Cao, X., Guo, X., Vogel, D., & Zhang, X. (2016). Exploring the influence of social media on employee work performance. *Internet Research*, 26(2), 529–545.
- Chen, J. V., Chen, C. C., & Yang, H. (2008). An empirical evaluation of key factors contributing to internet abuse in the workplace. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 108(1), 87–106.
- Coker, B. L. S. (2011). Freedom to surf: The positive effects of workplace internet leisure browsing. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 26(3), 238–247.
- Coker, B. L. S. (2013). Workplace internet leisure browsing. *Human Performance*, 26(2), 114–125.
- Çetin, C., & Akyelli, N. (2020). Sanal kaytarma ve iş doyumunu ilişkisi. *İzmir Katip Çelebi Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 3(1), 41–59.
- Çiçek, B. (2020). Organizasyonları Aşındırıcı Unsurlar Olarak Sosyal Dışlanma ve Sanal Kaytarma İlişkisi ve Bu İlişkide Etik İklimin Rolü. *Yönetim ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 18 (2), 198–217.
- Erdem, A. T. (2020). Sanal Kaytarma Davranışının İş Performansına Etkisinde İşe Bağlılığın Aracı Rolüne Yönelik Bilişim Sektöründe Bir Araştırma, *İşletme Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 12 (4), 3843–3858
- Garrett, R. K., & Danziger, J. N. (2008). Disaffection or expected outcomes: Understanding personal Internet use during work. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(4), 937–958.
- Greenfield, D. N., & Davis, R. A. (2002). Lost in cyberspace: The web @ work. *Cyber Psychology and Behavior*, 5, 347–353.
- Güğerçin, S., & Çavuş, M. F. (2021). Yıkıcı yönetim, sanal kaytarma ve işteki üretkenlik: Banka çalışanları üzerine bir araştırma, *bmij* 9(1), 164–185.
- Henle, C. A., & Kedharnath, U. (2012). Cyberloafing in the workplace (Chapter 48, pp. 560–573). In Y. Zheng (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Cyber Behavior*, IGI Global.
- Hunter, J. E., & Schmidt, F. L. (2004). *Methods of meta-analysis: Correcting error and bias in research findings* (Second edit.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Jia, H., Jia, R., & Karau, S. (2013). Cyberloafing and personality. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 20(3), 358–365.
- Kayapalı Yıldırım, S., & Karabey, C. N. (2017). Etik İklim ve Örgütsel Kontrol Mekanizmalarının Sanal Kaytarma Davranışı Üzerindeki Etkisinde Örgütsel Sinizmin Aracılık Rolü. *Gazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 4(11), 556–594.
- Kim, S. J., & Bryne, S. (2011). Conceptualizing personal web usage in work contexts: A preliminary framework. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27, 2271–2283.
- Koay, K. Y. (2018). Workplace ostracism and cyberloafing: A moderated-mediation model. *Internet Research*, 28(4), 1122–1141.
- Lavoie, J., & Pychyl, T. (2001). Cyber-slacking and the procrastination super-highway: A web-based survey of online procrastination, attitudes, and emotion. *Social Science Computer Review*, 19, 431–444.
- lexico.com (2021). In lexico.com. Retrieved April 15, 2021 <https://www.lexico.com/definition/internet>
- Lieberman, B., Seidman, G., McKenna, K. Y., & Buffardi, L. E. (2011). Employee job attitudes and organizational characteristics as predictors of cyberloafing. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(6), 2192–2199.
- Lim, V. K. G. (2002). The IT way of loafing on the job: Cyberloafing, neutralizing and organizational justice. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23(5), 675–694.
- Lim, V. K. G., & Chen, D. J. Q. (2012). Cyberloafing at the workplace: Gain or drain on work?. *Behaviour and Information Technology*, 31(4), 343–353.
- Mastrangelo, P. M., Everton, W., & Jolton, J. A. (2006). Personal use of work computers: Distraction versus destruction. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 9(6), 730–741.
- Mercado, B. K., Giordano, C., & Dilchert, S. (2017). A meta-analytic investigation of cyberloafing. *The Career Development International*, 22(5), 546–564.
- Mills, J. E., Hu, B., Beldona, S., & Clay, J. (2001). Cyberslacking!: A liability issue for wired workplaces. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 42(5), 34–47.
- Oravec, J. A. (2002). Constructive approaches to internet recreation in the workplace. *Communications of the ACM*, 45(1), 60–63.
- Öztürk, Y., Akman Dömbekci, H., & Yeşildal, M. (2018). The relationship between cyber loafing and job satisfaction in healthcare employee. *Journal of International Health Sciences and Management*, 4(7), 1–8.

- Özüdoğru, M., & Yıldırım, Y. T. (2020). Sanal Kaytarma ve İşgören Performansı İlişkisinde İş Stresinin Düzenleyici Etkisinin İncelenmesi: Sağlık Sektöründe Bir Araştırma. *Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 22(2), 467–490.
- Reinecke, L. (2009). Games at work: The recreational use of computer games during working hours. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 12(4), 461–465.
- Restubog, S. L. D., Garcia, P. R. J. M., Toledano, L. S., Amarnani, R. K., Tolentino, L. R., & Tang, R. L. (2011). Yielding to (cyber)-temptation: Exploring the buffering role of self-control in the relationship between organizational justice and cyberloafing behavior in the workplace. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 45(2), 247–251.
- Robinson, S. L., & Bennett, R. J. (1995). A typology of deviant workplace behaviors: A multidimensional scaling study. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(2), 555–572.
- Scheuermann, L. E., & Langford, H. P. (1997). Perceptions of internet abuse, liability, and fair use. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 85(3), 847–850.
- Schmidt, F. L., & Le, H. (2014). Software for the Hunter-Schmidt meta-analysis methods, Version 2.0. University of Iowa, Department of Management & Organizations, Iowa City, IA 52242.
- Seçkin, Ş. N. (2020). Algılanan Sosyal Mübadele, İşe Yabancılaşma ve Sanal Kaytarma Davranışlarını Etkiler Mi? Mübadele İdeolojisinin Düzenleyici Rolü. *Atatürk Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi*, 34(4), 1207–1227.
- Stanton, J. M. (2002). Company profile of the frequent internet user. *Communications of the ACM*, 45(1), 55–59.
- Stewart, F. (2000). Internet acceptable use policies: Navigating the management, legal, and technical issues. *Information Systems Security*, 9(3), 1–7.
- Stoddart, S. (2016). The impact of cyberloafing and mindfulness on employee burnout (Order No. 10105022). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1790628132).
- Teo, T. S. H., & Too, B. L. (2000). Information systems orientation and business use of the Internet: An empirical study. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 4, 105–130.
- Vitak, J., Crouse, J., & LaRouse, R. (2011). Personal Internet use at work: Understanding cyberslacking. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27 (5), 1751–1759.
- Warren, D. E. (2003). Constructive and destructive deviance in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 28, 622–632.

- Weatherbee, T. G. (2010). Counterproductive use of technology at work: Information & communications technologies and cyberdeviancy. *Human Resource Management Review*, 20(1), 35–44.
- Whitty, M. T., & Carr, A. N. (2006). New rules in the workplace: Applying object-relations theory to explain problem Internet and email behaviour in the workplace. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 22, 235–250.
- Yıldırım, F. (2018a). Tükenmişlik Düzeyinin Sanal Kaytarma Davranışına Etkisinde İş Doyumunun Aracılık Rolü. *Gazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 5(13), 302–313.
- Yıldırım, F. (2018b). Otel İşletmelerinde Yıldırma ve İşe Yabancılaşmanın Sanal Kaytarma Davranışına Etkisinde Psikolojik Sözleşme İhlali Algısının Aracılık Rolü. *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 6(4), 21–39
- Yıldız, H., Yıldız, B., & İyigün, N. Ö. (2016). Psikolojik Sözleşme Algısının Sanal Kaytarma Davranışları Üzerindeki Etkisi. *Erciyes Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1(47), 147–165.
- Yıldız Durak, H., & Saritepeci, M. (2018). Occupational burnout and cyberloafing among teachers: Analysis of personality traits, individual and occupational status variables as predictors. *The Social Science Journal*, 56(1), 69–87.

## **Section 3 Legal and Public Administration Researches**



Hüseyin Korkut

# **Social Media Use in Municipalities: Public Perception in Turkey**

## **1 Introduction**

Developments in information technologies accelerated towards the end of 20th century and led to new communication opportunities through internet based connections. These new communication channels rapidly grew and began replacing traditional channels because of their substantial superiority in terms of speed and cost advantage. Furthermore, applications of Web 2.0 introduced social media and social network concepts together with internet technologies which brought significant transformation in connectivity and communication (Mayfield, 2008:7).

These new communication channels initially were adapted and used by private sector in order to reduce their cost and also increase their customer base and satisfaction. Central and local government authorities followed the private sector eventually. Direct contact with residents is more important and vital for municipalities than the central governments as personal connection between voters and elected officials is easier and more common in local governments. Thus, it became very important for municipalities to use these new communication channels, especially by developing a sustainable social media strategy, in order to increase the efficiency of local governance and public satisfaction from local services (Erkek, 2016:142).

Social media eventually has a potential to become a primary channel in communicating with the residents and increasing their participation in local governance because of its instant and two-way interaction and communication opportunities (Tarhan, 2012:92). Municipalities can use social media together with traditional communication channels to inform residents about their services, to check satisfaction level of residents from municipal services, to find out about their needs, desires and expectations, and also to increase resident interaction in local policy issues (Kaygısız & Sarı, 2015:315–316).

This chapter aims to present the results of a survey conducted online in Turkey in April 2021 in order to find out the level of knowledge and use by public of municipal social media channels. There is substantial amount of literature on e-government, social media use by local and central governments and

public use of social media applications of municipalities in Turkey and abroad. This paper focuses on the local literature as the survey conducted deals only with residents in Turkey. The literature on the subject has mainly three genres; studies approaching from public relations perspective but mainly from institutional perspective rather than public perspective, studies approaching from administrative efficiency perspective and studies approaching from public participation and interaction in local decision process.

This study slightly deviates from these genres and focuses on the public or user perception of social media channels of the municipalities. This research investigates the level of awareness of public on social media channels of their local governments and also their level of use of and satisfaction from these channels.

The literature on social media and local governments suggests that local governments use the social media as a communication channel along with traditional communication channels but just like they practiced in the past with the traditional ones. Simply, they seem to fail to grasp what social media technology could offer them and they use this modern tool rather ineffectively (Yeşildal, 2019:895). Moreover, local governments seem to use social media quite sensibly in communicating with residents but they fail to utilize the opportunities provided by social media tools to increase the local participation and interaction between the municipality administrations and their residents (Bonson, Torres, Royo & Flores, 2012:123).

Bonson et al. (2012) studied Facebook and Twitter accounts of local administrations of 5 biggest metropolitan areas from 15 European Union (EU) member countries and found that the use of electronic services and social media channels which are used for institutional communication and to encourage e-participation are still in elementary level while most of these administrations use the social media and Web 2.0 tools which are known to increase transparency in administration. Omar, Stockdale and Scheepers (2014) report that most local councils have presence in electronic services and social media but they seem not to have well-defined vision for the use of social media technology. Even though social media has experienced rapid growth and provides many advantages for the residents and municipalities, they also point that there are ongoing concerns about the use of social media such as uncertainty, lack of knowledge, damaging behavior by citizens, fear of risk and lack of trust. Literature on social media use by municipalities also provide many valuable studies. For example, Sobacı, Köseoğlu and Karkın (2015) investigated to what extent and for what purposes municipalities in Turkey utilized the social media platforms by conducting a survey in 93 municipalities among the members of Marmara Association of

Municipalities. They found that municipalities mostly concentrated their efforts on limited number of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and used the social media mostly for announcements even though they are aware of and acknowledge the large potential of social media use for them in the long run. Arslan (2014) confirms this finding in a study done on Facebook and Twitter accounts of metropolitan municipalities of major cities across Turkey.

Sayılganoğlu (2018) applied content analysis of Twitter accounts of Esenyurt, Küçükçekmece and Bağcılar municipalities of İstanbul and found that the use of municipal Twitter account was very limited and mostly it was used to pass information to the residents about activities, funerals, weddings etc. and failed to encourage and resident interaction or participation in decision process. Yavuz and Duyan (2019) verified the findings above in their study analyzing the social media use by municipalities in Black Sea region of Turkey. They reported that social media became the most frequently used medium of communication but municipalities mostly used social media as a one-way communication channel just like a TV or radio and continued to employ the same strategies that they used in traditional media in this new media outlet.

Demirtaş (2012) analyzed the content of Twitter and Facebook accounts of Üsküdar municipality of İstanbul from the public relations perspective and claimed that the municipality used the social media efficiently and this resulted in increase in satisfaction level of residents from the municipality administration. Tarhan (2012) used a sample of nine metropolitan municipalities using Twitter actively and found that the platform mostly used to provide information on activities and social municipality practices. On the other hand, Kahkeci and Bucak (2019), based on the results of their study of 16 metropolitan municipalities in their sample, claim that almost all metropolitan municipalities are present in major social media platforms and this seems to contribute to the participatory culture in cities..

## **2 Turkish Municipal System**

Modern Turkish local government system was shaped with law numbered 1580 in 1930 and did not change much until 1980s (Ökmen & Canan, 2009:26). The first major change was conducted in 1984 with law numbered 3030 and the concept of greater area metropolitan municipality was introduced based on the new legal structure brought by 1982 constitution. The system was strengthened by additional legal regulation in 2004 (Eryılmaz, 2004:160). Initially, only three greater area metropolitan municipalities were established in İstanbul, Ankara

and Izmir. Over the years, the number of metropolitan municipalities was increased gradually and has reached to 30.

In Turkey, currently there are five types of municipalities. Greater area metropolitan municipalities, as mentioned above, serve in 30 large cities together with district municipalities where metropolitan municipality is responsible for city-wide operations and services. District municipalities are responsible for district level services such as trash collection and services of smaller streets while the major streets are under the responsibility of metropolitan municipalities.

The third type of municipalities are province center municipalities which are responsible to serve the city center or central district (town) of each province in the rest of the 51 non-metropolitan provinces of Turkey. The fourth type of municipality is the district municipalities in non-metropolitan provinces and also district municipalities which are not included in the metropolitan area borders of metropolitan provinces. Finally, the fifth type of the municipality is the ones which are responsible to serve in larger rural centers or towns which are not officially classified as district (town). The population of these small municipalities is generally between 2000 and 5000.

According to data from the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, there are 30 greater area metropolitan municipalities, 519 metropolitan district municipalities, 51 non-metropolitan province municipalities, 400 non-metropolitan city district municipalities and 389 rural town municipalities as of 2014. In other words, there are 1389 municipalities in Turkey as of 2020. According to Turkish Statistical Agency data, 93 % of the Turkish population lives within municipal boundaries. Out of this municipal population, 83 % lives in greater area metropolitan areas while only 17 % lives in non-metropolitan municipalities.

### **3 Survey Methodology and Data**

This study aimed to present public perception and awareness of social media use and presence of municipalities in Turkey. In order to achieve this goal, an online survey with total of 67 questions were conducted across Turkey. The survey included set of questions about resident's personal characteristics like gender, age, education level, marital status, income etc., social media usage, knowledge of e-municipality and presence of municipality in social media platforms, frequency of social media use, frequency of social media channels of the municipalities, knowledge of the mayor and his/her party, use of e-municipality services and municipality social media channels in the pandemic and finally opinion about the use of mayor's personal social media accounts or municipality's official

social media accounts by mayor to make a political statement about the issues outside of his/her jurisdiction.

The survey was conducted through convenience method. Online survey invitation links were sent to people in the contact list of the author as well as students in the classes of colleagues in some universities. The student and also other contacts were requested to fill the survey and then also send it to their social media contacts and people in their e-mail list. Of course, the students selected were relatively randomly as they are not designated by the author to be in certain classes. Therefore, their contacts are also considered as random since the study had no control over the process. As a result, the survey has participants from over 75 provinces of Turkey.

The survey was available online for approximately 2 weeks and 1829 respondents participated in the survey. Nine hundred and twenty-one of the participants were female (50.4 %) and 908 of them were male (49.6 %). Participants in voting age were allowed to submit the survey and therefore the age range of participants turned out to be between 18 and 83. Detailed information on survey participants and their characteristics can be found in Tab. 10.1.

This study does not intend to make conclusions representing Turkey. As it can be seen from Tab. 10.1, a substantial portion of the participants of the survey has undergraduate or graduate degree and clearly the survey is not representative of Turkey. However, this is not surprising considering the nature of online survey and its potential participants. As mentioned above, the survey was distributed through social media, WhatsApp and e-mail lists, and were conducted only online. As a result, majority of the participants are the people with these means of technology. Therefore, less educated and low income people were grossly underrepresented in the study. In addition, network of academic colleagues and university students included disproportionately high number of participants with undergraduate and graduate degrees. One exception to this biasedness can be observed in income distribution of participants, which seems reasonably compatible with the reality.

Age of the male participants are significantly higher than that of female participants both in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Marital status question has four responses; single (never married), married, widow(er) and divorced. The study sample includes significantly more single females in all municipalities. The results, younger age and higher single rate for female participants, can be explained with extra effort put by female students to disseminate information about the survey among their peers.

**Tab. 10.1.** Descriptive statistics of the variables used in the study

Variables	Metropolitan Municipalities			Other Municipalities		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Age	42.4	33.9	37.5	40.8	32.5	36.8
Single	0.210	0.476	0.347	0.241	0.436	0.335
Higher education	0.816	0.822	0.819	0.843	0.791	0.818
Income						
Less than 4000 TL	0.132	0.199	0.167	0.165	0.269	0.216
4000–5999 TL	0.270	0.287	0.278	0.249	0.261	0.255
6000–7999 TL	0.193	0.154	0.173	0.227	0.115	0.172
8000–9999 TL	0.113	0.110	0.111	0.151	0.178	0.164
10000–14999 TL	0.169	0.156	0.162	0.124	0.129	0.127
15000 TL and over	0.123	0.094	0.108	0.084	0.049	0.067
Housewife	—	0.184	0.095	—	0.181	0.088
Student	0.069	0.208	0.141	0.078	0.195	0.135
Retired	0.050	0.016	0.032	0.062	0.011	0.038
Unemployed	0.042	0.025	0.033	0.038	0.017	0.028
Using social media	0.909	0.906	0.907	0.914	0.917	0.915
Using municipality website	0.771	0.691	0.729	0.614	0.584	0.599
Frequency of using municipality website (1–4)	2.615	2,283	2.444	2.146	2.023	2.087
Using social media of municipality (%)	57.4	48.1	52.6	47.4	46.5	47.0
Satisfaction from social media of municipality (province)	3.028	3.644	3.312	3.409	3.506	3.453
Satisfaction from social media of municipality (district)	3.392	3.628	3.501	3.483	3.571	3.529
<b>Number of observations</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>1110</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>719</b>

**Source:** Results of the survey conducted by the author.

This view is also supported by the higher percentage, almost three times more, of students in female subsets. Unemployment rate turns out to be much lower than the country average indicating underrepresentation of the unemployed people in the study. Social media use is very high (over 90 %) in all subgroups as expected due to the medium of conduct of the survey. Finally, satisfaction from social media services of females are slightly higher in all areas and it is higher in district municipalities compared to province municipalities.

Satisfaction rate is measured with five point Likert-scale where “1” indicates very dissatisfied and “5” indicates very satisfied. It should be noted that “province” municipalities cover the greater area metropolitan municipality which is responsible for the whole metropolitan area and province center municipality in non-metropolitan cities. On the other hand, “district” municipalities cover all district municipalities in provinces both metropolitan and non-metropolitan ones.

## 4 Results and Discussion

Main objectives of the study are to determine the level awareness of the public about the social media platforms of municipalities in Turkey and also to determine how often and through which channels the public is engaged with the municipalities. In addition, the study aims to determine main issues that the public faces in their social media interaction with their municipalities. Set of survey questions were designed to address these issues and goals. Major findings of the survey are presented in the next five tables though it should be noted that, due to availability of limited space to present the findings, the survey results are not limited to what is presented in this section.

Tab. 10.2 presents the detailed information about the preferred contact method of residents when they have business with the municipality offices or services. According to survey results, the first and main method of contacts are still the traditional methods; phone calls and walk-ins. As expected, walk-ins are slightly more common in smaller municipalities like province centers and non-metropolitan districts as municipal offices are often in a walking distance. Contact through internet based mediums of contact such as social media, webpage/e-mail or WhatsApp are still less common while the use of these methods are slightly more frequent in greater area metropolitan municipalities.

**Tab. 10.2.** Preferred contact method of residents with municipality

Method	Metropolitan Municipalities				Other Municipalities			
	Male	Female	Total	%	Male	Female	Total	%
Phone	371	417	788	71.0 %	241	238	479	66.6 %
In-person	242	203	445	40.1 %	195	140	335	46.6 %
Social Media	123	154	277	25.0 %	51	72	123	17.1 %
E-mail	131	130	261	23.5 %	43	66	109	15.2 %
WhatsApp	57	56	113	10.2 %	32	29	61	8.5 %

**Source:** Results of the survey conducted by the author.

Most questions in the survey were asked with the option of “other” so that participants could add choices were not listed in the questions. One particular survey response for preferred method of contact which is not listed in Tab 10.2 is contacting municipality through “intermediaries” who work in the municipality offices such as friends, relatives or neighbors. This response, though it is not as high as to deserve to be listed in the table as an additional entry, is quite prevalent in the surveys submitted from non-metropolitan areas where the family and clan connections play an important role in the more rural parts of Turkey. However, it should be noted that the same response is also quite frequent, though less, in metropolitan areas. Participants with that response explains that it is rather difficult to reach a real person over the phone when they called the municipal offices in greater area metropolitan municipalities like İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir.

**Tab. 10.3.** Preferred municipality social media platforms of residents

Platform	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Twitter	234	51.7 %	194	48.6 %	428	50.2 %
Instagram	168	37.1 %	257	64.4 %	425	49.9 %
Facebook	222	49.0 %	79	19.8 %	301	35.3 %
Google+	57	12.6 %	61	15.3 %	118	13.8 %
YouTube	32	7.1 %	28	7.0 %	60	7.0 %
<b>n (observations)</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>311</b>

**Source:** Results of the survey conducted by the author.

According to survey results presented in Tab 10.3, slightly less than half of the survey participants (852 of them to be exact) follow the social media accounts of their municipalities and mayors. Percentage of males using social media to reach or follow the municipality is somewhat higher than the female participants. Twitter, Instagram and Facebook accounts of the municipalities are the most frequently used social media platforms. The survey results indicate that Twitter is almost equally ubiquitous among survey participants from both gender while Facebook is heavily preferred by males and Instagram is similarly more preferred by female participants. Other, relatively newer, social media platforms like Pinterest, Tik Tok and Snapchat are also mentioned by some respondents but they were not as much frequently used as to be listed in the Table.

The survey also asked the participants as to why they are not interested in using the social media and social media platforms of the municipalities if they indicated that they do not use social media or they do not follow the social media

accounts of the municipality. Survey participants who do not use the social media (164 observations) reported that they do not use the social media mostly because; they do not like it or are not interested in it (49.4 %), they do not want to expose their personal/private life (34.8 %), they think it is a harmful addiction (25.0 %) and they are not much involved with technology (17.1 %).

When asked, 30.9 % of the all survey participants indicated that they are not even aware if their municipality has social media accounts or not. Out of all participants, 813 of them explained why they do not follow the social media accounts of their municipalities. They reported that they do not follow the social media accounts of the municipality mainly because; they prefer traditional contact methods like walk-ins and phone call (44.0 %), they do not even know if their municipality has a social media account or the municipality actually does not have social media accounts (33.1 %), their municipality has not well-functioning social media account (11.8 %), and they do not need it or are not interested in it (7.2 %).

Tab. 10.4 presents the preferred social media platforms by the residents as a percentage when they follow or contact their municipalities with respect to gender and municipality type. The situation is very similar to what is presented in Tab 10.3. This indicates that municipality type where the residents live does not affect their choices very significantly with respect to Twitter and Instagram use. Instagram is still preferred heavily by females regardless of the type of municipality. However, a different trend can be seen in Facebook and Google+ usage details. Clearly, for some reason, Facebook is significantly more preferred among male participants in smaller towns and centers compared to metropolitan areas. The result suggests that Facebook use in possibly decline in metropolitan areas.

**Tab. 10.4.** Preferred social media platforms of residents by municipality type (%)

Platform	Metropolitan Municipalities			Province Municipalities			Town Municipalities		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Twitter	51.5	51.6	51.6	61.3	72.2	66.3	39.1	38.6	38.8
Instagram	38.8	62.8	49.9	34.4	65.8	48.8	33.3	65.7	49.6
Facebook	43.0	16.4	30.7	54.8	25.3	41.3	66.7	25.7	46.0
Google+	14.1	16.0	15.0	12.9	13.9	13.4	5.8	14.3	10.1
YouTube	4.8	7.2	5.9	7.5	6.3	7.0	4.3	7.1	5.8

**Source:** Results of the survey conducted by the author.

Tab. 10.5 presents the main reasons for residents to follow social media accounts of their municipalities in terms of gender and type of municipality (metropolitan vs non-metropolitan). The most important reason for the residents to follow is to be informed about news concerning their city or town such as announcement about municipal services, social activities, sport events, funerals, weekly markets, special products and prices etc. the second most important reason is to follow the activities of the municipality and the mayor of the city or town. This is followed with providing feedback for the services as well as complaints from the services, requesting information, sharing feelings and opinions about municipal services and decisions. Finally, residents report using the social media accounts of the municipality for participating in municipal decision making process through e-voting which is only available in some municipalities and participating public surveys conducted by the municipality to track public opinions or to get citizens' preference about future services, for instance the color of public buses or what kind of summer activities are desired by the residents etc.

The survey also asks if the participants are aware of the identity of the mayor and his/her party affiliation. In other words, residents are asked if they knew the name of the mayor and also the party from which the mayor was a candidate and then elected. In greater area metropolitan municipalities, 96.2 % of the respondents knew the name of the mayor while 97.9 % of them knew the party of the mayor. In greater area metropolitan district municipalities, 87.9 % of the respondents knew the name of the mayor while 95.0 % of them knew the party of the mayor. The result is not surprising as greater area metropolitan mayors are more in media and, therefore, residents are more familiar with them. This familiarity through media declines in districts. In non-metropolitan province center municipalities, 90.3 % of the respondents knew the name of the mayor while 94.9 % of them knew the party of the mayor. In non-metropolitan district municipalities, 87.0 % of the respondents knew the name of the mayor while 97.0 % of them knew the party of the mayor.

Even though the following question was not directly related with the aim of the study, this study asked the participants as a final question what they think about the mayor sharing politically motivated social media messages, specifically if the messages are not directly related with their municipality or region. Tab 10.6 presents the distribution of the responses with respect to gender and type of municipality. According to survey results, 48.0 % of the respondents indicated that they believe the mayor should focus on serving his/her constituents and avoid using social media platforms of the municipality or his/her own mayoral social media accounts for politically motivated polemics. However, this

**Tab. 10.5.** Reasons of residents to follow social media platforms of municipalities (%)

Reasons	Metropolitan Municipalities			Other Municipalities		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
To follow the news and information	73.5	81.6	77.3	80.9	85.9	83.3
To follow the activities of mayor and the municipality	49.8	50.0	49.9	46.3	52.3	49.2
To provide positive feedback or to make a complaint	36.8	45.2	40.7	29.0	24.8	27.0
To ask a question or request information	33.7	43.2	38.1	21.6	20.8	21.2
To provide opinion on municipal services	19.6	14.4	17.2	15.4	9.4	12.5
To participate in municipal decisions by e-voting	10.3	11.2	10.7	9.3	8.7	9.0
To participate in surveys conducted by the city	8.9	10.0	9.4	4.3	6.0	5.1
<b>Number of observations</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>311</b>

**Source:** Results of the survey conducted by the author.

opinion is significantly more common among male participants compared to female participants. This can also be related with the younger age of the female respondents as mentioned above. The situation is reverse among the participants who indicate that they believe mayors are politically elected figures and therefore they have a right to voice their opinions freely though 22.1 % believes it should be on a personal platform. Among those opinions, female proportion is slightly higher than male proportion.

The survey also asked how the frequency of use of municipal website and social media platforms changed during the current Covid-19 pandemic. According to survey results, 44.5 % of the respondents indicated that their use of municipal social media accounts did not change, 32.3 % indicated that their use did slightly increased, 16.6 % indicated that their use did significantly increased while only 4.4 % indicated that their use did decrease slightly or significantly. Also, according to survey results, 48.2 % of the respondents indicated that their use of municipal website did not change, 21.1 % indicated that their use did slightly increased, 8.1 % indicated that their use did significantly increased while only 2.5 % indicated that their use did decrease slightly or significantly.

**Tab. 10.6.** Public opinion on mayor's use of social media for political purposes

Opinion	Metropolitan Municipalities			Other Municipalities			Overall
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Mayors should not make political messages in social media platforms of the city	54.3	42.8	48.4	51.1	43.6	47.4	48.0
Mayors should use a separate personal platform for political messages	20.4	22.7	21.6	19.7	26.4	22.9	22.1
Mayors should be able to share political messages as they are politicians	16.5	22.9	19.8	20.0	14.9	17.5	18.9
I have no opinion on the matter	8.7	11.5	10.2	9.2	15.2	12.1	10.9
<b>Number of observations</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>1110</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>1829</b>

**Source:** Results of the survey conducted by the author.

Finally, the survey explored the aspects of municipal services which residents have complaints or satisfaction from the social media accounts of the municipalities as well as their suggestions about these accounts. However, due to limited space of this chapter and also large variety of complaints and suggestions, this information is not provided here in detail. Major points of complaints are inefficiency of social media accounts, lack of swift response mechanism for requests, repetitive postings by the mayor or municipality, heavy political influence in messages, inactivity of accounts, lack of interaction, unprofessional use of the accounts and lack of updates. Most common suggestions are the need for more transparency, maintaining swift response mechanism, more frequent updates, objectivity, providing surveys to influence municipal decisions, more interaction and increased public participation.

## 4 Conclusion

Changes in information technologies and developments as well as increases in the variety and users of social media platforms transformed the media consumption behaviors of the users. As a result of these developments, public administrative

units began to give more weight on using these new communication channels over social media (Pektaş, 2011:62).

This study shows that there is an increasing use of social media platforms by all type of municipalities in Turkey as the municipalities have a significant role in Turkish public organizational structure. Social media platforms have a potential of significantly contributing to reach institutional goals and missions of the municipalities when they are used efficiently and effectively.

This study points that municipalities in Turkey use social media platforms mostly to flow information from inside out and making announcements and verifies the findings of Kaygısız and Sarı (2015). Thus, this study concludes that the municipalities greatly fail to implement and use the social media channels as an efficient two-way communication channel. Considering that the most important distinction of social media from traditional media are the interaction and reciprocity features of social media, awareness and recognition of municipality and municipal services/activities by the public is just as important as promotion of the municipality and its services/activities.

Social media is also used, though it is not that widespread yet, to provide public surveys to conduct surveys and voting in certain municipal decisions. This mechanism would allow municipalities to develop communication and public relations strategies which would improve the administrative participation culture and therefore increase the efficiency of municipal services (Karkin, Köseoğlu & Sobacı, 2015:108).

This study finds that social media presence and penetration of the municipalities in Turkey is high among the elite and well-educated residents who have means to use social media and are using social media extensively. However, considering that still a sizeable portion of Turkish public is not online or in social media, the results of this study should be reviewed with caution. The study finds that majority of the contacts by public with the municipality still occurs through traditional channels like phone calls and walk-ins. However, this might be expected to change in next 10 years as generations become more technology-oriented and with improved internet infrastructure. Social media use is slightly higher in greater area metropolitan municipality regions.

This study finds that Twitter, Instagram and Facebook are the most used social media platforms to follow municipal social media accounts, respectively. Twitter use seems to be gender balanced while Facebook is more preferred by men and Instagram is more popular among women. Also, Facebook is more popular in non-metropolitan areas while Google+ is more common in metropolitan areas.

According to results of this study, residents follow municipal social media accounts mainly to be informed about news concerning their city or town, learn

about the activities of the municipality and the mayor, to provide feedback, to file complaints and to request information. The share of interactive or participatory use of social media services do not constitute a significant share in the social media use of residents.

Finally, the study finds that almost half of the residents of municipal areas think that the mayors should not use municipal social media accounts or their personal mayor account for politically motivated messages, especially if the political message is not directly related with their jurisdiction. Around 10 % of the participants do not state any preference or claim ignorance. The remaining 40 % essentially is divided. One side thinks that the mayors, by definition, are politicians. Therefore, it is unthinkable for them to be not involved with the general politics of, not only their city or town but, the country. The other side thinks that, although they are politicians and it is normal for them to be politically involved with the issues, it would be best for them not to do this through municipal channels but rather use alternative channels for that purpose.

## References

- Arslan, Ş. (2016). “Yerel Politikacıların Sosyal Medya Kullanımı: Büyükşehir Belediye Başkanlarının Günlük Sosyal Medya Kullanımlarının İncelenmesi”. *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 9(42), 1374–1391.
- Bonson, E., Torres, L., Royo, S., & Flores, F. (2012). “Local e-government 2.0: Social media and corporate transparency in municipalities”. *Government Information Quarterly*, 29, 123–132.
- Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı, T. C. (2020). *Yerel Yönetimler Genel Müdürlüğü 2019 Yılı Mahalli İdareler Genel Faaliyet Raporu*, Ankara.
- Demirtaş, M. (2012). “Yerel Yönetimlerde Bir Halkla İlişkiler Çalışması Olarak Sosyal Paylaşım Ağlarının Kullanımı: Üsküdar Belediyesi Örneği”. *e-Journal of New World Sciences Academy*, 7(4), 291–314.
- Erkek, S. (2016). “Kamu Kurumlarında Sosyal Medya Kullanımı: Sağlık Bakanlığı Örneği”. *Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 35, 141–150.
- Eryılmaz, B. (2004). *Kamu Yönetimi*. İstanbul: Erkam Matbaası.
- Kahkeci, H., & Bucak, A. (2019). “Belediyelerde İletişim Stratejilerinde Dijital İletişim Sistemi ve Sosyal Medya Uygulamaları: Şanlıurfa Örneği”. *Strategic Public Management Journal*, 5(9), 55–64.
- Karkın, N., Köseoğlu, Ö., & Sobacı, M. Z. (2015). “Social Media Policy in Turkish Municipalities: Disparity Between Awareness and Implementation”. Surya Nepal, Cécile Paris ve Dimitrios Georgakopoulos (Ed.). *Social Media for Government Services*, Springer International Publishing 97–113.

- Kaygısız, U., & ve Sarı, S. (2015). "Belediyelerin Sosyal Medya Kullanımı: Burdur Belediyesi ve Burdur İlçe Belediyeleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma". *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research*, 1(2), 309–317.
- Mayfield, A. (2008), "What Is Social Media", iCrossing (Ebook), V 1.4 updated 01.08.08 [http://www.icrossing.com/uk/sites/default/files\\_uk/insight\\_pdf\\_files/What%20is%20Social%20Media\\_iCrossing\\_ebook.pdf](http://www.icrossing.com/uk/sites/default/files_uk/insight_pdf_files/What%20is%20Social%20Media_iCrossing_ebook.pdf)
- Ökmen, M., & Canan, K. (2009). "Avrupa Birliğine Üyelik Sürecinde Türk Kamu Yönetimi". *Yönetim ve Ekonomi: Celal Bayar Üniversitesi İ.İ.B.F. Dergisi*, 16(1), 139–171.
- Omar, K., Stockdale, R., & Scheepers, H. (2014). "Social media use in local government: An Australian perspective". *International Journal of Public Administration*, 37(10), 666–675.
- Pekeş, K. E. (2011). "Belediye Hizmetlerinde Bilgi -İletişim Teknolojilerinin Kullanımı ve E-Belediye Uygulamalarındaki Son Gelişmeler: Bir Literatür Taraması". *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 8(1), 65–88.
- Sayılganoğlu, S. (2018). "Kurumsal İletişim Bağlamında Belediyelerde Kurumsal Twitter Hesabı Kullanımı". *Çanakkale On sekiz Mart Üniversitesi Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 3(2), 389–406.
- Sobacı, M. Z., Köseoğlu, Ö., & ve Karkın, N. (2015). "Belediyelerde Sosyal Medya: Değişim İçin Yenilikçi Fırsatlar İstanbul". *Marmara Belediyeler Birliği Kültür Yayınları*.
- Tarhan, A (2012). "Büyükşehir Belediyelerinin Sosyal Medya Uygulamalarına Halkla İlişkiler Modellerinden Bakmak". *İletişim Kuram ve Araştırma Dergisi, Naci Bostancı Özel Sayısı*, 2(35), 79–101.
- Yavuz, C., & Duvan, Y. (2019). "Belediyelerin Kurumsal İletişiminde Sosyal Medya: Karadeniz Bölgesi Örneği". *Kent Akademisi*, 12(40), 682–702.
- Yeşildal, A. (2019) "Sosyal Medya, Yerel Yönetimler ve Katılımcı Yönetim: Bilgi Çağında Belediyeler için Yeni Stratejiler". *İnsan & İnsan*, 6(22), 883–902.



Bülent KENT & Merve Ayşegül KULULAR İBRAHİM

# The Right to be Forgotten for Protection of Personal Data and Privacy on the Internet

## 1 Introduction

It is necessary to establish a balance between protecting a person's right to privacy, or personal rights, and public interest for cases which provides information to the public. It should be decided by considering the characteristics of the concrete case whether the protection of public interest or personal rights or the privacy will be ensured. It is possible that the balance established between individual rights and freedom of expression or public interest may change over time. A situation where the public's right to information was more important in the past may lose its newsworthiness over time and may become less important than the personal right. In this case, thanks to the right to be forgotten, the person whose right has been violated may request the blocking of access to the relevant content or the deletion of the content (Tok, 2020:41).

In this study, protection of personal data and privacy in the online environment is discussed. With the study, the subject is basically limited to the right to be forgotten because the scope of the internet and relevant rights is far-reaching. It is aimed to analyze the impact of the right to be forgotten for protection of personal data and privacy.

## 2 Prohibition of Access Due to Violation of Personal Rights

The person who alleges that their right to be forgotten has been violated is entitled to manage the content on the internet that is the subject of the violation and that s/he does not want to be contacted (Yıldız, 2019:399). Considering that social media, as an environment equipped with various eyes and views with different interests such as companies, states, intelligence organizations, individuals, is an area where people are spied on and observed, it is necessary to evaluate with whom the content is shared, viewed, recorded, and disseminated (Nair & Balta, 2017:118). Because many users are unaware of this fact, they continue to share images and information about their private life, race, ethnic origin, political opinion, beliefs, health or sexual life, which are defined as sensitive personal data in Article 6 of the Law on the Protection of Personal Data No. 6698, without foreseeing any possible inconveniences (Nair & Balta, 2017:118). Therefore,

the right to be forgotten brings into question whether the content sharing of individuals on social media, not only made by someone else, but also made by themselves, can be deleted upon their request (Çelik, 2017:396). If data sharing takes place on personal communication platforms such as Skype, in the case that the audience is limited and there is a violation of personal rights due to the communication of the participants through a certain account, identification and proof of loss will be easier than platforms with a journalistic function that can reach the large masses or social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. For instance, because of the establishment of news sites in such a way as to enable readers to comment anonymously, it is extremely difficult to identify the person making comments causing infringement of personal rights. Because of the establishment of website where that no user account, no contact information is required to comment under the news s/he reads, any user can make comments causing infringement of personal rights. In this case, the person as a content provider is responsible to compensate the damage caused by their unlawful comment under the Law No. 5651. (Dülger, Bilişim Suçları ve İnternet İletişim Hukuku, 2014:776) (Kaya, 2015:186) However, in anonymous comments, or cases where different user accounts such as internet cafes are forgotten openly or fake user accounts are used extensively, and by many people, it is almost impossible to identify the person who writes the illegal comment. (Dülger, Bilişim Suçları ve İnternet İletişim Hukuku, 2014:695, 696) In such cases it is unfair, and disproportionate to attribute the perpetrator's identification to the aggrieved party. For such cases, considering the choice of the news site that it does not require the creation of a user account to make comments, the news site should be held responsible for the infringement of personal rights in order to compensate the aggrieved party. (Akkurt, AİHM. Delfi As v. Estonya Kararı Işığında İnternet Haber Portallarının, Sitelerindeki Haber Linkleri Altına Yapılan Okuyucu Yorumlarından Kaynaklanan Hukuki Sorumlulukları ve 5651 Sayılı Kanun Uyarınca Türkiyedeki Durum: Genel Bir Bakış, 2019:184, 185) The European Court of Human Rights held news site operators responsible for such issues. (Delfi AS v. Estonia, 2013) Similarly, as stated by Koç, although hosting service providers are not held responsible for the content under Italian Laws, not only the content provider who uploaded a video to YouTube, which includes images of physical violence by four students to a child with Down syndrome but also a total of four employees of Youtube were found guilty by the court. (Koç, 2013:108, 109) The court found three managers of Youtube guilty on the grounds that the video, which violates the personal rights, was kept online for a long time. (Koç, 2013:108, 109). Under Law No. 5651 legal persons providing services and content are defined as hosting service providers and they are not

obliged to check the content they provide, or to investigate whether there is an illegal activity or not in accordance with Article 5 of Law No. 5651. Thus news sites allowing user comments to be published directly without any interference will not be liable due the Law No. 5651. However, such news sites are held accountable for user comments causing torts in accordance with article 49 of the Turkish Code of Obligations even though they are not held accountable pursuant to Law No. 5651. Because in this case, news sites as hosting service providers should be held accountable for the damage arising from the tort that continues after the notification, that is, after they are warned in order to take the necessary measures against the illegal user comments and remove the damage(Kaya, 2015:218) (Akkurt, AİHM. Delfi As v. Estonya Kararı Işığında İnternet Haber Portallarının, Sitelerindeki Haber Linkleri Altına Yapılan Okuyucu Yorumlarından Kaynaklanan Hukuki Sorumlulukları ve 5651 Sayılı Kanun Uyarınca Türkiye'deki Durum: Genel Bir Bakış, 2019:190, 191).

If the news site foresees any auditing process and approval for publication for comments made on the Internet, the operator of the news site will have taken an active role in the creation or sharing of the content. Therefore, the news site's operator will be considered as a content provider within the scope of Law No. 5651, and will be held accountable for unlawful comments. (Akkurt, AİHM. Delfi As v. Estonya Kararı Işığında İnternet Haber Portallarının, Sitelerindeki Haber Linkleri Altına Yapılan Okuyucu Yorumlarından Kaynaklanan Hukuki Sorumlulukları ve 5651 Sayılı Kanun Uyarınca Türkiye'deki Durum: Genel Bir Bakış, 2019:190) The responsibility of the news sites here is similar to the responsibility in case of violation of personal rights or the protection of the right to privacy in the content of the news. For a certain period of time, the newsworthiness and the right to inform the public are possible to be preferred to the personal right or the right to privacy. However, after publication of news the public interest may decrease and the benefit of the person whose right is violated may outweighs. In this case, a new balance can be encountered (Y19.CD, 10.12.2018, M. 2018/7735, K. 2018/13080) and the violation of personal rights can be terminated within the scope of the right to be forgotten.

It is important to eliminate the violation of personal rights. Therefore, the content that violates the personal rights should be removed upon the request of the person whose rights are violated, regardless of who shared it. On social media sites, it is possible to encounter situations where the content created by the person himself or his/her friends is not considered as a violation of personal right at the beginning, but after a while, it may become a violation. For this, CEO of Google Eric Schidt states that people will need to change their names directly when they reach a certain maturity in order to reject the content of their

friends' social media accounts for youthful excitement(Jones, 2018:109). Here, it is pointed out that situations that do not constitute a violation of personal rights at a certain time can become disturbing and damaging after a certain period of time. A mechanism needs to be established to have and evaluate requests from social network providers to remove or block access to content(Dülger & Oğlakcıoğlu, Alman Sosyal Ağlarda Hukuk Uygulamasının İyileştirilmesi Hakkında Kanuna İlişkin Değerlendirme, 2018:99). In this mechanism, a report should be prepared and published in the official gazette and on the social network providers' own website, including information about the criteria used while evaluating the applications and the people who evaluated them, data showing the time from the application to the content was blocked or deleted, and the number of applications made(Çubukcu, 2020:173). Accordingly Germany provided new regulations allowing persons who request the blocking of access to the content or the deletion of the content through these mechanisms to also take punitive and judicial proceedings(Dülger & Oğlakcıoğlu, Alman Sosyal Ağlarda Hukuk Uygulamasının İyileştirilmesi Hakkında Kanuna İlişkin Değerlendirme, 2018:100). In other words, the person who makes a complaint to the social network provider does not have to wait for the conclusion of his/her application in order to apply to the judicial authorities or law enforcers.

According to the amendment made in Law No. 5651 in 2014 in Turkey, the content provider or in cases where the content provider cannot be reached, the hosting service provider must first notify the content provider. If no results are obtained within a reasonable time, s/he should notify the hosting service provider via their contact address. The notification includes the request, made by the person claiming violation, to remove the content or to block access to the content. For those claiming that their personal rights are violated in social media, application examples to a judge, content provider, or hosting service provider are available on the Information and Communication Technologies Authority website (Bilgi Teknolojileri ve İletişim Kurumu, 2020). Providing application examples online is necessary to terminate the online violation in short time. The hosting service provider or content provider must respond to the notification made to them within 24 hours. This time limit also is provided to end the online violation in a short time. The person who claims that his/her right is violated can also apply to the judicial authorities. In accordance with Law No. 5651, the court in charge is the criminal courts of peace. For determining competent courts the regulation for printed works in visual or audio broadcasts should be considered due to Article 12 of the Criminal Procedure Code No. 5271. Accordingly, 'the court of the place of the publishing center' and 'in case the work is published in more than one place if the crime occurred in the printing of the work outside

the publishing center, the court of the place where the work is published caused crime is also authorized for this crime.' If the relevant internet site has a center in Turkey, the criminal court of peace of the place where the center is located is authorized. Also, if the audio-visual broadcast is heard or seen in the aggrieved's residence and place of residence, the court of that place is also authorized. Accordingly, the settlement or place of residence of the victim is the criminal court of peace. The magistrate who hears the case should decide on the application within 24 hours. The magistrate may decide to block access only to the URL that s/he rules as URL violates the personal right. Due to the amendment made in July 2020, the magistrate may also decide to remove the content. The magistrate, who is convinced that blocking access to the URL will not be effective in eliminating the violation of personal rights, is also authorized to decide to block the access of all publications of the internet domain name, that is, the website. The magistrate's decision notified to the Access Providers Association must be implemented by the content provider, hosting service provider, or access provider within 4 hours. Otherwise, a judicial fine from 500 days to 3,000 days is envisaged.

With the amendment made in Law No. 5651 in July 2020 in Turkey, it is regulated that people's names who claim that their personal rights are violated will not be shown in search engines if the court decides. Accordingly, in the case it is decided that the person's name who applies to the criminal court of peace should not be associated with the internet addresses mentioned in the decision within the scope of the applicant's right to be forgotten, the decision also states which search engines should be notified by the Access Providers Association.

### **3 Blocking of Access Due to the Right to Privacy**

The blocking of access due to the right to privacy is specifically regulated under a separate heading in Law No. 5651. By this regulation, it is aimed to eliminate the violation of the right to privacy in a much shorter time compared to the method of blocking access due to violation of personal rights. After the application of the person to the Information and Communication Technologies Authority with the violation, the URL address and identity information, accession to the content that violates the right to privacy must be blocked within 4 hours after the chairman forwards it to the Access Providers Association. However, after the application to the Information and Communication Technologies Authority for violations that are inconvenient in delay, the access is blocked directly by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, upon the President's order, without forwarding the application to the Access Providers Association.

This situation is provided to protect the right to privacy efficiently. After applying the Information and Communication Technologies Authority and after the president's decisions, the magistrate must be notified within 24 hours to make a decision in 48 hours. Otherwise, the access blocking caution is removed. Since the right to privacy can cause irreparable harm to the right holder when the privacy is exposed, the violation of privacy on the internet is specially regulated. However, unlike the violation of personal right, it is impossible to remove the violating content, and only access to the content can be blocked.

#### **4 Mechanisms Established by Social Media Sites**

Social media accounts are established various mechanisms to inform their users and protect their personal rights, and right to privacy. For example, Youtube wants users to report all kinds of videos or comments that violate the right to privacy of the users or harm their personal rights, whether created with or without the knowledge of the users in the system under the name of 'Privacy Complaint Process' via the link [https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2801895?hl=tr\(YouTube\)](https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2801895?hl=tr(YouTube)). In its content blocking policy published in July 2020, Twitter stated that it would prevent users from sharing information published without their explicit consent and private images shared without their consent on Twitter. People can notify Twitter about their private images taken or shared without their consent by following the procedures specified in the link <https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/intimate-media> or by filling the form on the link [https://help.twitter.com/forms/private\\_information](https://help.twitter.com/forms/private_information). Similarly, users can notify Twitter about contents that violate personal rights or harmful contents, and Tweets, Lists, profiles, or Direct Messages containing violence or threats by following the procedures specified in the link <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/report-abusive-behavior> (Twitter, Report Abusive Behavior). Upon this notification, Twitter may follow ways such as immediately and permanently suspending the account that shares the content or warning the user to remove the content. The accounts of users who commit the same violation after the first warning are permanently suspended (Twitter, Intimate Media). If a blocked content is attempted to be added to a Tweet, Direct Message, or user profile by other users, Twitter sends a message as "You cannot complete this action because this link has been detected as potentially harmful by Twitter or our business partners. For more information, please visit our Help Center." to the user that the content s/he want to take action is blocked (Twitter, Our Approach to Blocking Links). Since search engines cache search results, content deleted from Twitter continues to be seen in search engines such as Google. When the content displayed in the

search engine is clicked, the “No such page exists!” warning will appear because the content does not actually exist anymore. Old or deleted links continue to appear in search results until search engines update the information in the search indexes. In this case, one can request Google to remove old content via [https://support.google.com/legal/answer/3110420?visit\\_id=637461378182908368-1900468448&rd=1](https://support.google.com/legal/answer/3110420?visit_id=637461378182908368-1900468448&rd=1) (Twitter, Help with Google Search Visibility). Not only the Twitter account but also the request for the removal of personal information or content with legal problems regarding the protection of all kinds of personal data from the Google search engine is made through the same link (Google). On the other hand, Yandex search engine has established an office in Istanbul as Yandex Projects and User Support Service. It is possible to contact the office or to follow instructions given on the link <https://yandex.com.tr/support/webmaster/yandex-indexing/removing-from-index.html> to prevent search engine displaying the content violating personal rights (Yandex). For content that violates the personal right and the right to privacy, Facebook directs its users to report the content via the link <https://tr-tr.facebook.com/help/contact/144059062408922>. Also, as Instagram has prohibited sharing personal data and privacy in its Terms of Use, it wants such photo or video sharing to be reported via the link [https://help.instagram.com/contact/504521742987441?helpref=page\\_content](https://help.instagram.com/contact/504521742987441?helpref=page_content).

## Conclusion

With the increase in the use of the Internet and especially social media, the rights to protect personal data and privacy have begun to be violated more. Especially when social media is considered, illegal content can be seen by millions of people in a very short time as the internet deactivates country borders. Considering this structure of the Internet, it is necessary to prevent access to illegal content by immediately applying the measures to protect personal data and the right to privacy. In the context of the right to be forgotten, the person who claims that his/her right is violated can manage the content on the internet that s/he does not want to be contacted or that s/he claims is false information about herself. Thus, the person may request the correction or removal of this information. In the request for correction of data, misinformation of the public will also be prevented. In the request to prevent access to data, in cases that conflict with the public's right to be informed, an evaluation should be made according to the characteristics of each event in balancing the interest in protecting the right of the individual with the public interest. It is necessary to balance persons's interest and public interest. In cases where the public interest disappears and the

personal right gains importance over time, the personal right or the right to privacy should be protected within the scope of the right to be forgotten.

## References

- Akkurt, S. S. (2019). AİHM. Delfi As v. Estonya Kararı Işığında İnternet Haber Portallarının, Sitelerindeki Haber Linkleri Altına Yapılan Okuyucu Yorumlarından Kaynaklanan Hukuki Sorumlulukları ve 5651 Sayılı Kanun Uyarınca Türkiye'deki Durum: Genel Bir Bakış. *İzmir Barosu Dergisi*, 84(1), 175–199.
- Bilgi Teknolojileri ve İletişim Kurumu. (2020, Eylül 7). İnternet Ortamında Kişilik Haklarının İhlali. Retrieved Ocak 1, 2020, from <https://internet.btk.gov.tr/internet-ortaminda-kisilik-haklarinin-ihlali>
- Çelik, Y. (2017). Özel Hayatın Gizliliğinin Yansıması Olarak Kişisel Verilerin Korunması ve Bu Bağlamda Unutulma Hakkı. *Türkiye Adalet Akademisi Dergisi*, 8(32), 387–406.
- Çubukcu, A. (2020). Almanya'nın Sosyal Ağ Yasasının Nefret Söylemi İçeriklerinin Kaldırılması Bakımından İncelenmesi: Türkiye İçin Öneriler. *Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, 3(2), 164–181.
- Delfi AS v. Estonia Kararı, 64569/09 (Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi Ekim 10, 2013). Retrieved Ocak 09, 2020, from <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=002-8960>
- Dülger, M. V. (2014). *Bilişim Suçları ve İnternet İletişim Hukuku*. Ankara: Seçkin.
- Dülger, M. V., & Oğlakcıoğlu, M. T. (2018). Alman Sosyal Ağlarda Hukuk Uygulamasının İyileştirilmesi Hakkında Kanuna İlişkin Değerlendirme. *Ceza Hukuku Dergisi*, 13(37), 87–109.
- Google. Yasal Nedenlerle İçerik Bildirme. Jan, 13, 2021 [https://support.google.com/legal/answer/3110420?visit\\_id=637461378182908368-1900468448&rd=1](https://support.google.com/legal/answer/3110420?visit_id=637461378182908368-1900468448&rd=1)
- Jones, M. L. (2018). *Ctrl + Z: The Right to Be Forgotten*. New York: New York University Press.
- Kaya, M. (2015). *Elektronik Ortamda Kişilik Hakkı İhlalleri ve Korunması*. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Özel Hukuk Anabilim Dalı, Doktora Tezi.
- Koç, S. (2013). *Hukuksal Bağlamda Sosyal Medya Analizi ve Kıyaslamalı Mevzuat Önerileri*. İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Bilişim ve Teknoloji Hukuku, Yüksek Lisans Tezi .
- Nair, G., & Balta, E. (2017). Bilgi İletişim Teknolojileri Kullanımında sınırları Aşan Bir Sosyal Sorun Alanı Olarak Unutulma Hakkı. *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 41(2), 113–126.

- Tok, G. (2020). *İnternette Unutulma Hakkı*. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İnsan Hakları Anabilim Dalı, Yüksek Lisans Tezi.
- Twitter. (2020). Bağlantıları Engellemeye Yönelik Yaklaşımımız. Jan, 13, 2021 <https://help.twitter.com/tr/safety-and-security/phishing-spam-and-malware-links>
- Twitter. Google Arama Görünürlüğü Hakkında Yardım. Jan, 13, 2021 <https://help.twitter.com/tr/safety-and-security/remove-twitter-profile-from-google-search>
- Twitter. Rıza Dışı Cıplaklık Politikası. Jan, 13, 2021 <https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/intimate-media>
- Twitter. Taciz İçeren Davranışı Bildirme. Jan, 13, 2021 <https://help.twitter.com/tr/safety-and-security/report-abusive-behavior>
- Yandex. Yandex Yardım. Jan, 13, 2021 <https://yandex.com.tr/company/contacts/istanbul/>
- Yargıtay 19. Ceza Dairesi, 10.12.2018, E. 2018/7735, K. 2018/13080.
- Yıldız, T. (2019). Unutulma Hakkının Uygulanışı Açısından Arama Motorlarının Rolü. *Çankaya Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, 4(2), 399–431.
- YouTube. Gizlilik Sikayeti Sureci. Jan, 13, 2021 <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2801895?hl=tr>



## **Section 4 Various Researches for Social Networks**



Tamer Can TALUY & Kivanç AYCAN

# Improving the Melodic and Rhythmic Hearing Skills in Children with Autism

## 1 Introduction

Today, auditory education courses taken during the development of children's melodic and rhythmic hearing skills through music education are important for the children to choose music as a profession (Yıldırım, 2012). However, an examination of the previous literature shows that there is a limited number of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral studies on the development of musical perception skills of children with autism within the scope of special education in Turkey, and the number of experts is insufficient. Furthermore, it is seen that many educators working with children with autism do not have sufficient knowledge about science-based practices (Borders, Bock & Szymanski, 2015). At this point, special education music teaching programs are needed. However, today, general music education is still given in Turkey, and a standardized music teacher is trained. According to the results of Duru and Karakelle (2013)'s research, there is one type of music teacher trained for general music education in Turkey, two for general music education and instrument education in Austria (University of Graz), and two for general music education and pre-school music education in Finland (Lahti University and Lahti Polytechnic). In Denmark (The Royal Danish Academy of Music and the University of Copenhagen), two types of music teachers are trained for music schools and general music education, and four types of music teachers are trained for the basic areas of group music, choir, orchestra, and piano in the USA (Texas Tech University). This case shows that, especially with the music education given in Turkey, music teachers can only be trained by giving lectures specific to this field in graduate education by academics working in this field. This is one of the important problems that negatively affect the progress of children with autism in music.

Pektaş (2016) states that music should play a more active role in institutions where children with autism receive education, and it is beneficial to have a music teacher in every private educational institution. In addition, studies on music for children with autism will have a positive impact on the quality of life of these children and their families. Many children with developmental

disorders love music, and some children have a developed sense of rhythm, as well (MEB, 2002). It is important to provide active and effective music education for children with an autism spectrum disorder to be able to integrate with society (gaining communication skills, etc.). When learning a language, children shape their speech with the words they hear. Development can be achieved with a musical education based on this idea. In this respect, the principles of modern music education based on mother tongue education will benefit children with autism who have speech and communication problems. For example, according to the Kodály method, one of the modern music education methods based on mother tongue education, music is for everyone, and every child can learn to read notes. Kodály uses the expression musical education in the mother tongue. This method is based on listening, singing, and generating new ideas. It cares about ear-training by listening to any music. The best way to learn music is to sing (Cary, 2012).

Contrary to standard music education, today, in music education pedagogy, it is accepted that children have an average musical talent. However, this ability will develop if appropriate environmental conditions are provided for unearthing this ability. This will be possible by developing and presenting qualified and purposeful educational materials. There is a need for educators who will develop these materials specific to the field. For example, in special education music teaching, this problem can be solved by programs and academic studies to be implemented in universities. Based on these situations, the problem statement of the research is “How can the existing musical hearing skills of children with autism be improved through an effective music education?”

## **1.2. Sub-Problems**

*1.2.1.* To what extent can solfeggio education applied to children with autism improve their musical hearing skills?

*1.2.2.* To what extent can elementary voice education applied to children with autism improve their singing and musical hearing skills?

*1.2.3.* What is the effect of piano education on children with autism on their musical hearing and psychomotor skills?

## **1.3. Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this research is to reveal the effects and efficiency of solfeggio, voice education, and piano training practices applied in the development of rhythmic and melodic hearing skills of individuals with autism.

#### **1.4. Importance of the Research**

Music education is given to children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) by ensuring their active participation is effective in developing and better learning both their musical senses and psychomotor skills (Garland, 2018). In addition, since it is a social event that includes activity, it will affect the individual's socialization; therefore, it is thought that the study is important in this respect. Also, studies showing that children with autism can engage in music at the secondary and undergraduate level and receive education in this field are included in this research. Therefore, this research is also important in this respect. This study will raise awareness of the families of children diagnosed with ASD about music, and parents will be able to start their children in music education. It is thought that the study is also important in this respect.

#### **1.5. Limitations**

*1.5.1.* This research is limited to 1 (one) participant with a basic level of musical hearing skills.

*1.5.2.* This research is limited to “musical dictation training”, “solfeggio” and “voice education” with the participant.

#### **1.6. Assumptions**

The interview form with the parents completely reflects the parents' real views and thoughts in this study. In this research, the answers are given by experts who answered the observer evaluation form completely reflect the truth. The participant's diagnosis of ASD is real.

## **2 Method**

### **2.1. Research Design**

According to the literature, action research is the individual's thinking about their professional competence, conducting interventions in cycles, and making personal evaluations for these interventions. Sharing this process with others reflects on the researcher as a positive process that is development-oriented (Hermes, 2001). Action research is an effective method for increasing an individual's success and solving their problems (Canlı & Yusuf, 2019). Action research in the field of education focuses on teachers, practices, classrooms, and schools (Gürgür, 2017). Therefore, this research is an experimental study focused on teachers and practice. In the experimental model, the researcher can

change the situation, observe the effect of this change and bring it under control (Çöl, 2012). The point that distinguishes single-subject experimental studies from other quasi-experimental studies is that single evaluations are made with each participant based on repeated measurements rather than working with participant groups (Aydın, İftar & Rakap, 2019). According to Tekin (2000), single-subject experimental studies are studies in which repeated measurements are taken from one or more subjects under standard conditions and studies in which the effectiveness of an application is evaluated in itself. This repetition increases the reliability of the research for the reader (Tekin, 2000). In this single-subject action research, audio and video recordings were taken to have repeated measurements and provide data diversity, and researcher observation form (personal course monitoring report), parent, and expert interview form were created.

## 2.2. Pilot Study

In the Erciyes University, music department a pilot study was conducted with 9 (nine) participants in a social responsibility course that includes basic music practices for those with autism. This study was conducted to understand the elementary musical skill level of the participants by **music educators**. As a result of the pilot study, an autistic student found to have a more basic interest, and ability in music was selected for this research.

## 2.3. Working Environment

All sessions in the research were held in the piano rooms of the Erciyes University, music department during the 2018–2019 Fall and Spring semesters.

## 2.4. Pilot Study Group

It is the group diagnosed with ASD who participated in the pilot study before the research.

### 2.4.1. *Demographic Characteristics of the Pilot Study Group*

In the Erciyes University, music department, nine children diagnosed with ASD, recommended by special educators, were selected as participants for the pilot study conducted with children with autism. To determine whether these nine children with ASD are at a level to participate in music education, the interest and ability levels of these children in music were tested by the researchers in a classroom with a piano in the Erciyes University, the music department was

selected for the pilot study. From the participants at different levels, it is observed that four people had a normal autism level and were able to play the piano at the elementary level (using only the right hand, playing with the wrong finger, changing the melody or rhythm of the audio song, ending it early, or late). It is noticed that one of the participants had a very little spectrum in terms of autism level and behaved like a healthy person. This child can play a simple melody on the piano. It is seen that one of the participants had an intense spectrum, and it is discussed that this individual could participate in the study for just socializing. It is observed that two of the participants had a normal autism level but had no interest in music. It is seen that one of the participants knew notes and could play piano better than the others. It is observed that this participant, coded as **P1**, was more interested in music than the other participants. It is also found out that they had a 2-year experience playing the piano at periods since 9 years old.

#### *2.4.2. Social Responsibility Lesson Group Work with Pilot Study Group*

On the day when the first lesson is held, a meeting was held with the practitioners before the social responsibility lesson to talk about the issues such as what kind of work will be done in the lessons, what kind of materials will be used, how the lessons will be taught and to exchange information. At the meeting, it was thought that a simple and conclusive song would be necessary for which the instructions to reach this information would be written to measure the rhythmic instincts and whether the children are interested in rhythm. The song was chosen by the practitioners. *Due to its familiarity simplicity of harmony structure, simplex in terms of rhythm and melody, the theme of Mozart's musical song, 12 variations, "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" is used for this practice lesson.*

Based on the daily routines of the participants (getting up in the morning, having breakfast, going to school, etc.), new words relevant to this song were written by the practitioners. It is aimed to teach the participants the movements of stepping, clapping, and jumping following the rhythm of the song through the written words. The lyrics and notes of the song were written together, and the appropriate rhythms were drawn on the music sheet. Participants and practitioners formed a circle to ensure communication among them and practiced the rhythms applied according to footsteps by clapping their hands and taking steps according to the rhythm with their feet. According to the last sounds in the note written as a guide for this practice (see Fig. 12.1), it is observed that the participants had difficulty in performing the jumping and stepping movements written following the rhythm. *It is observed that the participants were happy with sociality and liked the school. Also, in the interviews with the parents, the parents'*

Sa-bah er-ken u-yan-dım ben kah-val-tı - mı yap-tım  
O-ku-la er - ken var-dım no-ta-la-rı - mı aç-tım

mü-zik-le dans e-de-rim o-ku-lu çok se-ve-rim

he-pi-miz bir a-ra-da çok mut-lu-yuz bu-ra-da

**Rhythm steps (for the entire song)**

**Jumping**

**Jumping**

Fig. 12.1. The lullaby “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” (Wikipedi., 2020)

statements stating that their children are happy about this issue confirmed this situation.

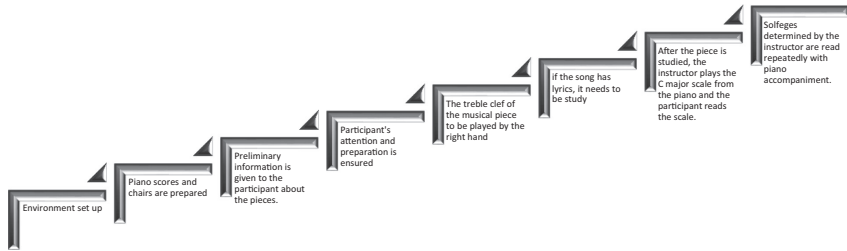
## 2.5. Selection of the participant (P1) in the study

It is observed that **P1**, who was better than the other participants in terms of elementary music skills and was more interested in music, got bored with the basic practices *in the pilot study group and social responsibility lesson group work*. In addition, after the pilot study, **P1**'s parents emulated other ASD children and expressed her concern that **P1** might learn problematic behaviors from them and imitate them. *Since P1 is also better than the other participants in terms of rhythmic and melodic hearing skills as a result of the ear test, and due to their promising level of development, it is recommended by experts who conduct the social responsibility course (Experts of music and Counseling and Research Center) that an independent study should be done by leaving the social responsibility course.* Considering

these situations, it is decided to conduct the lessons with **P1** individually. It is decided that this thesis study should be carried out depending on the examination of **P1**'s development in terms of rhythmic and melodic hearing skills as a result of their active participation in solfeggio, piano, and voice education.

## 2.6. Research Process

In the research, the practice process by providing effective music education to improve the rhythmic and melodic hearing skills of an individual with autism was given. Among the participants, a participant with a better musical ear than the others was selected for this study. The practitioner carried out all stages of the study process, and all sessions were arranged in a one-on-one education system. The application was carried out as a total of 33 lesson sessions over a period of 1 year, adhering to the 50-minute lesson duration once a week. In all the research sessions, the researcher first arranged the working environment where the lesson would take place and made the notes and chairs ready. Before the lessons, the participant was informed about the course and the songs to be played. Before the lecture sessions, it was ensured that the participant focused their attention and got ready. In the lessons taught during the research process, piano, solfeggio, and singing by playing the piano (elementary voice education) took place. The piano songs played by **P1** are divided into two different styles as the oral piano songs arranged by the practitioner and the songs selected from the piano repertoire. While studying the piano songs, first the left hand and then the right hand (or vice versa in order) were taught to the participant, and then their two hands were joined together. Before starting the solfeggio education, C major scale was taught to the participant. Examples of piano songs played during the research process are included in the *Appendices*. All lesson sessions are reported. During the study process, video and audio recordings were taken with the permission of the family in all lessons, and audio and video recordings of the participant working on homework were also used in the research. Sounds and video recordings recorded by telephone during the lessons were watched by 5 (five) experts of ear-training, piano, and voice education in the field of music. A structured interview form (*expert opinion form*), which determines the quality of the study according to the records they watched, was applied to the experts. In addition, a *parent interview form* was created to be asked of the participant's parents. To ensure the internal validity of the parent interview form, an academic who is an expert in qualitative research helped. As the expert academic found the number of questions too much, they were reduced and asked the participant's parent. The answers given by the participant's parents were recorded and reported first, and then descriptive analysis was carried out.



**Fig. 12.2.** Study plan

## 2.7. Data Collection Tools

In this study, the questions in the expert opinion form and the parent interview form were subjected to content validity by conferring on the experts. According to expert opinions, the number of questions was reduced and grouped.

### 2.7.1. Researcher Observation Form (Tables)

The researcher reported the lessons taught during the research process. Based on the reports, it is examined how successful **P1** was in playing the piano songs and oral piano songs in the process. The same process was performed in the solfeggio education given to **P1** during the research process. The collected data were analyzed by creating tables.

### 2.7.2. Expert Opinion Form

The researcher took video and audio recordings of the participant's performance during the lessons held during the research process. Then, nine video and six audio recordings, which were more advanced according to the difficulty level, were selected from these recordings. These recordings were watched by five experts in the field of voice training, ear-training, and piano training. A structured form was given to the experts to evaluate the participant's performance, and they were asked to rate the form according to the records they watched.

### 2.7.3. Parent Interview Form

At the end of the research, a semi-structured interview form was applied to the participant **P1**'s parents voluntarily. While preparing the interview questions, an academic who is an expert in qualitative research helped. Audio recordings were taken during the interview, and then these recordings were transcribed. Records were analyzed by the descriptive analysis method.

### 2.7.4. Audio and Visual Materials

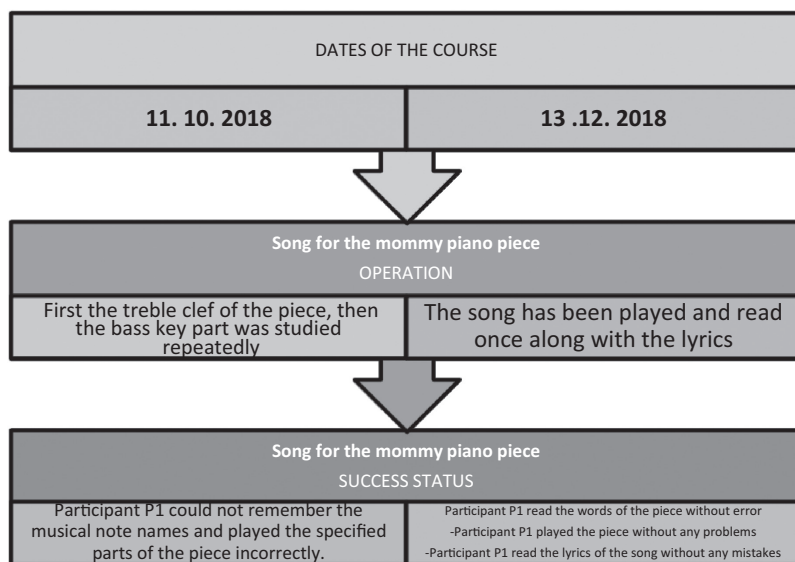
In data collection, audio and visual materials obtained from the lessons were used..

## 3 Findings

### 3.1. Piano and Voice Education Lessons with the Participant

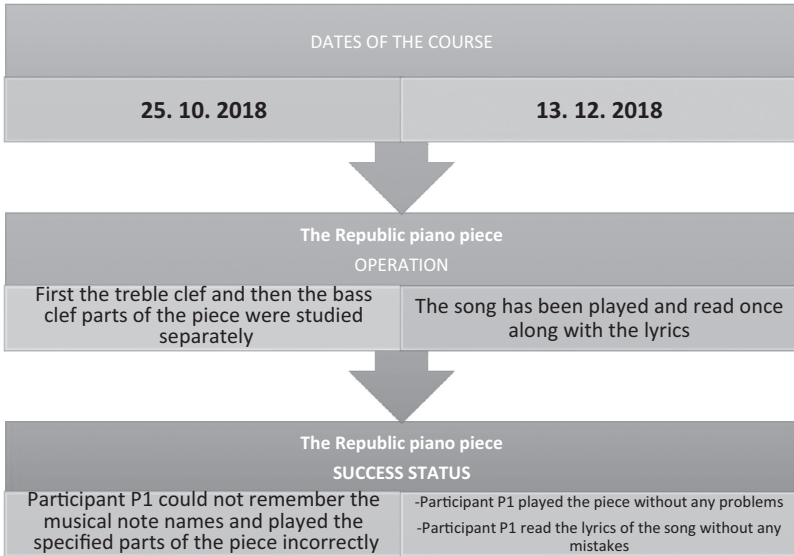
During the research process, the lessons made with **P1** were reported by the researcher. Based on the lesson reports, it is expressed that each song played in the process and the individual's ability to learn the songs in the process.

#### 3.1.1. Success Status of the Participant in “Annemize Türkü-Song for the mommy”



**P1** played *Annemize Türkü* between **October 11–December 13, 2018**. When the success status data in the table are examined, it is seen that **P1** played the song incorrectly in the first lesson in which the song was studied on **October 11, 2018**, and they played and could sing the lyrics of the song without a mistake on **December 13, 2018**.

3.1.2. *Success Status of the Participant in the Song “Cumhuriyet-The Republic”*



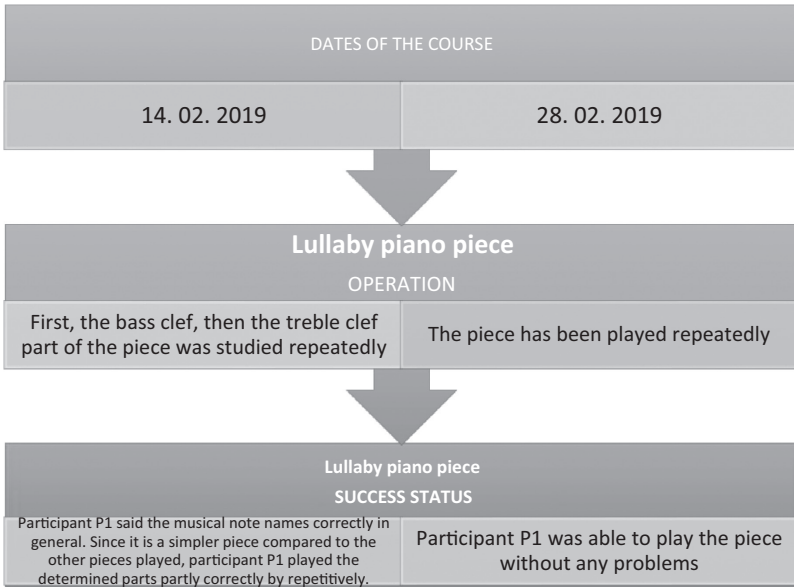
**P1** played *Cumhuriyet* between **October 25–December 13, 2018**. When the success status data in the table are examined, it is seen that **P1** played the song incorrectly in the first lesson in which the song was studied on **October 25, 2018**, and they played without mistakes and could sing the lyrics of the song on **December 13, 2018**. When the process in which the song is studied is examined thoroughly in the table, it is seen that the individual has made progress.

### 3.1.3. Success Status of the Participant in the Song “Hoş Gelişler Ola- Welcome to sweet home”

DATES OF THE COURSE	
<b>13. 12. 2018</b>	<b>14. 02. 2019</b>
↓	
Hoş Gelişler Ola <b>piano piece</b> OPERATION	
The bass clef part of the piece has been studied repeatedly.	The song has been played and read once along with the lyrics
↓	
Hoş Gelişler Ola <b>piano piece</b> SUCCESS STATUS	
Participant P1 incorrectly played the musical notes of the specified part of the piece	Participant P1 played the piece without any problems -Participant P1 said the words of the song correctly in general

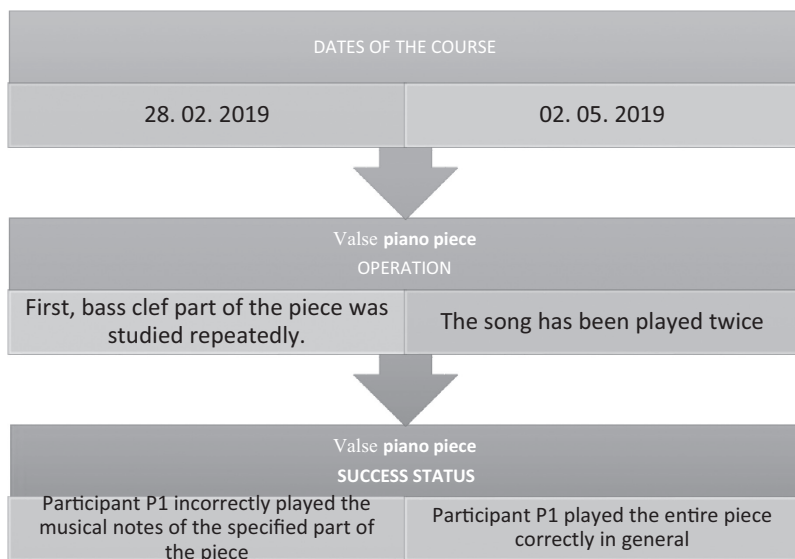
**P1** played *Hoş Gelişler Ola* between **December 13, 2018–February 14, 2019**. When the success status data in the table are examined, it is seen that **P1** played the song incorrectly in the first lesson in which the song was studied on **December 13, 2018**, and they played the song without any problem and could sing the lyrics of the song correctly in general on **February 14, 2019**.

3.1.4. *Success Status of the Participant in the Song “Ninni-Lullaby”*



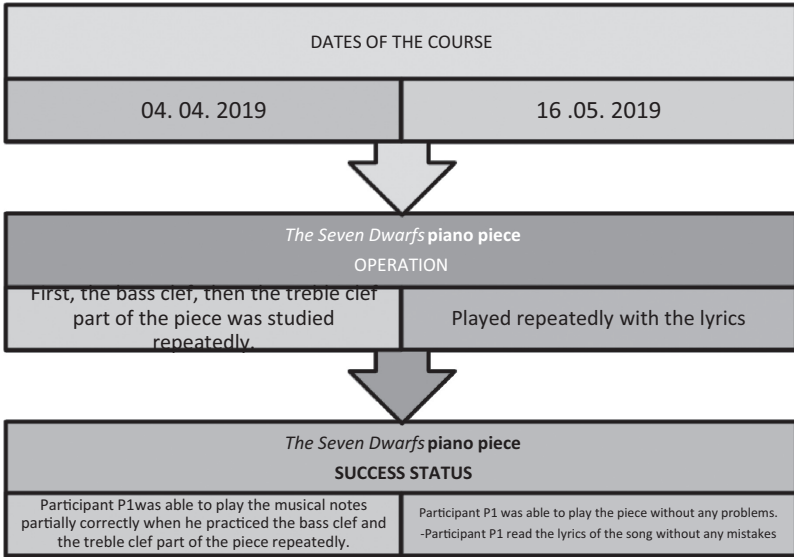
**P1** played *Ninni* between **February 14–February 28, 2019**. When the success status data in the table are examined, it is seen that **P1** played the song partially correctly on **February 14, 2019** as a result of repetitive practice, and they played the song without any problems on **February 28, 2019**.

### 3.1.5. Success Status of the Participant in the Song “Valse”



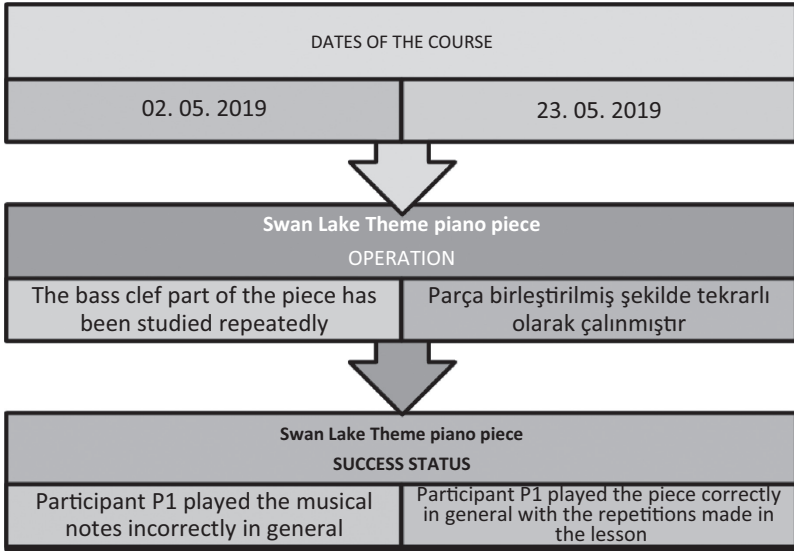
**P1** played *Valse* between **February 28–May 2, 2019**. When the success status data in the table are examined, it is seen that **P1** played the song incorrectly in the first lesson in which the song was studied on **February 28, 2019**, and they played the song correctly in general on **May 2, 2019**.

3.1.6. *Success Status of the Participant in “Yedi cüceler- The Seven Dwarfs”*



P1 played Muammer Sun (2014)'s *“The Seven Dwarfs”* between **April 4–May 16, 2019**. When the success status data in the table are examined, it is seen that P1 played the song partially correctly on **April 4, 2019** as a result of repetitive practice, and he played the song without any problems on **May 16, 2019**.

### 3.1.7. Success Status of the Participant in Swan Lake Theme



**P1** played *Swan Lake Theme* between **May 2–May 23, 2019**. When the success status data in the table are examined, it is seen that **P1** played the song incorrectly in general in the first lesson in which the song was studied on **May 2, 2019**, and they played the song correctly in general on **May 23, 2019**.

### 3.2. Solfeggio Lessons with the Participant

During the research process, the lessons made with **P1** were reported by the researcher. Based on the lesson reports, the summary of each solfeggio song selected from Muammer Sun (2018)'s book studied the process and the individual's ability to learn solfeggio in the process is as follows:

### 3.2.1. P1's Success Status in Solfeggio Studied in October

DATES OF THE COURSE	
11 .10. 2018	25.10. 2018

↓

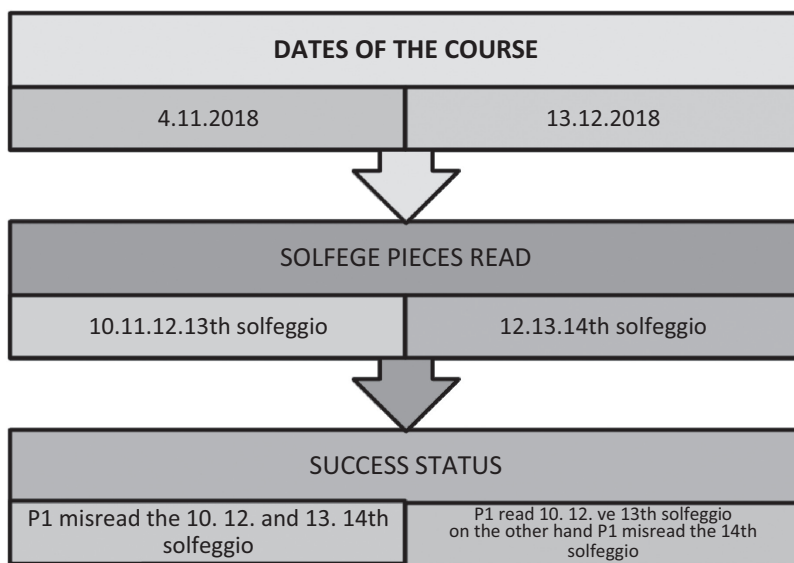
SOLFEGE PIECES READ	
1.2.3.4.5.6. solfeggio	7.8.9.10.11. solfeggio

↓

SUCCESS STATUS	
P1 read 1.,2.,3rd solfeggio correctly however he misread 6th solfeggio	P1, he read 7.8.9th solfeggio correctly on the other hand, he read 10th solfeggio misread

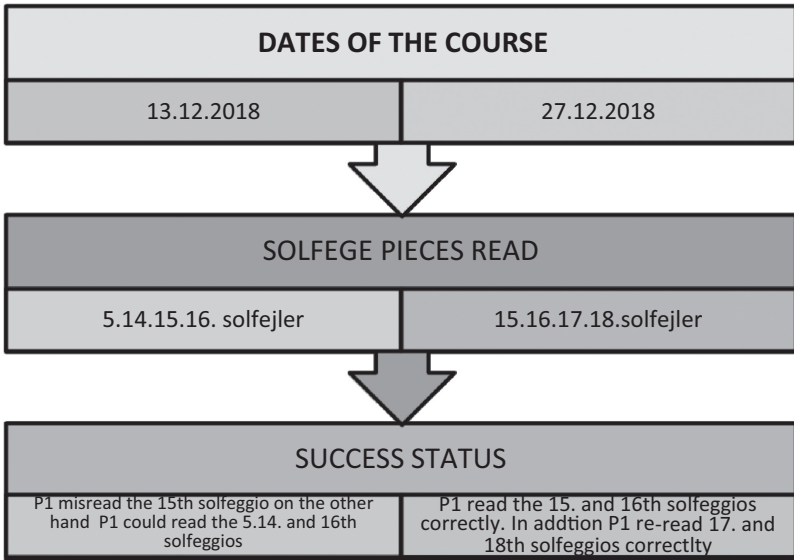
It is observed that **P1** read 6th solfeggio incorrectly on October 11, between October 11–25, and **P1** read solfeggio correctly in the lesson held on October 18. On October 18, it is seen that **P1** read the 9th solfeggio incorrectly, and in the lesson held on 25 October, **P1** read the solfeggio correctly. On October 25, it is seen that **P1** read the 10th solfeggio incorrectly. According to the data presented in the table, **P1** made progress in solfeggio no. 6–10.

### 3.2.2. P1's Success Status in Solfeggio Studied in November



It is observed that **P1** read 10th, 12nd, and 13th solfeggio incorrectly on November 4, between November 4–December 13, and **P1** read solfeggio correctly in the lesson held on November 11. On November 22, it is seen that **P1** read the 14th solfeggio incorrectly, and in the lesson held on December 13, **P1** read the solfeggio correctly. According to the data presented in the table, **P1** made progress in solfeggio education.

3.2.3. *P1's Success Status in Solfeggio Studied in December*



It is observed that **P1** read 15th solfeggio incorrectly on December 13, between December 13–27, and **P1** read solfeggio correctly in the lesson held on December 27. On December 27, it is seen that **P1** can read solfeggio as a result of repeated practice. According to the data presented in the table, **P1** made progress in solfeggio education.

### 3.2.4. P1's Success Status in Solfeggio Studied in January

DATE OF THE COURSE	
03 .01.2018	31 .01. 2018

↓

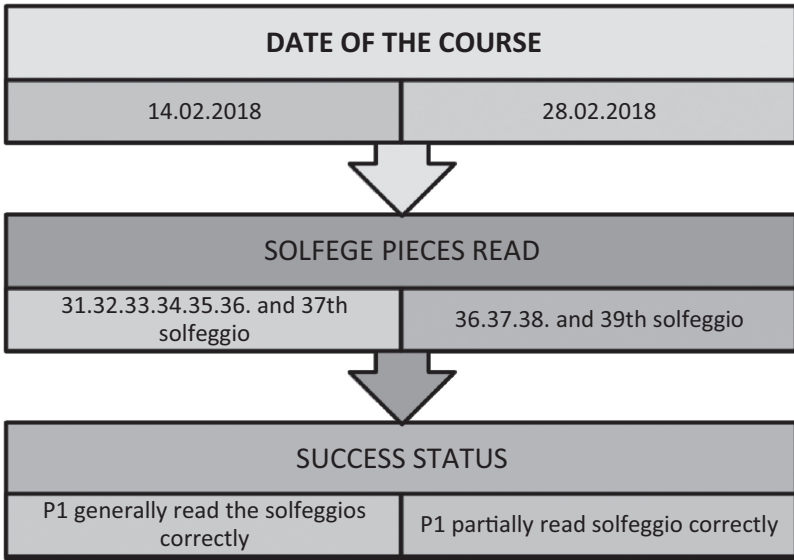
SOLFEGE PIECES READ	
17.18.19. and 20th solfeggio	18.20.21.22. 30. 31 and 32th solfeggio

↓

SUCCESS STATUS	
P1 misread the 20th solfeggio on the other hand P1 could read the 21.22.28.29. and 30th solfeggios	P1 generally read the solfeggios correctly

It is observed that **P1** had difficulty in reading 20th solfeggio on January 3, between January 3–31, and **P1** read solfeggio correctly in the lesson held on January 10. On December 10, it was seen that **P1** read 21st and 22nd solfeggio incorrectly, and **P1** read Solfeggio correctly in the lesson held on January 24. On January 24, it is seen that **P1** read 28th, 29th, and 30th Solfeggio incorrectly, and **P1** read Solfeggio correctly in the lesson held on January 31. On January 31, it is seen that **P1** read Solfeggio correctly in general. According to the data presented in the table, **P1** made progress in Solfeggio education.

3.2.5. *P1’s Success Status in Solfeggio Studied in February*



When the table of Solfeggio read in February is examined, it is seen that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly in general on February 14. It is observed that **P1** had difficulty in the 36th and 37th Solfeggio on February 21, and **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly in the lesson held on February 28. On February 28, it is seen that **P1** read the Solfeggio partially correctly. According to the data presented in the table, **P1** made progress in Solfeggio education.

3.2.6. *P1’s Success Status in Solfeggio Studied in March*

When the table of Solfeggio read in March is examined, it was seen that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly in general on March 7. It is observed that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly in general on March 14. On March 21, it is seen that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly in general. On March 28, it is seen that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly. According to the data presented in the table, **P1** made progress in solfeggio education.

### 3.2.7. P1's Success Status in Solfeggio Studied in April

DATE OF THE COURSE	
04.04.2018	25.04.2018

↓

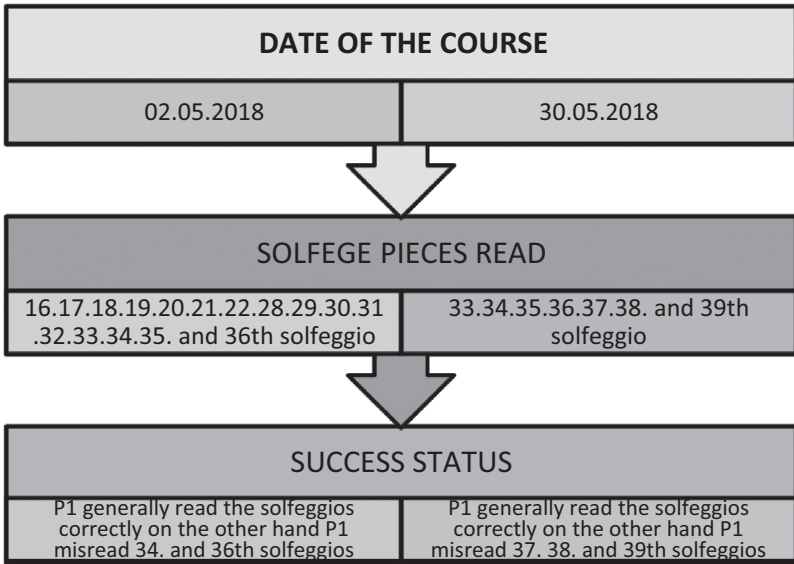
SOLFEGE PIECES READ	
1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.9.10.11.12.13.14. and 15th solfeggio	14.15.16.17.18. and 19th solfeggio

↓

SUCCESS STATUS	
P1 generally read the solfeggios correctly	P1 generally read the solfeggios correctly

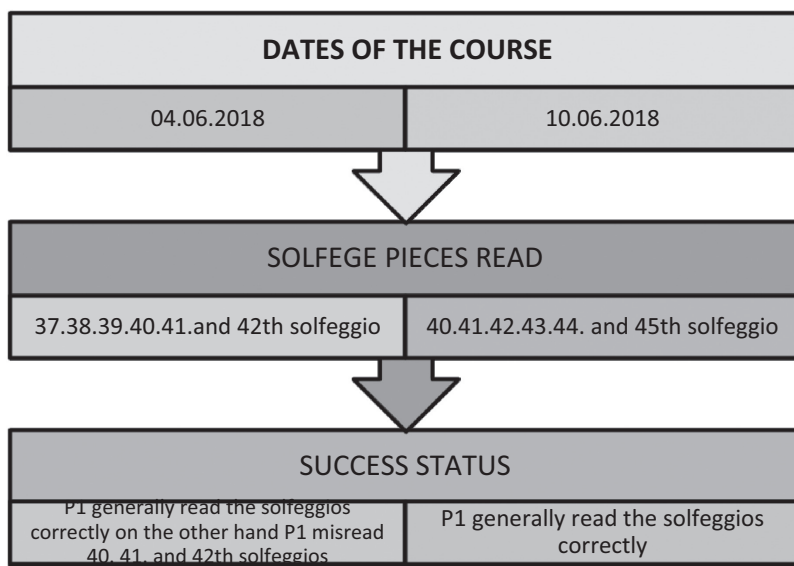
When the table of Solfeggio read in April is examined, it is seen that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly on April 4. It is observed that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly on April 11. On April 18, it is seen that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly. On April 25, it is seen that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly. According to the data presented in the table, **P1** made progress in solfeggio education.

3.2.8. *P1's Success Status in Solfeggio Studied in May*



When the table of Solfeggio read in May is examined, it is seen that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly on May 2. It is observed that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly in general on May 9. On May 16, it is seen that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly. On May 23, it is seen that **P1** read 34th and 36th Solfeggio incorrectly, and **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly in the lesson held on May 30. It is seen that **P1** read 37th, 38th, and 39th Solfeggio incorrectly on May 30, and **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly in the lesson held on June 4. According to the data presented in the table, **P1** made progress in Solfeggio education.

### 3.2.9. P1's Success Status in Solfeggio Studied in June



When the table of Solfeggio read in June is examined, it is seen that **P1** read 40th, 41st, and 42nd Solfeggio incorrectly on June 4, and **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly in the lesson held on June 10. On June 10, it is seen that **P1** read the Solfeggio correctly in general. According to the data presented in the table, **P1** made progress in solfeggio education.

### 3.3. Results of Expert Opinion Form

The graph created according to the evaluations of the experts is as follows:

- 77.5% I totally agree,
- 22,5% I agree,
- 0% I disagree and I totally disagree.

From the questions asked in the expert opinion form:

1. The statement "*The participant can carry a tune while reading*" was evaluated by 4 (four) experts as "I agree" and 1 (one) expert as "I agree". The expert, whose evaluation was "I agree", said there was an intonation problem in one of the Solfeggio songs **P1** read and stated that they made this assessment because of that.

## Expert Opinion

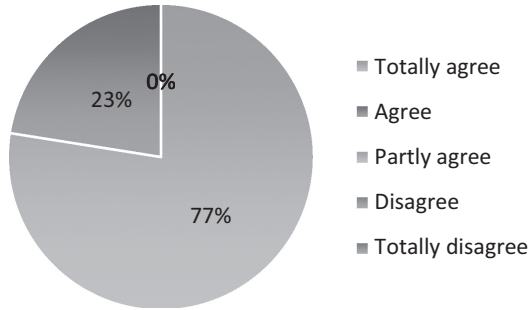


Fig. 12.3. Expert opinions

2. All the experts evaluated the statement, “The participant can produce the only sounds taken as a reference from the piano at the right frequency with the syllable “na” as “I agree”.”
3. 2 (two) experts evaluated the statement “*The participant can produce the right frequency with the “na” syllable, which is taken as a reference from the piano*”, as “I agree” and 3 (three) experts evaluated it as “I agree”.” Experts who evaluated “I agree” stated that **P1** could produce the sounds correctly, but they had problems with intonation.
4. 4 (four) experts evaluated the statement “*The participant can produce the three sounds taken as a reference from the piano with the correct frequency with the syllable “na”*” as “I agree,” and one expert evaluated it as “I agree”.”
5. All of the experts evaluated the statement “The participant can repeat the given rhythms” as “I agree”.
6. 4 (four) experts evaluated the statement “The participant uses their voice correctly while singing and reading Solfeggio “as “I agree” and one expert as “I agree”.”
7. 4 (four) experts evaluated the statement “The participant plays the piano correctly technically” as “I agree,” and one expert evaluated it as “I agree”.” Among the experts, 4 (four) people said that **P1** could play the piano songs correctly as a result of their piano education, but they reported that **P1** had posture problems in terms of hand and finger posture together with the sitting position while playing the piano; therefore, they said that they evaluated it as “I agree”. When the experts watched the audio and video recordings taken from the lessons

during the research process, they made positive comments on this research aimed at improving the musical perception skills of an individual with autism.

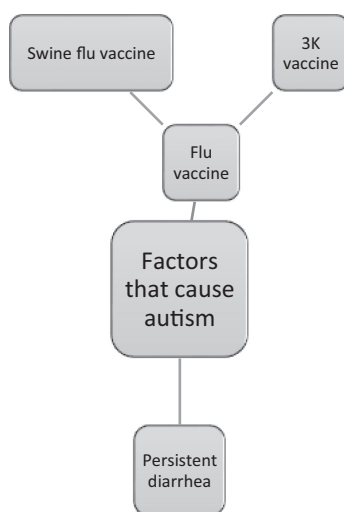
Among the experts, 2 (two) experts stated that it was a good decision to use Muammer Sun's Solfeggio book in Solfeggio education with *P1* during the research process, and they suggested that *Lavignac's* Solfeggio book could also be used to start reading Solfeggio. According to the evaluation results of the expert opinion form, none of the experts chose the statements "I partially agree", "I disagree" or "I disagree". According to the results of expert opinion, **P1** made progress in their rhythmic and melodic hearing skills.

### 3.4. Results of Parent Interview Form

The interview questions with the parents were collected under 3 (three) titles containing different topics and asked.

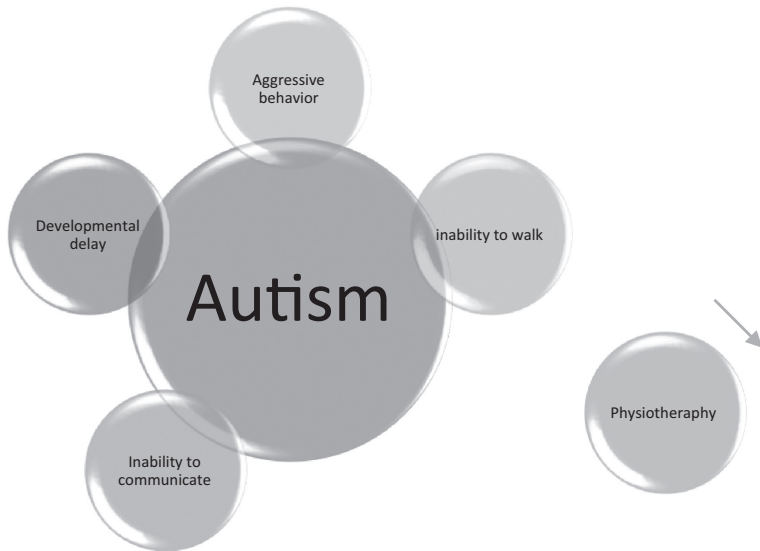
#### 3.4.1. How the Parent Felt after the Autism Diagnosis?

In the questions asked under this title, **P1's** parents talked about the diagnosis process. The parent stated that **P1**, who grew up healthy and was able to communicate for up to 9 months, got a fever as a result of the 3K vaccine, and stated that as a result of the inflammatory disease that lasted for three days, **P1** lost eye contact and became unresponsive.



**Fig. 12.4.** Schema of *P1's* factors causing autism spectrum

The parent, who stated that they started physical therapy as a result of **P1**'s unresponsiveness, mentioned that this process did not work. Later, the parent said that they went to the doctor because of a constant diarrhea problem but stated that the doctors could not find any problem. Afterward, the parent, who said that they went to a specialist doctor in Erciyes University Medical Faculty, stated that the doctor had diagnosed autism. The parent stated that when **P1** was diagnosed with autism, they did not know about the condition, and when they researched and learned about it, they could not accept this situation.



**Fig. 12.5.** Schema of the problems P1 experienced after having the Autism spectrum

### 3.4.2. *Autism Awareness*

In the questions asked under this title, the parent talked about their awareness of autism and **P1**'s arrangement in their daily life and the period of starting music. The parent stated that after **P1** became autistic, they constantly conducted autism research and became a member of many autism associations and groups. After talking about **P1**, the parent mentioned that **P1** is generally a well-adjusted individual, but because they are hyperactive, they never get tired and cannot contain themselves. The parent said they are looking for a solution to **P1**'s hyperactivity problem, and they enrolled **P1** in sports with the experts' suggestion.

They reported that sports tired out **P1**; therefore, **P1** showed less hyperactivity. Later, the parent talked about **P1**'s process of starting school and the problems they faced during the school period. The parent stated that **P1** attended inclusive schools and was unwanted by their teachers and friends in these schools. Regarding **P1**'s interest in music, the parent mentioned that when they sang a lullaby to **P1** at an early age, they fell asleep and was happy when they heard the sound of music. In addition, the parent mentioned that **P1** started to speak with music.

The parent, who said that they took **P1** to a group of private music educators who came to Kayseri, said that these special educators made **P1** sing and that they had a musical ear and suggested that they start playing the piano. They also said that experts recommend the piano because their finger muscles are weak. The parent, who stated that they started piano education given at the municipal conservatory, later on, said that they had problems there as well. The parent, who said that **P1** only played the piano with their left hand during the conservatory period, stated that **P1** attended the concert held at the end of the lesson and sang there, and said that people were watching him/her with interest. After this incident, piano lessons were canceled due to the piano teacher's busyness, and **P1** was able to attend piano lessons at the conservatory from time to time. The parent said that it is important for **P1** to socialize in crowded environments, and that is why she sent her to inclusive school, conservatory, or sports.

### *3.4.3 Contribution of Music Education at University to P1*

In the questions asked under this title, the parent talked about the music study process carried out at the university. The parent mentioned that they were invited to the social responsibility lesson, and then one-to-one lessons were held. Talking about the lessons held in this context, the parent said that **P1** enjoyed the lessons and these lessons were beneficial for him/her both musically and socially. The parent said that the researcher gave **P1** Solfeggio, piano, and voice education during the lesson so that **P1** learned notes and their musical ear developed.

## **5 Conclusion, Discussion, and Suggestions**

### **4.1. Conclusion**

According to the data revealed in the research, it is observed that children with autism who have a certain level of the musical ear can develop their rhythmic and melodic hearing skills as a result of regular Solfeggio and piano education.

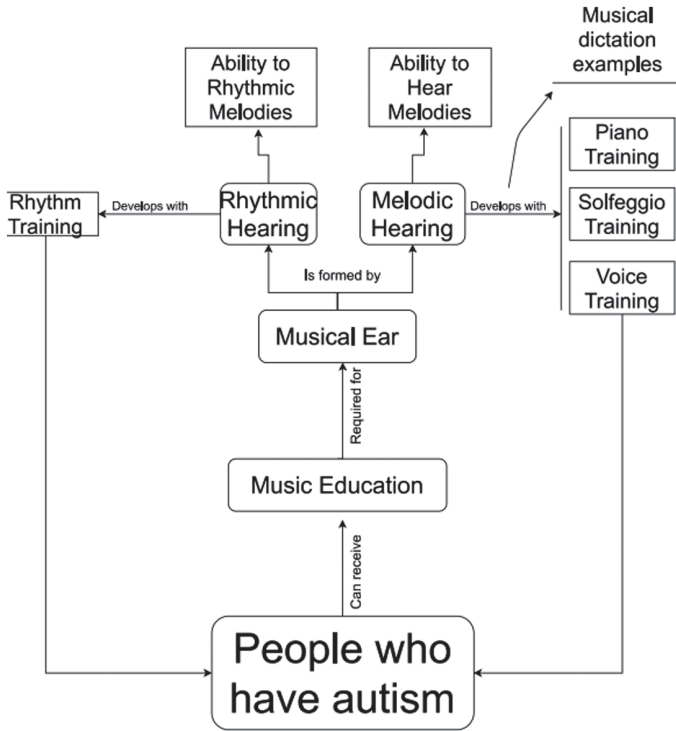


Fig. 12.6. Mind map on the development of P1's melodic and rhythmic hearing skills

The researcher observation form reveals that **P1**'s musical hearing skill has improved. At the beginning of the research, **P1** was able to produce the only sounds asked from the piano but could not produce two sounds and three sounds. As a result of the lessons given during the research process, they were able to produce one sound, two sounds, and three sounds. The Solfeggio read during the research process improved **P1**'s musical hearing skills.

The piano songs played during the research process improved **P1**'s musical hearing and psychomotor skills. According to the expert opinion form results, **P1** made progress in their rhythmic and melodic hearing skills.

In the interview, the parent mentioned that Solfeggio's education improves **P1**'s musical ear and helps him/her read the notes comfortably. It is learned from their parents that when they started playing the piano for the first time, **P1** could

only play the piano with their left hand. As a result of the research, **P1** was able to play the piano and sing by coordinating with both hands.

Conducting the research in a social environment such as a university and trying to communicate with people who are sensitive about autism enabled **P1** to socialize. Participating in concerts and playing the songs to the audience gave **P1** self-confidence. The oral piano songs arranged by the researcher consist of themes that include national feelings such as “Republic, Atatürk and homeland, mother’s love”. Consequently, the songs arranged are important for **P1** to make sense of these feelings.

#### 4.2. Discussion

Music education applied to children with autism has not become widespread in our country, and many parents are unconscious about this issue. The more research is done on this subject; the more aware of the society will increase.

As a result of a thesis study conducted using the Orff-Schulwerk approach within the scope of active music education, positive feedback was received from children with autism (Sağırkaya, 2014). Also, in this research, the individual’s active participation was ensured in the process, and the participant experienced lessons such as Solfeggio and voice education for the first time. In this respect, the study is consistent with this research. This research also contributes to the field as it has a subject related to the development of musical hearing skills.

According to Güleç, H., and Altın (2014), family members *diagnosed with ASD* try to cope with negative emotions such as intense anxiety, burnout, future anxiety, and various problems (such as seeking educational support explaining ASD to the environment). In this study, piano, Solfeggio, and singing education were given within the framework of seeking educational support. As psychomotor skills improved, anxiety and future anxiety decreased.

According to Güleç et al. (2014), it is stated that some problems specific to adolescence and adulthood (such as vocational training) of children diagnosed with ASD may cause mothers to go through a rough period again and experience intense stress. Providing social support to mothers and meeting the educational needs of children effectively will help mothers cope with this difficult situation. This study revealed that children with autism could engage in music at the secondary and undergraduate levels and receive education in this field to meet children’s educational needs effectively. Families of children with ASD will be conscious of music. Accordingly, parents will be able to start their children in music education.

According to Sağırkaya (2014), rhythmic studies that strengthen motor skills in children with autism are supported by songs; it is possible to start preparatory and long-term focus studies, a dynamic educational work with basic melodic structures, to process action movements that increase the social communication efficiency of the autistic individual and these movements in time and space. According to the results of this research, it is seen that children with autism who have a certain level of the musical ear can develop their rhythmic and melodic hearing skills as a result of regular Solfeggio and piano education. For this reason, oral piano songs and Solfeggio applied to the individual in this study positively affect the development of the individual's musical hearing skills.

As a result of Önal and Çaydere's (2011) research, it is mentioned that music studies with children with autism should be individual and that a special music program should be prepared for each individual with autism. Also, it is considered important to ensure the continuity of the studies conducted with these children. Also, in this research, the lessons in the process were held one-to-one, continuously, and regularly unless there was a public holiday or a critical situation that would adversely affect the lesson. This had a positive effect on the participant's development.

Thaut (1988) works on the measurement of musical perception skills of children with autism. An individual with autism got the highest individual score in this study, which is based on a comparison of musical perception with 11 (eleven) normal children, 6 (six) mentally challenged children, and 5 (five) autistic children. In addition, in this study, people with autism almost got the scores of normal people and were significantly ahead of those who are mentally challenged in terms of scores. In this research, Solfeggio songs from Muammer Sun (2018)'s *Solfeggio 1* book, which is taught to students in the curriculum of Fine Arts High School and Faculty of Fine Arts, were applied to P1. In addition, P1 played piano songs and sang songs at the high school and undergraduate level in the process. Considering this situation, it is seen that children with autism can be successful in music by getting high school and undergraduate education like normal children.

Boso, Emanuele, Minazzi, Abbamonte, and Politi's (2007) study conducted with 8 (eight) autistic children with severe autism spectrum, it is examined whether regular music lessons could improve the musical perception level and behavioral profile of children with autism. The development of musical skills of children with autism who participated in music lessons that included "playing the piano, playing the drums, and singing" activities for 52 weeks was graded with a Likert-type scale. At the end of the process, symptomatic improvements were observed in children with autism, and an improvement was observed in

their musical perceptions according to their basic state. In this study, a total of 33 lessons were conducted over a period of 1 year with an individual with autism who was understood to be interested in music, adhering to a 50-minute lesson once a week. Similar activities such as piano playing, singing, Solfeggio, and rhythmic exercises were applied with the individual. It is observed that P1, who participates in music activities, shows improvement in musical perception according to their basic state. Also, in this research, a Likert-type scale was used, which allowed five experts in the field to interpret the audio recordings and video images taken in the lesson. As a result of this research, it is seen that P1 became socialized and improved in communication. During the research process, a semi-structured interview was conducted with P1's parents with their consent. In this interview, the parent stated that P1 did not know how to speak before starting their music education and they started talking with music. They also mentioned that there was a decrease in their repetitive movements.

Berrakçay's (2008a) study, based on the question of what kind of effect music will have on the social behaviors of children with autism who exhibit certain behavioral disorders, rhythm lessons were held with 4 (four) autistic children as 10 sessions once a week. Their families followed up the identified problematic behaviors of the children with the "problematic behavior weekly monitoring form," and rhythm studies were measured using the "rhythm repetition scale". As a result of the research, it is concluded that repetitive rhythm studies can replace the repetitive problematic behaviors of children. Also, in this study, it is stated that the association of children with autism with any instrument is an important factor in increasing their interest in music. In this research, lessons were held regularly every week, and Solfeggio and piano songs were repeated in each lesson. As a result of this repetitive education system, P1's musical perception improved.

Berrakçay (2008b) applied study, the fact that each individual's performance is different has revealed that not all children with autism have musical talent, and talent is a feature that exists in the individual biologically. This study supports that not every individual with autism has musical talent. In the pilot study of the research, the musical talents of nine children with ASD were tested together with psychological counseling and guidance experts. It is seen that one of the participants from different levels of participants had an intense spectrum, and it is discussed that this individual could participate in the study for just socializing. It is observed that two of the participants had a normal autism level but had no interest in music. It is observed that four participants had a normal autism level and were able to play the piano at the elementary level (using only the right hand, playing with the wrong finger, changing the melody or rhythm of the audio song,

ending it early, or late). It is noticed that one of the participants had a very little spectrum in terms of autism level and behaved like a healthy person. This individual can play a simple melody by heart on the piano. It is seen that this participant knew notes and could play piano better than the others. It is observed that this participant, coded as **P1**, was more interested in music than the other participants. It is also found out that they had a 2-year experience playing the piano at intervals from the age of 9. Therefore, due to **P1**'s interest and talent for music, they worked on homework in the research, attended the classes regularly, and it was seen that they had a pleasant time during the lesson in general. P1 was able to correctly produce the rhythm repetitions applied to determine the level of development when the lessons during the research process were finished. There are examples of rhythm exercises studied in Fig. 12.7.



**Fig. 12.7:** The example of rhythm exercises carried out with the participant (Tuck, 2000)

Gökmen's (2010) study, which aims to describe the reactions of an individual diagnosed with autism to music and music studies, is studied with a 6-year-old child with autism for 30 sessions. The research data were collected with unstructured interviews, video camera recordings, and observer recording charts prepared by the researcher. Out of 30 study sessions, 8 studies were coded by the observers. As a result of the research, it is determined that the participant reacts positively to music and music studies, communicates with the researcher willingly, and participates in music studies willingly.

Like all children in society, children with autism also have the right to enter business life and earn income. During the transition period, the planning's and arrangements will serve as a bridge for these children to overcome the difficult transition periods in their lives with fewer problems and reach the planned goals

(Yücesoy, Ergenekon, Adıgüzel, Çolak & Kaya, 2015). The most important point is that children with autism will be able to progress in music and do this job as a profession, what kind of education will be preferred in terms of the musical development of these children, the training of the trainers who will provide these educations. This study shows that children with autism will contribute to music as both students and educators by receiving music education. There are even children with autism who receive music teaching education. However, it is seen that various arrangements should be made in the university exam threshold score in Turkey (AA, 2018; Ekizler, 2020).

### 4.3. Suggestions

It can be suggested to educators that they should practice piano, Solfeggio, and voice education to improve the musical hearing skills of children with autism.

Children with autism with musical talent can receive education in this direction and fill the gap in the field.

Music therapists can be trained in music education practices.

A piano can be used in the education of children with autism.

To raise awareness of the families of children with autism about music education, music lessons can be held in individual-family reunification.

The research may contribute to music therapy studies in children with autism.

In this study, the participant was given Solfeggio education throughout the research process. When the literature is reviewed, it is an applied sample study in which Solfeggio education for children with autism is conducted. In this respect, it is thought that this study can support similar studies to be conducted.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are no studies on piano and voice education for children with autism. It is expected that the study will shed light on new research in this regard.

To train experts, individual studies should be carried out within the framework of the subjects researched at the master and doctorate levels.

Special education music teaching departments and programs can be designed in universities. Music teachers who will serve in the field can be educated.

## References

- AA.(2018). Otizmli müzik dehasının ‘üniversite’ yola açıldı [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/egitim/otizmli-muzik-dehasinin-universite-yolu-acildi-4100742> 4 Date of Access 13.09.2020
- Aydın, O., İftar, E. T., & Rakap, S. (2019). Bilimsel-dayanaklı uygulamaları belirlemede “tek-denekli deneysel araştırmaların niteliksel göstergeleri”

- yönergesinin matematik becerileri öğretimi örneğinde ele alınışı. *Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Özel Eğitim Dergisi*, 20(3), 597–628. doi:10.21565/ozelegitimdergisi.421952
- Berrakçay, O. (2008a). *Müziğin Bir Yaygın Gelişimsel Bozukluk Tipi Olan Otizmde Ortaya Çıkan Problemler Davranışlar Üzerine Etkisi: Ritim Uygulaması Çerçevesinde 4 Örnek Olay İncelemesi*. (Yüksek lisans), Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi İzmir.
- Berrakçay, O. (2008b). *Müziğin bir yaygın gelişimsel bozukluk tipi olan otizmde ortaya çıkan problemler davranışlar üzerine etkisi: Ritim uygulaması çerçevesinde 4 örnek olay İncelemesi*. (Master), Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Güzel Sanatlar Enstitüsü.
- Borders, C. M., Bock, S. J., & Szymanski, C. (2015). Teacher ratings of evidence-based practices from the field of autism. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, 20, 91–100.
- Boso, M., Emanuele, E., Minazzi, V., Abbamonte, M., & Politi, P. (2007). Effect of long-term interactive music therapy on behavior profile and musical skills in young adults with severe autism. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 13(7), 709–712.
- Canlı, G. M., & Yusuf, T. (2019). Ana dili ve yabancı dil olarak Türkçe eğitimi üzerine eylem araştırması yöntemiyle yapılmış çalışmaların sistematik olarak İncelenmesi. *International Journal of Field Education*, 5(2), 30–54.
- Cary, G., Dilek (2012). Kodály and Orff: A comparison of two approaches in early music education. *ZKÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 8(15)-.
- Çöl, H. T. (2012). *Biçimsel çözümlenmeli çalgı eğitiminin devlet konservatuvarı öğrencilerinin çalgı çalma başarısına etkisi*. (PhD), Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara.
- Duru, E. G., & Karakelle, S. (2013). Türkiye ve Avusturya müzik öğretmeni yetiştirme programlarının karşılaştırılması. *Turkish Studies – International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic, ANKARA-TURKEY*, 8(3), 233–245.
- Ekişler, T. (2020). Otizmliler Onur, müzik öğretmeni olmak için 'ilk 800 bin şartı'nın kaldırılmasını istiyor. *Anadolu Ajansı (AA)*. Retrieved from <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/yasam/otizmliler-onur-muzik-ogretmeni-olmak-icin-ilk-800-bin-sartinin-kaldirilmasini-istiyor-1947736#>
- Garland, T. (2018). *Otizmliler duyuşsal işleme bozukluğu*. İstanbul: Bilim Teknik Yayınevi.
- Gökmen, U. (2010). *Otizmliler tanısı almış bir çocuğun müziğe ve müzik çalışmalarına verdiği tepkilerin betimlenmesi* (Master), Marmara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.

- Güleç, A. Y., H., C., & Altın, D. (2014). Otizm spektrum bozukluğu tanılı çocuk sahibi annelerin deneyimleri. *Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 13(50), 96–111.
- Gürgür, H. (2017). Eylem araştırması. In A. Ersoy & A. Saban (Eds.), *Eğitimde nitel araştırma desenleri* (pp. 37–52). Ankara: Anı yayıncılık.
- Hermes, L. (2001). *Action research- lehrkreafter erforschen ihren unterricht: Qualitätsentwicklung und qualitätssicherung von unterricht in der sekunderstufe. landesinstitut für schulentwicklung*. [https://www.schulentwicklung.nrw.de/cms/upload/ue-englisch/weitere\\_materialien/e-actionresearch.pdf](https://www.schulentwicklung.nrw.de/cms/upload/ue-englisch/weitere_materialien/e-actionresearch.pdf) Date of Access 10.10.2020
- MEB, T. C. (2002). *Otistik çocukların eğitiminde aile el kitabı*. Ankara: T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı.
- Önal, O., & Çaydere, Ö. Ö. (2011). Otistik çocuklarda müzik eğitimi. *e-Journal of New World Sciences Academy*, 6(2), 225–235.
- Pekeş, S. (2016). Otizm spektrum bozukluğu tanısı almış çocuklarda müzik eğitiminin önemi. *Sanat Eğitimi Dergisi*, 4(1), 95–110.
- Sağırkaya, B. (2014). *Temel Motor Becerilerini Kullanabilen Otizm Özelliği Gösteren Çocuklarda İletişim Becerilerinin Geliştirilmesinde Orff-Schulwerk Yönteminin Kullanımı*. (Yüksek Lisans Master), T.C. Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Sun, M. (2014). *7 Cüce*. Ankara: Sun Yayınevi.
- Sun, M. (2018). *Solfej-1*. Ankara: Evos Basım.
- Taluy, T. C. (2020). *Müzik eğitimi yoluyla otizmlı bireylerin melodik ve ritmik duyma becerilerinin geliştirilmesi üzerine bir eylem araştırması*. (Master), Erciyes Üniversitesi, Güzel Sanatlar Enstitüsü (651376).
- Tekin, E. (2000). Karşılaştırmalı tek-denekli araştırma modelleri. *Anadolu Üniversitesi Engelliler Araştırma Enstitüsü Özel Eğitim Dergisi*, 2(4), 1–12.
- Thaut, M. H. (1988). Measuring musical responsiveness in autistic children: A comparative analysis of improvised musical tone sequences of autistic, normal, and mentally retarded individuals. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 18(4), 561–571.
- Tuck, K. (2000). *Drums Book 1*. Australia: KT Percussion Publications.
- Wikipedi. (2020). Daha dün annemizin. Retrieved from [https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ya%C5%9Fas%C4%B1n\\_Okulumuz](https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ya%C5%9Fas%C4%B1n_Okulumuz)
- Yıldırım, F. (2012). Solfej öğretiminde makamsal materyallerin kullanımına ilişkin uzman görüşleri üzerine bir betimsel analiz. *Sosyoteknik Sosyal ve Teknik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 3, 19–33.
- Yücesoy, Ö., Ergenekon, Ş., Adıgüzel, Y., Çolak, O., & Kaya, A. (2015). *Otizm Spektrum Bozukluğu*. Ankara: HTC Ofset.



Sarper Yilmaz

# Evaluation of the Effect of Social Media on Hospital Emergency Services and Patient Treatment during The Pandemic

## 1 Introduction

On December 1, 2019, a pandemic resulting from a “new” virus began spreading in Wuhan, the capital of China’s Hubei region. It was determined that the virus was SARS-CoV-2, a different derivative of SARS from the Coronavirus family, which the world had experienced before. While the cases were progressing step by step in Wuhan and the virus was still endemic, China, one of the major managers of world trade, did not make any research and publication on this issue. However, the best way to prevent an infection outbreak is to fight to prevent its spread while that infection is endemic. Endemic as medical terminology is defined as an epidemic that occurs at a predictable time in a particular area or among a particular population. In the period that the world experiences, endemic diseases occur frequently and are destroyed with regional measures in that region without exceeding its own borders. Regional epidemic diarrheal, food poisoning, influenza infections are some examples of this phenomenon.

Li Wenliang was working as an ophthalmologist at The Central Hospital of Wuhan during this period. He detected the Coronavirus endemic that started in Wuhan on December 30, 2019 and warned the world via social media (1). In the group they used jointly with his doctor friends, Dr. Wenliang stated that he thought this disease was similar to SARS, which caused a global pandemic in 2003, and that he encountered seven cases, and that the cases came from the Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan. Unfortunately, four days later after this correspondence, the Chinese police told Wenliang that he was summoned to the Public Security Bureau and needed to sign a statement. The letter accused him of “making false statements that seriously disturbed the social order”. It was written that “We strongly warn you: if you persist with such arrogance and continue this illegal activity, you will be brought to justice, do you understand?”. Underneath the statement was the inscription “Yes, I understand” in Dr. Wenliang’s handwriting. Dr. Wenliang was one of eight people accused by police of “spreading rumors.” The world was first informed about SARS-CoV-2 not from a scientific paper, but from a copy of Dr. Wenliang’s letter posted on a social networking site called Weibo at the end of January 2019.

The message began with, “Hi everyone. I’m Li Wenliang, an eye specialist at the Central Hospital of Wuhan.” This was the first recognition of the COVID-19 pandemic, which would later change the world. Dr. Wenliang explained in another post he made on Weibo that he started coughing on January 10, and that he had a fever the next day and was hospitalized two days later. His parents also became ill and were taken to the hospital. Unfortunately, he died at the age of 33 at the Central Hospital of Wuhan on February 7, 2020. He passed away doing everything a doctor should do during a pandemic, even sacrificing his life. He left a great responsibility and honor to every doctor struggling with the pandemic in the world. This event is a story about all societies struggling with the pandemic in a similar manner. Countries where governors struggle with reality more than the virus have unfortunately paid the price of the pandemic. Because this virus can only be defeated as societies become more informed on how to limit contagiousness.

## 2 Contagiousness

One of the most difficult issues to explain to the public was the concept of contagion in this period. One of the main reasons why SARS-CoV-2 started as an endemic, evolved into an epidemic, and then a pandemic, was that its contagiousness was much higher. The value that best describes contagiousness is the  $R_0$  value of an infection.  $R_0$  value indicates the average number of secondary cases that develop after a typical patient for infectious disease in a fully susceptible population. Although it is stated as the basic reproduction number or basic reproduction rate in some sources, it would be more correct to call it as the basic reproduction number because it indicates a number in the end. The  $R_0$  number is generally specified as a digit (e.g. 1.7) or a numeric distribution (e.g. 10–18). Epidemiological triple variables (infective agent, host and environmental factors) are important in  $R_0$  estimation calculations. Three main variables play a major role in the calculations. These are given in Tab. 13.1.

**Tab. 13.1.** Important variables in calculating  $R_0$

- (a) The contagiousness period after a person gets infected,
- (b) Possibility of infection after contact with a susceptible person,
- (c) Contact intensity and duration.

If  $R_0$  ratio is higher than 1, it is predicted that a sick person can transmit the disease to more than one person and the disease will gradually spread in the society over time. The  $R_0$  value shows to how many people a disease has spread

from only one sick person in society, and there is no relationship between the value and the severity of the disease. Likewise, the  $R_0$  value does not indicate how quickly the disease spreads.

$R_0$  values have been estimated differently in different studies for the COVID-19 disease, which has recently emerged in the world and our country, and for which the World Health Organization (WHO) has warned of a pandemic. The  $R_0$  value of COVID-19 was found to be between 1.4 and 6.49 (mean 3.28, median 2.79) from 12 studies published between January and February 2020 in China and other countries mainly. WHO estimated it as 1.4–2.5. In general, it can be said that the  $R_0$  value of SARS CoV-2, which causes the current COVID-19 disease, is about 2.6 on average. This number is higher than SARS and MERS which are the other serious coronavirus infections, so it can be said that the COVID-19 disease has a much greater potential to spread. When the  $R_0$  value is accepted as 2.6, it has been estimated that a patient with COVID-19 will infect 2.6 people after 1 infection cycle (2–14 days, 5 days on average) and can infect 368 people in 7 infection cycles (35 days on average) (2).

Although there are speculations even on the concept of contagiousness, it is actually very easy to understand and explain. When the virus infects a person, it is reacted according to the person's immunity. If the person has a strong immunity, the virus is destroyed before it can hold on to the body. No infection condition may occur in this person. Many factors play a role in this, such as the immunity of the person, the amount of virus received (viral load), previous contact with the virus (immunity).

***There is no rule that every person who gets the virus will be infected. Another situation is that the virus transmitted to the person can create an infection in this person. However, it is not clear whether this infection can be transmitted to another individual.***

In fact, not every individual is contagious for every infection. This forms the basis of infectious diseases. But everyone is considered contagious, as there are no indicators or tests that allow us to know whether an individual will infect another individual in a pandemic. I think we now have the answer to the question “My wife, with whom I share the same bed, has COVID-19, so why don't I?” now. Especially on social media, these arguments aimed to convince people that this illness does not exist. This caused the pandemic to be underestimated, denied and naturally spread to large masses in the period.

The fact that the concept of contagiousness is not clearly understood in the society still causes increasing cases day by day. The duration and proximity of contact are still one of the most important criteria. The World Health Organization (WHO) and The Scientific Advisory Board of the Ministry of Health (henceforth SBBK) Guidelines still use the same common language (3). These are given in Tab. 13.2.

**Tab. 13.2.** Common information on contagiousness in guidelines

1. The disease is transmitted mainly by droplets.
2. In addition, the droplets released by sick individuals through coughing and sneezing are transmitted by contacting and touching the mouth, nose, or eye mucosa with their hands after contact with other people's hands.
3. Since the virus can be detected in the respiratory tract secretions of asymptomatic people, these people can be contagious.
4. The contagiousness period of COVID-19 is not known accurately. It is thought to begin 1–2 days before the symptomatic period and end with the disappearance of symptoms.
5. Viral shedding begins 1–2 days before the onset of symptoms, viral load peaks during the onset of symptoms in throat swabs, it decreases rapidly within the first seven days, and it can extend beyond the second week.
6. The contacts of the COVID-19 case with a positive PCR result within 48 hours before the PCR test or the onset of symptoms are identified and detected as at risk.

I think one of the best ways to understand the risk of transmission is to know the definition of “Contact” in the guidelines. According to The Scientific Advisory Board of the Ministry of Health (SBBK) Guidelines, individuals who are in contact, that is, one of the COVID-19 carriers of the disease, who are likely to transmit to another person, is defined as in Tab. 13.3 (4);

**Tab. 13.3.** Circumstances with the possibility of transmission of COVID-19

- Persons who talk to a COVID-19 patient at a distance of less than 1 meter for more than 15 minutes at a time,
- Persons providing direct care to a COVID-19 patient,
- Students and teachers sharing the same classroom with a student/teacher with COVID-19,
- People who contact with a COVID-19 patient physically (kissing, hugging, hugging, etc.),
- Persons who have unprotected contact with the secretions (saliva, phlegm, etc.) of a COVID-19 patient or in cases such as sneezing-coughing of a COVID-19 patient,
- Persons who are in the same closed environment (hospital or bank waiting rooms, land office, tax office, people waiting in official institutions such as municipality, buses, shuttles, etc.) with the COVID-19 patient,
- Passengers traveling on the same plane with a COVID-19 patient, and sitting in two front, two back and two side seats (if the person is sitting in the aisle, the closest people sitting in the front and back cross are also taken in contact),
- People living in the same house with a COVID-19 patient,
- People who work in the same office with a COVID-19 patient,
- Persons sharing the same room with a COVID-19 patient in a dormitory or hotel,
- People traveling on the same bus with a COVID-19 patient.

### 3. Test and Diagnosis:

One of the main reasons why COVID-19 cannot be prevented in the world today is the inadequacy of the tests used in the diagnosis of the disease. Tests used in diagnosis;

#### 3.1. Swab Test:

Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) **Republic of Turkey** It is the first recommended test to be applied to the suspected patient in the algorithms of the Ministry of Health. It is done by taking a swab sample from the throat with a stick. Unfortunately, the rate of detection of positive patients by the PCR test has not been clearly revealed yet. Although a specific number is still not given in the literature, it is stated in the expert opinions that it is around 70 %. In other words, if 10 COVID-19 patients were tested, not all cases could be detected with this test. This especially complicates the diagnosis and follow-up of the disease and causes the patients' resistance to treatment. More interestingly, even now, the most powerful diagnostic method in the diagnosis of COVID-19 is still PCR testing.

Before the pandemic, we had to not to do the PCR test, which was done in a year in our country, in one day during the pandemic period. In the first place, WHO recommended more testing and early isolation in the fight against the pandemic. In this period, countries have started to work on infrastructure and procurement for these tests; that is, hospitals have begun developing and changing their laboratory capacities. While most of these tests were carried out in the laboratories of the Ministry of Health in Ankara at the beginning of the process in our country, the number of provinces, hospitals, and laboratories where tests have been carried out has increased rapidly.

During the increasing testing capacity, posts written with false and unclear information on social media have begun to increase the burden on hospitals. Many social media users were making statements on their profiles saying “*test, test, test*” in order to imply that there were not enough tests and that they should be increased. Perhaps the addressees of these statements were the Ministry of Health officials directly; however, reading these statements, the general public broke the isolation rules, were admitted to hospitals after using public transportation, created crowded lines, the number of people waiting and medical examinations increased, and consequently, since they were not included in the group recommended for testing in SBBK guidelines, they were returning their homes without testing. We had many patients who were affected by these calls and applied to the hospital just to get tested without any complaints. This was

one of the greatest misfortunes of the period. In this period, while the infrastructure works were being carried out, the patients, whose best method was to continue their isolation at home, listened to the calls of social media users and broke their isolation, and social contact increased to a very high level. The risk of spread increased even more, and this was even reflected in the number of cases detected over time. When these social media users were examined, it was seen that many non-medical and non-health academics were among them. The proposal to increase the number of tests, which was actually a suitable suggestion, caused terrible results because it was done in the wrong place with the wrong method.

Another social media campaign was launched by those who thought that great powers would guide them through a chip implanted in people through tests. In this process, we also had patients who had symptoms in the field and did not accept to be tested and left the hospital without permission.

### 3.2. Computed Tomography:

A literature review in March 2020 revealed that the diagnostic value of chest X-rays is very low in the early stages, but computed tomography (CT) findings could be present even before symptom onset. Over time, the use of CT became widespread, especially in those who could not be detected as a COVID-19 patient by PCR test if respiratory complaints continued. On the other hand, SBBK guidelines defined the patient groups for whom CT scan was recommended in the early period. Because the damage that CT would cause to the patient's body due to high radiation had to be taken into account. However, this test was shown as a savior on social media (especially in the period when the safety of PCR was questioned), and the perception that it could be used as a screening test has emerged. It was a campaign that was launched and promoted without thinking about the future and without making any benefit-cost calculations. This false perception reflected on the health system as **“patient insisting on having a CT scan”**. There was worse, of course. CT units had to be cleaned, ventilated, and disinfected after each patient. While the scanning of real severe cases continued, the attitude of the persistent patients increased the burden on the radiology units, and the increased burden further increased the contact between the patients. This resulted in a statistic that increased the probability of an unnecessary examination to infect that patient with COVID-19. The propaganda of *“I took a test, and it was negative, I took a CT scan and was positive for COVID”*, which spread in waves on social media, did great harm to both the health system and the patient himself/herself, unfortunately.

### 3.3 Blood Tests:

One of the most challenging events to tell the public since the COVID-19 pandemic began is that while blood tests were taken and diagnoses were made in diseases before, blood tests for COVID-19 were used not for the diagnosis but as criteria in terms of the severity of the disease and hospitalization in the diagnosed patients. In the SBKK guideline on Management of Severe Pneumonia, ARDS, Sepsis, and Septic Shock;

*It is stated that “Full blood count, lymphocyte count, C-reactive protein, procalcitonin, kidney and liver parameters, cardiac enzymes, LDH, coagulation parameters, fibrinogen, D-dimer, ferritin, arterial or venous blood gas, lactate, and chest X-ray are requested from the patients, and the results are evaluated. If there is fever or other indications before antibiotic treatment, blood cultures and other cultures are taken according to clinical findings.” (7).*

This situation fueled by social media with the statement “**It didn’t come out in my test, but everyone said they had a blood test.**” was forcing physicians and clinics to increase laboratory tests within the increased patient population.

In this process, another challenge that users created the wrong perception through social media was **the number of antibodies**. Such a demand arose in all segments of the society after many health professionals shared their antibody levels on social media, and people put forward to find out whether people who had the disease or were vaccinated would relapse it. In a period when the number of patients was increasing, it was not easy to measure the antibody level of the patient after treatment or after vaccination and to interpret according to these data. The reasons for this are given in Tab. 13.4.

**Tab. 13.4.** Reasons that make antibody follow-up meaningless

1. Not everyone who had COVID-19 developed antibodies,
2. Not everyone who was vaccinated developed antibodies,
3. **The protective antibody level** has not yet been declared in world standards, and there were discussion topics,
4. There was a possibility that people who would go to hospitals to check their antibody levels could get the infection again.
5. It was not clear how long the developed antibodies would act as protection in the body,
6. The probability of false-positive and false-negative was high.

Even by considering these factors alone, we can see how unnecessary the antibody test propaganda, discourses, and suggestions are. Another mistake is that a member of the Scientific Advisory Board shared the antibody level in the blood

after vaccination and posted on social media that the vaccine worked in a study whose phase 3 investigation is ongoing. These are given in Tab. 13.5.

**Tab. 13.5.** Effects of social media post on community and disease management

1. Phase studies are double-blind studies. In other words, both the vaccinated and those who vaccinate do not know whether the injection is a vaccine or a placebo (ineffective substances, usually empty serum fluid is used). In other words, this statement overshadowed the reliability of the Phase 3 study, which was actually done.
2. Those who had a disease or those who were vaccinated in the community thought they would be followed up with an antibody test and applied to the pandemic polyclinics of the hospitals.
3. Doctors and health workers were compelled to explain the question “**Why were they tested?**” asked by citizens who were told that they would not be tested.
4. A new burden emerged in laboratories that were already used much more than usual for disease, weight, hospitalization, discharge, and differential diagnosis.

## 4. Treatment and Protective Effect (Prophylaxis):

### 4.1. Hydroxychloroquine (HQ)

The tweet below by a doctor, one of the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine members, on Twitter was the best description of what happened during the process.

*“The use of hydroxychloroquine (HQ) in COVID-19 will be remembered as one of the worst examples of medicine going against its core principle: First Do No Harm”*

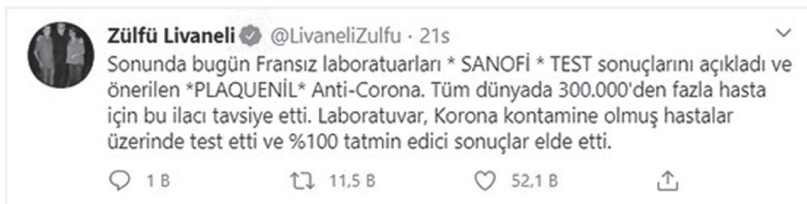
The early studies and recommendations in the literature on the treatment of COVID-19 were made by Chinese scientists **because they were the first to experience the pandemic**. He argued that HQ, which contains kinin and was previously used in malaria and rheumatic diseases globally, was effective on COVID-19. The study that first advocated this was from Italy, not China. It is derived from **kinin**, a medicinal product and a natural substance that has been used since the Middle Ages and is now legally approved for various treatments. Although it was removed from the guideline, it has been prescribed millions of times worldwide, including in Turkey, during the pandemic. Because in the early studies, there were suggestions such as the following.

*“Hydroxychloroquine medicines have the potential to be a widely used treatment option for SARS-CoV-2 infections without harming patients.”*

While the use of these medicines became widespread in the world through these kinds of studies, the debates in the scientific world continued. Guidelines initially recommended it with an antibiotic. Studies have shown that this combination of treatment is a mistake in the early period because both antibiotics and kinin have side effects on cardiac rhythm.

Most of the meta-analyses have shown that HQ has no positive effect. For example, in the conclusion part of a meta-analysis, the authors summarized the situation with the following statements (9).

*“Currently, there are no direct supporting data regarding the effective role of HQ in the treatment of COVID-19. Despite promising laboratory results, the largest international studies for COVID-19 treatments initiated by the WHO concluded that HQ had no effect on overall mortality and length of stay in hospitalized patients. However, we are still not sure if the HQ saga is over.”*



**Picture 13.1.** Tweet sample

In the meantime, there were rumors in society that this medicine had a protective effect at first. Social media posts were created by a pillar of society claiming that this medicine protects against the disease. We can even say that the tweets of the distinguished artist Zülfü Livaneli marked an era in that period:

A medicine recommendation that was not supported by academic data was proposed by one of the society's most prominent artists. After the huge response from the health community and many doctors to this tweet, Mr. Livaneli made a further statement and created a question in the minds of the society:

*Does this medicine really protect us?*

In this period, while the medical world was talking about the effect, benefit, and harm of HQ in the treatment of COVID-19 patients, people tried to get a hold of this medicine **“somehow”** with the effect of social media. Procurement was not easy. Because even a doctor's prescription was not enough to access this medicine, a report had to be received. Also, the Ministry of Health announced that

this medicine would not be sold in pharmacies during this period and would be given to the diagnosed patients from the hospital. The ministry realized early that the medicine could be abused; therefore, a precaution was taken. Those who could not get the medicine in this way began to consume and stock drinks containing kinin, based on *a story when the medicine was first discovered*. In time, as the harms of the medicine were revealed, the whole society would realize that these actions were wrong, but in the meantime, many beverage companies containing kinin would have already sold all their stocks to the society.

#### 4.2. Favipiravir

Favipiravir was one of the most hard-to-reach medicines at the beginning of the pandemic. Over time, it has become more accessible because pharmaceutical companies in Turkey have started to produce it. Favipiravir is an antiviral medicine first developed by Japan's Toyama Chemical Company against many RNA viruses. It binds to the RNA of the virus and stops it from multiplying. Initially, Toyama Chemical hoped there would be a new flu medicine that could replace Avigan and Tamiflu. However, its use was delayed a bit, especially when it was shown that there was a potential for adverse effects on fetuses in animal experiments. **This is the reason why this medicine is still not used in pregnant women in the world.** In March 2015, the U.S. Food and Medicine Administration (FDA) completed a Phase III clinical trial examining the safety and efficacy of favipiravir in the treatment of influenza. Favipiravir was studied for the experimental treatment of COVID-19 disease, and on March 17, Chinese authorities suggested that the medicine was effective in the treatment of COVID-19 in Wuhan and Shenzhen (10). Favipiravir is still a common prepartate in many parts of the world. So how did this medicine reflect on social media? Favipiravir had to reach a certain level in the blood to be effective in the body. In other words, the patients should be treated with loading therapy. In adults, 1600 mg was recommended for loading therapy on this first day. One tablet of the medicine contained 200 mg. In other words, a patient had to take 8 tablets in the morning on the first day and 8 tablets in the evening (after 12 hours), and this was a total of 16 tablets in one day. Social media posts quickly created a perception that society was being poisoned. It was not hard for the society that had taken at most 3 tablets of the same medicine a day in their life until now to believe this. It was seen that many patients threw away the medicines given for treatment. **A major treatment rejection revealed in society, fueled by social media.** It was reported that most of the patients who applied to the pandemic policlinics did not use the medicine at all or got the deficient dose. Thereupon, the Ministry of Health had

to hold press conferences describing the medicine, its use, and emphasizing the importance of starting it early.

### 4.3. Aspirin

In the studies conducted, unconscious use of blood thinners began in the society with the spread of the knowledge that the COVID-19 infection causes vascular occlusion by increasing blood clotting (coagulopathy). Unfortunately, many patients said that they even used it to protect themselves from the virus. However, a summary of what is mentioned in the **SBBK COVID-19 Anticytokine-Anti-Inflammatory Therapies, Coagulopathy Management Guideline** is given in Tab. 13.6 below.

**Tab. 13.6.** Summary articles of SBBK guideline

- Coagulation should be investigated with the diagnosis of patients.
- Although there is a study reporting a reduction in lung damage progression of the disease with the application of 100mg/day aspirin upon diagnosis, it has not been confirmed.
- As long as there is no obstacle, preventive treatment for coagulation should be applied in all COVID-19 patients hospitalized in hospitals.

**SBBK:** the Scientific Advisory Board of the Ministry of Health

In preventive treatment, it is not recommended due to various risks such as regular uncontrolled use of oral medications, damage to various organs, possible medicine interactions, cost, and the difficulty of reversing the effect because some hospitals do not have the necessary substance. Many news about vascular occlusion in social media created fear about vascular occlusion, and the society tried to solve its own problem with the wrong method.

*Uncontrolled use of medicines has great harm, as well as uncontrolled use of Aspirin has consequences that will never be innocent.*

### 4.4. Vitamine-Mineral Supplements

It would not be wrong to say that additional supplements, referred to as “supplements” in the world literature, made many companies rich during this period. Most of the vitamin and mineral supplements are approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and not approved by the Ministry of Health.

*During the period when the treatment of COVID-19 was discussed, one medicine caused a rhythm disorder, and the harmful effects of another on the liver, these*

*supplements, which were put on the market with the "All-Natural" propaganda, unfortunately, led to arguments supporting the rejection of treatment.*

In this period, the explanation of the treatment of US President Trump by his doctors and the fact that the treatment consisted of vitamin cocktails in addition to another virus medicine, Remdesivir, brought the society closer to vitamin and mineral supplements while staying away from the medicines used for COVID-19. Vitamin D has a regulatory effect on body immunity and vitamin C has an antioxidant effect. In this period, although many studies are carried out to use them in the treatment of patients with a diagnosis of COVID-19, no study can reveal the effect of protection and treatment. With the influence of social media, it is still widely used in society in an uncontrolled manner.

## 5. Vaccine

Vaccination is the main reason why human beings can prevent diseases throughout history. Vaccines protect the person by introducing the infection to the body without getting sick. As children of the 21st century, we are fortunate in this regard because we were born in the flower gardens of the swamps that were dried thanks to vaccines. Until the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-vaccination was questioned in the world and research was being conducted on its causes. In 2019, WHO listed vaccine hesitancy as one of the ten biggest threats to world health. Historically, vaccines have been associated with improved health outcomes due to democracies, accountability of institutions to the public, increased levels of public education, and higher levels of overall well-being. Vaccine hesitations are not new in history, but the increase in anti-vaccine misinformation via social media has given it new urgency, especially in light of the hopes for the rapid development and implementation of vaccines in conjunction with the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there are many studies on the socioeconomic determinants of vaccine hesitancy, ranging from qualitative single-country studies to large-scale surveys in dozens of countries, international analyzes of the impact of social media on a global scale are insufficient (12).

Especially during the pandemic, there is a distinction that becomes more evident with vaccine studies. Is the emerging situation a vaccine rejection or vaccine hesitancy? Opponents of vaccines are organized worldwide through joint campaigns on social media and serve distorted information to the world. A very interesting result emerged in a study (12). The created disinformation campaigns cause a decrease in the average vaccination rates in a country, and especially the use of social media for these campaigns can more strongly direct the public that vaccines are unsafe. Therefore, campaign studies focusing on countries and

telling the truth about vaccines remain incomplete against vaccine opposition or vaccine hesitancy. This situation necessitates a struggle by all countries on a global scale. In fact, according to these analyzes, additional strategies are advocated for vaccines developed for COVID-19 that explicitly target foreign disinformation campaigns and the use of social media by anti-vaccination groups. Although social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter were not very strong, they had to take some precautions against these groups.

## 6. Pandemic and Social Media Ethics

**The Contradiction of Medical Ethics and Social Media** has started to be discussed as the interest in the social media accounts opened by health professionals to inform the society, which began before the pandemic and during the pandemic process, have increased. Discussion topics are given in Tab. 13.7.

**Tab. 13.7.** Discussion topics on contradiction of medical ethics and social media in social media

- ✓ Do doctors put the concept of “patient confidentiality” at risk when they convey the positive or negative events they encounter in their daily patient-doctor relations to social media?
- ✓ Can such a post be shared with the permission of the patient?
- ✓ Do the doctor’s sharing of these events provide material and moral benefits to the doctor?
- ✓ Should these issues leave the examination room?

Many questions and discussion topics were being talked about more and more each day. I am the user of an account called “Dr. Sarper Yılmaz” and in this section, I will try to explain what I experienced during the pandemic period within the framework of my account.

First of all, I was giving social information about emergencies and first aid before the pandemic started, as well. The followers generally consisted of health-care professionals, people interested in first aid issues, and my own circle. After the pandemic started, I started to give information in the form of public information and summaries by sharing the publications written in the world to understand and be protected from COVID-19. The reason why my posts evolved with the pandemic was the fact that COVID-19 is a disease that I am unfamiliar with and patient applications in daily battalions to the Emergency Service where I work, rather than reaching more people. A new piece of information about the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention was emerging every day, and I was

reading them and turning them into comprehensible summaries for public use. After a certain time, I realized that what I wrote reached more people, and more people read it. In the process, unfortunately, my popular colleagues in the mainstream media were giving a very bad test. Bad and misinformation emerged. The anecdotes of misinformation put forward by the doctor's own accounts are given in Tab. 13.8.

**Tab. 13.8.** Anecdotes of misinformation by doctor's accounts

- “The Turkish gene protects one from COVID-19”
- “Corona is a disease like bird flu. There is nothing to be afraid of.”
- “No child is affected by COVID-19.”
- “Offal soups are enough for protection.”

In such a period, social media is the only way for us, doctors, who have no place in the mainstream media, to learn about the disease and inform the society. Because the pandemic is a public health problem and all doctors should act jointly.

Health workers from all branches, including dentists, already took part in the pandemic policlinics and filiation in the field. Next was sharing common, accurate, scientific information on social media by cooperating. In the process, the number of followers of my account had quadrupled what it was at that time, and now it was followed by people from every political view and point of view.

One of my posts is about a mother who was not vaccinated because her son did not want her to be vaccinated; thus, she was not vaccinated and died months later after infected with COVID-19. When she was diagnosed, she turned to her son and said, “I told you that it is better for me to be vaccinated, son.” I was exposed to lynchings and curses mostly with this tweet series. It was questioned that I violated the patient-doctor privacy and how I brought this to social media. **However, I hid the identity of the witnesses of the incident and revised them in a way that they would not understand when they read it.** This is exactly what ethics are. I put these examples into consideration in the society by taking it into account. We are doctors. We see dozens of these examples every day. If our job is limited to just diagnosis and treatment, we lose our role in this society. I think these issues should be talked about more. Then should I shut up about the father, who his own father tortured until the morning because he was an LGBT+ individual, the man who tried to beat and kill his wife and came to the hospital with a suit to protect himself and got a battering report, a headman who made

propaganda that vaccine and chip were implanted in the neighborhood, causing dozens of deaths in the first virus wave?

**We are doctors who carry the responsibility of this society on our shoulders, and in this society, the real event draws more attention than the theory.**

*While returning from the hospital this morning, the radio announcer was reading a columnist's article. He was criticizing a TV series that was made into a movie from the books of the thirty-year-old psychiatrist Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu, saying that the doctor sacrificed the privacy of the patient for ratings, and then he said, "We missed Gülse Birsel's TV series, they should come back."*

**However, the doctor's stories were real stories, and she helped women who experienced similar stories analyze the results.**

*We do not expect the shallow intellectual mindset to understand the doctor's banner of social struggle. As doctors, we are honored to fulfill our responsibilities towards the society as individuals while doing our share for the health of this society.*

Is it ethical? Isn't that what is really ethical?

## References

- Cansu, T., & Mustafa, H. What is The R0 Number and Clinical Significance in Infectious Diseases? *J Pediatr Inf* 2020; 14(1):55–56.
- Dubé, E., Gagnon, D., & MacDonald, N., et al. Underlying factors impacting vaccine hesitancy in high income countries: A review of qualitative studies. *Expert Rev Vaccines*, 2018; 17:9891004. DOI:10.1080/14760584.2018.1541406 pmid: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30359151>
- Elaine, Y. P. Lee, Ming-Yen Ng, & Pek-Lan Khong. COVID-19 pneumonia: What has CT taught us? *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*. February 24, 2020. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099\(20\)30134-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(20)30134-1)
- Gasmi, A., Peana, M., & Noor, S. et al. Chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine in the treatment of COVID-19: The never-ending story. *Appl Microbiol Biotechnol* **105**, 1333–1343 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00253-021-11094-4>
- Große, M., Ruetalo, N., Businger, R., Rheber, S., Setz, C., Rauch, P., Auth, J., Brysch, E., Schindler, M., & Schubert, U. Evidence That Quinine Exhibits Antiviral Activity against SARS-CoV-2 Infection In Vitro. *Preprints* **2020**, 2020070102.
- Rx Media Pharma İnteraktif İlaç Bilgi Kaynağı 2020. Rx Media Pharma İnteraktif İlaç Bilgi Kaynağı 2020. <https://www.eczanet.com/>. Published March 27, 2020. Accessed March 27, 2020.

- The Republic of Turkey The Scientific Advisory Board of the Ministry of Health. General Information, Epidemiology, and Diagnosis. December 7, 2020.
- The Republic of Turkey The Scientific Advisory Board of the Ministry of Health Management of Severe Pneumonia, Ards, Sepsis, and Septic Shock. October 23, 2020.
- The Republic of Turkey The Scientific Advisory Board of the Ministry of Health Anticytokine-Anti-Inflammatory Therapies, Coagulopathy Management. June 4, 2020.
- CDC (2020) “2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Situation Summary”. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. January 26, 2020.
- The Republic of Turkey The Scientific Advisory Board of the Ministry of Health Contact Monitoring, Outbreak Management, Monitoring Patient at Home and Filiation. March 29, 2021.
- Zhou, Cissy (February 7, 2020). “Coronavirus: Whistleblower Dr Li Wenliang confirmed dead of the disease at 34, after hours of chaotic messaging from hospital”. Archived from South China Morning Post on February 7, 2020. Accessed February 7, 2020.

Yasemin Özkent

# Discursive Trends on Twitter about COVID-19 Vaccine

## 1 Introduction

Until recently, traditional mass media, such as television and newspapers, played an essential role in health communication, while today, social media plays an active role in informing the public. The easy and fast distribution of user-generated content has radically changed the dynamics of health information dissemination. The frequent use of social media in disseminating information on health-related issues has increased interest in social media in improving public health and has required understanding of these platforms in their different dimensions. Indeed, as Goldstein, Macdonald, and Guirguisc note, there is growing evidence that communication can help people adopt positive health behaviors and build demand for preventive and therapeutic services (2015:4212). Twitter is the social media tool with the highest number of opinions and even negative shares, especially on vaccination (Ortiz-Sánchez et al., 2020:9).

COVID-19 appeared in Wuhan on December 19, 2019. During the pandemic, which saw mass deaths, people in most parts of the world tried to protect themselves from the disease by closing in on homes. In this period, people who carry uncertainty, fear, and anxiety are expected to have an optimistic attitude towards vaccination. Vaccination and vaccine confidence are important criteria for ending the pandemic. As Joan Donovan notes, negative rumors about the COVID-19 vaccine have been intense since vaccine studies began (2020). Therefore, detecting trends on Twitter is essential in predicting the course of the epidemic. As Neha Puri and his colleagues noted, concerns about the vaccine can increase through social media platforms (2020:2586).

This study explores the trends of the vaccination process on Twitter in Turkey. Trends regarding the COVID-19 vaccine on Twitter were determined by the content using the selected hashtags. A simple screening method was applied using the hashtags “#covidası,” “#covidası,” and “#aşılama.” In this direction, hashtags shared in a month’s time period, including before and after the date of January 14, 2021, when vaccination began in Turkey, were examined. Content analysis, which can be evaluated under the umbrella of qualitative analysis, was used as

a data collection method to analyze tweets. Although Twitter has many users in Turkey, the study was not designed to generalize to the population.

The study found that social media can play an essential role in creating anti-vaccination trends. As a result of the analysis, it was observed that positive tweets such as news, humor, vaccination, and information about the COVID-19 vaccine had a higher rate. It has been argued that Twitter is an important example of how it can build public confidence in the vaccine.

## 2 Twitter as a Social Network

Twitter is a web-based social media platform for sharing information and attracting attention. It is quite useful for celebrities and news sources. Twitter, which can be referred to as a status update service, used to be 140 characters (Jenkins, 2016:20), today consists of 280 characters. It allows sharing of text messages and images in real-time (Puri, 2020:2587). The interaction feature of Twitter and other social networks allows one to communicate instantly with other users. This is one of the most fundamental features that distinguish new media from traditional media. In traditional media, content can only go to the person to whom the message is transmitted, while in social media, content can be transmitted to the masses at the same time. In addition, a person is not only a content recipient but also a recipient. Social media users can choose the network they will use and the person they will follow, hence, the content they want. According to these characteristics, people in the new media environment have moved from the “receiver/passive” position to the “user/active” position (Lister et al. 2009:21).

Every chat on Twitter multiplies with participants. Through “retweet” and “tagging,” messages are linked by reaching more people (Himmelboin et al., 2019:2). On Twitter, other Twitter accounts are bridged through the hashtag (#). No spaces between words are used in hashtag usage. For example, clicking on a tweet with the hashtag “#BostonMarathon” redirects that group’s Twitter account (Jenkins, 2016:20). This feature leads to a group-level discussion of social media content. According to their social media links, each message sent can be viewed and shared by different people (Himmelboin et al., 2019:1). Harald Cramér notes that interaction on social media cannot be a mechanical collection of the views of isolated individuals, noting that interaction is not just sharing on the same platform (2016:19).

Twitter is a very convenient platform for sharing information, text mining and analysis. Tweets shared by users contain any data, including emotion, thought, activity, information, and news (Chew & Eysenbach, 2010:2). Millions of people

follow Twitter shares every day. Most of the shares are entertainment, information, and educational, while others are related to health issues.

As Himelboim et al. noted, traditional mass media, such as television and newspapers, are important in informing and educating the public about health. In recent years, social media has taken on the role of traditional mass media. The ease and speed of content production online have changed the spread of health-related information (2019:1). As for health communication, there is a widespread assumption that internet technologies and, in particular, social media are changing the model of health-related communication (Eysenbach, 2008).

On the other hand, the use of social media by many people who want to access health information has caused the flow of informative information as well as the proliferation of unstable, distorted and false information (Kumar et al., 2016:5). Research shows that incorrect or unproven information, especially about vaccines, is quite common on social media. Not all vaccine-related shares on social media are wrong, however, there is a critical level of disinformation. Current misinformation on social media can reduce confidence in vaccines, encourage hesitation and rejection about the vaccine. This condition, which affects the reliability of vaccines, includes the potential for the spread of misinformation at a global level (Larson, 2018:309). A plethora of research in recent years shows that Twitter is one of the most active tools for spreading messages containing false information about vaccination (Broniatowski et al., 2018; Larson, 2018; Walter et al., 2020)

There is a lot of research on Twitter usage during health crises. These studies focus on examining the types of tweets, such as whether tweets provide status updates, whether useful medical information is presented, and how intense personal ideas are in shares (Meadows et al., 2019:1314). In addition, criticism of vaccines on social media can be employed to understand many other situations, such as motivation for manufacturers, potential audiences, the type of resources they have.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, digital technologies overcome the rules of social distance, providing people with a sense of solidarity through social networks. They can provide crucial awareness regarding the prevention of the disease, the symptoms associated with the disease, and the significant effects of the disease. As for vaccination, it can significantly affect public attitudes. Amelia M. Jamison, Broniatowski, Dredze, Sangraula, Smith, and Quinn argue that Twitter is essential for defining diverse perspectives on vaccines. While some accounts tweet almost entirely about vaccines, others are divided into various subspecies related to public health. These species can be associated with politics, current news, or public health. A good understanding of the communication

norms of these subspecies is needed to better understand the spread of misinformation on social media and reduce its potential impact. The study found that the most shared subject associated with COVID-19 consisted of narratives that underestimated the severity of the disease (2020:2–3). Given the potential impact of Twitter content on vaccination, it is important that researchers understand the approaches on Twitter.

Social media can fill many areas where traditional research methods are lacking on issues such as vaccine rejection or hesitation. It has the potential to be groundbreaking in the field of vaccination by especially using the capabilities of big data (Dredze et al., 2016:550). In particular, the study of Keith Gunaratne et al. mentions that social media shares in favor of vaccination have increased since 2014. In addition to the increase in favor of vaccines, the number of users advocating the anti-vaccine movement has also been increasing (2019). Elvira Ortiz-Sánchez et al. found that the most anti-vaccine shares were made via Twitter (2020:9). Tomeny, Vargo, and El-Touhy stated that half of the tweets posted between 2009 and 2015 contained anti-vaccine beliefs (2017).

### **3 Importance of Vaccination**

Vaccines are one of the most fundamental components of public health programs and have contributed significantly to reducing infectious diseases, deaths, and disease rates (Habibabadi & Haghighi, 2019:1). At the turn of the 21st century, the vaccination method became a significant public health measure, offering social, moral, and environmental alternatives as well as its healing power for diseases (Hammonds, 1999). In the human fight against major infectious diseases – such as smallpox, polio, rabies, typhoid, and plague – vaccines have played a critical role in reducing disease-specific mortality rates. Its prominence vis-a-vis such important diseases has led to it being a frequently discussed public health issue (Harrison & Wu, 2020:325).

Vaccine hesitation, which has been more on the agenda due to the rapid spread of social media in recent years, is not a new phenomenon. The fact that mass preventative vaccination programs for mild diseases such as seasonal flu and measles began as late as the 1960s is a major reason to question confidence in vaccines. As Elena Conis points out, the success of vaccination in the first decades is not due to the public's acceptance of vaccination as a preventer of disease but is the result of several historically complex conditions (2015). Despite its success in reducing the global burden of diseases, public concerns about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines persist (Yiannakoulias et al., 2019:2757).

In order to get full yield from vaccination and create immunity at the population level, it needs to be positively accepted by the public. Confidence in the COVID-19 vaccine is worryingly fragile. COVID-19 vaccine trials have shown promising results. This unprecedented rapid development of an effective vaccine can be considered the world's largest breakthrough. It seems that many people in the appropriate population are willing to receive the vaccine. However, any hesitation towards vaccination is the biggest obstacle to the pandemic and public health (Al Awaidy & Khamis, 2020). Vaccine hesitation and uncertainty are more common, especially when scientists and medical professionals disagree on vaccine safety (Yiannakoulias et al., 2019:2057).

#### 4 Methodology

As stated in previous studies, Twitter has the most shares in the field of health communication, where users can easily access the most up-to-date information and receive support from each other in this topic (Myrick et al., 2016). This study examines the shares related to the COVID-19 vaccine based on the start of vaccination in Turkey. The findings are primarily Twitter-specific. Twitter has one of the highest users of social media. Although Twitter has a high number of users, the research is not designed to generalize to the general population of Turkey but to measure the trends of Twitter users related to the COVID-19 vaccine. The study was limited to tweets in Turkish only. Therefore, the same study in different languages can produce varying results. Based on January 14, 2021, when vaccination began in Turkey, tweets shared over a month's time period, including before and after, were examined. Twitter data was collected using the simple scanning method, using the hashtags "#covidası," "#covidasıı," and "#aşılama." A total of 855 tweets have been collected. An encoding scheme was created using tweet texts when extracting relevant key headers. Results were generated by manual coding.

The main limitation of this study is that it only investigates Twitter messages. Other limitations are hashtags consisting of specific keywords. Other than these concepts, tweets about the vaccine could not be included in the analysis. There is also a significant limitation to encoding tweets within a given time interval.

In this study, content analysis, which can be evaluated under the umbrella of qualitative analysis, was used as a data collection method when analyzing tweets. Content analysis is the systematic creation and analysis of content within this context to extract meaningful interpretations from the data for the themes of current research (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015:4). Qualitative content analysis can be used as inductive and deductive. In both cases, it involves three phases of

preparation, editing, and reporting of results (Elo et al., 2014:1). In the first stage of content analysis, data to be analyzed is created, while in the second stage, analysis is carried out through codes developed from media and other content. Defining and measuring the purpose of the research in both stages is the main task (Roller, 2019:3). In this study, content analysis enabled quantitative analysis by systematizing tweets according to their subjects.

## 5 Results

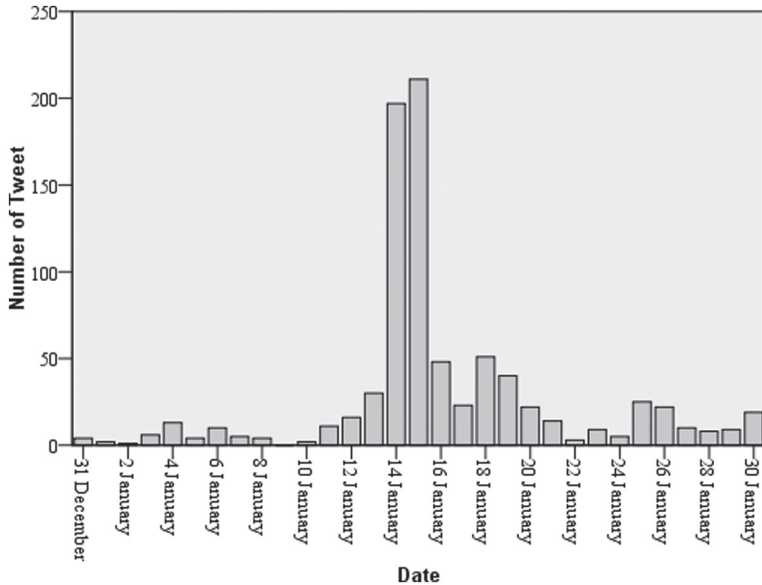
In this part of study, content-related tables of tweets related to vaccination are presented within the scope of the research (Tab. 14.1.). Between December 31, 2020, and January 30, 2021, 855 tweets were obtained by scanning “#covidası,” “#covidası,” and “#aşılama” on Twitter. These tweets are classified by the content analysis method according to the meaning they express. Later, results of the analyses were evaluated according to assumptions, and the relationship between the different categories was established.

**Tab. 14.1.** Features of shares related to COVID-19 vaccine on Twitter

# Hashtag Approach	Frequency	Percent
Humor	121	14.1
News	346	40.4
Hope	25	2.9
Criticism	9	1.0
Information	88	10.2
Concern	39	4.5
“I’ve been vaccinated”	51	5.9
Call for help	75	8.7
Irrelevant	101	11.8
Total	855	100.0

As shown in the table, most tweets contain news content (40.4 %). Following the news, humorous content was shared the second most (14.1 %). Many of the humorous tweets have been about the export of the vaccine from China. 11.8 % of shares are unrelated, 10.2 % are tweets with information, and 8.7 % are calls for help related to health problems (especially regarding the fact that foreign health workers have not yet been vaccinated). “I’ve been vaccinated” shares constitute 5.9 %. Almost all of these shares were made by medical personnel and photos were used in the shares. 4.5 % of shares were tweets with concern about

the vaccine, 2.9 % with hope, and 1 % with concern. When rates are evaluated, it can be said that news sharing about the vaccine is intensified or that there is a positive trend.



**Tab. 14.2.** Total number of tweet shares

Since January 14, 2021, when vaccination for health workers began in Turkey, it has been observed that shares related to the vaccine have increased by a large margin (Tab 14.2.). The total share before January 14 was 14.2 %. 20.5 % of all shares posted on Twitter were related to vaccination, while it was 22.9 % on January 15. It was also observed that dates when tweets intensified, were in line with the dates when the vaccination began. An important detail not included in the tables is that 74.9 % of all tweets related to the news were shared before January 14. Most of the content of these news is related to the date when vaccination will begin and the queue for vaccination. In addition, it was found that there was no regular increase or decrease in the number of shares -except for the two days mentioned- on the basis of days. 0.5 % of the total 855 tweets were shared on December 31, 2020, 0.3 % on January 1, 0.2 % on January 2, 0.8 % on January 3, 1.6 % on January 4, 0.5 % on January 5, 1.2 % on January 6, 0.7 % on January 7, 0.5 % on January 8, 0.1 % on January 9, 0.3 % on January 10, 1.4 % on January

11, 1.9 % on January 12, 3.6 % on January 13. After vaccination began, 4.5 % of shares was made on January 16, 1.6 % on January 17, 4.7 % on January 18, 4.7 % on January 19, 2.6 % on January 20, 1.7 % on January 21, 0.4 % on January 22, 1.1 % on January 23, 0.7 % on January 24, 3.0 % on January 25, 2.6 % on January 26, 1.2 % on January 27, 1.0 % on January 28, 1.1 % on January 29, 2.3 % on January 30. The rate of shares with positive hope about the vaccine was 12 % before the start of vaccination, while it rose to 88 % after the start of vaccination. Tweets with concern about the vaccine increased from 17.9 % before vaccination to 82 % after vaccination began.

## Conclusion

Twitter, one of the most widely used social media channels today, allows users to share ideas and experiences on any subject. Individuals living in isolation from the COVID-19 era have often shared questions and ideas about the outbreak via Twitter. Especially since the start of vaccine studies, the intensity of vaccine-related sharing has been remarkable. As Muninger and Mahr noted, it is known that people use social media more intensively during times of health crisis (2019). The starting point of this study acting from this approach is to identify trends in vaccine-related discourses at the time of vaccination.

In this study, Twitter shares between 31 December 2020 and 30 January 2021, covering a one-month period, were examined based on the date of 14 January 2021, when COVID-19 vaccination started in Turkey. 855 tweets obtained by screening “#covidası,” “#covidası,” and “#aşılama” were analyzed. In the coding scheme created using Tweet texts, tweets were found to consist of the most vaccine-related news. Accordingly, it can be said that shares related to the vaccine are focused on reporting. It was determined that humorous content was shared secondly. This finding suggests that humor may indicate a positive perception of vaccination. As in the study of Gunaratne, Coomes and Haghbayan (2019), which found an increase in favor of vaccines on Twitter, it was observed that more positive tweets about the COVID-19 vaccine dominated. The low proportion of anxiety-related tweets supported this finding. Users who have expressed concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine have been observed to focus on possible odds rather than providing concrete data.

In the results obtained on Twitter shares, it was found that most shares were made on the date and the day after vaccination began, and shares increased after vaccination began. According to the number of hashtags, individual tweets ranked 122 (14.2 %) before the vaccine and 733 (85.8 %) after the vaccine. The rate of sharing according to content of tweets is 346 for news (%40,4), 121 for

humor (%14,1), 101 for irrelevant information (%11,8), 88 for information (%10,2), 75 for call for help (%8,7), 51 for “I’ve been vaccinated” (%5,9), 39 for anxiety (%4,5), 25 for hope (%2,9), and 39 for criticism (%4,5). Especially in the early days of vaccination, the medical staff was found to share photos taken during the vaccination. Many of these shares contain positive meaning. Therefore, it can be suggested that the positive opinion of health workers about the vaccine may address concerns about vaccination. It can also be argued that Twitter is an appropriate tool for developing a communication strategy to raise public awareness about vaccination.

The study’s findings include meaningful relationships, especially for health communicators. Understanding the shares on Twitter during the pandemic will contribute to public agencies’ accurate assessment of public health attitudes, thoughts, and needs. On the other hand, it is necessary to mention a few limitations of the study. This is simply selecting Twitter as a sample, scanning through designated hashtags, and scanning only within a specific time frame related to the vaccine. Finally, while Twitter is one of the most widely used social media platforms, the findings do not represent a public discourse. Also, studying other health issues and vaccines will help a better understanding of health communication.

## References

- Al Awaidy S. T., & Khamis F. (2020). Preparing the Community for a Vaccine against COVID-19. *Oman Med J.* 35 (6), e193. doi: 10.5001/omj.2020.130.
- Broniatowski D. A., Jamison A. M., Qi S., AlKulaib L., Chen T., Benton A., Quinn S. C., & Dredze M. (2018). Weaponized Health Communication: Twitter Bots and Russian Trolls Amplify the Vaccine Debate. *American Journal of Public Health*, 108 (10), 1378-1384.
- Chew C., & Eysenbach G. (2010). Pandemics in the Age of Twitter: Content Analysis of Tweets during the 2009 H1N1 Outbreak. *PLoS ONE*, 5 (11), e14118. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0014118.
- Conis E. (2015). *Vaccine Nation: America’s Changing Relationship with Immunization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cramér H. (2016). *Mathematical Methods of Statistics (PMS-9)*. Princeton University Press.
- Donovan J. (2020). Social-Media Companies Must Flatten the Curve of Misinformation. *Nature*, doi:10.1038/d41586-020-01107-z.

- Dredze M., Broniatowski D. A., Smith M. C., & Hilyard K. M. (2016). Understanding Vaccine Refusal: Why We Need Social Media Now. *Am J Prev Med*, 50 (4), 550-552.
- Elo S., Kääriäinen M., Kanste O., Pölkki T., Utriainen K., & Kyngäs H. (2014). Qualitative Content Analysis. *SAGE Open*, 4 (1), 215824401452263. doi:10.1177/2158244014522633.
- Eysenbach G. (2008). Medicine 2.0: Social Networking, Collaboration, Participation, Apomediation, and Openness. *J Med Internet Res*, 10 (3), e22.
- Goldstein S., MacDonald N. E., Guirguis S., & SAGE Working Group on Vaccine Hesitancy (2015). Health Communication and Vaccine Hesitancy. *Vaccine*, 33 (34), 4212-4214. doi: 10.1016/j.vaccine.2015.04.042.
- Gunaratne K., Coomes E. A., & Haghbayan H. (2019). Temporal trends in anti-vaccine discourse on Twitter. *Vaccine* 37, 4867-4871. doi:10.1016/j.vaccine.2019.06.086.
- Habibabadi S. K., & Haghighi P. D. (2019). Topic Modelling for Identification of Vaccine Reactions in Twitter. *ACSW 2019*, January (31), 1-10.
- Hammonds E. (1999). *Childhood's Deadly Scourge: The Campaign to Control Diphtheria in New York City 1880-1930*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Harrison E. A., & Wu, Julia W. (2020). Vaccine Confidence in the Time of COVID-19. *European Journal of Epidemiology*, 35 (4), 325-330. doi.org/10.1007/s10654-020-00634-3.
- Himmelboim I., Xiao X., Lee, D. K. L., Wang, M. Y., & Borah P. (2019). A Social Networks Approach to Understanding Vaccine Conversations on Twitter: Network Clusters, Sentiment, and Certainty in HPV Social Networks. *Health Communication*, 1-9. doi:10.1080/10410236.2019.1573446.
- Jamison A. M., Broniatowski D. A., Dredze M., Sangraula A., Smith M. C., & Quinn S. C. (2020). Not Just Conspiracy Theories: Vaccine Opponents And Proponents Add to the COVID-19 'Infodemic' on Twitter. *The Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*, 1 (3), 1-22. doi: 10.37016/mr-2020-38.
- Jenkins A. (2016). *Social Media: Become a Social Media Marketing Master-How to Easily Start Marketing on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube & More*.
- Kumar D., Chandra R., Mathur M., Samdariya S., & Kapoor N. (2016) Vaccine Hesitancy: Understanding Better to Address Better. *Isr J Health Policy Res*, 5 (2), 1-8. doi: 10.1186/s13584-016-0062-y.
- Larson H. J. (2018). The Biggest Pandemic Risk? Viral Misinformation. *Nature*, 562 (7727). 309-309. doi:10.1038/d41586-018-07034-4.
- Lister M., Dovey J., Giddings S., Grant I., & Kelly K. (2009). *New Media: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Routledge.

- Meadows C. Z., Tang L., & Liu W. (2019). Twitter Message Types, Health Beliefs, and Vaccine Attitudes During the 2015 Measles Outbreak in California. *American Journal of Infection Control*, 47, 1314-1318. doi:10.1016/j.ajic.2019.05.007.
- Muninger M. I., Hammadi W., & Mahr D. (2019). The Value of Social Media for Innovation: A Capability Perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 95 (1), 116-127.
- Myrick J., Holton A. E., Himelboim I., & Love B. (2016). #Stupidcancer: Exploring a Typology of Social Support and the Role of Emotional Expression in a Social Media Community. *Health Communication*, 31 (5), 596-605. doi:10.1080/10410236.2014.981664.
- Ortiz-Sánchez E., Velando-Soriano A., Pradas-Hernández L., Vargas-Román K., Gómez-Urquiza J. L., Cañadas-De la Fuente G. A., & Albendín-García L. (2020). Analysis of the Anti-Vaccine Movement in Social Networks: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17 (15), 5394. doi:10.3390/ijerph17155394.
- Puri N., Coomes E. A., Haghbayan H., & Gunaratne K. (2020). Social Media and Vaccine Hesitancy: New Updates for the Era of COVID-19 and Globalized Infectious Diseases. *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics*, 16 (11): 2586–2593. doi:10.1080/21645515.2020.1780846.
- Roller M. R., & Lavrakas P. J. (2015). *Applied Qualitative Research Design: A Total Quality Framework Approach*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Roller M. R. (2019). A Quality Approach to Qualitative Content Analysis: Similarities and Differences Compared to Other Qualitative Methods. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research Sozialforschung*, 20 (3). doi.org/10.17169/fqs-20.3.3385. 20 (3): 1-21.
- Tomeny T. S., Vargo C. J., & El-Toukhy S. (2017). Geographic and Demographic Correlates of Autism-Related Anti-vaccine Beliefs on Twitter, 2009–15. *Social Science & Medicine*, 191, 168-175. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.08.041.
- Walter D., Ophir Y., & Jamieson K. H. (2020). Russian Twitter Accounts and the Partisan Polarization of Vaccine Discourse, 2015–2017. *American Journal of Public Health*, 110 (5), 718-724. doi:10.2105/ajph.2019.305564.
- Yiannakoulias N., Slavik C. E., & Chase M. (2019). Expressions of Pro-and Anti-vaccine Sentiment on YouTube. *Vaccine* (37/1), 2057-2064. doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2019.03.001.



# List of Figures and Graphs

*Cemal Çelik*

## **Strategic Social Media Business Model, Theory of Change and Strategic Marketing**

Visual 2.1:	Turkey data in the global e-commerce market .....	35
Visual 2.2:	Social media user and traditional media: The role of source-receiver traditional media, new media .....	38
Visual 2.3:	Purchasing hierarchy .....	41
Visual 2.4:	Social media strategy design .....	43

*Yasemin Bozkurt*

## **Influencers: A Comprehensive View of the Digital Advertising World, From its New Opinion Leadership to its Types**

Fig. 5.1:	Influencer typography .....	100
-----------	-----------------------------	-----

*Onur Bayrakçı*

## **Surveillance Practices through Social Media: From Strict Surveillance to Spontaneous Voluntary Surveillance**

Picture 7.1:	Panopticon image .....	136
--------------	------------------------	-----

*Kıvanç Aycan*

## **Improving the Melodic and Rhythmic Hearing Skills in Children with Autism**

Fig. 12.1:	The lullaby “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”(Wikipedi., 2020) .....	212
Fig. 12.2:	Study plan .....	214
Fig. 12.3:	Expert opinions .....	230
Fig. 12.4:	Schema of P1’s factors causing autism spectrum .....	231
Fig. 12.5:	Schema of the problems P1 experienced after having the autism spectrum .....	232
Fig. 12.6:	Mind map on the development of P1’s melodic and rhythmic hearing skills .....	234
Fig. 12.7:	The example of rhythm exercises carried out with the participant (Tuck, 2000) .....	238

*Sarper Yilmaz*

**Evaluation of the Effect of Social Media on Hospital Emergency  
Services and Patient Treatment during the Pandemic**

Picture 13.1: Tweet sample ..... 251

# List of Tables

*Akwesi Assensoh-Dobua*

## **Financial, Economic and Legal Researches for Covid-19 Social Networks: Platform for Running or Developing Business in the Financial Sector**

Tab. 1.1:	Item loadings, cross-loadings and reliability estimations .....	25
Tab. 1.2:	Factor AVE and correlation measures .....	25
Tab. 1.3:	Summary of hypotheses test .....	26
Tab. 1.4:	Model fit quality indices .....	27

*Cemal Çelik*

## **Strategic Social Media Business Model, Theory of Change and Strategic Marketing**

Tab. 2.1:	Software technologies and usage types .....	36
Tab. 2.2:	5-year social media user growth rate .....	38

*Fatma Yasa*

## **Determinants Influencing Attitudes towards Social Media Advertising**

Tab. 6.1:	Attitudes and belief factors towards social media ads .....	121
-----------	---	-----

*İlksun Didem ÜLBEGİ*

## **Cyberloafing in the Workplace: A Meta-Analysis Study**

Tab. 9.1:	Meta-analysis results (serious cyberloafing) .....	168
Tab. 9.2:	Meta-analysis results (minor cyberloafing) .....	169
Tab. 9.3:	Meta-analysis results (cyberloafing) .....	170

*Hüseyin Korkut*

## **Social Media Use in Municipalities: Public Perception in Turkey**

Tab. 10.1:	Descriptive statistics of the variables used in the study .....	184
Tab. 10.2:	Preferred contact method of residents with municipality .....	185
Tab. 10.3:	Preferred municipality social media platforms of residents .....	186
Tab. 10.4:	Preferred social media platforms of residents by municipality type (%) .....	187
Tab. 10.5:	Reasons of residents to follow social media platforms of municipalities (%) .....	189
Tab. 10.6:	Public opinion on mayor's use of social media for political purposes .....	190

*Sarper Yılmaz*

**Evaluation of the Effect of Social Media on Hospital Emergency Services and Patient Treatment during the Pandemic**

Tab. 13.1: Important variables in calculating $R_0$ .....	244
Tab. 13.2: Common information on contagiousness in guidelines .....	246
Tab. 13.3: Circumstances with the possibility of transmission of COVID-19 .....	246
Tab. 13.4: Reasons that make antibody follow-up meaningless .....	249
Tab. 13.5: Effects of social media post on community and disease management .....	250
Tab. 13.6: Summary articles of SBBK guideline .....	253
Tab. 13.7: Discussion topics on contradiction of medical ethics and social media in social media .....	255
Tab. 13.8: Anecdotes of misinformation by doctor's accounts .....	256

*Yasemin Özkent*

**Discursive Trends on Twitter about Covid-19 Vaccine**

Tab. 14.1: Features of shares related to COVID-19 vaccine on twitter .....	264
Tab. 14.2: Total number of tweet shares .....	265