Assessment of the Relationship between the Ways Adolescents Use Facebook and Self-Esteem

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to assess the relationship between the ways adolescents use Facebook and self-esteem. The study is a survey conducted by a descriptive method. The study included 168 secondary-school students taught in Trabzon in the fall semester of the 2009-2010 training year. Of the participants, 103 (61%) were male and 65 (39%) were female. As the data-collecting tool, Facebook Questionnaire, prepared by the researchers, and Coopersmith Self-Esteem Scale (CSES) were used. According to the findings obtained from the study, there are significant relationships between the scores adolescents received from the different uses of Facebook and those from different subscales of Self-Esteem scale. These findings were debated with reference to the literature and some recommendations were made about the future studies on the issue concerned.

Key Words: Self-Esteem, Adolescence, Facebook.

Ergenlerde Benlik Saygısı ve Facebook Kullanma Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi

Özet

Bu çalışma, ergenlerin benlik saygıları ile Facebook'u kullanma biçimleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma betimsel yöntemle yürütülen bir tarama çalışması niteliğindedir. Çalışmanın örneklemini, 2009 – 2010 eğitim öğretim yılı güz döneminde, Trabzon ilinde öğrenim görmekte olan 168 ilköğretim ikinci kademe öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcıların cinsiyete gore dağılımı 103 erkek (61 %) ve 65 kız (39%) şeklindedir. Veri toplama araçları olarak, araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanan Facebook Anketi ve Coopersmith Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği (CBSÖ) kullanılmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda elde

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edilen bulgular, ergenlerin Facebook kullanım biçimi ile ilgili puanları ve benlik saygısı puanları arasında anlamlı ilişkiler olduğunu göstermektedir. Elde edilen bulgular literatür doğrultusunda tartışılmış ve konuyla ilgili gelecekteki çalışmalara bazı önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Benlik saygısı, Ergenlik, Facebook

INTRODUCTION

Internet has increasingly become part of our daily life within the last two decades. Accordingly, the online communication means, such as e-mail, chat rooms, social communication network, etc., have begun to be more prevalently used. Several studies have established that the prevalence of the use of internet has increased among the young and adults in particular (Peluchette & Karl, 2010; Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert, 2009; Selwyn, 2009; Young, Dutta & Dommety, 2009). The increased rate of the use of internet among the young in particular has caused researchers to focus on this point in our country and in the world. It can be seen that recent studies have been intended to determine the frequencies with which people use online technologies and to assess their behaviors during their use of them (Christofides, Muise, & Desmarais, 2009; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). One of the issues that have been dealt with and that have grown more and more important in recent years is the use of social networking sites. Especially recent studies have revealed that the young have begun to spend more time at such networks (Roberts, Foehr, & Rideout, 2005; West, Lewis & Currie, 2009).

Such social networking sites as Facebook, Myspace and Twitter are the ones that enable their users to share their information on the network with a user's name, a photo and an address with which others can contact them (Pempek, Yermolayeva & Calvert, 2009). It has been observed that such sites attract the attention of the young in particular. Wiley and Sisson (2006) have arrived at the conclusion in their study on the university students in the US that 91% of the participants are members to the site Facebook.com. In a study by Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007), it has been found out that majority of the college students living in the US spend nearly 10-30 minutes on the internet site of Facebook.com every day.

The increased use of Facebook and similar sites has brought with it some problems. It has been established by the studies conducted that some of these problems are the unlicensed use of others' photos, videos and documents, the use of nicknames (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Young, Dutta & Dommety, 2009; Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin, 2008). Given this new situation, the young should be rendered conscious about the use of these social networking sites, which seems to be important for the prevention of such events. At this point, why the young are so much interested in the social networking sites is an issue that needs to be examined. Recent studies have shown that especially the young are of the opinion that they are growing more popular with their friends by putting out pictures or videos on such networking sites as Facebook, by increasing the number of their friends and by being the member of various activities (Peluchette & Karl, 2010; Tong, Heide & Langwell, 2008; Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin, 2008). At this point, which activities they conduct on Facebook, how they express themselves and how they present themselves are important. Especially in imaginary environments, it has been stated that they are tempted to present themselves occasionally as

different from the way they are because there is not a direct communication (Madell & Muncer, 2006; Orr, Sisic, Ross, Simmering, Arseneault & Orr, 2009).

Christofides, Muise and Desmarais (2009), in their studies, have concluded that the individuals with a high level of self-esteem can form closer relationships with other people while making friends on Facebook. It has been suggested in recent studies that there are some relationships between people's personality traits and the way they use such social networking sites. Sheeks and Birchmeier (2006) have reported that shy people refer to online communication means more frequently. The reason for this, they have explained, is that the fact that they do not make face-to-face contact or communication with others alleviates their anxiety and concern. In their study on the relationships between the use of social networks and personality disorders, Clifton, Turkheimer and Oltmanns (2009) have concluded that there is a positive correlation between the people with narcissist and hysteric personality disorders and the level of their using the social networking sites and a negative correlation between the people with schizoid and schizotypal disorders and the level of their using the social networking sites. Considering the recent studies on self-presentation, it has been determined that the individuals are inclined to show themselves as more than what they really are, especially on the flirt sites, chat rooms and such imaginary environments, and thus they aim to attract much more attention (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006; Yurchisin, Watchravesringkan, & McCabe, 2005). All these studies have shown that there are significant relationships between the personality traits of the individuals who have recently become members to social networking sites and their activities on these networks.

In this sense, it is assumed that there is a relationship between the way adolescents perceive and express themselves and the way they use such social networking sites as Facebook. Westen (1985) has stated that self-esteem expresses one's satisfaction or dissatisfaction about his or her assessment of himself or herself. Salmivalli, Kaukiainen and Lagerstpez (1999) have reported that self-esteem is one's holistic and assessing view of himself and is a significant psychological factor that may affect physical well-being. Accordingly, it is thought that there is a direct relationship between self-esteem and the way people express themselves on such social networking sites as Facebook. With this point in mind, the aim of the present study is to assess the way adolescents use Facebook and their self-esteem. It has been found out that this is a new and fresh topic for national literature, so this study is expected to shed light on progressive studies on the similar topic.

METHOD

The study is a survey conducted by a descriptive method. Scanning models are research approaches that aim to describe a situation of the past or present as it currently exists (Bryman & Cramer, 1990).

Study Group
The study was conducted on 168 secondary-school students taught in Trabzon in the fall semester of the 2009-2010 training year. Of the participants, 103 (61%) were male and 65 (39%) were female.

Data-Collecting Tools

Facebook Questionnaire: The questions of this questionnaire have been formed, depending on the studies in literature. They are intended to find out the duration of participants using Facebook, their perception of Facebook and their general thoughts of it.

Coopersmith Self-Esteem Scale (CSEC): In the study, Coopersmith Self-Esteem Scale (CSEC) was used as a scale which had been developed to measure the students' self-esteem. This scale has two different forms; a long form composed of 58 items and a short form composed of 25 items. In this study, the long form of 58 items has been used. With it, it is possible to obtain scores for 5 subscales. These are: general self-esteem, school and academic self-esteem, family and home self-esteem, and false items. The sum of the scores obtained from the subscales of the inventory, except for the false items, indicate the total self-esteem of the scale. The first attempt at adapting the self-esteem scale to Turkish for the first time was made by Onur in 1981 and it was applied to 127 primary-school students. Total score has been taken into account in the reliability and validity calculations of the scale. The correlation between the self-esteem and Piers-Haris Self concept scale has been calculated as .72. In different groups, KR-21 scores have been calculated as between .75 and .83. The correlation coefficient between the applications conducted on 51 students with a two-week interval for the repetition reliablity of the test has been found as .70 (Pişkin, 1996).

Collecting the Data

The scales used in the study have been prepared in a word file and loaded on an internet site prepared beforehand (www.bilgincocuk.net/FO). The participants have been asked to enter this site and fill in the scale and then send it to the mail address of the researcher.

Analysis of Data

After the data have become available for the analysis, some processes have been made to determine the qualities of the participants' use of Facebook and their self-esteem levels. To analyze the data, SPSS 17.0 package program has been used. One-Way ANOVA statistics has been used to determine the relationship between the qualities of the individuals' use of Facebook and the scores they have got from the Self-Esteem subscales.

RESULTS

Assessment of the Relationship between the Duration of Adolescents' Using Facebook and Self-Esteem

The relationship between the duration of adolescents' using Facebook and self-esteem has been given in Table 1.

TABLE 1

According to the results of the analysis, the relationship between the time individuals spend on Facebook every day and "General Self-esteem", "Home-Family Self-esteem" and "School-Academic Self-esteem", which are the subscales of self-esteem, has been found as

significant ($F_{general}$=3,154, $F_{home-family}$=1,335, $F_{school-academic}$=2,830, p<0,05). To find out the source of this significance, Tukey Post-Hc test statistics has been applied.

According to this result, there is a significant difference between those who use Facebook for "10-30 minutes" a day and those who use it for "2-3 hours" a day. This result suggests that those who have a low level of "general self-esteem" spend more time on Facebook. However, there appears to be a significant difference between the individuals who use Facebook for "10-30 minutes" a day and those who use it for "2-3 hours" a day in terms of Home-Family Self-esteem. Accordingly, it appears as a finding that those with a low level of Home-Family self-esteem spend more time on Facebook. Similarly, there appears to be a significant difference between the individuals who use Facebook for "10-30 minutes" a day and those who use it for "2-3 hours" a day in terms of School-Academic Self-esteem. With these findings in mind, the adolescents who spend a lot of time on Facebook have low levels of Family/School/General self-esteem.

Assessment of the Relationship between the Adolescents' Perceptions of "Seeing Themselves as Part of Facebook" and Self-Esteem

The relationship between the scores taken from adolescents' perceptions of seeing themselves as part of Facebook and self-esteem has been shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

According to the results of the analysis, the relationship between the adolescents' perceptions of seeing themselves as part of Facebook and "General Self-esteem" and "School-Academic Self-esteem", which are the subscales of self-esteem, has been found as significant ($F_{general}$=3,402, $F_{school-academic}$=2,779, p<0,05). To find out the source of this significance, Tukey Post-Hc test statistics has been applied. Accordingly, there appears to be a significant difference between those who say "I don't agree" with the thought that "I see myself as part of Facebook" and those who say "I certainly agree" with it in terms of the "general self-esteem" subscale. It can be thought that those who have a low level of general self-esteem see themselves as part of Facebook and those who have a high level of general self-esteem have quite an opposite view.

Similar results are seen in the subscale "School-Academic self-esteem". Accordingly, there appears to be a significant difference between those who say "I partly agree" with the thought that "I see myself as part of Facebook" and those who say "I agree" with it. With these findings in mind, it can be said that those who have a low level of academic self-esteem usually see themselves as part of the imaginary life created by Facebook, while those with a high level of self-esteem do not agree with this view.

Assessment of the relationship between the Adolescents' Perceptions of Losing Facebook and Self-Esteem

The relationship between the adolescents' perceptions of losing Facebook and self-esteem has been given in Table 3.

TABLE 3

According to the results of the analysis, there is a significant relationship between the adolescents' perceptions of losing the social environments on Facebook and "General Self-esteem", "Social Self-esteem" and "School-Academic Self-esteem", which are the subscales of self-esteem ($F_{general}$=5,117, F_{social}=4,702, $F_{school-academic}$=2,596, p<0,05). To find out the source of this significance, Tukey Post-Hc test statistics has been applied.

Considering the scores from the general self-esteem subscale and the answers to the item "I feel sorry if Facebook is closed"; there has been determined a significant relationship between those who have said "I don't agree at all" and those who have said "I certainly agree". The finding has been obtained from this result that those with a low level of general self-esteem do not want to lose their social environments on Facebook. Similarly, according to the answers to the item "I feel sorry if Facebook is closed." And the scores from the social self-esteem subscale, there has appeared to be a significant relationship between those who have said "I don't agree." and those who have said "I certainly agree". It could be thought here that those with a low level of social self-esteem do not want to lose their social environments on Facebook.

Lastly, according to the school-academic self-esteem and the answers to the item "I feel sorry if Facebook is closed.", there has been determined a significant relationship between the individuals who have said "I do not agree by any means." And those who have said "I partly agree." The finding has been that those with a low level of school-academic self-esteem do not want to lose their social environments on Facebook.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Self-esteem and the ability to express oneself are among the foremost elements on the social networking sites which are increasingly used today. In the studies made on the subject, the adolescents who spend much time on the social networking sites have been determined to be persons who behave differently, i.e. using someone else's name, photo or video, about expressing themselves (McKenna & Bargh, 2000; Orr, Sisic, Ross, Simmering, Arseneault & Orr, 2009). At this point, what is of importance is how the individuals perceive themselves, how they introduce themselves to other people and how they communicate with others. Millions of people make new friends on such social networking sites as Facebook every day. In these friendships, it is thought that people's views of themselves and others are reflected in their behaviors. In this context, how much time adolescents spend on such imaginary sites and how they perceive these environments come out to be important once more again.

The first finding to be obtained from our study is about the duration of the adolescents' use of Facebook and their perceptions of self-esteem. The use of media means, such as mobile phone, internet and television, are thought to be important in cognitive, social and emotional terms for the young who spend most of their time using such means (Roberts, Foehr, & Rideout, 2005). It has been reported that internet technology reduces the time and place differences among people and increases the number of people who communicate with each other as well as the variety of the relationships among people (Aktaş, 2005). Hence, it is assumed that people can express themselves better on social networking sites and show their personal and interpersonal abilities better. It has been said by Pempek, Yermolayeva and

Calvert (2009) that the young tend to show themselves as different from how or what they really are on some occasions while spending time on social networking sites.

It is seen that the individuals who have subscribed to such networks try to overcome their lack of self-confidence and self-esteem within the real social environment through the facilities they are provided by the networking sites. Therefore, it is supposed that there is a relationship between the amount of time they spend on such sites and their self-esteem. According to the results obtained on this issue; those who have a low level of "general self-esteem, home-family self-esteem and school-academic self-esteem" spend more time on Facebook than others do. In other words, the individuals with a low level of self-esteem spend more time on Facebook. Because the adolescents who have a low level of general self-esteem, home-family self-esteem and school-academic self-esteem cannot express themselves adequately at school and home, they are inclined to refer to social networking sites and complete their deficient sides by visiting and spending more hours on them. Given that the young are intensively interested in social networking sites as they provide them with new ways to express themselves, these results are considered to be significant and meaningful. There are studies in literature which show that there are significant relationships between self-esteem and academic success and the young's social lives (Pullmann & Allik, 2008; Yovetich, Leschied & Flight, 2000). Accordingly, there appears some parallelism between the findings of literature and those of this study.

Another finding obtained in the study concerns the young's perceptions of "seeing themselves as part of Facebook" and self-esteem. It has been concluded that those who have a low level of "general self-esteem and school-academic self-esteem" are more inclined to see themselves as part of Facebook. In other words, the young with a low level of self-esteem appear to feel more that they belong to the imaginary environment on Facebook. It is seen that recently some studies have been conducted on this subject. Facebook, Myspace, Twitter and such social networking sites have been found out to be mostly searched-for internet sites among the big search engines (Ronn, 2007). According to the latest statistics, the site Facebook has today reached the number of 400 million users today. However, among the striking data is that within the site nearly 60 million people upgrade their pages and every day more than 3 million photos are loaded on the site (Facebook, 2010). It can be understood from these numbers that there is an inclination of people towards Facebook not only in our country but in the whole world. In a study on 213 participants in recent times, 54% of the participants have obtained a Facebook account before starting their university education, 25% of them after starting their university education and 21% after graduation from university (Madge, Meek, Wellens, & Hooley, 2009). All these stdueis have shown that today the young are growing more interested in the social networking sites today. It has been established by the studies conducted that the young perceive the social networking sites as an imaginary world of friendship and express themselves as different from they really are (Orr, Sisic, Ross, Simmering, Arseneault & Orr, 2009; Peluchette & Karl, 2010).

Given that self-esteem is one's perception and introduction of himself or herself to the outer world, the results of the study can be thought of as significant and meaningful. Furthermore, the results appear to bear resemblance to those in literature.

The last finding obtained within this study concerns the relationship between self-esteem and the young's "thought of losing their social environment on Facebook." In literature, addiction to, or dependence on, the imaginary world is a subject that has been dealt with in recent times. It appears that several studies have been conducted on people's addiction

AKADEMİK BAKIŞ DERGİSİ
Sayı 23   Ocak – Şubat – Mart – 2011
Uluslararası Hakemli Sosyal Bilimler E-Dergisi
ISSN:1694-528X İktisat ve Girişimcilik Üniversitesi, Türk Dünyası
Kırgız – Türk Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Celalabat – KIRGIZİSTAN
http://www.akademikbakis.org

to the internet. It has been reported in these studies that there is a direct relationship between people's different personality traits and problematic use of the internet (Weiser, 2001). At this point, the way the young see the internet and their purpose of using it are of significance. According to the findings obtained in this study, there is a significant difference between the young's thoughts of losing the imaginary environment on Facebook and their "general self-esteem, social self-esteem and school-academic self-esteem" scores. Thus, those with a low level of self-esteem, it has been concluded, fear that they may lose their existing imaginary environments. Given that social self-esteem is one's perceptions of himself or herself in the social environment in which he or she lives, the individuals with a low level of social self-esteem are concerned about the loss of their Facebook accounts, which is a significant result. The imaginary friendship environment that the young create and the satisfaction they get with it are thought to affect their views of the matter. Moreover, considering that self-esteem is that one finds himself or herself successful, important and valuable, it is supposed that this finding is very important and strikes one's attention. Here it is seen that the young have developed a sort of addiction to the imaginary friends' environment on the internet. Given the rate of the worldwide use of Facebook, this subject appears to be more and more important than assumed.

It is thought that all the findings revealed in this study will contribute greatly to the literature. The rate of use of such social networking sites as Facebook among the young is on the increase day by day. Parallel to this, the number of the academic studies on this issue is also on the increase. Adolescence is defined as a period which is one of the most important periods in human development, in which one passes from childhood to adulthood and in which the adolescent is vulnerable to a variety of variables and factors (Tümkaya, 2005). Therefore, it is important that the young should be protected from the negative gaining of the social networks researchers have made some recommendations towards this matter.

In today's world in which the use of the internet is getting more popular and widespread, the first step seems to be to render the young conscious of its use. The fact that the young should be taught how to use the internet correctly and informed about its damages is of importance at this point. One of the steps to take in real life is that the young should be made more active in real life so that the young are not affected by the imaginary social networks. To enable the young to take part in more social activities is important in that it transfers their physical and mental energies to such useful fields. In the studies conducted, the individuals with a low level of self-esteem are incapable in social skills on occasions (Mahon, Yarcheski & Yarcheski, 1994; Olmstead, Guy, O'Malley & Bentler, 1991). As the young today try to eliminate such incapability and inabilities of theirs on Facebook and such imaginary networks, they are, it could be said, addicted to such environments and sites. For the young to pass through a healthy process of physical and mental development, the issue needs to be addressed in other studies quickly and systematically so that the future studies can shed more light on the problem.

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Table 1. The relationship between the duration of adolescents' using Facebook and self-esteem

| Self-Esteem sub scales		Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average of squares	F	p
General self-esteem	Between groups	0,216	5	0,043		
	In the group	2,229	163	0,014	3,154	0,010*
	Total	2,444	168			
Social self-esteem	Between groups	0,100	5	0,020		
	In the group	2,436	163	0,015	1,335	0,252
	Total	2,536	168			
Home-family self-esteem	Between groups	,298	5	0,060		
	In the group	3,475	163	0,021	2,796	0,019*
	Total	3,773	168			
School-academic self-esteem	Between groups	0,359	5	0,072		
	In the group	4,136	163	0,025	2,830	0,018*
	Total	4,495	168			

*Note *p<0,05*

Table 2. One-way anova results for the scores taken from the adolescents' perceptions of seeing themselves as part of facebook and coopersmith self-esteem subscales

Self-Esteem sub scales		Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average of squares	F	p
General self-esteem	Between groups	115,472	4	28,868		
	In the group	1391,676	164	8,486	3,402	0,011*
	Total	1507,148	168			
Social self-esteem	Between groups	5,647	4	1,412		
	In the group	156,637	164	0,955	1,478	0,211
	Total	162,284	168			
Home-family self-esteem	Between groups	9,103	4	2,276		
	In the group	232,376	164	1,417	1,606	0,175
	Total	241,479	168			
School-academic self-esteem	Between groups	18,263	4	4,566		
	In the group	269,405	164	1,643	2,779	0,029*
	Total	287,669	168			

*Note *p<0,05*

Table 3. One-way anova results for the scores taken from the adolescents' perceptions of losing the social environment on facebook and coopersmith self-esteem subscales

Self-esteem sub scales	Sum of	Degree of	Average of	F	p
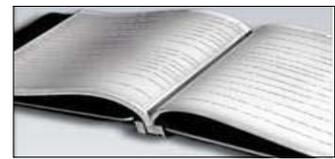
		squares	freedom	squares		
General Self-esteem	Between groups	167,219	4	41,805		
	In the group	1339,929	164	8,170	5,117	0,001*
	Total	1507,148	168			
Social Self-esteem	Between groups	16,697	4	4,174		
	In the group	145,587	164	0,888	4,702	0,001*
	Total	162,284	168			
Home-Family Self-esteem	Between groups	4,296	4	1,074		
	In the group	237,183	164	1,446	0,743	0,564
	Total	241,479	168			
School-Academic Self-esteem	Between groups	17,127	4	4,282		
	In the group	270,542	164	1,650	2,596	0,038*
	Total	287,669	168			

*Note *p<0,05*