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## **THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG THE STUDENTS OF COMMUNICATION FACULTY**

### **Abstract:**

In the current modern societies where mass life is gradually increasing, almost all the communication is executed through mass communication instruments. The traditional instruments such as newspapers, journals, radio, and television and new mass communication instruments such as internet and social media are used for the same purposes. Among them, new communication instruments provide the users opportunities such as being faster than the traditional ones, more advantageous, more entertaining, either individual or mass depending if required and being stored easily. In the conducted studies, however, the results indicating that those new instruments are used by the young generations and the individuals older than a definite age group use it less.

This study was conducted to employ the findings related to the mass communication instruments used by the university students and the levels which they use the social media.

For this purpose, 438 participants were applied a face-to-face questionnaire. According to the results at the end of the research conducted on the students of Communication Faculty in Selçuk University, majority of university students use the internet and social media most among the mass communication instruments; they spend approximately two hours using those new communication technologies.

### **Keywords:**

Communication Faculty, Communication, Mass Communication, Mass Communication Instruments, Social Media

## Introduction

Human beings who live in the society after the birth are the creatures who meet all kinds of their needs within the society. Since the oldest periods of the history, they regarded living around the living creatures of their own kind as a necessity. By this means, they maintained their bloodline, came up with hunger, provided the security and executed production. Namely, they survived until today through utilizing the advantages of massification rather than individualism. However, they also experienced definite stages of development throughout the definite periods of the history while reaching their life today. Those stages may be listed as collecting and hunting, the agriculture society which is shaped upon the invention of the necessary tools and the needs of the society, the industrial society in the sequel and finally the information society which digital devices and computers are used (Yoloğlu 1997:452).

In the current information society, human beings need to get information mutually, learn and share what they have learned since they adopt communal life. This need necessitates the mutual interaction among them. Briefly, communication is a process of producing information, transferring and explaining or exchange of information between two systems (Dökmen 1996: 19-20) and the process of creating a common ground (Sever 1998: 51). As Watzlawick et al., also stated, the “ill-communication is impossible” in the organism of society which human beings also exist (cited by Anık 2009:3). Namely, people encounter information exchange unless they fall into a vegetative state. For this purpose, the information sources in unlimited quantity are informed every day by physical-cultural environments, place and space which they are located in (Anık 2009:3).

The communication between the individuals may occur face to face as well as through mass communication instruments. This kind of communication which is called mass communication shortly means the process of distributing the information, thoughts and attitudes to large masses through technical devices (Yumlu 1994: 16). The expertised enterprises embody the enterprises which distribute their symbol-based contents to a scattered, heterogenous and large mass (Oğuz 2012: 121). By means of mass communication, distances are shortened, the concepts of time and space undergo changes, new attitude forms and new consumption activities are developed, the issues of the agenda are determined and behavioral education is conducted.

Mass communication is executed through the instruments such as newspapers, journals, radio, television (Işık 2013: 9), videos, cassettes, records, cinema, books, theatre, posters, leaflets, telephone, telegram, graffiti (Yumlu 1994: 22), internet and social media which execute mass broadcasting. Among them, especially internet and social media have become the most popular mass communication instruments.

Internet is the network of the computer networks and consists of a network which computers all over the world are connected to each other (Ertaş 2015: 8). Today, it is a communication instrument which almost everyone uses or has to use. It is the instrument of the modern age which provides access to information, entertainment, relief, enjoying

free times, utilizing public services, access to education and working environment. It caused the emerging of communication environments such as social media.

Social media instruments are: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Wordpress, LinkedIn, Google+, Foursquare, Blogger.com, Wikipedia, Flickr, PhotoBucket and Ning (Vural and Bat: 3356).

Social media are the instruments such as blogs, social networks, viki's, online groups, micro-blogs, and video sharing sites which may transfer messages (Borders 2009). As well as employing numerous communication instruments available before it, it owns some characteristics which don't exist in others. For example, some of the characteristics are as follows; both expressing one-self and following the others, sending/watching texts and videos, both reading newspapers/magazines and listening to the radio. Having so many characteristics, it draws the attention of modern human beings and makes them used intensively.

The frequency of quantity which the university students use mass communication instruments and social media is the topic that is concerned about and requires researching. In order to access the research findings related to this topic, 438 students from the Communication Faculty, Selçuk University were applied face to face interviews. Since it is one of the rare studies which is limited with the students of Communication Faculty, this study has great importance.

## **Method**

### **Application of the Research and Sampling**

In order to present the frequency which the students of Communication Faculty use social media, a field research was conducted on the students of Selçuk University Communication Faculty. In the research, the accidental sampling method was employed. For this purpose, the students of the 1.st, 2.nd, 3.rd and 4.th year who were registered at Communication Faculty and were volunteered for participation to the research were interviewed. The data which is a base to the field research was obtained through face to face interviews with 459 people. As a result of the preliminary examination of those questionnaires, 438 questionnaires were analyzed.

### **Data Collecting Instruments**

In order to determine the frequency of using social media among the students of Communication Faculty, a questionnaire form consisting 3 sections was prepared. The reliability of the questionnaire in this study (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) was measured as 0.85. in the first section of the questionnaire, the questions in the form of 5 likert type with the frequencies of I never use (1), 1-2 days a week (2), 3-4 days a week (3), 5-6 days a week (4) and Regularly Everyday (5) were employed.

In the second chapter of the questionnaire, the questions in the form of 5 likert type were prepared to determine the durations the students of Communication Faculty use social media, their reasons to use social media and which social media environments they use at which frequencies. In order to determine the reasons for using social media,

multiple-choice questions including the options such as I Totally Disagree (1), I Disagree (2), I am Hesitant (3), I Agree (4) and I Totally Agree (5) were employed while following options were chosen in order to determine the frequency of using social media; I Never Use (1), I don't Use (2), I sometimes Use (3), I Use (4) and I often Use (5).

The third section of the questionnaire consists of the questions to reveal the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants such as their age, gender, education level and their monthly expenses and the form of accommodation.

Prior to the application of the questionnaire form, two separate experts analyzed those questionnaire questions for their validity and necessary amendments were made in accordance with their suggestions. Moreover, 40 people were applied the pre-test in order to observe the intelligibility of the questionnaire form and predict the probable problems that may be encountered in the field and they were prepared to be used after the final controls.

### **The Analysis of the Data and the Adopted Tests**

The field research was conducted on the students of the 1.st, 2.nd, 3.rd and 4.th classes of Selçuk University Communication Faculty through face to face between the dates of February 28, 2015 and March 3, 2015. The obtained data was electronically processed through SPSS 15.0 statistical package.

In the analysis of data, the frequency analysis in order to present the percentage distribution of the participants of the questionnaire; Independent Sampling T-test in the two-option independent variants such as gender were employed, respectively. The ones with significance level equal to  $p=0.05$  or lower in T-test were evaluated. In order to determine the reasons for using social media and the significance levels of the frequency of using social media environments, the Arithmetic Average (A.A.) analysis was conducted.

Those are the basic problems of the study:

Question 1: Which one is the Mass Communication Instrument used by the students of Communication Faculty?

Question 2: For what purpose do the students of Communication Faculty use social media?

Question 3: How often do the students of Communication Faculty use social media environments?

### **Findings and Interpretation**

This study which aims to determine the reasons and frequencies of using social media among the students of the Communication Faculty contains the results of the questionnaire data obtained from the students of Selçuk University Communication Faculty between the dates of February 28 and March 3, 2015. Since it was aimed to reach to the result of the interpretation of the obtained data, the characteristics of the participants and their answers to the questionnaire questions are evaluated.

## The Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

The results of descriptive statistics related to the characteristics of the participants were listed below: When the data related to the distribution of the participants of the research are analyzed (N=438), 17.8% of the participants are between the ages of 18-20, 60.5% of them were between 21-23, about 20.1% of them were between 24-26, 0.9% of them were between 27-29, and 0.7% of them were at the age of 30 and over.

When the rates of age distribution among the participants are examined, the 48.6% of the participants were female from the point of gender (N=438) while 51.4% of them were males. Those obtained rates show a level convenient for a comparison from the point of gender.

From the point of educational status, 12.3% of the participants (N=438) stated they were in the first year, 23.1% of them were in the second year, 42.0% of them were in the third year and 22.6% of them were in the fourth year.

When the results of the descriptive statistics of the participants (N=438) related to their average monthly expenses in their answers to the research questions are analyzed, 10.0% of the declared they spend less than TL 300, 48.9% of them were between TL 301-600, 28.5% were between TL 601-900 and 12.6% were TL 901 and over. Those recovered results show that majority of the participants (58.9%) expenses at the lower levels of income.

When the types of accommodation among the participants of the research are considered (N=438), 3.0% of the participants were living alone at home, 11.9% of them were living with their parents, 47.9% were living in the dormitory, 36.3% were living at home with friends and 0.9% of them were living with their relatives. According to this covered data, majority of the students (84.2%) are lived in the social environments which require association such as dormitories and houses.

## The Frequency of Using Mass Communication Instruments

When the percentage distribution of the participants who accept to participate the research and answer the questions related to their weekly using mass communication instruments are examined, 16.0% of the participants state that they never use television, 43.6% of them use television 1-2 days a week, 17.8% of them use 3-4 days a week, 9.1% of them use 5-6 days a week, and 13.5% of them use television regularly everyday. According to the recovered results, minority of the participants (13.5%) regularly use television everyday.

**Table 1: Weekly frequency of using television**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
I never use	70	16,0	16,0
1-2 days a week	191	43,6	43,6
3-4 days a week	78	17,8	17,8
5-6 days a week	40	9,1	9,1
Regular everyday	59	13,5	13,5
Total	438	100,0	100,0

When the frequency of weekly internet usage among the participants are examined, 0.7% of them never use internet, 3.0% of them use 1-2 days a week, 9.6% of them use 3-4 days a week, 18.0% of them use 5-6 days a week, and 68.7% of them use internet regularly everyday. Those covered results state that majority of the participants (68.7%) regularly use internet everyday.

**Table 2: Weekly frequency of using internet**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
I never use	3	,7	,7
1-2 days a week	13	3,0	3,0
3-4 days a week	42	9,6	9,6
5-6 days a week	79	18,0	18,0
Regular everyday	301	68,7	68,7
Total	438	100,0	100,0

When the answers of the participants related to the frequency of their weekly use of radio is examined, it may be seen that 3.0% of them answered I never use, 37.0% stated I use 1-2 days a week, 18.9% said 3-4 days a week, 7.3% of them said 5-6 days a week and 6.6 said I regularly use everyday. According to those replies, minority of the students (6.6%) uses the radio regularly everyday.

**Table 3: Weekly frequency of using radio**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
I never use	132	30,1	30,1
1-2 days a week	162	37,0	37,0
3-4 days a week	83	18,9	18,9
5-6 days a week	32	7,3	7,3
Regular everyday	29	6,6	6,6
Total	438	100,0	100,0

When the answers of the participants related to the frequency of their weekly reading newspapers is examined, it is seen that 16.7% of them replied I never use, 39.5% of them stated 1-2 days a week, 20.5% stated 3-4 days a week, 8.7% of them stated 5-6 days a week and 14.6% of them replied as I regularly use everyday. According to those replies, minority of the students (14.6%) regularly uses newspapers everyday.

**Table 4: Weekly frequency of reading newspapers**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
I never use	73	16,7	16,7
1-2 days a week	173	39,5	39,5
3-4 days a week	90	20,5	20,5
5-6 days a week	38	8,7	8,7
Regular everyday	64	14,6	14,6
Total	438	100,0	100,0

When the answers of the participants related to the frequency of their weekly reading magazines is examined, it is seen that 47.3% of them stated I never use, 37.2% of them stated 1-2 days a week, 9.6% of thm said 3-4 days a week, 3.0% of them stated 5-6 days a week, and 3.0% of them stated I regularly use everyday. According to those

replies, minority of the students (3.0%) use magazines regularly everyday while almost half of them never use it.

**Table 5: Weekly frequency of reading magazines**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
I never use	207	47,3	47,3
1-2 days a week	163	37,2	37,2
3-4 days a week	42	9,6	9,6
5-6 days a week	13	3,0	3,0
Regular everyday	13	3,0	3,0
Total	438	100,0	100,0

When the answers of the students related to the frequency of their weekly using social media is examined, it is seen that 4.1% of them stated I never use, 9.4% of them stated 1-2 days a week, 8.9% of them stated 3-4 days a week, 14.2% 5-6 days a week and 63.5% of them stated I regularly use everyday. Those uncovered results indicate that majority of the participants regularly use social media everyday.

**Table 6: Weekly frequency of using social media**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
I never use	18	4,1	4,1
1-2 days a week	41	9,4	9,4
3-4 days a week	39	8,9	8,9
5-6 days a week	62	14,2	14,2
Regular everyday	278	63,5	63,5
Total	438	100,0	100,0

When the arithmetic average of the students related to the rate of their using mass communication instruments is examined, it is seen that Internet is used most (AA=4.5114), then Social Media (A.A.=4,2352), Newspapers (A.A.=2,6050), Television (A.A.=2,6507), Radio (A.A.=2,2329) and Magazines at the lowest level (A.A.=1,7717), respectively.

According to those results, it is seen that internet and social media are the instruments which are used most among the students and traditional communication instruments were used less than those two.

**Table 7: The levels of using mass communication instruments**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Internet	438	1,00	5,00	4,5114	,83877
Social Media	438	1,00	5,00	4,2352	1,18995
Newspaper	438	1,00	5,00	2,6507	1,27065
Television	438	1,00	5,00	2,6050	1,24620
Radio	438	1,00	5,00	2,2329	1,15230
Magazines	438	1,00	5,00	1,7717	,95093

## The Use of Social Media

When the answers of the students to the questions asked in order to determine how long they have been using social media is examined, it is seen that 2.7% of them stated less than 1 year, 4.8% stated 1-2 years, 25.8% 3-4 years, and 66.7% of them stated 5 years and over. This emerging data indicate that majority of the students (66.7%) have been using social media for five years and more.

**Table 8: The history of using social media**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Less than 1 year	12	2,7	2,7
1-2 years	21	4,8	4,8
3-4 years	113	25,8	25,8
5 years and over	292	66,7	66,7
Total	438	100,0	100,0

An independent sampling T-test was applied in order to determine whether there is a differentiation between the gender of the students and their history of using social media environments. According to the obtained data, there is a significant differentiation among the social media users related to the importance they attribute to the variant of "How long have you been using social media" ( $t = -2.99$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ). This variant is attributed importance by males (A.A.=3.66) more than females (A.A.=3.46). Namely, males determine that they have been using social media for more years than the females do.

When the answers of the students for the questions asked to determine how long the students use social media during the day are analyzed, it is seen that 40.2% of them stated 60 minutes and less, 28.3% between 61-120 minutes, 16.4% between 121-180 minutes, 8.0% of them 181-240 minutes and 7.1% of them used social media about 241 minutes and over. This emerging data indicates that majority of the students (68.5%) spend two hours and less a day using social media.

**Table 9: Duration of using social media during the day**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
60 minutes and less	176	40,2	40,2
between 61-120 minutes	124	28,3	28,3
between 121-180 minutes	72	16,4	16,4
between 181-240 minutes	35	8,0	8,0
241 minutes and over	31	7,1	7,1
Total	438	100,0	100,0

## The Significance Levels of the Reasons for Using Social Media

When the answers of the students to the questions asked to determine the significance levels of the reasons for using social media are analyzed, they list the reasons as follows: In order to get in touch with friends (A.A.=4.2009), Getting information about the events and individuals (A.A.=4.0753), Sending and receiving text messages (A.A.=3.8562), Having fun and freshening (A.A.=3.7922), Recreation (A.A.=3.6256), Seeing or uploading pictures (A.A.=3.6050), Accessing the communication information of people (A.A.=3.1438), Sharing personal presentations and profile information (A.A.=

3.0205), Writing on the wall of the friends and reading the messages on my wall (A.A.= 2.9521) and Knowing people better (A.A.= 2.8196).

According to those results, the students use social media most in order to get in touch with their friends and access to information about the events/individuals while the minimum level is to know the people better and a bit higher than level is to write on the walls of the friends or read the written messages.

**Table 10: The reasons for using social media**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
In order to get in touch with my friends	438	1,00	5,00	4,2009	,92303
Access to information about the events/people	438	1,00	5,00	4,0753	,99255
Send and receive text messages	438	1,00	5,00	3,8562	1,05668
Having fun or freshening	438	1,00	5,00	3,7922	1,09930
Recreation	438	1,00	5,00	3,6256	1,18398
See or upload photos	438	1,00	5,00	3,6050	1,19751
Access to the personal information of the people	438	1,00	5,00	3,1438	1,24553
Share the information of personal presentation and profile	438	1,00	5,00	3,0205	1,27178
Write on the wall of the friends or read the written messages on my wall	438	1,00	5,00	2,9521	1,28536
Know the people better	438	1,00	5,00	2,8196	1,28604
Valid N (listwise)	438				

When the independent sampling T-test is applied in order to determine whether there is a differentiation between the gender of the participants and the importance they attributed to the variants of the reasons for using social media, it was found according to the obtained data that there is a significant differentiation between the genders from the point of attributing importance to the variant "Seeing or uploading photographs" ( $t=2.09$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ). Females (A.A. =3.72) attribute more significance to this variant than males (A.A. =3.48).

There is a significant differentiation between the significance attributed to the variant of "Writing to the wall of my friends and reading the written messages on my wall" and the gender of social media users ( $t=2.25$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ). The significance attributed to the variant of "Writing to the wall of my friends and reading the written messages on my wall" according to gender is high among the women (A.A. = 3.09) while it is lower among the men (A.A. = 2.81). According to those averages, the variant of writing to the wall of my friends and reading the written messages on my wall is attached importance by women more.

## The Frequency of Using Social Media Environments

When the responses of the participants to the question asked in order to determine which social media environments they use at which frequency, it is seen that they use Facebook most (A.A.= 4.3721); then come Youtube (A.A.= 4.3607), Google+ (A.A.=

3.8584), Twitter (A.A= 3.2603), Wikipedia (A.A.=3.2443), Foursquare (A.A.=2.4475), Blogger (A.A.=1.7671) Linked In (A.A.=1.6324) and WordPres (A.A.=1.5731) in decreasing amounts, respectively. This resulting data indicate that the students use Facebook and Youtube most while they use WordPres and Linked In in the minimum amount.

**Table 11: The frequency of using social media**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Facebook	438	1,00	5,00	4,3721	1,08699
Youtube	438	1,00	5,00	4,3607	,87556
Google+	438	1,00	5,00	3,8584	1,37085
Twitter	438	1,00	5,00	3,2603	1,60401
Wikipedia	438	1,00	5,00	3,2443	1,42297
Foursquare	438	1,00	5,00	2,4475	1,56645
Blogger	438	1,00	5,00	1,7671	1,08056
Linked In	438	1,00	5,00	1,6324	1,01230
WordPres	438	1,00	5,00	1,5731	,94125
Valid N (listwise)	438				

When the independent sampling T-test is applied in order to determine whether there is a differentiation between the gender of the participants and the frequency they use social media, it was found according to the obtained data that there is a significant differentiation from the point of importance they attribute to the variants of "WordPres" ( $t = -2.66$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ), "Blogger" ( $t = -2.34$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ), "Wikipedia" ( $t = -2.98$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ) and "Google+" ( $t = 3.61$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ).

Accordingly; Men (A.A.=1.68) attribute more importance to the variant "WordPres" than women (A.A.=1.45); Men (A.A.=1.88) attribute more importance to the variant "Blogger" than women (A.A.=1.64); Men (A.A.=3.44) attribute more importance to the variant "Wikipedia" than women (A.A.=3.03); while, Women (A.A.=4.09) attribute more importance to the variant "Google+" than men (A.A.=3.63).

## The Level of Trust to Social Media Environments

When the subjects who has joined the research were asked to give a trust score for social media (1 Never Reliable, 10 Rather Reliable); 11.9% of the participants scored 1, 6.4% scored 2, 13.2% scored 3, 15.3% scored 4, 22.1% scored 5, 15.3% scored 6, 9.8% scored 7, 3.7% scored 8, 0.9% scored 9 and 1.4% scored 10. According to the emerging data, 31.5% of the participants (when those who scored 1,2, and 3 were considered) trusted at lower levels, 62.5% trusted at medium levels (considering those who scored 4,5,6 and 7) and 6.0% of them trusted at high levels (considering those who scored 8,9 and 10).

**Table 12: The reliability scores of social media environments**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
1	52	11,9	11,9
2	28	6,4	6,4
3	58	13,2	13,2
4	67	15,3	15,3
5	97	22,1	22,1

6	67	15,3	15,3
7	43	9,8	9,8
8	16	3,7	3,7
9	4	,9	,9
10	6	1,4	1,4
Total	438	100,0	100,0

When the average of the answers for the questions asked to determine the reliability levels of social media environments is examined, the score of A.A.=4.4795 is obtained. This emerging occasion indicates that the social media environments have the medium reliability levels in the eye of the students.

**Table 13: The reliability levels of social media environments**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
To what extent social media environments are reliable mass communication instruments?	438	1,00	10,00	4,4795	2,06381
Valid N (listwise)	438				

## Conclusion

Social media turned into a communication platform which is more frequently used among the university students in order to communicate, get information, recreation, and interact. For this purpose, the results obtained from the research findings conducted to determine the habits of the students at communication faculty related to using social media were given below:

- Among the traditional mass communication instruments, television, radio, newspapers and magazines are daily followed by the minority of the students of Communication Faculty.

- Among the instruments and environments of modern media, the internet and social media is daily used and followed by the majority of the students of Communication Faculty.

- The students of Communication Faculty most commonly use Internet and then come Social Media, Newspaper, Television, Radio, respectively, and Magazine is the least used.

- Majority of the students of Communication Faculty has been using social media for five years and more.

- The history of the male students at the Communication Faculty dates back to older times than female students.

- Majority of the students spend about two hours a day using social media.

- The students use the social media mostly in order to “communicate with friends” and “obtaining information about the events and the people”.

- Female students use the social media more than male students in order to “see or upload the photos” and “write on the walls of the friends and read the messages written on the wall”.

- The students use “Facebook” and “Youtube” mostly and “WordPres” and “Linked In” the least.

- Male students use “WordPres”, “Blogger”, and “Wikipedia” more than female students while female students use “Google+” more than male students.

- Majority of the students give lower or medium scores for social media environments.

- Social media environments have medium level of reliability in the eye of the students.

In conclusion, it may be stated that social media and internet got ahead the commonly used traditional mass communication instruments in the eye of the students and those instruments are used in majority of daily life. From this point of view, it is also thought that the issues related to the social media instruments which are preferred by the university students with various motivations could be discussed in future studies through including the entire society and it would enlighten the various dimensions of the issue.

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