

OPINIONS OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES ABOUT SOCIAL NETWORKS ACCORDING TO THEIR PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine opinions of university graduates about social networks according to their personal characteristics. The research was conducted on 203 university graduates who received teacher training at Sakarya University in 2010-2011 academic year. Two different data collection tools were administered to the participating university graduates and correlation analysis was conducted in light of data collected from the tools above. As is widely accepted by the technology users, Facebook, the most used social network in Turkey and across the world, was selected as the social network for the research. A positive and significant relationship was found among Facebook-related opinions stated by university graduates having an extravert personality as a result of data collected through the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised/Short-Form and Opinions of University Graduates about Social Networks data collection tools.

Keywords: Personality, Social networks, Facebook, Internet use

INTRODUCTION

The Internet has become the main information and data provider since its appearance at the end of the 20th century (Ozad & Kutoglu, 2010). The most effective communication resources, computers and the Internet, are part of our daily life and have become one of the important tools in the education (Sahin, Balta, & Ercan, 2010). There are a number of Web-based services and applications that demonstrate the foundations of the Web 2.0 concept, and they are already being used to a certain extent in education. These are not really technologies as such, but services (or user processes) built using the building blocks of the technologies and open standards that underpin the Internet and the Web. These include blogs, wikis, multimedia sharing services, content syndication, podcasting and content tagging services. Many of these applications of Web technology are relatively mature, having been in use for a number of years, although new features and capabilities are being added on a regular basis (Anderson, 2007).

Web 2.0 enables and facilitates the active participation of each user. Being attached to the Web 2.0 tool used, the users have a variety of rights about interacting with the content (Balkan Kıyıcı, 2010). Web 2.0 applications and services allow by individual (blogs) and collective (wikis) publishing and storing of textual information and audio recordings (podcasts), video material (vidcasts), of pictures, etc. Authoring of this user generated content is greatly facilitated by providing easy to use desktop-like interfaces. While some time ago, Web applications were easily distinguishable from their desktop counterparts due to their design and point-click-wait interaction, today's Web 2.0 applications are often recognizable as being Web application only at second glance (Ullrich, Borau, Luo, Tan, Shen, & Shen, 2008).

Social networks gain great importance following the development of web 2.0 technologies. Today, many individuals communicate with others using social networks in environments where face-to-face communications are not fully provided. They use the social networks as a way of entertainment and adapt socials networks into their life styles. And also social networks is defined network sites as web based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

One of the websites that comes to mind first in terms of social networks is Facebook. Facebook is one of the three most visited web sites in the world in 2010 (Alexa, 2010). Founded in February 2004, Facebook is a social utility that helps people communicate with their friends, family and coworkers more efficiently. The company develops technologies that facilitate the sharing of information through the social graph, the digital mapping of people's real-world social connections. Anyone can sign up for Facebook and interact with the people they know in a secure environment (Facebook, 2010 a). 50% of the 500 million members all over the world regularly visit this social network platform each day (Facebook, 2010 b).

Despite the explosive growth in the number of Facebook users, the number of research investigating Facebook has not increased proportionally. Ellison and colleagues note, much of the research which currently exists investigates identity presentation and privacy concerns (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007).

Researches conducted revealed that attitudes towards internet and experiences in using internet had a correlational relation with using social networks more (Wellman, Haase, Witte, & Hampton, 2001; Ross, Orr, Siscic, Arseneault, Simmering, & Orr, 2009). Moreover Burt et al. drew the personality profile of “network entrepreneurs” by identifying the personality characteristics of individuals who possessed structural holes in their work Networks. Based on those personality characteristics, they concluded that network entrepreneurs prefer to be in authority, create excitement, and change things (Burt, Janotta, & Mahoney, 1998). Becker (2004) has argued that results regarding relations between personality and network behavior have usually been regarded as weak because personality does not have strong direct effects on behavior. Becker proposes that the effects of personality on network building are likely to be mediated by more proximal motivational antecedents, including attitudes, subjective norms and perceived control over network building. However, there are not many researches in the literature shedding light on the opinions about social networks according to personal characteristics and frequency of using social networks. Therefore, the research sought how the personal characteristics affect the opinions about social networks.

METHOD

In this section, information about the research model, data collecting tools, data collection and analysis is provided.

Research Model

The research was conducted through the general survey method. General survey models are survey designs to be administered on an entire population, a group selected from the whole population, sample or sampling in order to make a general judgment about the population consisting of many items (Karasar, 1995). Population of the research comprises the university graduates in Turkey and the sampling consists of the university graduates enrolled to receive teaching training certificate at Sakarya University, Faculty of Education.

Population and Sample

In the research conducted in order to determine the personal characteristics of the university graduates, the sample of the research was selected from university graduates who received teacher training at Sakarya University in 2010-2011 Academic Year. Appropriate sampling method was used for the sample selection. The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised Short-Form and the questionnaire developed by the researcher were administered to the randomly selected 220 university graduates and 17 questionnaires were excluded since university graduates did not use social networks. Data were evaluated through the 203 questionnaires. Distribution of the sample group by demographic characteristics is given in Table 1.

Table 1 General Distribution of Participating University Graduates by Demographic Characteristics

		f	%
Gender	Female	139	68.5
	Male	64	31.5
Marital Status	Married	54	26.6
	Single	130	64.0
	Engaged	19	9.4
Age	20-25	109	53.7
	26-30	65	32.0
	30 and over	29	14.3
Level of Income	0-1000 TL	103	50.7
	1001-2000 TL	61	30.0
	2001 TL and over	39	19.3
Weekly Internet Use	0-3 Hours	77	37.9
	3-6 Hours	60	29.6
	6-9 Hours	26	12.8
	9 Hours and over	40	19.7

Distribution of the students by the universities of graduation is provided in the Table 2.

Table 2 General Distribution of Participating University Graduates by the Universities of Graduation

		f	%
Universities of Graduation	Samsun 19 Mayıs University	3	1.5
	Gazi University	5	2.5
	Marmara University	1	.5
	Atatürk University	4	2.0

Abant İzzet Baysal University	4	2.0
Uludağ University	2	1.0
Gaziosmanpaşa University	3	1.5
Balıkesir University	4	2.0
Sakarya University	113	55.7
Trakya University	2	1.0
Afyon Kocatepe University	5	2.5
İstanbul University	12	5.9
Anadolu University	5	2.5
Niğde University	1	.5
Karadeniz Technical University	5	2.5
Çanakkale18 Mart University	5	2.5
Dumlupınar University	4	2.0
Kocaeli University	8	3.9
Ankara University	2	1.0
Ege University	2	1.0
İnönü University	1	.5
Eastern Mediterranean University	1	.5
Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University	1	.5
Zonguldak Kara Elmas University	4	2.0
Celal Bayar University	3	1.5
Fatih University	1	.5
Yıldız Technical University	1	.5

Data Collection Tool

Two different data collection tools were used in the research. One of these tools is “the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised/Short-Form” which was developed by Francis and et. al (1992) and translated into the Turkish language by Karancı, Dirik and Yorulmaz (2007). Other one is the tool of “Opinions of the University Graduates about the Social Networks” which sought the opinions of the university graduates about the social networks.

The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised/Short-Form (EPQR-S) has a four factor structure including 24 items. Each factor composes of 6 items and gathers the personal characteristics of the individuals in terms of neuroticism, psychoticism, extraversion and lie scale. This four factor structure explains 38% of the total variance. The co-efficiency level of the scale was found sequentially as 78, .65, .42, .64 for extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism, and lie scale dimensions and the test-retest consistency sequentially as .84, .82, .69 and .69. The relationship of the EPQR-S was assessed with Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, the Egna Minnen Beträffande Uppfostran and Fear Survey Inventory in order to assess the validity of the scale. The findings supported the construct validity of the scale (Karancı, Dirik, & Yorulmaz, 2007).

Discriminative personality characteristics defined by Eysenck were found to be related to specific feelings and behaviors. And it was revealed that neuroticism was related to anxiety, fear, depression, low self-esteem, and a tendency towards emotional and irrational behaviors. Extraversion was associated to being social, going to parties, making jokes and having many friends, impulsivity, uncontrolled emotions, and sometimes unreliable personality traits. Finally, psychoticism was found to have relation with psychoticism, aggression and antisocial behaviors, and insensitivity towards others. The lie subscale is a control scale by which the validity of the whole test is examined (Karancı, Dirik, & Yorulmaz, 2007).

The questionnaire “Opinions of the University Graduates about the Social Networks” developed by the researcher was initiated by forming the determination of the items by which effects of the personal traits on the frequency of using social networks could be measured and was sent to 4 specialists working as instructors in the Department of Computer Education and Instructional Technologies for the scope validity. A questionnaire including 15 items was prepared in line with the views received from the specialists. Since the most used social network in Turkey is Facebook, items in the questionnaire were compiled in respect of Facebook. The internal consistency coefficient of the questionnaire was found as .86.

Data Collection and Analysis

After the sample group was determined, it was asked whether the university graduates receiving teaching training volunteered to participate in the research and the scale and questionnaire were given only to the volunteer students. Data were analyzed using SPSS 19 program.

FINDINGS

Correlation between the total points acquired from the items in the questionnaire “Opinions of the University Graduates about the Social Networks” aiming to investigate opinions of university graduates about social networks according to their personal characteristics and the sub-factors of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised/Short-Form (EPQR-S) was examined.

Table 3. Correlation Coefficient Demonstrating the Relationship between the Extravert Personality Characteristics and Opinions About Social Networks

	Correlation Coefficient
1. Using Facebook is important for me.	.202**
2. I use Facebook everyday.	.143*
3. I communicate with my friends on Facebook.	.092
4. I feel strange if I do not use Facebook.	.087
5. I feel curious about the shares of my friends on Facebook.	.025
6. Contacting my friends on Facebook makes me happy.	.026
7. Facebook is a great advantage for today’s people.	.091
8. Playing Games on Facebook makes me happy.	.151*
9. I can spend long hours on Facebook.	.197**
10. I share my psychological condition on Facebook.	.197**
11. I read opinions shared on Facebook.	.043
12. I encourage my friends to be a member of Facebook.	.185**
13. I share things on Facebook.	.149*
14. Being tagged by my friends on Facebook annoys me.	.026
15. Facebook affects today’s social relations negatively.	-.003

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

As seen in the Table 3, a significantly positive relationship was found between the points given by university graduates having extraversion personality characteristics for the items of the extravert personality characteristic in the EPQR-S scale and points given for the items “Using Facebook is important for me” ($r = .202, p = .004$), “I use Facebook everyday” ($r = .143, p = .043$), “Playing Games on Facebook makes me happy” ($r = .151, p = .033$), “I can spend long hours on Facebook” ($r = .197, p = .004$), “I share my psychological condition on Facebook” ($r = .185, p = .009$), “I encourage my friends to be a member of Facebook” ($r = .149, p = .035$) “I share things on Facebook” ($r = .149, p = .035$).

Table 4. Correlation Coefficient Demonstrating the Relationship between the Neurotic Personality Characteristics and Opinions About Social Networks

	Correlation Coefficient
1. Using Facebook is important for me.	-.090
2. I use Facebook everyday.	-.037
3. I communicate with my friends on Facebook.	-.023
4. I feel strange if I do not use Facebook.	-.029
5. I feel curious about the shares of my friends on Facebook.	-.065
6. Contacting my friends on Facebook makes me happy.	-.084
7. Facebook is a great advantage for today’s people.	-.020
8. Playing Games on Facebook makes me happy.	-.014
9. I can spend long hours on Facebook.	-.057
10. I share my psychological condition on Facebook.	-.016
11. I read opinions shared on Facebook.	-.121
12. I encourage my friends to be a member of Facebook.	.018
13. I share things on Facebook.	-.047
14. Being tagged by my friends on Facebook annoys me.	.064
15. Facebook affects today’s social relations negatively.	.037

As seen in the Table 4, no correlational relationship was found between the points given by university graduates having neurotic personality characteristics for the items of the neurotic personality characteristic in the EPQR-S scale and the points given for the questionnaire in which they stated their opinions about Facebook

Table 5. Correlation Coefficient Demonstrating the Relationship between the Psychotic Personality Characteristics and Opinions About Social Networks

	Correlation Coefficient
1. Using Facebook is important for me.	-.058
2. I use Facebook everyday.	-.048
3. I communicate with my friends on Facebook.	-.084
4. I feel strange if I do not use Facebook.	-.033
5. I feel curious about the shares of my friends on Facebook.	-.111
6. Contacting my friends on Facebook makes me happy.	-.136
7. Facebook is a great advantage for today's people.	-.020
8. Playing Games on Facebook makes me happy.	-.055
9. I can spend long hours on Facebook.	-.069
10. I share my psychological condition on Facebook.	-.039
11. I read opinions shared on Facebook.	-.139
12. I encourage my friends to be a member of Facebook.	.053
13. I share things on Facebook.	-.129
14. Being tagged by my friends on Facebook annoys me.	.044
15. Facebook affects today's social relations negatively.	.079

As seen in the Table 5, no correlational relationship was found between the scores given by university graduates having psychotic personality characteristics for the items of the psychotic personality characteristics in the EPQR-S scale and the points given for the questionnaire in which they stated their opinions about Facebook

Table 6. Correlation Coefficient Demonstrating the Relationship between the Lying Personality Characteristics and Opinions About Social Networks

	Correlation Coefficient
1. Using Facebook is important for me.	-.089
2. I use Facebook everyday.	.046
3. I communicate with my friends on Facebook.	.066
4. I feel strange if I do not use Facebook.	.063
5. I feel curious about the shares of my friends on Facebook.	.050
6. Contacting my friends on Facebook makes me happy.	.077
7. Facebook is a great advantage for today's people.	.046
8. Playing Games on Facebook makes me happy.	-.042
9. I can spend long hours on Facebook.	-.106
10. I share my psychological condition on Facebook.	-.050
11. I read opinions shared on Facebook.	.101
12. I encourage my friends to be a member of Facebook.	.035
13. I share things on Facebook.	.021
14. Being tagged by my friends on Facebook annoys me.	-.095
15. Facebook affects today's social relations negatively.	-.062

As seen in the Table 6, no correlational relationship was found between the points given by university graduates with lying personality characteristics for the items of the lying personality characteristic in the EPQR-S scale and the points given for the questionnaire in which they stated their opinions about Facebook

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the influence of personality on Facebook use. Consistent with previous researches, findings indicated that personality variables were associated with some aspects of Facebook use. For example, individuals in the high Extraversion group reported membership in significantly more Facebook groups than individuals in the low Extraversion group (Ross, Orr, Sisc, Arseneault, Simmering, & Orr, 2009). Individuals high on the trait of Extraversion were found to belong to significantly more Facebook groups. And also extraverts are more likely to engage in social activities (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

In this research, it stands out that university graduates with extraversion personality characteristic gave more positive responses to some items related to using Facebook in comparison those with psychotic, neurotic and lying personality characteristics. In light of the findings of the research and with reference to the literature, it could be stated that individuals with extravert personality characteristics set communication using social

networks. However, no findings could be acquired between individuals with other characteristics and using social networks.

University graduates with extravert personality characteristic expressed that Facebook is important for them, they use Facebook everyday, playing Games on Facebook make them happy, they spend long hours on Facebook, they share their psychological conditions on Facebook, they encourage their friends to be a member of Facebook and they share things on Facebook. When these characteristics were assessed, it can be concluded that university graduates with extravert personality characteristics use Facebook to communicate and spend time and share their status.

Today, given that the importance of the social networks and number of users are on the increase it can be suggested to encourage individuals other than extravert personality characteristic to use social networks, develop applications addressing to all types of personality characteristics and not to regard the social networks as a barrier in front of the socialization.

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