



# New Paradigms within the Communication Sciences

*Edited by*  
Enes Emre Başar  
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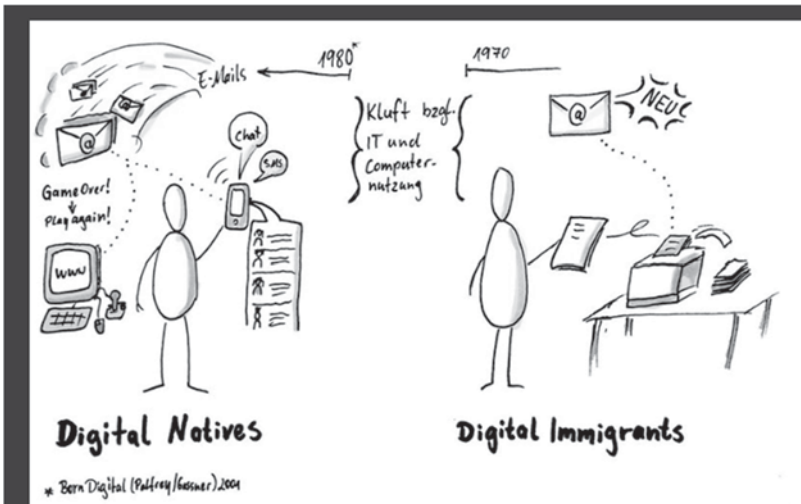
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# CHAPTER ONE

## TRANSITION TO THE DIGITAL ERA THROUGH COVID-19: TRANSFORMATION OF DIGITAL IMMIGRANTS INTO DIGITAL NATIVES

FATMA GEÇİKLİ

### Introduction



**Figure 1.1:** Digital natives and digital immigrants  
*Source:* Palfrey and Gasser (2004)

With the outbreak of COVID-19, there has been a shift and transformation in digitalization. While the digitalizing world has already brought new



communication processes and the new generation has adapted to these tools and environment in a short time, the so-called digital immigrants have remained a little more distant. However, with the Covid-19 outbreak, digital immigrants have started to be intensely interested in these communication tools and feel an obligation to use digital media and digital media tools to close the gap regarding changing communication models, media types and lifestyles. With the COVID-19 outbreak, very serious alterations started to occur in the life and communication styles of digital immigrants. They have actively turned towards using the social media tools and environment and made progress towards becoming a digital native. Digital tools and environments create a virtual link between people. These digital environments have basic features such as rapidity, ease of accessibility, a borderless world, and an ability to reach large masses in a short time.

In these digital environments, personal information, requests, feelings, thoughts, and skills are shared, and thus communication with other users is managed. Amid COVID-19, there has been an increase in the use of digital tools and surfing through online environments by people as a result of spending more time at home. Education has begun to be carried out through digital tools and programs. Due to all these reasons, digital immigrants have had to break their shell and develop their knowledge and skills to adapt to the digital era. Expressed as the renaissance of the age, the internet has now been moved to an advanced level with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and has become an indispensable phenomenon. The internet, referred to as “networking across networks”, has re-formed the infrastructure of the digital era today, and changed the way of life and communication of the digital immigrant. An understanding of how to make the knowledge and skills of using digital tools more effective and efficient for the digital immigrant has brought digital citizenship and digital media literacy with it. The digital immigrant has focused on the need to understand the detail represented by the content, to understand the language, to understand the logic of production and the target audience, as well as to be digitally literate, either voluntarily or not.

Accordingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the use of digital tools and media to be the rising issue of the day. While discussing the concepts of digital indigents and digital immigrants, concepts such as digitalization and digital media, generations and digital tools, digital citizenship, and digital literacy will be emphasized in this context.

## Digitization and digital media

The COVID-19 outbreak has made technology stand out in every field. The importance of digital transformation in terms of the sustainability of both business and communication has been understood once again. When the COVID-19 outbreak is over, no individual will continue where they left off, and with the increase in technology awareness, a new lifestyle will be faced. It is a fact that the process that experts call the new normal is also accelerating digitalization. In the transition process of the digital age, a period has started in which the balances in political, economic and social life have changed. The journey began in an era where traditional education was almost over with the spread of online education, and the concept of time and space has seemingly disappeared. Concepts such as e-government, e-school, e-declaration, e-shopping, and e-commerce have started to be included in the literature and daily conversations. With digitalization, concepts such as big data, open data, artificial intelligence, data mining, hyperlink, cyber security and hacker have also frequently been presented in the technology literature.



**Figure 1.2:** The difference between digitized and digital media

*Source:* <https://medium.com/original-reveries/the-difference-between-digitized-and-digital-media-19101fd76c1e>

With the development of computer technologies and the use and spread of the internet and social media in all areas of life, the way that people

communicate and interact throughout the world has drastically changed. The presence of a large number of senders and receivers in these environments has created an environment for the rapid spread of messages. Shared messages are not filtered; people from all over the world can be contacted in this environment. The structure and function of communication have changed. Now, every event and phenomenon have been transferred to the digital environment. On the one hand, this situation has brought many problems, and led to violations. On the other hand, it has led to innovations and changes in many subjects such as education, art, economy, culture, language, politics, and diplomacy within the practices of daily life. This period is expressed as the “digital age” or “digital century”. Although digital media environments enable the establishment of a culture of democracy and an easy expression of ideas, they also include risks such as censorship, surveillance, dirty information and control. In this regard, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerates the digitalization process with not only its pros but also its cons.

Digital media texts are all videos, photos, advertisements, newspapers, magazines, books, recorded music, computer games, programs, films, images, websites, etc., that can be transported and transmitted by different communication forms via digital media (Anklam 2009). Users manage their digital media environment through different tools, for example, through social networking sites (Facebook), video sharing sites (YouTube), blogs (Blogger), music sharing sites (Jamendo), photo sharing sites (Flicker), wikis (Wikipedia), virtual words (Active Words), micro blogs (Twitter), virtual worlds (Second Life), social markup sites (digg.com), and commercial communities. The use of digital media tools in the world of the wide web goes beyond encompassing all of the free time of children and young people, and is no longer a leisure activity. In some studies, it is stated that the use of digital media tools replaces the family and school, which are considered as basic socialization tools in today's societies (Kırık 2013). As a result, digital media tools have started to take a more complex structure with intertwined and integrated technologies with both the positive and negative effects of the internet, social media, mobile phone, digital game, etc. Therefore, they require to be perceived as tools to be emphasized within the scope of digital environments. For, although the use of digital media tools brings many positive developments, it also has, at the same time, some negative dimensions, and these dimensions mostly affect children and young people. The scope of the digital media concept is expanding day by day in line with the developments that lead to a transformation both in media tools in general and digital media tools in particular. In this expansion process, the contents of digital media tools are

diversifying and the usage habits and consumption of digital media tools are changing in today's "digital media transformation era".

Digitalization causes many changes in human life. In digital environments, passive viewers have turned into active users and these new media use digital systems such as computers, the internet, mobile phones, personal computers, tablets and other mobile devices, etc., covering communication technologies. Digital tools enable two-way communication; the viewer can share and comment on the internet without the need for any mediator. The desired information can be stopped and re-started regardless of time and place. While a large amount of information can be accessed and distributed, it allows the use of multimedia. People are provided with the opportunity to socialize with websites and social media platforms; they are becoming part of political, religious, cultural, economic, social, technological and health environments through their sharing of information. Individuals and social groups, who could not share their views and thoughts, now have the opportunity to convey them through this medium. Moreover, this situation has also affected companies in sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, and sponsorship, etc. According to Everett M. Rogers, the possibilities of new media are grouped under three headings:

- ***Mutual communication***: This feature constitutes the most important advantages of new communication technologies against the one-sided operation of conventional communication tools.
- ***De-mass***: They are capable of exchanging messages in the form of transmitting or receiving individual messages.
- ***Simultaneity***: Those who use new communication technologies can start, freeze or terminate communication whenever they want. This shifts the control of timing and effectiveness in the communication process from the source to the receiver.

## Generation and digital tools

According to Lagree, a generation is a community of individuals who share a common historical past, live in the same time period, are exposed to common social events, and have a common collective identity (as cited in Erciş, 2014).. As for Karl Mannheim, generations are individuals who share a common culture and have common habits (Toruntay 2011). Generations are directly affected by the social, political and cultural events of the period in which they live; at the same time, they contribute to social change and transformation.

The development of generations varies according to the development levels, economic structures, and social and socio-cultural characteristics of the countries. There is a difference between these generations in terms of their use of digital tools. On this basis, the generations are classified by their characteristics in terms of digital tool use as follows;



**Figure 1.3:** Generations

**Source:** <http://generations.sisliab.gov.tr/a-review-of-differences-between-generations/>

**The generation of traditionalists:** People in this generation were born between 1900 and 1945, and they are loyal, harmonious, responsible, and consistent in their relationships.

**Baby boomers:** This is a generation of people born between 1945 and 1965, caring about issues of well-being, unable to access products and services, and tending to spend and have fun; it is also called the sandwich belt. Despite many political events and crises within the era in which they were born such as the movement from capitalism to communism, the east-west conflict, and anti-westernism, this generation can manage to hold up and go their own way.

**Generation X (GEN X):** This generation, also called “Transitional Period Children” and the “Lost Generation”, was born between 1965 and 1977. In an environment dominated by changing dynamics and uncertainties, this is a much more abstemious and noble-minded generation that has focused on making a career, making money, and working. People of this generation started to use technology at later ages.

**Generation Y (GEN Y):** Born between 1977 and 1994, this generation is also called the “Digital generation”, the “Net Generation”, “Indigo”, the

“WWW Generation” and, in Turkey, the “post-80 generation”. The main characteristics of this generation are as follows: 1) they are internationally minded, 2) they are able to use technology, 3) they have easy access to information, 4) they rapidly advance in their career, and 5) they are focused on factors such as success and gain.

**Millennial generation:** This generation is an interactive generation born between 1994 and 2003, so they are known as the “Digital Generation”. This generation has basic characteristics such as using a cryptic language consisting of abbreviations, preferring to chat rather than speak, and being intertwined with technology.

**Generation Z (GEN Z):** Born from 2003 onwards, this is the first generation of the 21st century. People of Gen Z have interesting characteristics in that they perceive time spent away from social media or the internet as lost time; their IQ and self-confidence are quite high; they are not easily satisfied; they follow the trial-and-error method in achieving results; they are very quick in terms of learning, speaking and thinking; and they can handle several tasks at the same time. As for their most prominent characteristics, people of Gen Z use digital tools and media extensively.

## Digital natives and digital immigrants

While digitalization has started to manifest itself intensely in every field, the COVID-19 pandemic has prepared more ground for this situation. Trying to understand what digitalization is and how it works, digital immigrants, which is how we refer to middle-aged and older people, have been required to visit the digital world more frequently; thus, they have started to work on increasing their knowledge and capacity on this issue. The developments amid the COVID-19 pandemic, quite surprisingly for digital immigrants, have been quite commonplace for digital natives as they could easily communicate with artificial intelligence and solve problems.

The concept of “digital native”, first defined as those born in 1980 and later as digital natives, also called millennials by Pedro, was coined by Prensky. Since the people of this generation were born, they have grown up with computers, the internet, and mobile phones; therefore, their ways of acquiring information differ from those of previous generations. Then, it is understood that “digital native” is used for individuals who grow within the focus of technology, can use all kinds of technology effectively, access information quickly, prefer to use graphics instead of space and text, and perform multiple tasks.



**Figure 1.4:** Learning from digital natives

**Source:** <https://tr.instela.com/digital-immigrant--19118700>

Today, for the characteristics of digital natives, there are many different nomenclatures used such as the internet generation, game generation, new generation, cyber children, zapping generation, and grasshopper mind. To explain them briefly;

- **Grasshopper mind:** Attention spans are rather short, which is why they are called grasshopper mind; they focus on the previous or next subject instead of focusing on the current subject.
- **Net belt:** Digital technologies have a significant impact on their cultural development. These individuals choose e-mail as their primary means of communication; instant messaging is important for them.
- **Game generation:** This is a generation that grew up playing games and they are exposed to new paradigms. This generation tries many ways of winning instead of looking for a single answer. They see the world as a competitive environment and develop strategies accordingly. It is important to be a hero.
- **Millennium students:** This is a generation born after the 1980s. These students are surrounded by digital media. Digital tools are an indispensable part of their daily life. They use it for both obtaining information and communication.
- **Zapping generation:** This is used to describe individuals born with a computer screen open to the world with a computer mouse, using

icons, games, and sounds, and questioning others, so they have a nonlinear cognition.

Briefly, this generation, called digital natives, uses digital language as the mother tongue such as the language of the computer, video games, and the internet, and they intensively use computer games, digital music players, video cameras, mobile phones and tools of the digital age. The basic characteristics of digital natives in general are thus summarized as follows;

#### Key characteristics of digital natives

1. Their daily life is based on instant messaging. There are communication preferences such as cellular chats and sending texts.
2. They are looking for ways to communicate on their own, using socially oriented technology such as blogs, wikis, and instant messaging.
3. They use digital media to get information quickly.
4. They prefer graphics rather than text.
5. They express themselves through emojis.
6. They can cope with their multiple and parallel tasks; they want to do many jobs at the same time.
7. They prefer games rather than dealing with critical issues.
8. They want to learn by trial and error, that is, by discovering.

Digital natives are also classified by their reactions to technology use: they are thus classified as avoidant, minimalists, enthusiastic participants, innovators, and extreme users ([http: /dijitalbolnme. Blogstop.com.tr/](http://dijitalbolnme.Blogstop.com.tr/), 2012). On this basis;

- **Avoiding:** Although these individuals were born in the digital age, their sense of proximity to digital technologies is low. In addition to not being able to open Facebook and Twitter accounts, they may not have internet access at home. This is the smallest group of digital natives.
- **Minimalists:** They realize that technological tools are part of daily life. They prefer social media tools according to their interests.
- **Enthusiastic participants:** This is the largest group of digital natives. They follow technology closely and search for topics and data they are curious about on Google. They use a new model phone.



- ***Innovators:*** In addition to being overly eager to use technology, these people also make an effort to improve it; for example, engineers, tech writers, etc.
- ***Extreme users (Addicts):*** Addicts are those who use technology excessively. Their mood changes when they stay away from the internet. They can be angry, sad, and aggressive.

As for digital immigrants, these are people who admire digital technology but meet with technology later in life and accept technological life even at a distance. These people make an effort to adapt to the environment. They have also attempted to learn new languages (Prensky 2001). Thus, these individuals, who meet with technological tools later and have to use them, are called digital immigrants. With the COVID-19 outbreak, these digital immigrants, who are aware of the need to use technology more intensively, have started to have the characteristics of digital natives. Digital immigrants are classified as avoidant, reluctant adopters, and enthusiastic adopters according to their characteristics:

- ***Avoiding:*** These people have a lifestyle that does not involve technology or they use it at the lowest level; they do not regard networks such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. They do not find it necessary to have an e-mail address or a new mobile phone.
- ***Reluctant adopters:*** These people are aware that technology is very important in their lives. Their ability to connect with technological developments is weak. These people have cell phones and e-mails. They check their e-mail, though not very often. They benefit from online banking transactions. They tend to use online environments.
- ***Enthusiastic adopters:*** This is the group trying to catch up with digital natives. These people have e-mail, Facebook and Twitter accounts. They can also be blog and website owners. They check their accounts regularly.

On this basis, summarizing the key characteristics of digital immigrants;

1. They prefer to talk on the phone or in person
2. They prefer to meet face to face
3. They try to access information from many different sources.
4. They prefer graphics over text
5. They prefer to type rather than use emojis
6. They prefer a hierarchical structure in the workplace

7. They focus on serious work
8. Value, commitment and consistency are important in the workplace
9. They don't change jobs often.

In conclusion, the following table shows the overall differences between digital natives and digital immigrants.

**Table 1.1:** Differences between digital natives and digital immigrants

DIGITAL IMMIGRANTS	DIGITAL NATIVES
They prefer to talk on the phone or in person.	They prefer to talk via text chat, Facebook, and online games.
They prefer to use the user manual.	Instead of using the guide, they trust their intuition.
Their preferences for access to information are linear, logical, and sequential.	They prefer to receive information from multiple sources simultaneously.
First, they pay attention to the writing.	Sound, picture and graphics attract more attention.
They can postpone their dreams.	They prefer instant gratification and rewards.
They focus on business issues during working hours.	They can switch focus and alternate between work, play, and social networks.
After the traditional 5-day workout, they take a 2-day break.	Playing, working and socializing takes place 24/7.
They use the internet to gather information.	They use the internet to have fun, play games, and socialize.
They use correct Turkish in messages.	They use abbreviations in messages. Like “2” instead of “to”.
They prefer to meet face to face.	They prefer to talk online.
Value, loyalty and consistency are important in the workplace.	Personal satisfaction is more important; they can change jobs frequently.
They think their online life is wasted.	Their online life is more valuable.
They talk to each other about the changes in their vacation and life.	They report by sharing their pictures on social networks such as Facebook.
They prefer the hierarchical approach in the workplace.	They are more for an egalitarian approach.

**Source:** <http://dijitalbolunme.blogspot.com.tr/>

## Digital citizenship

Reasons such as the disappearance of a perception of citizenship based on geographical boundaries with globalization and the use of the same digital platforms and technologies by all citizens of the world show that world citizens can be digital citizens with equal rights and responsibilities.

Concepts such as e-citizen, net citizen, www citizen, and cyber citizen are used for the concept of digital citizenship. As to the definition of digital citizenship, it is the behaviour of participating in the online society as an active individual in the virtual environment (Mossberger et al. 2008). Also, digital citizenship is defined as the norms of appropriate and responsible behaviour in technological and virtual environments. Then, digital citizens are individuals who adopt and implement ethical behavioural norms in the process of using digital tools such as computers, mobile devices, mobile phones and tablets, and have the required level of knowledge in this regard.

The overall characteristics of digital citizens are as follows:

- They use information and communication resources correctly and effectively in digital environments
- They tend to have correct attitude and behaviour in online environments, where individuals are actively communicating
- They use the right to communicate in the digital environment
- They do not harm others with their posts
- They encourage others to comply with ethical rules and behaviours in this direction
- They respect personal rights in digital environments
- They act with responsibility and security awareness while using digital tools
- They are individuals who know their rights and responsibilities in using technology.

In addition to these, there are nine dimensions to be a digital citizen, which are digital access, digital security, digital rights and responsibilities, digital ethics, digital health, digital law, digital commerce, digital communication and digital literacy.



**Figure 1.5:** Dimensions of digital citizenships

*Source:* Rible (2011)

To briefly mention these nine dimensions, the following definitions can be a guide:

- **Digital access:** Providing access to digital tools for use.
- **Digital security:** Technology users to take measures to protect their personal security over the network.
- **Digital rights and responsibilities:** Expectation of behaviour in accordance with the rights and freedoms of users.
- **Digital ethics:** The norms and standards of behaviour expected by digital media users.
- **Digital commerce:** Purchase and sale of goods and services online.
- **Digital communication:** Message exchange in the digital environment.
- **Digital law:** Legal restrictions on the use of technology.
- **Digital literacy:** Learning and teaching process for the effective use of digital communication tools.

- **Digital health:** Physical and psychological health problems that arise after the use of digital technology.

## Digital media literacy

When the relevant literature is reviewed, it is seen that some concepts are used, such as “New Media Literacy”, “Online Literacy”, “Internet Literacy”, “Electronic Literacy”, “Digital Literacy”, and “Multiple Literacy” related to digital media environments. These concepts are used in daily spoken and written language, and, with the digital media and surveillance practices of use being a part of daily life, another concept, “Digital Media Literacy” has now been included in the language. Now, multiple channels offered by digital tools attract everyone from children to adults, and accordingly the ability to access, interpret, apply, reproduce and deliver data in digital media is called digital literacy.



**Figure 1.6:** Digital media literacy

**Source:** <https://eavi.eu/media-literacy-for-all/>

Digital literacy is based on reinterpreting, producing, and evaluating data after obtaining it. Paul Gilster was the first researcher to come up with the concept of digital literacy. Gilster (1997) stated that digital literacy is a special kind of mentality associated with mastering ideas that

are not just pressing keys (Gilster 1997). According to Gilster, digital media literacy is based on the following principles:

- The knowledge and ability to access and use a variety of hardware devices and software applications,
- The competence to understand and critically analyze digital content and applications,
- The ability to create with digital technology.

Then, the main characteristics of the digital literate person are to solve problems, communicate, manage information, collaborate, create, and share content; and to have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (skills, strategies, values) required to use information communication technologies, and digital media in an effective, efficient, appropriate, critical, creative, autonomous, flexible and ethical manner for work, leisure, participation, learning, socialization, consumption. and awareness. There are four elements in digital literacy, these being (Kavaliar 2006):

- ***Understanding the detail the content represents:*** The ability to understand existing data, to compare with others, to question and evaluate.
- ***Understanding the language of the content:*** The ability to understand how digital data are created and propagated online.
- ***Understanding the production logic:*** The ability to understand the target audience of the data created in the digital environment and the needs of this audience.
- ***Understanding the target audience:*** The ability to understand how users are directed to digital data, the way digital data are used and the way they turn to information.

## Conclusion

As a result of technological developments, digitization, which affects every aspect of people's lives, has manifested itself more with the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. It has affected their professions, work relationships, and concept of work, their way of action, and their lifestyles. Its effect has begun to be felt in every field from home life to business life; that is, it has caused individuals to reinterpret their lifestyle. Through e-business, e-education, e-school, e-shopping, and e-government, digital immigrants have had to transform into digital natives. In digital environments, there is

a bidirectional spiral and also a complex operation where there is a continuous communication flow between multiple stations.

While discussing the risks and opportunities brought by the digital age, the effect of digitalization on generations should also be considered and discussed. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as digital immigrants have transitioned into digital natives, the awareness that it is necessary to adapt to this change by understanding the place and importance of digitalization has started to spread.

The COVID-19 pandemic also reveals the need to review the concepts of digital immigration and the digital native. It has become an indispensable phenomenon for digital immigrants to benefit from applications such as creating instant content and contributing to the content, being able to explain the tagged content, being actively involved, creating social networks, being able to update the posts instantly, and using them as an entertainment medium, which are the basic features of digital media. Furthermore, the definition of digital immigrant has also been opened up for discussion; once, digital immigrants used digital media as secondary sources, with printed sources primarily for information, but, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the ways of using life and the digital environment have been affected, and the necessity of using it for the generation in question has emerged, although it was not born into technology. Digital immigrants, consciously or unconsciously, have begun to use new media tools more as digital citizens (digital access, digital health, digital rights and responsibilities, digital security, digital law, etc.). It can be said that, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital immigrant has double-checked every piece of information, and s/he has also had a sort of a digital literacy test with an effort to reach the right source.

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## CHAPTER TWO

# TRANSFORMATION OF THE SUBJECT ON THE COORDINATES OF THE OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF DIGITAL SOCIAL NETWORKS

FÜSUN ALVER

### **Introduction**

Digitalization has had significant impacts in different areas since the 1990s. Beyond media and communication limitations, digitalization has transformed the whole society and culture, reconstructed the norms/values and the subject, and reformulated social relationships and communication. There is a growing body of research on digitalization in engineering, informatics, and social and communication sciences (Carstensen et al. 2014a; Carstensen et al. 2014b; Krotz 2019; Winter 2019). Communication sciences focus on the formation of the subject in digital social networks and new forms of communication and interaction because digital social networks are where the subject performs and expresses himself/herself as much s/he is enabled or disabled by her / his opportunities and limitations.

Based on symbolic interactionism, self-representation theory, and cultural studies, this study aimed to critically evaluate the structural features of digital social networks that enable or disable the subject to present himself/herself and the factors that transform him/her. This study analyzed how the subject uses the new forms of communication of digital social networks to develop a digital self and express himself/herself and how his/her self transforms in digital networks.

The problem of the study makes it clear that the transformation of the subject in digital social networks should be reconsidered. Therefore, the study sought answers to the following questions: (1) What new forms of communication do digital social networks provide? (2) How do the new

forms of communication affect the social and communication practices of the subject? (3) What opportunities and limitations do digital social networks present for the social interaction of the subject? (4) What factors transform the subject? (5) Under what structural conditions do digital social networks affect the transformation of the subject? What potential do symbolic interactionism, self-representation theory, and cultural studies have to explain the interaction of the subject in digital social networks? This argumentative study was based on the assumption that the rules set by the dynamics and structure of digital social networks and their opportunities and limitations for communication transform the subject.

## **The theoretical foundation of the design of the subject**

The subject is a result of interactions between social structures in human-society dialectical relations within a socio-cultural context. The subject designs and is designed by other subjects and social reality. “The subject thinks, feels, acts, and constructs himself/herself in the tense relationship between autonomy and dependency. Subjects are actors who meet as interaction partners. The self is an active collection of the attitudes, orientations, values, communication patterns, and the design of ‘I’ that makes up the subject” (Schachtner 2019). Today, the reformation, participation, and transformation of the subject by communication and media technology are discussed. However, the subject has always been transformed by philosophical, social, technical, political, and economic structures and interpreted from different intellectual perspectives.

### **From the modern subject to the postmodern subject**

The concept of “subject” has been and continues to be discussed by the modern age philosophy. Therefore, it is necessary to approach it from different perspectives and address how it is defined differently.

Although “subject” is a modern concept, it was first discussed in antiquity. Discussions on the concept of “subject” go back to the Sophists in Ancient Greece, the political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, and the concept of “individual” in Hellenistic philosophy (Reichardt 2012). Reform movements abolished the clerical hegemony over the relationship between God and man, and the Renaissance and humanism placed the “subject” in the epicenter of the world. The great philosophers of the Modern Age conceive the subject as an active entity that regulates the world, thus paving the way for its new social and political position. Descartes (2004), the founder of Modern Age Philosophy, emphasizes the capacity of the subject for self-reflection and sets its modern design. By

stating, "I think therefore I am," Descartes describes a thinking, doubting, and rational subject with high self-awareness and specific goals. Hume (2009), the leading exponent of empiricism, places the subject at the center of his philosophy and analyzes its fundamental understanding. He argues that the subject can perceive reality only through his/her perceptions. Kant (2003) approaches the subject from the philosophy of transcendence and criticism of the mind and asserts that the subject is capable of acting consciously and freely. Hegel (1982; 1986) defines the subject as a free and conscious being, which is a force and a means of history. "The modern subject is the invention of epistemology discussed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In fact, it is a by-product rather than an invention. Epistemology does not ask who or what the subject is, but rather it seeks answers to the question, 'How do we recognize our environment?' While European rationalism points to an active subject seeking comprehension, Anglo-Saxon empiricism designs a passive subject. However, both approaches accept that the subject recognizes the world" (Beer 2014). As a result of the development of information and transmission technologies from the eighteenth century, the press took on the informing, enlightening, democratizing, and liberalizing of society. Therefore, epistemology and political debates, and the press have played a key role in transforming the subject.

In the nineteenth century, Marx (2009) looks into the subject's position and activity in historical conditions, and unlike Hegel, he analyzes it in the capitalist economic system. He describes the subject as an economic unit and claims that the subject has a meaning in society. He thinks that when the subject recognizes that he/she is a social being, he/she becomes aware of his/her political and class power and organizes accordingly. He states that human labor gains a revolutionary momentum. Nietzsche (2012) criticizes Descartes' concept of the modern subject and instead focuses on its anatomical characteristics. He sees the subject as a transient and transforming identity with his/her instincts, senses, behaviors, and interactions and as a cultural interpretation and fixation of conscious impressions. Weber's (2016) concept of "subject" is inspired by the Reformation and capitalism and Kant's rational subject. While the ascetic lifestyle shapes the subject, he/she is capable of making rational decisions and being responsible for himself/herself. He/she takes rational and cultural actions to achieve his/her goals.

In the twentieth century, Husserl (1984) approaches the subject from a phenomenological perspective within the framework of consciousness, freedom, responsibility, and interaction. He claims that the personal self, unlike the pure self, is constructed in consciousness and dependent on the

body. He thinks that the individual can protect his/her autonomy and freedom with his/her own minds and see the free self as the subject of pure mind. Wittgenstein (1984), on the other hand, considers the subject to be a conscious being that thinks and dreams, but he positions the subject not in the world but at its edge and attributes his/her epistemic success to his/her linguistic skills. Horkheimer and Adorno (2017) discuss the subject from the perspective of critical theory and see it as a result of historical, social, and cultural practices. They draw attention to the class position of the subject in the capitalist system and treat it within the framework of the characteristics that one should possess to serve a social function in an organization based on a division of labor. Horkheimer and Adorno analyze the subject within social power and hegemony relations and design it as the end-product of a social process. Postmodern theorists (Lyotard 1986) try to locate the subject not in the center but in uncertain, unknown, and uncontrolled processes and envision a powerless subject with no autonomy and rationality. The poststructuralist perspective sees the subject not as a unity with certain limitations but as an entity constructed through society, culture, politics, and language. They focus on discourses, power relations, processes, and techniques to explain the subject. From this perspective, Foucault (2000) analyzes the social structures defining the position of the subject and focuses on subject-power relations. To him, the subject creates himself/herself by submitting to rules and the hegemony of others or through his/her liberating practices arising from self-consciousness and self-recognition, resulting in a self-made being. The subject constructs and transforms himself/herself.

The self-understanding, design, and transformation of the subject have been affected by the two World Wars in a similar way to the different orientations in scientific and philosophical debates in the twentieth century; with migration, liberal movements and globalization gaining momentum since the 1980s, the expansion of the radius of print and electronic media, and digital communication and media technology becoming ubiquitous in the last decade of the century. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the subject is also affected by economic, political, and cultural globalization, the pressures of capitalism and migration, and racist, nationalist, and religious discourses against global social movements defending human rights and freedom. The subject takes on a new form in the process that started with Web 2.0 technology and continues today. Given that artificial intelligence and robotics will become more advanced and more widespread in the coming years, it is anticipated that the questions, problems, and perceptions of the subject will also transform.

### **Symbolic interactionism: reconstruction of the subject through intersubjective interaction**

The concepts of "self", "pragmatic action", and "social interaction" from pragmatism lay a theoretical foundation and a point of origin for the development of symbolic interactionism. Mead (1973; 1980) focuses on the concept of "social interaction" and develops a theory of socialization that emphasizes the symbolic transmission of human behavior and the formation of the subject, consciousness, and society in intersubjective interaction. Mead (1980) attaches importance to the self in the formation of the subject during intersubjective interaction. He focuses on the question "How does one acquire one's self?" and claims that the self is a part of social interaction that develops in a process in which one acts according to the situations related to oneself. The self refers to a unity constructed iteratively and reflexively through a process in which the acting individual is involved at all times. The self is a unity resulting from the reflection of the acting individual on himself/herself in the social process. The prerequisite for the first parts of the self is one's ability to connect with others through symbols. Mead (1980) thinks that the self acts on the other and recognizes the objects around it. This self questions, criticizes, or accepts, makes suggestions, and plans consciously. In other words, it is a reflexive self that develops in and through symbolic interaction and gives one a sense of being an individual.

Mead (1980) thinks that the interacting subject develops self-awareness when evaluating the consequences of his/her own actions. According to him, the self is viewed from the point of view of the "other," and the reaction to it is a prerequisite for his/her attainment of self-consciousness. The perspective of the "other" also represents social rules, and the subject takes the "other" on a dynamic basis during interactions.

"Conscious subject," "action," and "adaptation" are critical concepts for Mead's (1980) theory on the subject and intersubjective interaction. Mead (1980) argues that the individual and society are in intense interactions and that the self exists in society. However, norms and structures impacting the individual emerge and reproduce via individual action. The subject is potentially creative and self-conscious and constructs himself/herself in the process of social experience and action. The conscious subject living in a society in harmony acts through symbolic interaction and interacts with other people. In this context, Mead's (1973;1980) assertion of the formation of the self and self-awareness and awareness of the point of view of the "other" as well as his interpretation of meaning during symbolic interaction lay a theoretical foundation to better understand the reconstruction of the self in digital

social networks and intersubjective interaction through the new forms of communication.

### **Goffman: presentation of the self in the public domain**

Goffman (1986; 2012) is not a proponent of symbolic interactionism, but his theory of representation of self bears the traces of symbolic interactionism. Goffman (1986; 2012) analyzes the social order and interaction to examine the human and the self and focuses on "situations" and "people in situations" rather than "people and their situations." He analyzes the human on two different bases: First, as an actor who is a restless impressionist busy performing on stage, which is a very human profession; second, as a character, an icon, and someone who has the courage, strength, and other superior qualities that he/she intends to perform to convey. Goffman regards the self as not the cause of action but as practices that create the self. Using the theater metaphor, he examines the self in everyday life (public domain) and sees it as an image that the character on the stage tries to convey to the audience. However, according to him, even if the image is constructed in relation to the individual and allows a self to be attributed to that individual, the self is not who has it, but is the sum of his/her actions. The self is composed of qualities attributed by others based on their interpretation of the individual's actions.

Goffman (1977; 1986:2001) claims that the meaning patterns of social practices are formed not individually but through collective knowledge patterns and interactional processes and are interpreted through those meaning patterns. The individual uses this cognitive framework to organize and design events and topics. Interactions of the individual are contingent upon the forms of collective control, and these are closely related to the social order resulting from the social practices of the self. Goffman (2012) states that interaction plays a vital role in forming social order. According to him, "face-to-face interaction" is the mutual effects of the individuals physically in the same place on one another's actions, while interaction is all the interactions in an event in which certain individuals are continuously involved.

The concept of social order, as well as the relationship between the self and interaction, has an important place in Goffman's (2001; 1986) work, but it does not offer a point of exit. Interaction and social structures belong to separate realities, and interactive practices reproduce social structures. Goffman, who mainly focuses on the interaction between the self and social structure, expands the horizon for social and cultural sciences, ranging from psychology to linguistics. Goffman's views on the design of self-presentation and social reality offer a perspective for communication

sciences concerning the change in the social representation of the self and in the discursive principles and the rules of social reality promoted by digital social networks that are ever-developing and spreading.

### **Cultural studies: multidimensional subject**

Cultural studies are characterized by radical contextualism, theoretical understanding, interventionism, interdisciplinarity, and self-reflection (Hepp 1999; Marchart 2008). Cultural studies focus contextually on culture, communication, daily life practices, the reception and interpretation of media products, and power and hegemonic structures. This perspective also affects communication science (Hepp and Winter 1997; Hepp 1999; Renger 2004).

According to Hall (1994; 1998), the idea of a sociological subject does not reflect the increasing complexity of the modern world and the perception that the subject is not autonomous but self-sufficient. However, it reflects the culture in which the subject attributes value and meaning to himself/herself and conveys symbols and shapes his/her relationship with the significant other. The modern identity had stabilized the subject and the cultural world he/she was in and made them integral and mutually predictable, but this is no longer the case. The subject, who used to have a total and stable identity, is now disintegrating. The self that we had designed in our cultural identity has become translucent, fluxional, and problematic. Identification conjures up or connotes the idea of “This and that is the same thing” and “we are all the same.” However, identification is becoming increasingly vague. Hall states that what we have today is the “postmodern subject,” which is precarious and unstable. Identity has a dynamic immutableness. It forms and transforms in cultural systems that we are continuously represented by or invited to. The subject, which is historical, not biological, assumes different identities at different times, and therefore, cannot possess a consistent totality. We have different identities that go in different directions and change regularly. Identities can never be complete because they are in a constant state of construction and formation. Identity is always narrated as a process, a narrative, and a discourse from the position of the “other.” Identity is a partial representation and always in representation.

Cultural studies focus on the effects of digital social networks on the formation and transformation of the postmodern subject and identity. “From the perspective of cultural studies, digital media technologies with technical opportunities to disseminate and share information (Internet, digital video devices, wireless networks, and World Wide Web) do not have natural features arising from their social and cultural meaning. The

Internet is generally considered liberal, open, and democratic because it has a decentralized structure that allows interaction and participation. The media appears to possess the features that promote appropriate social and cultural processes” (Winter 2010). Therefore, cultural studies focus on social practices, interactions, and mediatization of culture in digital social networks (Winter 2010; 2011; Krotz 2011; Hepp 2013). It investigates the potential of the subject to influence and shape within the cultural and social context. It looks into the structural boundaries of social hegemony and inequality in digital social networks as in real social networks, examines power, gender, ethnic, and cultural differences in class antagonism, and focuses on expanding the opportunities of the politics and media not only for participation but also for self-representation and self-expression. In this context, cultural studies provide a perspective to analyze the participation of the subject in digital social networks and his/her social practices and transformation.

### **Digital social networks: predetermination by the structure or the potential of the subject to resist**

The term “digitalization” encompasses engineering, medicine, economics, politics, law, communication, and media, drives society into deep and complex change and transformation, and includes different phenomena. From a technical perspective, digitalization is a new stage of electronic data production and processing. “Digitalization is considered a set of relationships in which tangible and non-tangible commodities are produced, used, transformed, and personal and collective action is designed and coordinated with digital networks” (Piegsa and Trost 2018). Digitalization includes Artificial Intelligence, large-scale automation of processes and business models, big data, robotics, Industry 4.0, communication and information channels provided by the Internet, and participation in digital social networks and the design and oversight of reality. “Digitalization, which drastically transforms the areas of communication and media and society, allows us to design new communication potentials across the entire bandwidth of the media, from personal communication to mass media, and to implement them in digital platforms” (Rusch and Schanze 2007). New communication processes in social networks and radical changes in the production and dissemination of information pave the way for a new dialectic about the subject and the relationship between the subject and society.



### **The orientation of the subject from real social networks to digital social networks**

The subject communicates and interacts at different times or simultaneously with other subjects and groups in the society in which he/she lives, resulting in dynamic social relationships and social networks. “The individual develops social networking and communication skills as he/she socializes, which is a precondition for him/her to build an image and become a subject capable of social action. This means that the individual attributes meaning to his/her own personality, actions, and social and environmental data, and interprets them with others and develops social relationships and skills” (Schulz 2011). Digitalization, common in different areas of society, allows people to move their real-life social relationships to digital social networks or maintain or terminate their already-digital social relationships.

Digital social networks have a format which does not conform to real social networks but integrates traditional media (print, radio, and TV) with new technologies and provides vast opportunities for interaction and the combination and dissemination of different materials. “The format of digital social networks is based on the solidified and institutionalized use of technical media. The format is a result of the social use of media. It signifies how to use a means selectively and manipulates the participant in action based on the context in which he/she is” (Neuberger 2011). The main feature of the format of dynamic digital social networks is that it makes the communicative and social practices of the subject systematically visible. The subject constructs his/her profile to discover both himself/herself and others and gives information about himself/herself and his/her social relationships.

Digital social networks have different functions that change not only the communicative and social practices of the subject but also the structure of the social interaction itself. “Those functions are identity management, expert seeking, context- and trust-building, context management, and information collection about and transformation of network activities. Identity management allows the individual to represent himself/herself and present data about himself/herself to a target audience in a conscious and controlled manner. Expert seeking makes it possible to access and use information. Context- and trust-building refers to creating a shared context as the foundation of trust in human relationships. Context management is the improvement of personal relationships within the network by presenting a friend list and exchanging data. Information collection about and transformation of network activities means communicating with network members via e-mail, chat, or comments” (Richter and Koch

2008). Digital social networks, which employ those functions to bring together interpersonal and mass communication, create a new culture of media that promotes the effective and widespread use of digital media in daily life and redefines the subject's position. This new culture of media not only transforms the cultural practices in the social context but also introduces new forms of communication.

### **New forms of communication**

The new forms of communication involve face-to-face and traditional media communication as well as communication on new media technologies. Digital communication technologies bring into being the multi-functional new forms of communication that promote new and different social relationships. This makes intersubjective and subject-society interaction possible and encourages wide participation in social communication from search engines to news, video and photo portals, and blogs, and various platforms. Moreover, human-machine interaction through computerized smart software brings a different meaning to communication.

The new forms of communication of digital social networks go beyond the one-way transmission of traditional media and encourage multiple interaction, diversity, and personalization and offer design options in which the individual can showcase his/her creativity. Within their limitations, the interaction-oriented digital new forms of communication allow the subject to represent his/her self and present his/her claims effectively and productively.

The subject uses digital social networks to perform personal or group interaction and social practices. Digitalization offers people numerous opportunities for new communication (mobile phones, chat, e-mail, etc.). The conventional means of communication (telegram, letter, fax, etc.) still exist or are processed and used digitally. Different forms of communication can coexist alternately and simultaneously. The combination of different forms of communication in this way is called vertical integration, while their intertwining is called horizontal integration. Interpersonal communication is based on the exchange of information, which is standardized and confined to some extent (Krotz 200; 2007). These opportunities are provided by numerous digital social networks, from image-based social media promoting active participation (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Myspace, YouTube, Snapchat, etc.) to profile-based platforms.

As a new form of communication, human-machine interaction makes technology an increasingly meaningful part of life and transforms the relationship between the subject and technology. People and things are

connected to a network and communicate with each other, breaking the limits of time and space. “New constellations and formations are coming to be in the media and between people and the media. These new hybrid forms bring about a more individualized and complex social reality” (Sonnenburg 2015). Technology gives rise to hybrid forms by undergoing integration with itself and people. This transforms both the interaction and self-understanding of the subject.

### **Digital self, multidirectional participation, and themes of the subject**

It would be useful to talk about Voirol's (2010) analyses on the self, or in other words, the relationship between the practical self and the digital self before discussing the participation of the self in digital social networks within the framework of the opportunities of the new forms of communication. Voirol (2010) argues that, contrary to the concept of "digital identity," the “digital self” is more than the arithmetic sum of users' online “footprints.” To him, the digital self, as a relational term, allows us to perceive the dialectic of creative activity and the narrow and normative modes of digital platforms at different levels. The subject mostly defines self-reference transmitted based on a digital interface, other subjects, and a norm-promoting collective. The digital self is different from the practical self because the self-reference emerges only through technological interaction. The main feature of the practical self is that it is not bounded by the body but has a continuity of specifically practical activity and experience that is impossible in computer-based interaction. The digital self, on the other hand, is devoid of a body and continuity of experience. For example, a practically mobile Internet user seems to be active in “technical systems” even if he/she is not consciously active because technical systems (digital footprints, databases, statistics, etc.) or other users (profile visits, comments, etc.) push him/her to be active.

The most important feature of digital social networks and social media is that they have a comprehensive participatory platform that allows the subject to create a digital self and share his/her interests and activities. The subject presents himself/herself as a social and sometimes politically conscious individual through his/her social relationships and puts his/her digital self on stage in his/her public domain page and makes it open to other subjects' comments and evaluations. His/her posts may influence others' opinions and feelings, while their comments and evaluations may influence his/hers. The subject's self/identity on digital social networks can be an extension of his/her practical self/identity. However, it can also be a fictitious self/identity because he/she may present a different identity and character or make alterations in his/her physical appearance. The subject

uses visual materials effectively and creatively to reflect or reconstruct his/her self. "In the process of digitalization, photos, in particular, seem to gain new narrative importance because they help the individual document his/her life, combine different and contradictory experiences, and build a bridge of communication with what needed to be left behind. Self-making narratives transform the body into media forms, process it with care, allow it to be disguised and presented as such, and make it more appealing in photos" (Ries 2013). Another form of participation that has become increasingly meaningful in digital social networks is using social media to influence real-life political decisions and social discussions. Digital media technologies play an essential role in mobilization, information exchange, and political action coordination on a global scale. The way that social media participate in themselves should also be specified. This is about assisting in shaping social media technology and infrastructure. It is a part of network policy, a new policy developed in recent years (Schmidt 2013). Unlike real social networks, digital social networks provide the subject with opportunities to go beyond local limitations, participate in global networks, and represent and express himself/herself. This allows the subject and the community to organize and take their problems and interests to a vast network.

Digital social networks provide formally and contextually a new environment in which the subject can participate, create and share his/her own narratives and views, and thematize himself/herself. Digital social networks are settings or means for the subject to create, present, and share narratives. "Depending on the narrative practice and focus, digital media turns into means of network, comparative foils, and experimental spaces.... Networking potential allows people to engage, share content, and collaborate, making it possible for narratives to survive. The multimedia feature offers new opportunities for audio (music and podcast) and visual (image and video) narratives" (Schachtner 2019). Digital social networks offer various materials for formatting that allow the subject to create different narratives, design a social reality, and position and thematize himself/herself and other subjects within that social reality.

Self-thematization develops as a feature of verbal communication and culture, but it is also apparent in written and electronic communication and culture in different forms, such as autobiographies, letters, diaries, newspapers, and interviews on radio and TV. Today, personal pages in digital social networks are platforms for creating written and visual narratives. "Self-thematization is used to store, process, and transmit properties attributed to the subject. Media enables, engender, compartmentalizes, and delimitates self-thematization. Storage objectifies the self, processing discloses the

ways for which the subject obtains information about himself/herself, and transmission makes it possible for others to be included or excluded” (Fröhlich 2019). Digital social networks allow the user to create a different language and thematize himself/herself by using visuals, emojis, and abbreviations that make communication faster. Funny photos and videos are also among the practices of visual subjectivity and discursive practices. “The communicative and media features of memes and their appearance and circulation in structured digital settings present changing perception schemes and new self-thematization techniques” (Oswald 2019). The subject uses some of the narrative and self-thematization principles in both real and digital social networks and sometimes transforms digital narrative and self-thematization experiences into real-life ones.

### **Transformation of the subject in digital social networks**

The transformation of the subject is a constellation of different variables. Cultural studies posit that the modern subject has been replaced by the multidimensional and decentralized postmodern subject, who is always under construction. “Hall<sup>1</sup> (1989) addresses the formation of subjectivity and the transformation of the subject from the context of new information and communication technologies as well as Post-Fordism, globalization, flexible working conditions, and recent developments associated with social changes triggered by consumer culture. He argues that those developments reconstruct not only the conditions of life but also the human” (Hipfl 2015).

Global, economic, social, and cultural changes, and the communication and interaction opportunities and limitations of digital social networks also transform the subject. Spengler (2018) focuses on four reasons as to why the subject abides by the rules and dynamics of digital social networks, albeit unwillingly. First, digital social networks, which are thought of as problem solvers, are actually governed by algorithms that dump their latent logic on the subject and make them believe that they want to be faster, better, more flexible, and more individual. Second, social network platforms that convey a designed social reality leave a more personal and less technocratic impression on the subject. In a commercial- and competition- positive world, the subject should present himself/herself as a “brand me” against the comments and evaluations of his/her digital

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<sup>1</sup> Stuart Hall, The meaning of new times. In S. Hall & M. Jaques (eds.). *New times. The changing face of politics in the 1990s*. London: Lawrence & Wishart. 1989. 116-134. Transmitting: Brigitte Hipfl, Subjekt und Begehren. Handbuch Cultural Studies und Medienanalyse. In Hepp, Andreas Krotz, Friedrich, Lingenberg, Swantje & Wimmer, Jeffrey (eds.). Wiesbaden: Springer VS. 2015. 275-284.

friends. Third, on the one hand, smartphones allow the subject to record his/her experiences and memories; and on the other hand, they are a mobile gateway to the network. Fourth, smartphones provide generic apps to the subject for almost every situation. These presentations have secret strategies of networking, standardization and individualization, physical performance, and consumption that invite the subject to follow their implicit and functional demands in the present time in everyday life. They contain new and emancipatory potentials, such as the unpredictability of human action. For Spengler (2018), the subject is a responsible, productive, and entrepreneurial self who is permanently connected to the network distributed for optimization and expansion. Therefore, this process results in a neoliberal form of subjectification that intends to generate competing forces that are applicable, functional, and modifiable (only if necessary) for the Internet and everyday life.

Similar to the form of neoliberal subjectification conceived by Spengler (2018), Faßler (2019) argues that the subject has become a micro-agent or a micro-target for the advertising and data market. In the classical modern sense, the reader and partner of the individual are no longer society but companies. Computer technology networks are expanding global business and economic connections, while data and information technologies are going beyond society's normative boundaries. The individual assumes a global, networked, multipolar, and non-linear role in data and information networks. Interactive predictability symbolically puts the "user" instead of the "subject" in production, typography, and communication society. The principle of adaptation and positive selection applies to the solution of problems in practice. Computing, algorithms, mass data, and big data replace a wide variety of analytical roles. The "user," who is not regulated into things, issues, institutions, and processes but added to computable, retrievable, and modifiable data streams, emerges as a new form of the individual in high-tech platforms. However, the subject does not disappear entirely, but is expected to have non-binding, role-free, and instantly-activated collaboration skills adapted to highly variable situations.

Faßler (2019), who believes that modern subject designs experienced a global reference shock at the end of the twentieth century argues that the typographic design of the individual and the subject has been weakened by the terms of communication, action, interaction, and data technology, and has been, in a sense, abandoned and historicized. Global data technology brings about digital demographics (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., user populations) and network populations and positions the individual in online and offline networks. In other words, it results in functional,

communicative, and collaborative changes in the subject. Rules and principles regarding the use of virtual situations and things become a part of the individual's perception and action skills.

The quality of the new forms of communication of digital social networks in the private and public domains is a moot point. However, on the one hand, they allow the subject to participate actively and perform himself/herself in the private and public domains; and on the other hand, they limit the transformation of the subject through a structure dictated by the global economy and technology.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

Examining the subject regarding his/her action and interaction with other subjects through symbols within the framework of symbolic interactionism (Mead 1980) is promising for analyzing new forms of interaction offered by digital social networks through communication and media technology. Cultural studies have similar potential. Both “symbolic interactionism and cultural studies assume that the individual lives in a world of interpreted symbols in his/her interaction. However, one of the theories sees the individual as a social being, while the other argues that the individual has a unique identity” (Krotz 2008). Moreover, cultural studies offer a meaningful context to analyze the new culture of media, and communicative and social practices signified as mediatization, a driving force for the transformation of self-presentation and self-expression.

Goffman (1977; 2012) focuses on situations and actions in the context of social rules and norms and analyzes everyday life. He argues that the individual creates and makes sense of cognitive frameworks to organize events and subjects but that he/she does not create them by himself/herself but through collective communicative processes. Goffman highlights social practices rather than subjective consciousness and establishes a connection between the self and interaction. This offers a perspective to analyze self-presentation and interaction in digital social networks.

The subject is transformed by commercialized digital social networks and social media, as well as individualism, which is becoming increasingly popular in society. The subject-machine interaction signifies the existential aspect of the transformation of the subject. Human-machine interaction and interaction forms in digital networks indicate the controversial transformation trends that the subject undergoes. “Hybridization of human and media technology encourages us to think about the dichotomies of materiality and virtuality, action and interaction, proximity and distance, and mind and emotion. The nascent world of human-media hybrid

involves numerous risks and traps of dehumanization and cyborgization. Ethical and aesthetic questions regarding the hybrid human being discussion” (Sonnenburg 2019).

The subject is stuck between the opportunities and limitations of digital social networks and social media that enable him/her for, or disable him/her from taking action and developing subjectivity, just like in real life. People do not seem as if they will stop using digital social networks any time soon because they allow them to present their selves and participate, organize and emancipate, and create social pressure. Despite emancipatory opportunities, technology is also turning into something that is dominating human life. Therefore, we need strategies to re-identify the subject's conditions to remain a subject and to mobilize his/her creative and modifiable potential against global companies that strive to reduce him/her into an entirely economy-oriented user.

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## CHAPTER THREE

# A NEW APPROACH IN SOCIAL MEDIA: DIGITAL MARKETING AND DIGITAL MARKETING CHANNELS

MEHMET SERDAR ERCİŞ

### Introduction

The speed of change and renewal of technology is progressing at a much faster pace with each passing day. The digital revolution in today's global world has led to major transformations in the field of marketing as in other fields. The rapid development and change of technology, bringing about digitalization together with itself, have been one of the important applications of today's marketing approach in terms of marketing practices in social media (Wind 2002). This formation has led to the emergence of the phenomenon of digitalization in social media in terms of marketing quite effectively in the marketing sector. Unlike traditional marketing methods, marketing communication elements, where communication with customers gains importance, come to the fore, while the concept of integrated marketing communication has emerged, which requires the integrated use of all elements of marketing communication with technology (Arent 1967). It is an undeniable fact that collecting, measuring and evaluating data lead to clearer results depending on the possibilities created by technology. The tools used in the digital world determine the limits of this power. In this respect, it should be stated that digital areas and channels constitute a defining feature in today's world. Especially the widespread use of Web 2.0 technology has been effective in people's understanding of life. It is especially important for social media to become effective. As a result of the rapid spread of the Internet, borders have disappeared in the virtual world (Berthon 2012). With this power that social media have gained day by day, they have also brought about changes in the marketing activities of institutions and organizations. Institutions have widely used

social media and digital channels in order to present their products and brands effectively to the target audience. This course of action has kept brands away from traditional marketing activities (Westbrook 1987). By taking all these developments into account, institutions have turned to digital marketing activities in order to be more efficient and more effective in their marketing activities. One of the main reasons for this is that organizations understand the impact of digital marketing in shaping the purchasing behavior of customers in terms of target audience. Digital marketing can be expressed as a platform that supports marketing practices in technological environments and efforts to introduce and adopt all areas of marketing to the target audience. Given this effective role of technological media, digital products, which are of considerable importance for consumers, bring institutions and target audiences together in digital media. In this respect, digital marketing differs from traditional media (Watson 2000). At the same time, it achieves a success far beyond the usual. Digital marketing provides efficiency by simultaneously supporting and integrating public relations and marketing fields (Brassington 1997). This is important for institution and product promotion. For this, digital media such as the internet are used extensively. In this study, first of all, a theoretical framework will be drawn for the concepts of marketing, marketing communication and integrated marketing communication, then new areas of use, purpose and importance of digital marketing in social media will be revealed. From this point on, the traditional understanding of marketing, in which face-to-face communication is prevalent, has been replaced by social media marketing (Todor 2016). Therefore, it has been important for consumers to receive information about products and services in the electronic environment. In this context, traditional marketing differentiated in the electronic environment, allowing it to reach wider audiences. In the consumer's purchasing decision process; It is clear that he is more influenced by the people he knows and trusts and his environment (Erciş 2020). For this reason, digital marketing has recently become widespread. Quick feedback can be received in this system based on mutual interaction. Thus, support is provided for the enterprise to develop a suitable behavior. Within the framework of all these determinations, digital marketing works with different methods than traditionally known media. It promotes the brand and the work done (Taken 2012). It supports all marketing activities. Most importantly, digital marketing provides an environment that can reach large masses in the cheapest way possible. In this way, marketing strategies change completely. Digital marketing takes place through the use of digital elements. For this reason, it is important to analyze and optimize

advertising models that move towards different goals with different metrics (Taiminen 2015). In this study, firstly, by giving information about general marketing and digital marketing, digital marketing channels, advantages and disadvantages of digital marketing for consumers and businesses, features of social media marketing, and then new usage areas, the purpose and importance of digital marketing in social media will be revealed (Broussard 2000).

## **Social media**

Social media are online areas where individuals share feelings, thoughts, comments, opinions, information, and documents through social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. In the last few years, there has been an increase in the spread of health messages through social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. By ensuring the timely dissemination of health information, its potential effect is increased, healthcare developments are accessible to wider audiences, health messages tailored to specific audiences are delivered faster, interaction and connection with health institutions are increased, and people are encouraged to make safer and healthier decisions (Singh 2012). In addition to these, social media; Provide time and savings to both patients and healthcare institutions, improve marketing activities, provide superiority over competitors, and increase the awareness of the health institution and its access to health services (Brown 2008). Unlike standard marketing channels, social media are an effective marketing tool in reaching more individuals, promoting the health services offered, fulfilling the mission of the health institution, and adhering to the current advertising bans. In a study evaluating whether social media or the internet is effective in the decisions of health service users, a great majority of the participants stated that if the information provided is obtained from reliable sources (hospitals, famous doctors, etc.), it will have a positive effect on their decision (Blythe 2006). In a study conducted in Turkey on the social use of private health care institutions, it was determined that Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are mostly used for advertising purposes, providing information about health that create awareness and improve their marketing. In a study conducted on the use of social media in the top 100 health institutions in the United States, it was found that most of the health institutions have pages on more than one social media platform. Social media form a common system used for web-based applications that enable individuals to create their public or semi-public profiles in a registered system, show a list of other users with whom they share a link,

and see the relationship lists of people in the system. Thanks to the potential they contain, social networks are also effective in the purchasing decisions made by their users. Social network marketing is a form of internet marketing applied to achieve marketing communication and branding goals (Chaffey 2013). Social network marketing primarily includes activities involving the social sharing of content, videos and images for marketing purposes. Social media marketing is a new trend which is growing rapidly in a way that easily enables the business to reach targeted customers. Therefore, it is an area that provides important opportunities for public relations activities. Politicians also act with a similar perspective and make use of social networks while shaping complex product designs according to voters' expectations. During election periods, social networks provide politicians with an environment where they can introduce themselves and explain their ideas and goals, and in return measure the pulse of the voters. The politician receives feedback before the election and thus has the chance to predict the rate of votes more consistently before the election (Chiang 2011). Almost all political parties and party sub-organizations now have an active account on social media, and the parties maintain all their political programs through these accounts. In fact, most of the public relations activities of political parties are carried out through these portals. Political parties always announce their daily activity programs, political ideas, and conflicts with rival parties to its voters or followers. Social networks also cause campaigns against political parties to spread rapidly. In this respect, they contain many advantages and disadvantages at the same time (Constantinides 2011).

## **Digital marketing**

Digital marketing can be expressed as online marketing. It can also be presented in the form of e-marketing or interactive marketing. It can sometimes be called web marketing. There are many definitions of digital marketing in the literature. It is possible to give some of these definitions as follows (Davis 2010);

- It is a strategic process in terms of developing, promoting and distributing products on the internet,
- It is developed in virtual environments and supports relationship marketing and management,
- It has strategies for promoting products or brands through electronic systems,



- Its efforts reveal all marketing practices in the digital environment,
- Its virtual environments bring consumers and producers together to make sales,
- It gets support from websites to raise awareness of products and services globally to reveal the marketing communication strategy,
- It is a two-way communication made to provide digital purchases related to the consumption phenomenon,
- It provides commercial applications of businesses through interactive networks such as the internet to promote and support the brand and business,
- It effectively provides an interactive communication between the business and the consumer with its digital tools in marketing,
- It tries to increase sales by presenting products on the electronic platform.

Considering these definitions, digital marketing is an area where brands are effectively promoted on digital media. It is superior because it is technology-oriented. It supports marketing applications with a high level of performance. It makes successful and effective product applications focused on digital media. It is very difficult for organizations that overlook this great advantage of digital marketing to survive in this technological environment. It is inevitable that institutions that allocate a significant budget to this area will be more prominent in terms of competition. Through digital marketing and digital channels, institutions can carry out effective public relations activities and introduce themselves to the target audience more accurately. At the same time, product and brand promotion can be done more effectively. In this way, they can increase their sales and the purchasing behavior of customers can be guided (Hofacker 2016).

We can express the usage areas of digital marketing as follows (Dahiya 2018);

- Internet sites,
- Social media channel,
- Blog posts,
- Infographics,
- Online applications,
- Digital brochures,
- Online catalogs,
- Applications such as logos and fonts,

- Performance tools,
- Electronic marketing applications,
- Content media.

Digital marketing, in terms of content, refers to the impressive presentation of the product or brand to the target audience. This style of presentation has to include a professional approach focused on public relations (Erciş 2020). In other words, digital marketing applications should have a dynamic, persuasive and shareable feature that is unique and effective. As a result, the power of this digital medium offers great opportunities in terms of reaching a wide range of audiences. This formation is inevitable in terms of mutual and interactive interaction with the target audience. This important feature has made digital marketing practices stronger (Smith 2017). Social media tools used effectively in terms of digital marketing are important. Among these, Facebook, Twitter and Google are the most important. At the same time, tools such as smartphones and tablets significantly support digital marketing applications. The effective use of these tools has an important place in the competitive advantage of institutions. One of the advantages of digital marketing is that it offers the opportunity to easily analyze the demands and behaviors of the target audience in a customer-oriented approach. Campaigns and promotions that try to motivate customers and activate their purchasing behavior are an effective digital marketing technique. Such campaigns can expand the range of customer preferences (Gunelius 2011).

### **Social media channels**

Digital marketing takes place through digital channels in addition to traditional marketing activities. Among the digital marketing channels are websites, mobile applications, search engine optimization, social media sites, video sharing sites and health blog management (Huang 2013).

*Websites:* The website contains information on specific or different topics and includes different webpages. The web page contains information and documents such as text, photographs, and videos. For individuals who access websites via smart phones, the appropriateness of the websites in terms of appearance and content provides ease of use (Smith 2011). These websites, also called mobile websites, are designed to be accessible via smart phones. Potential patients can access information on their medical problems, the doctor they want to be examined by, and how they can reach the hospital through the websites of healthcare institutions. Websites undertake important marketing tasks such as reaching new patients,

ensuring patient satisfaction and maintaining patient loyalty. The effective use of websites by healthcare organizations is important in terms of being recognized and known by their customers. In this period when health services are beginning to digitalize, health organizations include websites in their marketing programs. In a study conducted on two different patient groups who received their laboratory results via the hospital website and via SMS; it was determined that the satisfaction levels of the patients who reached the test results via the website were higher than those who received them via SMS (Kannan 2017).

*Mobile applications:* Mobile applications are software designed to run on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. Users can access similar services via mobile applications, which they can access on computers. 73% of mobile phone made in a study population of Turkey in 2009 was found to be the owner of smartphone users (Safko 2009). It was also found in the study that 56% of internet users connect to the internet through smart phones. Mobile health applications include, in addition to specific procedures such as calorie and heart rate measurement, step counting, medication tracking, drinking water reminders, fitness exercises, maintenance of well-being, individual monitoring of infectious diseases and chronic diseases, health education, health counseling, health protective measures, health institution information, making appointments and accessing examination results. The use of smart phones today and the necessity of mobile applications for the use of smart phones increase the importance of mobile applications as a marketing channel (Lea 2006).

*Search engine optimization:* A search engine is computer software that provides access to information sought on the web. It provides access according to the level of interest by bringing together information and documents about the subject the user is researching. Search engines publish information about the words used in searches, which word or words are used on a daily, monthly or yearly basis, and which word or words are researched the most on their own websites. Search engines divide searches according to their topics into titles. For example, in recent research on anthrax disease in Turkey this was determined to be a popular title on Google. In another study, it was found that most patients first did research on the internet to obtain information on medical issues (Royle 2014).

*Health blog:* A management blog is an area where information, ideas and opinions about health or general issues are shared in chronological order by healthcare professionals, healthcare organizations or any individual, and visitors can express their opinions online about the subject they read. Using blogs as a marketing tool gives healthcare organizations

the chance to establish personalized communication with their patients, create a community under the brand of the organization, archive information about patients and use ready-made information in developing or promoting services. Blogs are an important marketing tool (Ryan 2016).

A blog is expressed as a web-based publication where listed articles and comments are published. Often at the end of each post, the name of the author and the time of the post are specified. The most basic feature of blogs is that they are platforms where users can easily express their opinions. There are reader comments below the blog writers' views. In this way, it is interactive. In the field of marketing, blogs provide companies with the opportunity to establish personalized communication with their customers, create a sense of community gathered around the brand or company, archive information about their customers and present ready-made information on the stages of research development, product and promotional design (Ryan 2011). From this point of view, blogs are considered to be an important marketing tool. By including important tasks such as "writing" and "expressing their opinions", "opening their opinions to discussion", "expressing and conveying their opinions and attitudes" and "persuading", blogs in a sense strengthen the people who write and their readers. It is no longer a journalist or broadcaster who owns the media, writes, controls, and changes the content, but a blogger. Therefore, it is possible to say that bloggers are effective in informing blog readers and changing their minds. This activity will increase with increasing years of internet usage. The concept of the political blog is defined as a common type of blog where comments on politics are made. Political blogs often explicitly express political bias. Although blogs are generally seen as too anonymous and deprived of trust, they can serve as a platform for ideas that are not presented in the common media (Leeflang 2014).

*Video sharing:* For sites nowadays, it is possible to shoot videos at any time, even with a mobile phone, and rich content and remarkable videos can be prepared. Video sharing sites such as YouTube and Dailymotion have spread rapidly because they can enable people to reveal very different features and reduce the video sharing costs to almost zero. Creating product and company awareness by sharing on these sites, which can reach millions of users around the world in a short time, is a method frequently used by businesses in recent years. The expanding use of video makes a significant contribution to achieving integration with traditional marketing by making TV advertising accessible over the internet. These video sharing sites are also considered as important tools used to reach voters as a social network, allowing many visual materials such as

speeches of the leader or candidate on various platforms, TV programs, rallies and commercials to be repeated and watched at any time (Rohra 2012).

*E-mail:* E-mail refers to the use of the e-mail method in communication, promotion, sales and marketing activities by making use of the internet environment in order to carry out marketing activities more effectively, efficiently, quickly and comprehensively. From this point of view, e-mail messages can be regarded as one of the most effective ways of reaching customers directly on the internet and for one-to-one marketing. Personalized product and service offers, e-bulletin sending, and replies to customers' complaints and suggestions are usually provided via e-mail messages. E-mail, a tool that can also be used for political parties, is often used for intra-party announcements and communication. Especially with WhatsApp, BIP, etc., the development of communication channels and the possibility of sending files through these channels, there is a decrease in e-mail usage (Neti 2011).

*Instant messaging applications:* Instant messaging services are internet-based applications that allow real-time communication between individuals, mostly performed with mobile devices. These differ from the use of SMS and MMS thanks to the advantages of these applications such as being supported by computers and being able to be used simultaneously, showing the status information, detecting that the users have received the message, and being able to communicate instantly as when having a conversation. Other positive features are the ability to communicate even when the users do not have the opportunity to speak, the fact that they are cheap – even free of charge as of now, and the opportunity for group communication (Mills 2012).

## Conclusion

The rapid development and change in technology, bringing about digitalization together with itself, have been one of the important applications of today's marketing approach in terms of marketing practices in social media. This formation has led to the emergence of the phenomenon of digitalization in social media in terms of effective marketing in the marketing sector (Wright 2006). Unlike traditional marketing methods, marketing communication elements, where communication with customers gains importance, come to the fore, while the concept of integrated marketing communication has emerged, which requires the integrated use of all elements of marketing communication with technology. It is an undeniable fact that collecting, measuring and evaluating data lead to

clearer results depending on the possibilities created by technology. This new marketing world created by technology, the Internet and new communication technologies has enabled institutions to use a new method called digital marketing in reaching their target audiences. Along with all these, digitalization has become an important force in the marketing world that enables change and development in the realization of effective and interactive marketing communication by using the social media channel. The tools used in the digital world determine the limits of this power. In this respect, it should be stated that digital areas and channels constitute a defining feature in today's world. The widespread use of Web 2.0 technology has especially been effective in people's understanding of life. It is especially important for social media to become effective. As a result of the rapid spread of the Internet, borders have disappeared in the virtual world. This power that social media has gained day by day, has also brought about changes in the marketing activities of institutions and organizations. Institutions have widely used social media and digital channels in order to present their products and brands effectively to the target audience (Wymbs 2011). This course of action has kept brands away from traditional marketing activities. By taking all these developments into account, institutions have turned to digital marketing activities in order to be more efficient and effective in their marketing activities. There are many marketing channels under the digital marketing umbrella and they all serve different goals. Before starting an effective digital marketing strategy, it is necessary to know the capabilities of digital marketing channels and the differences between them. It is very important for your strategy to decide which marketing channel will work better on your way to your goals and to determine which advertising models you will move forward with on the channel you choose. For example, the advertising model used by a brand that launches new products to increase its awareness and the advertising model used by a known brand to sell products are quite different. For this reason, it is important to analyze and optimize advertising models that move towards different goals with different metrics. In this study, firstly, by giving information about general marketing and digital marketing, digital marketing channels, advantages and disadvantages of digital marketing for consumers and businesses, features of social media marketing, and then new usage areas, the purpose and importance of digital marketing in social media will be revealed. Social media are online areas where individuals share feelings, thoughts, comments, opinions, information, and documents through social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. In the last few years, there has been an increase in the spread of health messages through social

networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Through social media; By ensuring the timely dissemination of health information, its potential effect is increased, healthcare developments are accessible to wider audiences, health messages tailored to specific audiences are delivered faster, interaction and connection with health institutions are increased, and people are encouraged to make safer and healthier decisions. In addition to these, social media; Provide time and savings to both patients and healthcare institutions, improve marketing activities, provide superiority over competitors, increase awareness of the health institution and its access to health services. Unlike standard marketing channels, social media are an effective marketing tool in reaching more individuals, promoting the health services offered, fulfilling the mission of the health institution, and adhering to the current advertising bans. In a study evaluating whether social media or the internet is effective in the decisions of health service users, a great majority of the participants stated that if the information provided is obtained from reliable sources (hospitals, famous doctors, etc.), it will have a positive effect on their decision. Digital marketing can be expressed as online marketing. It can also be presented in the form of e-marketing or interactive marketing. It can sometimes be called web marketing. There are many definitions of digital marketing in the literature. Digital marketing, in terms of content, refers to the impressive presentation of the product or brand to the target audience. This style of presentation has to include a professional approach focused on public relations. In other words, digital marketing applications should have a unique, dynamic, effective, persuasive and shareable feature. As a result, the power of this digital medium offers great opportunities in terms of reaching a wide range of audiences. This formation is inevitable in terms of mutual and interactive interaction with the target audience. This importance has made digital marketing practices stronger. Social media tools used effectively in terms of digital marketing are important. Among these, Facebook, Twitter, and Google are the most important. At the same time, tools such as smartphones and tablets significantly support digital marketing applications. The effective use of these tools has an important place in the competitive advantage of institutions. One of the advantages of digital marketing is that it offers the opportunity to easily analyze the demands and behaviors of the target audience in a customer-oriented approach. Campaigns and promotions that try to motivate customers and activate their purchasing behavior are an effective digital marketing technique. Such campaigns can expand the range of customer preferences. Digital marketing takes place through digital channels in addition to traditional marketing activities. Among the

digital marketing channels are websites, mobile applications, search engine optimization, social media sites, video sharing sites and health blog management.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

# ASSESSMENT OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CHAOS THEORY

ÖZLEM IŞIK

### **Introduction**

Organizational health is a frame concept that not only covers the effective operation of an organization but also encompasses the growth and development capabilities of the company; when we evaluate the performance of an organization, it strikes us as both a material and moral value. Chaos theory, which is defined as the uncertainty of the reactions that may arise in response to the effects generated in systems and the complexity in measuring the occurrences, posits that organizations might encounter unexpected outcomes when there is a complex structure at hand and that factors that may be deemed insignificant might turn into colossal outcomes.

In this study, the aim of which is to identify organizational health and to analyze the reasons for and consequences of the problems encountered, the notion of organizational health and its importance for organizations will be discussed. In the second part of the study, chaos theory will be discussed within the context of its relation to the concepts of organizational behavior and organizational health. In the research section of our study, the organizational health perception of private and public hospital employees working in the city of Kayseri will be analyzed via a survey set within chaos theory frame.

## **What is organizational health and what does it entail for organizations?**

In the fierce competition environment, organizations endeavor to realize their aims and goals in the presence of developing technology and changing customer needs. An organization's ability to realize its aims and goals is directly proportional to its organizational health. The concept is a metaphor that was developed by Matthew Miles (1965) for the organizational climate of schools, and a healthy organization is defined as not only surviving within the environment in which it resides but also constantly developing and improving its coping and survival skills in the long run. Miles initially used the notion of organizational health in order to explicate the sustainable quality of organizational life; later, it was defined by Parsons, Bales, and Sils (1953), Hoy and Tarter (1991) and Hoy and Miskel (1991) as an organization's ability to adapt successfully to its environment, establish cooperation between its members, and reach its goals.

In another definition, organizational health is characterized as the properties of an organization that is currently operating in a given field and/or the properties it utilizes in finding a better mode of operation and temporary ideas for challenging conditions (Hoy and Feldman 1987), indicating a wide scope encompassing an organization's ability to realize its aims in a certain period of time, sustain its vitality, and adapt to environmental changes (Owens 1970). Bell et al. (2002) defined organizational health as the setting of an organization in which there is a culture that is open, trust-oriented, and encouraging (Ardıç and Polatçı 2007).

At this juncture, healthy organizational structures can be described as differing from the strict and centralistic understanding set forth by the classical theory which limited the individual and discounted the role of initiative. Certain circumstances created by bureaucracy—such as strictness, smothered creativity, unmotivated employees, and the restriction of individual self-realization—are not the characteristics of healthy organizations (Adler and Borys 1996). In the social working environments of healthy organizations, individuals are not alone or isolated. There is effective communication and sufficient interaction. Those who work in the social organization environment are sensitive to an organization's mission and voluntarily share a common vision. Hence, those working in environments in which organizational health does not exist go to work merely to prove their attendance. Cooper and Williams (1994) defined this as “presenteeism” (being in a place just to prove one's presence).

Many studies in the literature have stated that healthy organizations consist of employees who are faithful, loyal and highly motivated, have intra-organizational and inter-organizational communication channels that are constantly open, constantly increase their efficiency indicators, and have effective middle-level management. People working in such organizations are more effective and productive, and the organization can adapt to environmental changes; employees feel physically and psychologically well, and all these indicators positively affect the organization and the organizational climate (Owens 1981; Hoy et al. 1991; Lyden and Klingele 2000).

When the converse is considered, a situation comes to the fore that is both tangibly and intangibly costly. Unhealthy organizations incur many expenses. Alongside the direct costs, indirect costs caused by professional, psychological, and physical discomfort (such as employee absenteeism or poor work performance) force organizations to carry excessive material burdens (Ardıç and Polatçı 2007). The particularly alienating effects of organizational health problems can also lead to a decrease in an individual's job satisfaction and an increase in their work stress while resulting in a loss of performance by inhibiting the individual's creative skills (Tutar 2010).

Consequently, by likening an organization to a human being (with reference to the idea that an organization can be ill or healthy, just like a human being), we can say that all the sub-systems should be congruent and well-arranged in order for the organization to be healthy and well-functioning. In the other section of the study, the dimensions of organizational health developed by Miles will be examined in order to identify them conclusively.

### **Miles and the dimensions of organizational health**

While the notion of organizational health was first used by Argyris in the late 1950s, Miles (1965) developed the concept over the long term by explicating its factors in the 1960s, thereby improving its abilities of contestation and survival and identifying three fundamental dimensions of a healthy organization, as described below.

#### ***Growth and development***

The first dimension of organizational health is growth and development, which includes innovation, supporting individual development, and concordance and problem solving (Hoy et al. 1991; Rosen and Berger 1992; Guarnaccia 1994, Eren 2000; Buluç 2008, Kotbaş and Kahveci 2019).

Innovation refers to an organization moving forward to achieve new goals and invest in new procedures. In a healthy organization, new products, development, and progress should be accepted by all the employees as an organizational value. Herein, a healthy organization is one that accommodates innovation and improves, changes, and grows more than standard, facing no danger of suffering from routines while doing so.

The achievements of individual employees should be appreciated by executives and employees should be encouraged to develop and grow. The odds of personal values being realized increase when organizational values are embraced and pertinent to them.

In terms of concordance, organizations have a structure in which they are capable of making corrective changes in their growth and development. Most studies have identified a similar relationship between the harmony of the human body with the mind and organizational components by underlining the concordance dimension of organizational health and characterizing organizations that are concordant with its components as “healthy” organizations. In such organizations, there is a high likelihood of achieving common goals and the individuals within them do not have difficulties with self-confidence.

A healthy organization should have coping methods against chaos through problem-solving competence. In a healthy organization, it is not important that there is a problem but that the presence of the problem is recognized in time and that there are adequate structures and advanced methods in place in order to develop effective solutions and evaluate their efficiency.

### ***Task needs***

The second dimension of organizational health is task needs, which includes objective focus, open correspondence, and communication adequacy (Rosen and Berger 1992; Weiss 1993, Akbaba 1997; Şimşek et al. 2008; Garda 2011; Özdemir 2013).

All organizations—in the same way as human beings—endeavor to achieve institutional goals in order to survive in the existing system; there is always a goal at stake. In this vein, the driving force of an organization is comprised of business purposes that are commodiously defined, realistic, attainable, and measurable—this is the objective focus. At this point, management has great responsibilities for being able to set the organization’s members in motion, guide them, and urge them to use the resources at hand and to find new resources.

Open correspondence and communication adequacy constitutes the basis of organizational activity. In order for correspondence to be present

in an organization, relations should be established between individuals. This entails the reciprocal exchange of ideas, information, and sentiments. This relational process comprises the types of correspondence which are formal and informal.

The formal type of correspondence is the one which operates on the basis of officialism/formalities and considers superior–subordinate relationships and levels. The informal type of correspondence, on the other hand, is the one which is mostly verbal and not based on the written form; it is often realized in co-working situations and is mostly preferred as it cuts through red tape.

### ***Survival needs***

The third and final dimension of the notion of organizational health as developed by Miles is survival needs, which includes organizational commitment and the effective use of resources (Owens 1970; Lambert 1995, Akbaba 1997; Balay 2000; Ardiç and Polatçı 2007; Erciş 2020; Tutar 2010; Güllüoğlu 2012b; Özdemir 2013).

Organizational commitment concerns an individual's psychological faithfulness to an organization. Psychological faithfulness encompasses the employee embracing their job and showing loyalty to and belief in the organizational values. The employee recognizes that their future is tied to that of the organization, and their professional values are not based on benefits but on loyalty and devotion. Employees whose organizational commitment is underdeveloped, on the other hand, go to work in order to prove their presence and without a clear purpose.

The dimension of organizational health pertaining to the effective use of resources underlines the input of the “health” system at the institutional level—especially the effective use of personnel. Therefore, an organization's resources should not be concentrated in a single hand but tangibly–intangibly rewarded in line with employee performance. Employees should be assigned suitable tasks, and settings should be established in which the right people are working in the right positions. Whether the work environment and materials are good is not enough on their own to ensure success in an organization if the employees are unhappy.

Miles stated that if one of these three dimensions is not completely accounted for, it will affect the other dimensions and problems that affect the whole system will arise.

## **What is chaos theory?**

At the end of the 19th century, Poincare laid the foundations of chaos theory by working on dynamic systems and stated that minor incidents that remain undetected may result in major and significant incidents that people will deem coincidental.

Ruelle (1994) described chaos as “a temporal evolution that has a sensitive dependency to the initial state.” Kaneko and Tsuda (2001) defined chaos as the unpredictable dynamism in systems, while Sinai (2010) emphasized that chaos is best described as the sensitive dependency of a system or event to the initial state.

Chaos theory is used to decipher or clarify the complicated relations that a linear approach cannot tackle (Ertürk 2012). Chaos theory, which is considered to constitute the foundation of postmodern social sciences, emphasizes that relations in complex systems like organizations are not linear and that there is a mechanism that manifests unexpected results and choices in which events cannot be forecast (Tetenbaum 1998).

Chaos theory also concerns the order of chaos. According to Gleick (2000), there is an organized and steady structure inherent to all complex, unorganized data. In other words, when a system becomes unbalanced, it is pulled in a new direction by a “strong attractor. “Whether the new order proves to be settled depends on the continuous flow of new information and energy to the system, which is used by the system moderately (Tetenbaum 1998).

Undoubtedly, as is the case in many other areas, the new world order has the potential to create unexpected outcomes in the organizational area as well. Perhaps the idea that we can predict or control the future is utopian; however, managing the existing order or disorder is one of the principal factors of existence. At this juncture, understanding chaos theory’s place within organizational behavior in general and organizational health literature in particular sheds light on managing the disorder in question, especially on a sectoral basis.

## **Organization and organizational health in the context of chaos theory**

Chaos theory presents a new management paradigm for executives. This paradigm is based on the presupposition that there are unknowns even when everything seems to be known. For this reason, viewing occurrences from different perspectives is essential for effective management. Using chaos theory, the aim is to prepare organizations own futures for



unexpected states of affairs and salvage them (Ertürk 2012). According to the theory, when an unexpected situation occurs abruptly, various ways out that resemble road junctions confront organizations, and the system can dodge this chaos by incurring the least damage or perhaps no damage at all by reorganizing itself with unforeseeable defenses by virtue of both its energy and by being prepared for complex conditions (Styhre 2002).

The notion of chaos encapsulates two important points for organizations: internal and external factors. While internal factors are those that are related to an organization, external factors are those that remain external to the organization. Organizations can be subject to unexpected internal and external factors in the current information age. Because these factors form on their own, organizations must take action against them to manage the chaos (Mason 2007).

According to chaos theory, the control of an organization is based on the following activities and characteristics (Gunter 1995):

- Creating a vision for the future.
- Having a leader that will articulate this vision and direct the organization toward change.
- Transforming the vision into behavior through the proliferation of concordance and culture.
- Using this vision to determine long-term goals, make choices, and prioritize the use of resources.
- Living out this vision in time through comprehension and activities.
- Marketing the vision outside the organization.

At this stage, the chaotic management approach comes to the fore as a new roadmap for managing organizations and defends the autonomous operation of management processes rather than subjecting them to rules imposed from outside. In this approach, organizations are deemed dynamic structures rather than ordered structures with a mechanical function (Kuşçu et al. 2020). Accordingly, balance in systems characterizes a dynamic structure as well as a complex and chaotic one emerging at the boundary between order and disorder. The balance that must constantly be maintained between order and disorder requires an organization to be continuously monitored with all of its dimensions and necessary changes being made at the correct place and time (Kirim 1998). The possibility of a chaotic situation emerging in a balanced organization depends on the (in) consistency of the system and the presence of threats to its continuity (Tetenbaum 1998). If we can define these factors in a timely manner, we can predict the incidence of chaotic behavior in advance.

At this juncture, because there is a human factor in each step to be taken by health institutions—from the planning of the service to be provided to those who want to receive it and to it being implemented—we can characterize them as systems that have a “non-linear” structure (Kuşçu et al. 2020). Therefore, “illness,” which is an important notion for humans, is a threat and a chaotic state with regard to the values, ideas, beliefs, and techniques shaped through the different perspectives of health sub-paradigms that are expected to exhibit linear behavior. In this sense, the notion of “health” strikes us as a natural and complex condition for both the service-receiving and service-providing parties (Peng et al. 2002; Janecka 2007).

Taking this point as the outset, our study aims to analyze the organizational health perceptions of private and public hospital employees in light of different variables. In the next section of our study, data regarding the research results will be interpreted through the lens of chaos theory, followed by suggestions for and evaluations of this and subsequent case studies.

## Methodology

### Aim of the study

In hospitals, which are a public institution that most of society benefits from, the perspectives of the personnel regarding organizational health directly or indirectly affect many organizational outputs in terms of evaluating them from the outset of a minor question proving capable of providing major answers.

The fundamental reason why hospitals have been included within the scope of this research is that they provide services for many people, and those services must be provided with high quality, rapidly, and effectively according to people’s demands and expectations. Moreover, the possibility of presumable chaos environments coming into play validates the justification for and necessity of choosing hospitals as a case study as they provide examples of instant and rapid interventions.

### Model of the study

Our study is characterized as descriptive research. The aim of descriptive research is to properly portray an organization, individual, group, situation, or phenomenon. It is especially vital that a proper definition is made for the phenomenon about which data is to be gathered. This means that the researcher needs to carry out a more in-depth analysis and reach certain conclusions on the basis of the data gathered. The aim of

descriptive studies is to define the problem at hand and identify the conditions related to the problem, the variables, and the correlations between the variables, thereby rendering it possible to make anticipatory estimations (Kurtuluş 2004; Doruk 2008; Güllüoğlu 2012a). In this study, the organizational health perceptions of private and public hospital employees are analyzed within the context of different variables in line with the descriptive research model.

### **Population and sample**

In this study, the aim is to analyze within the context of different variables the organizational health perceptions of administrative personnel working in private and public hospitals in Kayseri, encompassing employees with different social and cultural backgrounds. The sample was determined using simple random sampling (coincidental) to ensure that the possibility of all the sampling units being chosen was equal (Karasar 2009).

### **Limitations of the study**

Data were collected from hospital employees using a face-to-face interview technique. However, the COVID-19 pandemic, which was first observed in Turkey in March 2020, slowed down the research process. The survey process that began on June 14, 2020, subsequent to the normalization process that began on June 1, 2020, could not be finished until July 20. Because healthcare employees were in a particularly high-risk group, the research process dragged out over a longer period than originally anticipated. The study was further limited by the placing of pregnant and medically compromised employees on administrative leave during the COVID-19 pandemic and some of the employees choosing not to participate in the study due to the pandemic.

### **Data collection tool**

This study used the organizational health scale developed by Sanville (2008) to measure the organizational health perceptions of private and public hospital employees. The data collection tool used within the scope of the study was comprised of three parts. The first part comprised a personal information form developed by the researcher in order to capture the sample group's demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, marital status, level of education, department, job, etc.). In the second part of the survey, 37 questions were asked to determine organizational health. Thirty-seven criteria pertaining to Sanville (2008) were grouped under five factors according to the order of importance and priority as follows:

organizational product, organizational management, organizational communication, organizational leadership, and organizational integrity.

### Research questions

In line with the aims of the study, the following research questions were asked:

Research Question 1: Do the organizational health scales and subscales exhibit differences depending on the institution type?

Research Question 2: Do the organizational health scales and subscales exhibit differences depending on the employees' demographic characteristics?

Research Question 3: Do the organizational health scales and subscales exhibit differences depending on the unit in which the employees work?

Research Question 4: Is there a significant correlation between the organizational health scale and sub-dimensions?

### Findings

#### *Descriptive findings*

Table 4.1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution according to the participants' demographic characteristics.

**Table 4.1.** Participant distribution by demographic characteristic

Demographic Variable	Group	n	%
Institution type	Public	51	44.7
	Private	63	55.3
Gender	Female	61	53.5
	Male	53	46.5
Age group	Age 30 and under	46	40.4
	Age 31–40	47	41.2
	Age 41 and over	21	18.4
Marital status	Married	65	57.0
	Single	49	43.0
Service unit	Procurement/accounting	18	15.8
	Patient records	29	25.4
	Ambulatory care services	12	10.5
	Document records/archive	18	15.8
	Laboratory	8	7.0
	Technical services	8	7.0
	Cleaning services	7	6.1
Refectory	14	12.3	

Of the 114 hospital employees who participated in the study, 44.7% worked in a public hospital and 55.3% worked in a private hospital; 53.5% of the participants were female and 46.5% were male. The average age of the participants was  $33.86 \pm 8.80$ ; 40.4% were aged 30 and under, 41.4% were aged between 31 and 40, and 18.4% were aged 41 and over. Fifty-seven percent of the participants were married and 43% were single. In terms of their service units, 25.8% of the participants worked in the procurement/accounting unit, 25.4% in the patient records, 10.5% in ambulatory care services, 15.8% in document records/archive, 7% in the laboratory, 7% in technical services, 6.1% in cleaning services, and 12.3% in the refectory.

Table 4.2 presents the descriptive statistics formed by the mean values and standard deviations regarding the scale and subscale scores.

**Table 4.2.** Descriptive statistics regarding scale and subscale scores

Scale and subscale	<i>n</i>	Min.	Max.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Skewness
Organizational integrity	114	2.27	4.11	3.11	0.37	0.23
Organizational product	114	2.00	4.14	3.25	0.44	-0.16
Organizational management	114	1.40	4.25	3.05	0.58	-0.36
Organizational leadership	114	1.40	3.80	2.81	0.65	-0.77
Organizational communication	114	1.75	4.67	3.19	0.56	-0.30
<b>Organizational health</b>	114	2.48	3.74	3.08	0.28	-0.10

According to the organizational integrity ( $3.11 \pm 0.37$ ), organizational product ( $3.25 \pm 0.44$ ), organizational management ( $3.05 \pm 0.58$ ), organizational leadership ( $2.81 \pm 0.65$ ), organizational communication ( $3.19 \pm 0.56$ ) subscales, and organizational health scale ( $3.08 \pm 0.28$ ) scores, hospital employees' perceptions of value creation oriented toward the organizations in which they worked were moderately positive.

Findings concerning the comparison of the scale and subscale scores according to demographic variables

Table 4.3 presents two independent samples t-test results regarding the comparison of scale and subscale scores depending on the institution type.

**Table 4.3.** Comparison of scale and subscale scores according to institution type

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Institution type</b>	<b>n</b>	<b><math>\bar{X}</math></b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Organizational integrity	Public	51	3.14	0.40	0.81	0.420
	Private	63	3.08	0.34		
Organizational product	Public	51	3.26	0.46	0.11	0.914
	Private	63	3.25	0.43		
Organizational management	Public	51	2.94	0.61	-1.86	0.065
	Private	63	3.15	0.54		
Organizational leadership	Public	51	2.75	0.68	-0.84	0.404
	Private	63	2.85	0.63		
Organizational communication	Public	51	2.94	0.61	-0.02	0.985
	Private	63	3.15	0.54		
<b>Organizational health</b>	Public	51	2.75	0.68	-0.91	0.362
	Private	63	2.85	0.63		

The organizational health scale and subscale scores do not exhibit significant differences ( $p > 0.05$ ) depending on the institution type.

Table 4.4 presents two independent samples t-test results regarding the comparison of scale and subscale scores depending on the gender of participants.

**Table 4.4.** Comparison of scale and subscale scores according to gender

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b><math>\bar{X}</math></b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Organizational integrity	Female	61	3.08	0.37	-0.80	0.426
	Male	53	3.13	0.36		
Organizational product	Female	61	3.25	0.47	-0.05	0.963
	Male	53	3.26	0.41		
Organizational management	Female	61	3.03	0.54	-0.50	0.620
	Male	53	3.08	0.63		
Organizational leadership	Female	61	2.82	0.61	0.13	0.893
	Male	53	2.80	0.70		
Organizational communication	Female	61	3.26	0.58	1.32	0.190
	Male	53	3.12	0.53		
<b>Organizational health</b>	Female	61	3.09	0.28	0.16	0.874
	Male	53	3.08	0.28		

Organizational health scale and subscale scores do not exhibit significant differences ( $p>0.05$ ) depending on gender.

In Table 4.5, the one-way analysis of variance test results are given regarding the comparison of the scale and subscale scores depending on the age groups of the participants.

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**Table 4.5.** Comparison of the scale and subscale scores according to age group

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Age group</b>	<b>n</b>	<b><math>\bar{X}</math></b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
Organizational integrity	A(30 and under)	46	3.11	0.39	0.16	0.851
	B(31–40)	47	3.08	0.34		
	C (41 and over)	21	3.13	0.40		
Organizational product	A(30 and under)	46	3.23	0.54	0.11	0.898
	B(31–40)	47	3.27	0.36		
	C (41 and over)	21	3.27	0.41		
Organizational management	A (30 and under)	46	2.98	0.67	0.76	0.472
	B (31–40)	47	3.08	0.56		
	C (41 and over)	21	3.16	0.40		
Organizational leadership	A (30 and under)	46	2.82	0.66	0.93	0.399
	B(31–40)	47	2.87	0.65		
	C (41 and over)	21	2.64	0.62		
Organizational communication	A (30 and under)	46	3.12	0.54	1.88	0.158
	B(31–40)	47	3.17	0.61		
	C (41 and over)	21	3.40	0.48		
<b>Organizational health</b>	A (30 and under)	46	3.05	0.28	0.46	0.630
	B (31–40)	47	3.09	0.30		
	C (41 and over)	21	3.12	0.24		

The organizational health scale and sub-dimension scores do not exhibit significant differences ( $p>0.05$ ) depending on age groups.

In Table 4.6, two independent samples *t*-test results are given regarding the comparison of scale and subscale scores depending on the marital status of participants.



**Table 4.6.** Comparison of scale and subscale scores according to marital status

Variable	Marital status	<i>n</i>	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Organizational integrity	Married	65	3.12	0.40	0.64	0.523
	Single	49	3.08	0.32		
Organizational product	Married	65	3.24	0.46	-0.50	0.620
	Single	49	3.28	0.43		
Organizational management	Married	65	3.12	0.54	1.38	0.169
	Single	49	2.97	0.63		
Organizational leadership	Married	65	2.80	0.66	-0.24	0.814
	Single	49	2.82	0.65		
Organizational communication	Married	65	3.23	0.55	0.78	0.434
	Single	49	3.14	0.58		
<b>Organizational health</b>	Married	65	3.10	0.28	0.78	0.435
	Single	49	3.06	0.28		

Organizational health scale and subscale scores do not exhibit significant differences ( $p>0.05$ ) depending on marital status.

In Table 4.7, the one-way analysis of variance test results are given regarding the comparison of the scale and subscale scores depending on the participants' service unit.

**Table 4.7.** Comparison of scale and subscale scores according to service unit

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Service unit</b>	<b>n</b>	<b><math>\bar{X}</math></b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
Organizational integrity	A- Procurement/accounting	18	3.04	0.31	0.71	0.664
	B-Patient records	29	3.12	0.41		
	C-Ambulatory care services	12	3.07	0.33		
	D-Document records/archive	18	3.15	0.37		
	E-Laboratory	8	3.25	0.47		
	F-Technical services	8	2.90	0.37		
	G-Cleaning services	7	3.19	0.36		
Organizational product	H-Refectory	14	3.11	0.30	1.26	0.276
	A- Procurement/accounting	18	3.35	0.39		
	B-Patient records	29	3.13	0.40		
	C-Ambulatory care services	12	3.11	0.53		
	D-Document records/archive	18	3.28	0.52		
	E-Laboratory	8	3.20	0.24		
	F-Technical services	8	3.47	0.30		
Organizational management	G-Cleaning services	7	3.19	0.36	1.03	0.416
	H-Refectory	14	3.42	0.57		
	A- Procurement/accounting	18	2.90	0.55		
	B-Patient records	29	3.01	0.64		

	C-Ambulatory care services	12	3.33	0.50		
	D-Document records/archive	18	3.22	0.47		
	E-Laboratory	8	2.93	0.58		
	F-Technical services	8	3.03	0.58		
	G-Cleaning services	7	3.19	0.50		
	H-Refectory	14	2.93	0.72		
Organizational leadership	A-Procurement/accounting	18	2.84	0.69	0.62	0.735
	B-Patient records	29	2.90	0.60		
	C-Ambulatory care services	12	2.65	0.74		
	D-Document records/archive	18	2.71	0.66		
	E-Laboratory	8	2.78	0.80		
	F-Technical services	8	2.60	0.68		
	G-Cleaning services	7	2.69	0.80		
Organizational communication	H-Refectory	14	3.03	0.46	1.10	0.366
	A-Procurement/accounting	18	3.29	0.48		
	B-Patient records	29	3.07	0.63		
	C-Ambulatory care services	12	2.94	0.55		

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<b>Organizational health</b>	D-Document records/archive	18	3.31	0.66		
	E-Laboratory	8	3.34	0.50		
	F-Technical services	8	3.14	0.49		
	G-Cleaning services	7	3.50	0.35	0.39	0.908
	H-Refectory	14	3.17	0.52		
	A-Procurement/accounting	18	3.09	0.27		
	B-Patient records	29	3.05	0.30		

The organizational health scale and subscale scores do not exhibit significant differences ( $p>0.05$ ) depending on the service unit.

Findings concerning the correlation between organizational health scale sub-dimensions

Table 4.8 presents the Pearson correlation analysis results concerning the correlation between organizational health scale sub-dimension scores.

**Table 4.8.** Correlation analysis results concerning the correlation between sub-dimensions

Scale and subscale	1	2	3	4	5	6
1-Organizational integrity	1	-0.10	-0.01	0.28**	0.34**	0.49**
2-Organizational product		1	-0.20*	0.18	0.12	0.34**
3-Organizational management			1	-0.06	0.22*	0.41**
4-Organizational leadership				1	0.22*	0.66**
5-Organizational communication					1	0.72**
6-Organizational health						1

\* $p<0.05$  \*\* $p<0.01$

There is a positive and significant correlation between the organizational health subscale scores and organizational leadership ( $t=0.28$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and organizational communication ( $r=0.34$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) scores. When the perceptions

of hospital employees toward organizational integrity are positive, their perceptions of organizational leadership and organizational communication are also positive.

There is a negative and significant correlation between the organizational product subscale scores and organizational management ( $r=-0.20$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) scores. When the hospital employees' perceptions of organizational product are positive, their perceptions of organizational management are negative.

There is a positive and significant correlation between the organizational management subscale scores and organizational communication ( $r=0.22$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) scores. When the hospital employees' perceptions of organizational management are positive, their perceptions of organizational communication are also positive.

There is a positive and significant correlation between the organizational leadership subscale scores and organizational communication ( $r=0.22$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) scores. When the hospital employees' perceptions of organizational leadership are positive, their perceptions of organizational communication are also positive.

## Conclusion and evaluation

The survival of an institution in the fierce competition environment and its ability adapt to the changes brought about by rapidly developing technology are only possible within a healthy organizational structure. The health of an organization is made possible by not neglecting its part in society, by being able to recondition itself in line with the necessities of the time, by being in cohesion with the other organizational systems, and by strengthening the bonds between its employees and society as the supra-system.

In other respects, situations that we can characterize as “chaos” (which can be brought about by the ever-changing states and conditions in our day and time) necessitate taking an active approach, and the problems that occur instantaneously also require rapid intervention and solutions. However, as chaos theory propounds, the acute developments in question create a new “order,” and in certain cases, this new order comes across as a new area of “opportunity.”

In light of the comprehensive literature review and the results of the current study conducted on hospital employees, we contend that the organizational health process is not contingent upon a single dimension; it is reflected in employee behavior due to human needs being diverse, organizational content being different, and needs and expectations

exhibiting variability which thereby differentiates expectations of the organization. All the relevant differentiations within an organization reflect positively or negatively on the subscales of organizational health in particular—so much so that our study conducted within the context of hospital employees corroborates this argument. Our findings especially highlight that employees' perceptions of the organizational health subscales are influenced by the organizational climate and influence the leadership and organizational communication subscales in turn.

Despite the concept of organizational health having not been given enough credit until now, organizational health is greatly important, especially in our current world of work, and it should be confronted as a new subject that needs to be analyzed and discussed further. Establishing a healthy organizational structure at the individual and organizational level in order to create an effective organizational structure and periodically measuring its effectiveness will also facilitate managing the “chaos” it might possibly experience.

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# CHAPTER FIVE

## THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF FINANCE AND COMMUNICATION: A RELATIONAL INTRODUCTION

GÖKHAN GÖKGÖZ

### Introduction

Besides their economic nature, financial markets are established as social areas of interaction. The structural crisis in the beginning of the 1970s, which shaped the next immediate economic-political regime, greatly changed the relationship between money and society, among other things. The collapse of the *Bretton Woods* system, which assessed the value of money on a tangible basis till then, led to a necessity to introduce, into economic analysis, a set of new variables instead to assess this value. Concepts such as culture, psychology and cognition, which had then been regarded as inherent only to social context, were added to the new rhetoric driven by behavioral economics, owing to a scientific attitude that took into account the irrationality behind economic behaviors. Now money was no longer a completely materialistic tool that could only be approached from an economic point of view; it was re-established as a new kind of relationship which aimed to embed itself into social structure and gain ground in the cultural context of ordinary social life. This equation, which altered the traditional relationship between economy and culture, and led to the transformation of the understanding that referred to the former as an absolute determiner and the latter as a mere reflection of it, then placed culture at the heart of economy-politics. Therefore, individual views on the economic cycle as a whole and the economic actors in it at a more specific level, together with a common social perception of and/or trust in an economic institution became a fundamental necessity for that cycle to gain “social validation” (Reuten and Williams 1989: 84) and therefore reproduce itself based on social acceptance. Phenomenological concepts

such as perspective, meaning, trust, etc., were established as pillars which would lead the new realization between economy and society in the age of financialization.

### **Market: as a social and cultural field**

Harrison White (1981) and Mark Granovetter (1985) suggested that markets can be conceptualized as “networks of social relationships”. As suggested by Alex Preda, markets were perceived at a scale greater than pure economic processes, hence they were established as “areas of social interaction”. Furthermore, new theoretical contexts such as the socio-structural approach, the new economic sociology, neo-institutionalism and social studies, in a financial context were borne out of this change in the interpretation of markets (see Preda 2007: 507). In the same way, the Chartalist approach refers to money as a social relationship established in nonmarket roots and emphasizes that the value of money is based on this social relationship (Ingham 2004). Ultimately, the perception of money and/or markets as an embodiment of social relationships requires players, who work with money and/or who are active in the market, to interpret this sociological phenomenon, interact with it and penetrate into its world of meaning. Because the belief that the interaction of the economy-political core is where companies are rooted and/or cultural ties between individuals is/are potential determiner(s) of their economic behaviors is most effective within that company’s corporate ground. The Fligstein and Dauter (2006: 2) study, which focuses on market sociology, suggests that markets are mediated by extensive social relationships between companies, workers, suppliers, customers and governments and/or are agreements at an enormous scale to make up a social structure, and states that many researchers in the field believe that culture (shared meanings, normative understandings, local practices, etc.) holds an important place in market projects.

This new relationship between economy and culture also creates an opportunity to rethink the privileged role that Max Weber essentially granted to cultural content, due to the conditions in which capitalism emerged. Thus, Preda preserves this realization in his work titled *The Sociology of Financial Markets* and, moving on from Weber’s determination that markets are at the same time political establishments and that financial procedures cannot be independent of expectations/benefits and power relationships, he studies the parallel relationship between “foundation of power” and “reproducing expectations” (Preda 2007: 516). This power is embodied as a discourse/language in market players’ expectations, i.e.,

about the activity area of a bank, and related social actors' expectations, i.e., from that bank, and comes into contact with expectations via this discourse/language; ultimately, the ability to manage this/these discourses/languages/expectations and circulating information to enable this management is crucially important for that bank's active presence in the market.

Preda expresses that information intermediary corporations create a classification and/or comparison of securities and that this classification/comparison is adopted by market actors as a framework of perception. Therefore, uncertainties which occur at certain times are eliminated while paying attention to these perception perspectives. In other words, information processes, which envelop these securities and install them into a certain frame of interpretation, are just as important as the material processes related to securities, in terms of recreating value. Preda also states that the uncertainties regarding the statuses and characters of actors, who utilize information as a means to reduce market uncertainties, can sometimes cloud the market processes (2007: 509-510). Therefore, as a bank that traditionally establishes a spontaneous relationship with the state and farmers, you must be clear if you are willing to make both the state and agricultural producers the subjects of a voluntary relationship which centers around a market after a corporate transformation; you need to be so transparent as to let all market actors read your codes. Position information within a reasonable framework which envelops the current state, then present and future corporate tendencies will prevent noise and/or rumors and enable a healthy growth of reputation capital. The opposing concept is financial speculation which has a long tradition in the literature. For instance, according to Keynes, if market value is data which emerge due to social actors' market behaviors, any uncertainty regarding the behaviors and/or tendencies of these market players "will lead to increased speculation, which is merely an effort to estimate market psychology" (1980: 160, 175). It can be said that regulating information, as mentioned here, and balancing market psychology are very important both for a deep market structure and in terms of corporate benefits.

The reference made to Weber on economic processes in the era of financialization and the new nature of the relationship between economy and society are, in a certain sense, maintained by the social-structural approach. This approach, which points to a relationship between price fluctuations in financial markets, cultural-ethical codes in the social area and political-legal systems, aims to overcome the understanding of *ideal type*, which has a primary role in the Weberian theory, by re-interpreting Weber. The impossibility of ensuring social togetherness through a pure

*rationality* in the present reality is counterbalanced by including *belief systems* in the frame, in the process of reproducing and/or stabilizing corporations. Economic behavior is not of an absolutely rational nature and/or individuals' economic practices exceed normative assumptions; "Rituals and belief systems do not work according to rationality criteria, but they play a central role in terms of producing and sharing common meanings by way of using symbols" (Preda 2007: 512). For instance, Abolafia (1996) studies how beliefs and rituals affect investment and trade strategies in the ethnography of Wall Street investors. According to Abolafia, uncertainty is caused by missing and/or corrupted information like a game that market players play among themselves; controlling information means controlling both the market and the game. Obviously, rationality is not the root of economic behavior; it does not work as a permanent resource behind economic practices, and social actors do not always follow a rational path and make rational decisions. In this way, a market exists as embedded in the corporate structures of players in a way, and in the rituals, symbols, belief systems and habits of the cultural area in another.

## Financialization and language

The metaphor of *embeddedness*, which emphasizes that financial procedures are embedded and/or built in the social area, challenges Polanyi and Bourdieu on one intellectual axis, and Durkheim and Saussure on another. The Durkheim way of thinking, which advocates that trust relationships, in particular, are a requisite for economic processes and that market relations extend into the very capillaries of social life, establishes a bridge between language and cultural life, and between the mind and physical phenomena by transforming Saussure's language works into sociology and anthropology works. As the tendencies of market players, i.e., a regulatory institution, in a financialization tend to *embed* themselves into social areas, this necessitates the establishment of a relationship with a language which will envelop this tendency. Language is important; on Gramsci, who attached great importance to culture in his studies and is regarded as an important figure in the literature of human sciences, Peter Ives remarks "His appeal comes from his resistance to the assumed contrast between the intangibility of language, meaning and communication and the tangibility of economics and the meta" (Ives 2011: 19). Add to this, the intangible aspect of current financial markets, their autonomous structure compared to physical production processes and therefore the desire to embed self in society, and it then becomes necessary to establish a dialectic interaction

between these social practices such as language, meaning and communication and economy. Any vision which focuses on the daily activities and mentalities of social actors, who inevitably come into contact with markets due to their positions in the economic cycle, is obliged to pay attention to how that meaning, language and communication are contextualized and organized, for there is a mutual relationship between the global money cycle and the local, ordinary humane practices.

This emphasis on language and meaning requires paying closer attention to human stories as another determinant of the financial agenda. According to Barthes “every human society has stories of its own and these stories are mostly collectively heard by people of different and even opposing cultures” (1988: 8). Likewise, every market player has a story of its own. For example, if a bank has a corporate story, this story both interacts with other stories and is experienced by other people who grow their own stories that are parallel to it. Therefore, it is very possible to say that there is a pathway of language, a discursive route, which connects those that occur between different life stories. The meaning, which shapes the relationship between market players, is established on this pathway. As iterated by Brandist after Bahtin “... there needs to be a common tool, a common medium to enable connection and interaction of minds and ideas” (Brandist 2011: 83) and this is the very place. Hence language, architecture as a language, the construct of the branch, the process of speaking from the very beginning, stages of financial consultancy, then images, images that one encounters throughout one’s own life and will continue to be encountered by others, etc., are all related to this. Ultimately, there is a common language which holds together and connects individual stories, narratives and eventually, the expectations of social actors who lead different lives and undergo different experiences. It is critically important to be able to see the points highlighted and the points frequently converging in these different stories, corporate bank stories included, so as to be able to determine the effective area, expansion capacity and ultimately “the point where it leads to consensus” (Van Dijk 1998: 47).

From this point of view, the relationship between a market and its players and/or among social actors, who are affiliated to a corporate area such as a bank, is similar to the relationship between a – *partial* – statement and an – *inclusive* – story. At this point, Barthes suggests that there is a secondary relationship between these two, which is beyond the rules of grammar. According to Barthes, this relation, which is beyond the – simple – grammar structure, has to be the subject of a secondary grammar (1988: 12). A fundamentally similar emphasis is seen in Bahtin’s works too; according to him, a distinction must be made between the units

of language and those of the story. This leads to the realization that the competency of grammar ceases “at the point where a syntactic unit becomes a story unit”, that is, when it gains a social context (cited by Brandist 2011: 234). This context, where abstract is validated in life, lingual meets actual and therefore the end result is life experiences, surpasses the point of seeing language as a simple objective regularity and communication as a mere technical tool. This context, which is the area where Fairclough (1993: 65) lays down the foundations of communication between language and social practices, enables semiotic structures to be filled with meaning, the completion of indicators with equivalent references, the reproducing of dominant meanings and even the fetishizing of certain ideas/institutions, mythologizing them and approaching them through a universal/natural acceptance beyond their historical connections. Myths are important, because Fuchs et al. (2010: 202) mention myths and ideologies as the underlying reasons for financial crises.

Voloshinov suggests that in the social arena, the two ideologies are in a mutual relationship; “official ideology” and “life ideology” (1987: 88). As opposed to the objective nature of an official ideology which encompasses all of social life, life ideology is more individual, subjective and therefore of a sensitive, dynamic and active character. Essentially, an institution in the market, for instance a bank, turns to this life ideology; it focuses on bending the variable tendencies of daily economic practices according to its own corporate context and therefore brings it in line with the general tendencies of the official ideology embodied in that context. This contact between the official ideology and life ideology requires a suitable language and discourse to flow through communication channels; *suitable*, because this is at the same time a struggle for meaning. Every social group has its own set of internal indicators. Questions as to, what internal reference system to take as a reference when filling in the meaning, which is to be constructed in its own dimension among different social groups and corporations and, at what rate the social groups will be represented in that meaning, can only be answered according to the course of this struggle. In his next step, Voloshinov employs a lingual distinction, which is “Monological” and “Dialogical” and which would indicate his own self as social imagination (2001: 23). This distinction can also be interpreted as corporate envisagement in this way and it intrinsically produces the answer to the question of whether a lingual indicator would be limited to and closed with a single emphasis, or woven to include multiple meanings just like public relationships within the daily and mundane flow of life. Answers can be found here to the question of whether a market player, for instance a state bank, shall form its own meaning based on the historical-

politic remnants in which it is also rooted and therefore establish its relationship with the public arena with the purpose of popularizing this monist meaning, or within a wider context which includes the countenance and perspectives of social actors towards those historical-politic remnants, and establish its corporate meaning by collecting from the pluralistic structure of this social discourse. This is a symbolic area; discourses, literal meanings which reflect the dominant view of an institution, connotations which envelop social actors' differing reading practices and views, the person writing the *relationship text* between that state bank and equivalent social actors which are, therefore, envisagements of different subjects, the discursive/lingual/cultural frameworks that encompass this subject and/or rhetoric structures directed to the same subject, are all included in this area.

The pathways of rhetoric are important at this point; there must be a consistency between social structures and/or institutions, and the perspectives of individuals towards these institutions. A market player, for instance a financial mediator, needs to present its own objective world to the subjective audience and become internalized by that audience, so that individuals' economic practices can be swayed to that world. This mutual relationship, which Bourdieu coins as "habitus", is not merely a type of *ontological complicity* which only works in the context of future expectations, it also works as a reference for how to recall history into memory. The fact that negative memories of inflationist environments in the past cloud current practices of economic actors, and therefore, monetary policy, can be related to this. This symbolic dominance of history upon the present time must be balanced with a counter story. This story, which concerns the future of economy and/or the new course of monetary policy, focuses on simultaneously bringing the expectations of social actors in line with this story. Shiller (2000) states that new stories regarding national economies in different parts of the world always emerge together with an increase in stock markets. The primeval relationship established with the sacred state, which is beyond the past's positive motives and/or individual indebtedness, are included in the construct of the new story and the negative parts of the story are sent back to a distant past.

Smart, in an attempt to interpret how market data and/or players' economic worlds look like from every social subject's point of view, remarks: "When you look at a bundle of data, what does it mean to you; what does it tell you? That's a story" (Smart 1999: 260). This is the starting point of the path which arrives at the macro-story regarding the whole economic area and/or national economy-policy; it is the subjects'



perception of economy, their way of interpretation and their way of seeing things. In another point of view, Jessop (2008: 282) suggests that a national-level growth rhetoric and/or a micro-level bank's market tendencies can be brought together with the related social cadaster with a "national-popular" project. This project works as social imagination in the acts of social actors and provides context in the process of interpreting their social practices. Individuals make references to this storage of meanings, which they add to their own lives. In order for this relationship to be established between social actors and institutions/structures, and to establish a sociological connection between unique life stories and the enormous imaginary discourse, this national-popular project must be storified. It would only be possible to anchor economic reality, limitations and tendencies, which people tread on in their journey to the truth, to a constant framework. In this direction, Smart conceptualizes the story as "intrinsic patterns of structured social interaction" (1999: 258). The attempt is to utilize the causal connections between small stories of subjects regarding the past, the present and the future in order to reach the utmost economic story which unites these small stories in the same path. What is important for a market player, for instance a bank, is to reach an "agreeable story" (1999: 262).

As understood here, a story is an area of intersubjectivity. Economic areas bring together stories of industries, a discourse for the whole of economy and the stories of market players, for instance the corporate story of a company. This interaction also makes it possible to create the impression that life is evolving, the world is changing and therefore *the discourse is progressing* in the minds of social actors. "The progression of discourse is, in its simplest form, eventual merging of events and accumulation of experience" (Sennett 2009: 128) and the intersubjectivity in the financial area provides negotiation among local experiences and/or economic discourses in the market and in this way, it is mediating to create possible collaborations. Ultimately, the emphasis on intersubjectivity as a cultural framework and the economic area, follow similar paths. Mathematical equations are represented by language; they're converted to fit a cultural-discursive area; statistical information gets interpreted, and using current progress, stories are created about the future. At this point, Akerlof and Schiller ask; "... what if, what is driving markets is the stories themselves? What if these exaggerated stories really have an impact? What if these stories are actual parts of the economy's inner workings?" "Stories do not only explain truth any more, they are the truth itself" (Akerlof and Shiller 2010: 80). For instance, a story from a market player like the central bank, which reaches the social ground through oral

and written discourse and in these ways, requests collaboration of economic actors in the field is marked by Smart (1998: 124) as “a creation, a realistic construct”.

### **Financial deepening and ethnography of everyday life**

A player in the market, for instance a bank, can merely be thought of as a monetary tool in the first layer of economic reality. However, it is actually positioned as the center of a network of meanings in the eyes of the actors it is connected with. Looking at the bank’s corporate story, it is possible to interpret both the major discourse regarding the national economy, and unique and small life stories simultaneously. A bank in this state works as a “cognitive and rhetorical source” for related social actors (Smart 1999: 249). The bank’s story and the types of discourse that it uses to circulate this story are positioned as “an intellectual list to what kind of social information will be constructed” (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995: 24). This framework holds together the social arena to which the bank’s area is connected. At this point, Bahtin mentions two types of discourses: The first is the “simple” and/or “basic” discourse types, used in the most ordinary practices of daily life. The second is the more complicated, systematic discourse types which can also envelop the simple and basic types (see Brandist 2011: 235). Based on the bank’s discourse and the story built upon it, the story and the intellectual framework constitute an example of the discourse types referred to as the *secondary type*. They gather ordinary life stories into the bank’s *objective culture*. This relationship of mutuality, which is established in the financial area, utilizing different “grammatical sub-layers”, in which social actors are included (Gramsci 1971), is an anthropological relationship in actuality.

The anthropologist Gertz suggests that in order to understand the ability of a community and/or society to produce meaning, one needs to focus on the symbolic action which arises from the primary constructs, regarding reality, of the shareholders of that social area (1973: 25-27). Therefore, in order to understand the perceptions, constructs and semantic worlds of the local and ordinary lives regarding economy, an “experience-near” (Geertz 2007) rhetoric is needed to contact this context as per the social context, in which the process of financialization is embedded. However, this does not suffice; as this is a frequently referenced notion with echoes from an experience-distant location and there is the fact that seemingly unrelated individuals are interdependent, based on the “social relations network” (Marx 1997: 165-182), it is expected that the primarily compiled information will evolve, as a type of secondary construction,

into a market structure and/or corporate area. According to Ashcroft (2010: 93), an organizational structure, which intends to establish this contact in an attempt to more closely observe the daily practices of people needs to be “warm and hospitable”; and it is expected to let go of the “quiet, distant and arrogant demeanor”. It needs to handle the subjects of daily experiences and semantic worlds innate to them and/or market dynamics, as subjects of an accurate communication strategy. As mentioned earlier, “the story cannot be controlled without an accurate communication strategy.” These data, embedded within the convergence of daily life, enable the discovery of common perspectives within “individualities in multiple connections with each other” (Geertz 2007), while interpretation of lingual classifications enables the extraction and exploration of meanings shared in a social arena; while the studying of a life cycle makes it possible to have a correct perspective to look at stories, as symbolic works regarding the history and/or potential richness of a social arena. This three-layered methodological management relates individuals, who proceed in their own stories in their own worlds, with the general meaning network, while linking these stories with the corporate area of the social network and/or market players.

This ethnographic methodology, which aims to analyze the “social network” and goes hand in hand with the “financial network” (Heller 1991: 60) that is already established in the present and referred to in the context of cash reserves and assets, is referred to as “interpretive ethnography” by Smart. Interpretive ethnography provides a route to be followed when the aim is to study local and authentic forms of reality, understand the ways in which social actors experience these forms and therefore get to know the humane world behind the uppermost layer of behavior. “Attaining continuous participation and focusing on professional information generation which is separate from the observed conceptual world of society” (Smart 1998: 111) are only possible with this ethnography. This aims to observe the *evolution of meaning* on a communication axis which connects people’s micro-meanings in their daily experiences to a macro-meaning network; it looks at the discourse of individual-subject and other market players and corporate structures. According to Blommaert, this procedural route has to simultaneously include (i) perspectives of market participants, (ii) special methods to make sense of micro-events regarding the market, and (iii) an interest towards the constant and dialogical character of information (2007: 682). This procedural route requires, according to Van Hout, (i) the extraction of keywords used in the construction and popularizing of settled meanings, (ii) the study of life discourses in the social arena as a way to see into the economy, (iii) a

determination of various perspectives established in the area of intersubjectivity, and (iv) the inclusion of studies from the related discipline for an ethnographic explanation (2009: 174). Ultimately, it focuses on developing “insights regarding tangible experiences, common feelings and ideas of people living as groups” (Stickers 1980: 12-13). This insight is evaluated as an important data input and/or an important collection of fields-of-vision. This phenomenological line, which comes alive in the cooperation between philosophy and its sociological aspect, adopts social aspects as a symbolic representation and transfers these to practice a lingual archeology focused on searching for these symbols.

The most frequently referenced aspect in the financial market network is trust, because it provides economic foundations, market stability and social expectations. Akerlof and Shiller suggest that “if trust is instilled, there will be optimism towards the future, if not, the future can be daunting” (2010: 32). Therefore, the optimistic mood of social actors and the trust and belief they hold for the future of economy are expected to lead to a stable market structure. The relationship between savings and the financial area through loans and/or household indebtedness is, in essence, a relationship of trust. “When confidence is lost and companies and consumers both are unwilling to spend, *–then–* a standard monetary policy will know its limitations” (Akerlof and Shiller 2010: 102). Without confidence, other policy instruments won’t be able to work and all monetary measures become insignificant. Increasing financial fragility and increasing depth in the economy will be relatively important only when it is not supported by confidence in the general framework of economy. If thinking is based on the information that inflation, as an anchor where a growth regime is supported, “was first born as an economic concept, and then became a social concept” (Doğan 2005: 6-9), it can be understood that the discourse of trust regarding a future vision must have contact with the sense of community in this very point. In the storification of global developments, the general tendencies of economy-politics and/or a bank’s active existence in a market as a market player, and the storytelling of this in such a way that it is internalized in the minds of social actors, the utilization of a qualitative discourse instead of “a bundle consisting of numbers” (Smart 1999: 249) is important for this very reason. Because social psychologists state that storification and a reality, which meld into the action of a certain story, constitute the foundation of human knowledge. The things that human beings tend to remember are things about stories (see Schank and Abelson 1977 and 1995). On “speaking” which relates the story to an oral outlet: Ehrmann and Fratzscher (2007) determined that speaking has a significant impact on financial markets.

Derrida's determination (2011) that the idea of speaking and the consequent canonization of the individual-subject voice, the Western way of thinking, and society itself, has strong relationships with the mind so rationality echoes itself, in this instance, in the efforts to rationalize the expectations of financial markets and market players. However, it cannot really be said that people act completely rationally in their economic practices, as they don't act rationally during the rest of their lives; but it is very possible to say that "our enthusiasm, envy, anger, illusion, (...), our ever-evolving level and especially the evolution in the stories regarding the structure of economy" (Akerlof and Shiller 2010: 24), and therefore the changes in all thought patterns are an ontological notion which underlies the fluctuations regarding economy. Another suggestion which feeds the irrationality at this point is speculation; Blinder suggests that "speculations have an important impact on interest rates" (2008: 19). These formless speculations, which spread into social life and are fed by individuals' perceptions and even psychological states, make their presence felt in markets.

Language is the central category of social life; it is a dynamic and relational category which gains its form according to the course of social interaction, bends with changes in the social network of meanings and its content can be created in different ways according to the level of social struggle. For instance, the market has a language; it is only thanks to language that information regarding market extensions can circulate. There is a language which connects market players; the contents regarding the intricacies of market behavior and how to interpret market data are all conveyed through that language. The call of social actors to participate in the market is also conveyed via the same language; it is only possible for the market to deepen itself and widen its base when social actors respond to this lingual call. Participation is important; the legitimacy of the modern state, market stability, and the collective story of the social arena can only be provided when the invited actors accept and consent to this invitation. Goffman (1976) coins this as "the invitation to complete the picture"; otherwise, the picture is left *unfinished* and cannot establish itself as a *complete* structure. The Jessop (2008: 63-64) study suggests that "the capitalist state is finding it ever more difficult to provide the general social conditions needed for accumulation and conditions for specific inputs which individual capitals cannot produce profitably (...) therefore it needs to plan and promote participation", and therefore, it must almost have pointed to this; as a matter of fact, for *planning* and *participation* to align on the same line and bend to the same direction, we still need language, discourse and/or communication. The relationality and/or mutuality at this

point include, regarding this, “(1) ... an emphasis on its relational character, (2) the idea that the source of information can be found in the relationship among objects rather than objects’ particular attributes, (3) that language is not a passive representation of reality, but something that contributes for us to maintain our lives and make choices...” (Ives 2011: 37).

### **Financial markets: ir/rationality and intersubjectivity**

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) state that companies in the market area follow each other, exhibit strategic behaviors against each other and then, eventually start conducting similar actions. When the roles of the players in the market become repeatable and are all but imitations, this enables the reproducing of market communications, which leads to forming the base for a stable market structure. This is because stable social relationships enable stable prices in markets (see Baker 1984; Uzzi 1997) and – *in the next step* – these stable prices are regarded as signals for – *future* – social actions (see Spence 1974a and 1974b). At this point, Shiller (2000: 15) states “most investors view stock markets as essentially a natural force. They do not fully understand that it is them who set the market’s level, nor do they seem to comprehend that other investors’ ways of thinking are very much like theirs”, pointing to almost the same aspect. The fact that a market, which is actually a consequence of player behaviors, arbitrarily becomes a *prophecy which fulfills itself*, and in the next step, tells market players how to behave, requires a very intricate communication. “The way in which what others see as a profitable share to invest in, is conveyed and becomes more important than the thing that is conveyed” (Marazzi 2010: 21). The personal views of market players are melted together in a collective consensus, numerical values of this consensus then become the reference for the next investor’s behaviors. Foreseeing the market’s direction and therefore investor behavior, regulating beliefs – if any – about the market, clearing the area of prejudgment, managing expectations about that consensus and inviting new participants through the same lines constitute an important agenda. As indicated by Orlean, “... the progressing of financial markets through the herd behavior of investing masses is due to the nature of financial markets, therefore ‘communication’ becomes an essential content of markets” (cited by Marazzi 2010: 22).

The Bernanke (2007) study suggests that “many of the most interesting topics in the modern monetary theory involve the learning activity conducted by central banks”; because participation in the market and contact with market players require a pedagogical ability which enables this

contact. For instance, the World Bank designs a participative communication strategy in order to create opportunities for shareholders and implement this learning process; this is a dialogical form where tendencies are not strictly predefined and it is shaped according to interactions between players/shareholders: “The mass in the monological communication is substituted by active shareholders in dialogical communication” (Tufté and Mefalopulos 2009: 17-37). Similar to constructions of market discourse on an intersubjective base, this dialogy describes a different understanding, an imagination of humans and society that is different from what is traditional and monological (Bahtin 2004: 29). What is monological tends to have a content that is causal, consolidating and linear, and therefore a more positivist path in terms of sociology; what is dialogical is of a specific, mediated and relational character that is fragmented, libertarian and non-linear. A monological language objectifies actors in the market and relates them only to the outcome of the economic policy; a dialogical language emphasizes the value of every specific experience realized by social actors, and positions these experiences as creators of economic policy. Moving on from Bahtin’s path; a monological communication naturally sees a corporate entity and/or a holistic structure as the source of messages and knowledge; a dialogical communication is rooted in the social arena and social practices, and it places the context of its meaning in there. From this point of view, in an era of financialization where there is a desire to embed into social structure, it is easier to understand the transforming corporate base, together with the more active, transparent and open vision, of the market as a whole and of market players in specific, and for instance a bank.

As understood, as money slots in a social system; it follows a social route of production and reproduction; it is not a self-proclaimed fact and it does not have any essence in itself; it owes its value to relationality (see Gökgöz 2013). According to Fligstein and Dauter (2006: 44), a view which is inclusive to economy and sociology needs to include the role of ethics in shaping companies, markets, the broad connections with labor and the state, the role of local cultures, meaning systems and markets. As the efficiency of a national economy is reflected harmoniously with global routes of money, and manifests itself as a compound of past shared meanings used to include the national arena into this route and practices of power and struggle; it follows a path that is specific to that national arena and differs according to “history, culture, class struggle and the state’s role” (Roe 2003). The idea of a neo/classical economy which is built on premises that individuals have extensive knowledge about economic progress and therefore will not make mistakes of their own, and ultimately

the economy is built on this rationality, loses its validity due to this very route and the sociology related to it. For instance, it gets substituted by Keynes' approach which suggests that this rationality, which shapes economic behaviors, cannot always be established and there are cases where individuals act based on their "animal instincts" and behavioral economics, which follows the emphasis of irrationality here. The reasons for economic crises and/or market fluctuations are deemed to be these "animal instincts". As expressed by Brunhoff (2007: 177) "the irrationality of finance markets stems from mass psychology and 'herd movement'; (...) without any change in fundamental economic conditions, a circulation of 'news' can instantly increase or decrease stock prices." Similarly, Yeldan cites from Hyman Minsky, who suggests that there is a self-feeding structural deformity in an unchecked financial system, and states that the players, who act with speculative and short-term foresight in financial markets, make decisions, due to their herd instinct, which would continuously push stock prices up and tend to keep positive news on the agenda while ignoring negative news (Yeldan 2010: 67). The placing of these irrational-instinctive tendencies into a rational context and "connecting them in a consistent way" as Smart states (1998: 120) then become a must; and this is where the state steps in. Akerlof and Shiller suggest that Keynes' opinions about the state's role in the economy are very similar to the content of the *how to* style of books directed at parents. According to them "The duty of parents is to create a happy home which gives freedom to children but at the same time protects them from their own animal instincts" (Akerlof and Shiller 2010: 13-15). Just like the state does...

The state "is not a monolithic block, it is a strategic area" (Poulantzas 2004: 41, 54). The state extends the economy's general and/or global characteristics to *social spheres* by visiting them and/or nodal points of the micro-power network by way of mediation. According to Fligstein (1996: 660), who puts emphasis on the relationship between financial markets and establishments of policy, "States specify the rules regarding property rights, governance structures and change, as a regulatory context therefore forming markets. These are social and political control mechanisms without which markets would become unstable." According to this, if the society on which financial procedures are based, consists of different tendencies and thus interest groups, each of which corresponds to a specific cultural existence, then the state establishes itself as "a unity of different components" (Bonefeld and Holloway 2007: 134). As a matter of fact, these different social positions being in a *structural coordination* is crucially important for a consistent market structure. In a vision like this,



there also needs to be discussion about an ideology which will keep together different subject positions; because without ideology there cannot be a configuration of a social arena. The ideology here, as Bahtin suggested, can be thought of as “a shared worldview” or as pointed out by Bourdieu, a “habitus” where individual practices are bent. The economist Robert Heilbroner (1990: 103) suggests “Ideology points to perceptual contexts by way of interpreting and regulating societies’ experiences”. In this state, ideology –*in its traditional definition*– is comprehended as an area which is inherent to human experience, stands on those experiences and where people voluntarily participate, rather than a concept which is external to and forcefully covers the social area, and interrupts individual perception by adverse impact. Ideology is positioned inside the network of social relationships and gathers *special moments of perception*. It works as a conceptual framework and/or social structure which meets different subjective positions, voices and epistemological tendencies around the same ontological acceptances. Ultimately, markets are a manifestation of this social structure: “Markets are specific political and social structures of every society, which possess different cultures and histories, which encompass different types and classes of relationships of political interventions which produce different corporate orders” (Fligstein and Dauter 2006: 12).

## Conclusion

The David Stark (2000) study puts forward the following thesis regarding the philosophical source of financial sociology: “While economists are studying value, sociologists must research it, this is the network of external procedures for social relationships which support market change.” With a similar approach, Alex Preda states that in the post-1980 era, financial markets have increasingly been an area of focus for sociologists, both as part of the renaissance in economic sociology and as a response to globalization. According to Preda, this tendency is related to the efforts to understand “the levels of human behavior, dynamics of social development and the structure of developed societies” in the process of financialization (Preda 2007: 506). In the same way, the Callon (2002) study argues that the actions of economists are insufficient in the formation of cultural tools, which comprise of markets in the financial area. It can be said that the efforts to interpret financial processes directly through mathematical models and/or to conceptualize these processes as a sub-branch of mathematics, are related to this argument. However, an effective dialogue between cultural works and economy-policies is

required in order to be able to understand the cycles of financial markets and relationships between market players. “To draw a clear picture of the relationship between the manufacturing of new products, the legitimacy of them and the structures of stable markets” is only possible through this dialogue (Fligstein and Dauter 2006: 31). A type of lingual text and a venue of dialogues, which enable encounters among markets and/or social actors, corporate structures and individuals-subjects, the market is one of the focus areas of *Financial Ethnography*.

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## CHAPTER SIX

# INFLUENCERS IN THE DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS AND THEIR CHANNELS: A PERSPECTIVE FOR MILLENNIALS AND CENTENNIALS

F. GÖRGÜN DEVECİ AND TUĞBA YILDIZ

### Introduction

Covid-19 began to affect the world in December 2019 and laid the foundations of the new digital world. The digitalization process, which started with the Industry 4.0 and Marketing 4.0 periods, has accelerated and all routines of daily life have been placed online. In this process, the general habits of the consumers changed. The interest in online platforms has increased. Individuals became dependent on these platforms. In the pre-Covid-19 period, individuals would spend most of their time on the internet and their mobile. However, with Covid-19, many people have shown interest in online channels, and the use of social media has increased significantly for all generations. This is because the concept of “new” has changed. Consumers have applied to opinion leaders in the digital world to understand “new” concepts. This is because influencers, who are digital opinion leaders (De Veirman et al. 2017; Santiago et al. 2020), have more information about products/services/brands than other consumers. They also play an active role in the “diffusion and acceptance of innovation” process. With the change of communication language, these individuals have also switched from offline to online. Digital influencers are named in different ways such as blogger, vlogger, Instafamous, etc. (cited by Nouri 2018; Hu et al. 2020). They are perceived as more accessible and real by consumers. These individuals have opened the door to a new promotional world as a powerful channel for businesses. When the studies conducted in recent years are examined,

it is seen that there are different studies on influencers. With the present study, the process will be discussed starting from the basis of Rogers' "Innovation Diffusion Theory" and opinion leadership and influencers, their characteristics, how they emerged, differences from traditional celebrities, how they are classified, which digital media channels they are popular in, and the amount of interest in these individuals in terms of the millennial and centennial generations will be examined in depth. There can be benefits in terms of forming strategies that create "value" for businesses, "decision-making processes" for consumers and "correct understandability" for individuals, who want to take part in these platforms, on a generational basis. In this way, it will be possible to contribute to both the academic literature and the planning of businesses with a strategy-based approach.

### **Diffusion of innovation theory and digital opinion leaders**

Innovation explains the perception of anything new by individuals. Diffusion is the realization of communication related to innovation through various channels between social system members (Rogers 1995). Diffusion of innovation is the process of individuals' adoption of a new idea, product, practice, or thought, etc. (Kaminski 2011).

Diffusion of innovation theory deals with the factors affecting the diffusion of innovation by considering individuals' perceptions and examines how innovation can diffuse within the social system through communication channels (Usluel and Mazman 2010). The mainstay of innovation diffusion is the theories of Bass and Rogers. However, its main theoretical framework has emerged as a result of Rogers' studies (Mori and Mlambiti 2020). According to Rogers (1995; 2003), there are four main factors that enable the diffusion of innovation:

- Innovation is perceived by users as new. The perceived traits of innovation are as follows; Relative advantage is the perception of innovation as relatively better than the thoughts it replaces. Compatibility is innovation meeting the needs of people which are consistent with their values. Complexity is the perception that innovation is difficult to use. Trialability is the ability to test the new. Observability is the results and benefits of innovation being observable by others.
- Channels of communication are taking part in the process of communicating or promoting innovation to society.
- Time is referring to the adaptation process to innovation.

- Social System is a group of interrelated units that contribute to the problem-solving process in order to achieve a common goal.

According to Rogers' (1995) model, knowledge goes through five stages. Knowledge; information about innovations and their functions is obtained. Persuasion; a positive or negative attitude is revealed by evaluating new knowledge. Decision; the individual decides whether to use innovation or not. Implementation; the individual makes the innovations which s/he decides to use. Confirmation; the individual discusses the consequences of decisions.

Not every innovation is not accepted in similar processes on the market. As well as the traits of innovation, the characteristics of individuals who are adopting innovations are also effective in this case. Individuals are evaluated in five categories according to their level of innovation (Rogers 2003; Başar and Yapraklı 2013):

Innovators are the first to adapt to innovation and take risks in the social system (Tosuntaş and Çubukçu 2019: 960). Early adopters are seen as role models in the acceptance of innovation and are respected by other individuals. The early majority act prudently and avoid risk in the process of adopting innovation (Rogers 2003). The late majority adopt innovation after the majority of society has adopted it. Laggards are the last people to adopt innovations in a social system (Çelik et al. 2014: 302).

In order to better understand the theory in terms of digital influencers, it is useful to mention opinion leadership.

Opinion leaders informally influence how other consumers seek, buy, and use products (Lyons and Henderson 2005: 326). According to the diffusion of innovation theory, opinion leaders are the early adopters of an innovation, and effective in the diffusion of negative/positive opinion among other adopters (Rogers 2003; Başar and Erciş 2014; Uzunoğlu and Kip 2014).

In online environments, they play a vital role in the efficient and rapid diffusion of information (Rehman et al. 2020). Digital influencers, who are opinion leaders in virtual networks, are an effective resource for e-WOM, provide information about products, and make suggestions and personal comments. They can change the actions and decision-making processes of individuals (Li and Du 2011; Jain et al. 2020) due to the increasing importance of businesses to influencers, the growth of digital markets day by day and the transition from traditional marketing to digital marketing; it is of great importance to examine digital influencers.



## Digital marketing

Digital marketing is a marketing concept that includes mobile phones, display advertising and other digital media tools, using digital technologies and basically offering products/services by way of the internet. Since digital marketing is used as a general term, it includes many online marketing concepts (Sudha and Sheena 2017: 15). Social media marketing and influencer marketing are also included in these concepts. At the point of understandability of both marketing methods, firstly the social network should be defined. Social networks are virtual spaces where individuals and businesses establish relationships among themselves by sending messages and sharing content. Today, there have been many different social networks which have different purposes and address different target audiences (Guarda et al. 2020).

Social media are a computer-based technology that allow ideas, thoughts and information to be shared through large virtual networks and online communities (Daniel 2020). In this respect, “social media marketing is a way to promote a website, brand/business by interacting or attracting, current or potential customers, through a social media channel” (Saravanakumar and Sugantha Lakshmi 2012: 4451).

Today, businesses use social media very effectively. In addition to using social media for promoting their products/services/brands, they benefit from influencers, who are new generation celebrities.

Influencers have gained recognition through social media channels and have an impact on consumers (Gómez, 2019). Influencer marketing is the use of individuals, who have an impact on potential buyers, for assisting the marketing activities of a brand (Evans et al. 2017; Coursaris et al. 2018). In this respect, the success of the influencer marketing efforts of businesses depends on the selection of the right influencer.

### Who are influencers?

The increasing popularity of social networks has differentiated the way that consumers and businesses interact. Consumers have become accustomed to getting information from other individuals, who have significant status in social networks (Liu et al. 2015). Influencers, who have opinion leadership qualifications, show the “reference group” effect, because they are effective on consumers’ decisions (Djafarova and Rushworth 2017; Wang et al. 2020).

Today, opinion leaders are not only offline but also online (Casaló et al. 2018; Santiago et al. 2020). The other name for social media influencers is digital influencers (Torres et al. 2019). Digital influencers

have their own followers and a social effect on their followers (Yi et al. 2017; Roth and Zawadzki 2018; Lou and Yuan 2019; Silva et al. 2020; Wang et al. 2020). Freberg et al. (2011: 90) define the digital influencer as a third-party endorser who shapes their followers through blogs, tweets or other social networks. At this point, digital influencers are content creators who can influence others through social media and create their target audience (De Veirman et al. 2017; Gross and Wangenheim 2018; Hendriks et al. 2020; Nascimento et al. 2020). Influencers are actually more regular people, who use the internet more often than the average internet user, even every day (Abidin and Ots 2015; Gretzel 2018). In some characteristics they differ from “traditional celebrities.”

### **The rise of influencers and differences of traditional celebrities**

Influencers did not appear with the Internet age. They are individuals who existed in their environment which influenced them in the pre-Internet period (Santiago et al. 2020). With the development of information and communication technologies, “ordinary people” have become “digital influencers” by creating and publishing content on social media (Hu et al. 2020). These individuals were initially unknown to the public and shared their content as a hobby, then they started to spend their free time creating content with the goal of building an online career (Erz and Christensen 2018; Schouten et al. 2020; Nascimento et al. 2020) and gained “recognition”. Today, almost everyone creates content on social media. This is the factor that separates “everybody” from the “digital influencer”. For this reason, “not all content creators are influencers, but all influencers are creators” (Gómez 2019: 15). Influencers, who first appeared in blogs in 2005, then spread to different social media networks (Abidin 2016; Neal 2017).

Influencers differ from traditional celebrities with their various characteristics.

Unlike traditional celebrities, digital influencers are “regular people” who become “online celebrities” by creating and publishing content on social media (Lou and Yuan 2019: 58; Santiago et al. 2020: 107). Traditional celebrities use mass media. However, influencers are not just limited to television; they perform their activities on social networks (cited by Wijnen 2019). Traditional celebrities become famous through a field of occupation such as music, sports, etc. Influencers are self-branding through their social media shares (De Veirman et al. 2017; Kay et al. 2020).

Digital influencers and traditional celebrities differ in terms of their audience. While traditional celebrities appeal to normal consumers; digital influencers focus on more specific categories (such as travel, food, beauty,

fashion, etc.) and audiences (Khamis et al. 2016; Lou and Yuan 2019). Therefore, influencers become famous in niche groups (Raun 2018). These individuals are perceived as being more “authentic” (Abidin and Ots 2015; Hu et al. 2020). Unlike traditional celebrities, they are accepted as being more accessible, reliable and sincere (Hwang and Zhang 2018; Torres et al. 2019) and they are respected by their followers (Audrezet et al. 2020). Digital influencers have a similar social status and lifestyle to their followers (Lou and Yuan 2019). For this reason, they communicate with followers more easily than traditional celebrities, sending and replying to messages. (Casaló et al. 2018) and sharing in detail their personal lives, experiences and ideas (De Veirman et al. 2017).

### **Classification of digital influencers**

In today’s digital world, there are different platform-based names for influencers. While the names of influencers have changed depending on the platform, the only classification or naming of digital influencers is not platform based. Different researchers have been classified as “digital influencers” in different ways. Some of these classifications are as follows;

According to Singh and Diamond (2012: 15-16), influencers are divided into three basic categories;

**Referent influencers:** These individuals provide participation in the platforms. They have an effect on consumer decisions through consumer reviews. They influence the consumer’s brand affinity and purchasing decisions by constantly updating their status and feedback, and commenting on blogs and forums.

**Expert influencers:** For a high involvement level purchase, consumers can consult expert influencers. An expert influencer is accepted as the authority in terms of this product that the consumer intends to buy. Expert influencers, who are called “key influencers”, often have their own blogs and large audiences. However, they do not know these audiences personally.

**Positional influencers:** This is the influencer who is closest to both the purchasing decision and the consumer. Positional influencers are also called “peer influencers”. Regardless of their expertise, positional influencers’ ideas are always valid and effective (Sette and Brito 2020).

At the same time, a certain number of followers are needed to be characterized as a real and effective influencer (De Veirman et al. 2017). Many researchers have made both general and platform-based distinctions in terms of the number of followers.

Domingues Aguiar and van Reijmersdal (2018) discuss six different influencer categories (cited by Qutteina et al. 2019: 4);

1. Everyday Influencers have 1.000-1.300 followers, who are mainly the inner circle (like family or friends).
2. Brand Advocates are individuals who share their positive experiences of brand(s) with their audience.
3. Micro-influencers have 1.000-20.000 followers.
4. Professional (meso) influencers have 20.000-100.000 followers.
5. Macro-influencers have 100.000-300.000 followers and are usually represented by media agencies.
6. Celebrity influencers have more than 300.000 followers.

In light of the number of followers, digital influencers are called micro, meso, mega, macro, etc. These are explained below (Pedroni 2016; Khamis et al. 2017; Casaló et al. 2018; Coursaris et al. 2018; Gretzel 2018; Childers 2019; Dhanesh and Duthler 2019; Wijnen 2019; Boerman 2020; Kay et al. 2020; McFarlane and Samsioe 2020).

Micro influencers are the largest influencer group, having a more specific and relatively small audience of up to 500-10.000. They reflect the audiences' product/service usage and lifestyle. Although micro-influencers have low accessibility, they stand out with their high-quality content creation. An influencer in this group is perceived by the consumer as a friend and therefore familiar.

Meso-influencers have between 10.000 and one million followers and national visibility. Influencers in this group have "web celebrity" and are characterized as full-time professional influencers. They are accepted as an authority and expert in the field.

Macro-influencers (Mega-influencers) are international celebrities who become famous through social media and have more than one million followers. They exhibit more persuasiveness over their followers than micro influencers.

Daniel (2020) has discussed nano influencers in a similar classification, as follows;

Mega-influencers have at least 1 million followers; macro-influencers have 100.000 to one million followers; and micro-influencers have 10.000 to 100.000 followers/subscribers on a single social media platform. The nano-influencer is an everyday consumer with fewer than 10.000 followers/subscribers. Nano-influencers are increasingly popular because of the potential level of interaction with consumers.

Baramidze has explained in their YouTube study (2018), that micro-influencers have 1000-100.000, and macro-influencers have over 100.000 subscribers. For YouTube platforms, Ladhari et al. (2020) cited the following classification.

Mega-influencers, who are social stars, are the new celebrities of social media. These influencers have millions of followers on different social networks.

Macro-influencers have between 200.000 and 900.000 followers and they are experts in a particular product/service category.

Micro-influencers have 10.000-200.000 followers. This group is more interactive with their communities and more targeted by followers.

Nano-influencers have the most loyal followers. Nano-influencers are brand advocates with fewer than 10.000 followers.

For Instagram, Wang et al. (2020) shared the following information in their studies; a nano-influencer would have 1.000-5.000; a micro-influencer would have 5.000-20.000; a mid-tier influencer would have 20.000-100.000; a macro-influencer would have 100.000-one million and a mega-influencer would have more than one million followers.

In the light of the above information, it is seen that the traits and naming of influencers also differ depending on social media channels. Influencers' platforms, which are intensively used by them, are examined below.

## **The channels of influencers**

The social media channels that are the leading and “basic” platforms for influencers are Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and blogs (Sammis et al. 2015; Martínez-López et al. 2020; Trivedi and Sama 2020). However, it would be wrong to restrict the influencer effect to the mentioned platforms. Factors, such as changes in the micro and macro environment, technological differentiation, and digital transformation, will reveal new platforms and an influencer effect will be seen in different channels.

### **Influencers and the millennial and centennial generations**

There are many different generations from past to present. However, it is necessary to mention two basic groups that are directly related to the digital age. These generations are the millennials and centennials; in other words, the Y (millennial) and Z (centennial) generations. The traits of the two generations and their relationship with influencers are clarified below.

Millennials were born between 1980 and 2000 (Berkup 2014). With the clearest expression, the members of the millennial generation came of age with the millennium. Therefore, they are called the millennial generation (Gentilviso and Aikat 2019).

Millennials are the first generation to grow with digital communication tools (Bakanauskiene et al. 2016; Venter 2017). They are quite technologically informed. In addition, they have flexible and fast learning skills (Xu and Pratt 2008). The active use of social media and peer influence for this generation affects their intention to engage in word of mouth. Millennials use social engagement to convey what they think. They express themselves by way of likes, follows, friendships, retweets, etc. (Zhang et al. 2017).

Depending on the new social media tools, the results of the studies differ from the past to the present. For example, Furlow (2011) stated that millennials are especially active on Facebook and Twitter. According to McCorkindale et al. (2013), Facebook is an active entertainment platform for millennials. It contains a large number of games, apps, videos and music which may be of interest to this generation. In their 2019 studies, Flecha-Ortíz et al. stated that Snapchat's ephemeral content creation model affects the expectations of millennials and can increase the relationships of brands with this generation. Brands provide personalized content to their users on this platform. According to Werenowska and Rzepka (2020), the most used social media channels by millennials are Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. This generation thinks that YouTube and Instagram have fast and easy access to content that is interesting to them. Due to Instagram's visual based concept, its effect on the young population in the world is increasing day by day (Spech 2016). Similarly, in line with the young generation's demand for more personalization (Sweeney 2005), TikTok, which provides more personalized content, is one of the attractive social media platforms targeting the young generation of the recent period (Omar and Wang 2020).

Digital media has greatly influenced the way that customers reach millennials. For millennials, the marketing communication of companies is based on digital media and social platforms (Naumovska 2017). Brands are using influencers to reach these new generation consumers more easily (Oczachowska 2020). Influencers play an important role in the purchasing process and product search of millennials (SanMiguel et al. 2108).

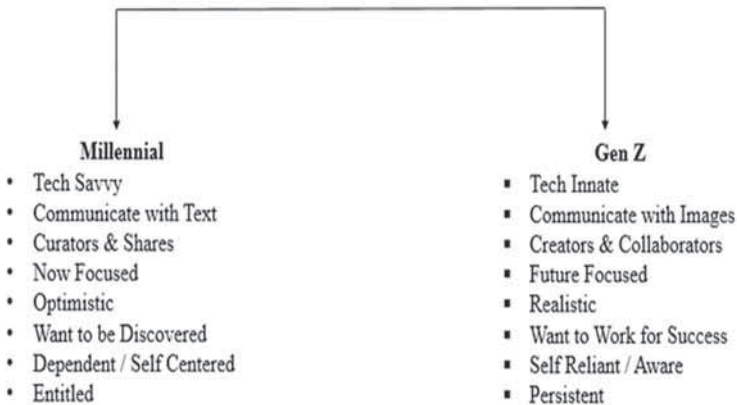
Centennials were born during the mid-1990s and late 2000s (Levickaite 2010). The characteristics of centennials are creating images, being accepted as cool and unique, and standing out amongst the crowd (Alqvist and Klaus 2018). Centennials tend to be spontaneous, more individual and self-directed (Desai and Lele 2017: 802). Centennials are the first generation born in the time of worldwide access of the internet and are called technology addicts (Becerra 2018; Gentilviso and Aikat 2019). In addition, social networks are seen as an important component of life for this generation (Ting et al. 2016).

YouTube is an important and the most followed marketing communication platform used to influence centennials and their purchasing decision processes (Pospíšil 2018; Duffett 2020). YouTubers are perceived as accessible, authentic and effective by centennials (Fromm and Read 2018).

At the same time, it is seen that they prefer Instagram and TikTok instead of Facebook (Krasznay et al. 2020). The interactions of centennials are vertical and ephemeral content-oriented. They especially prefer short, fun and entertaining video content. This makes TikTok an important and innovative communication channel (Sidorenko-Bautista et al. 2020). Snapchat is another communication channel that centennials find attractive and popular (Kusá and Záziková 2016). Snapchat and Instagram's predominantly visual-based structure, effective entertainment and visual presentation, give these platforms prominence (Gentilviso and Aikat 2019).

This generation's members are extremely loyal to a group of people, brands and organizations that they call a "circle of trust". For this generation, influencers are part of the circle of trust (Becerra 2018). Digital influencers are very effective in reaching centennials because these generations have a high level of trust in influencer recommendations (Dunkley 2017).

Lastly, millennials and centennials differ from each other in terms of various traits. These are as follows.



**Figure 6.1.** Millennial vs. Gen Z  
*Source:* PrakashYadav and Rai (2017)

In light of this information, it is possible to state that social media are the most popular marketing tool for both generations (Hanifawati et al. 2019). Millennials and centennials do not pay much attention to traditional media (Kusá and Záziková 2016; Gentilviso and Aikat 2019). Unlike previous generations, these generations are interested in advanced technology (Shatto and Erwin 2017).

## Conclusion

At the heart of marketing is the transfer of “value”. Businesses transmit their “new” products/services/brands to consumers through promotional activities. The preferred promotion methods differ depending on the marketing approach. With the marketing 3.0 approach, the importance given to mobile phones and social media applications increased and consumers became addicted to these applications, in other words, to new wave technology. In the marketing 4.0 approach, digital applications have become more important. In this period, digital and traditional marketing have come together and there has been a machine-to-machine interaction (Kotler et al. 2011). With the transition from broadcast media to participatory media, social media and social media technologies have become popular (Marwick 2015). Social media and influencer marketing are two important marketing concepts that have emerged in this age. The indispensable element of these concepts is influencers, who are the content creators and the new marketing channel of social networks. Influencers are not perceived as commercial by consumers. Their opinions and preferences are valued, due to them being seen as more real and sincere than traditional celebrities. Influencers identify with consumers and articulate their satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

In other words, they communicate with consumers for altruistic and authentic reasons (Munar and Jacobsen 2014; Abidin and Ots 2015; Hu et al. 2020). As a human brand, influencers are an effective e-WOM resource. Their tweets, posts, and videos can go viral within seconds. In today’s consumer world where unilateral communication ends and the user-generated concept is popular, consumers follow influencers in order to keep ahead of current trends. As influencers are role models, consumers act according to the recommendations of these individuals in their purchasing decisions. Consumers want to be as good as the influencers and prefer influencer platforms. Meanwhile, attitudes and behaviors in this direction are changed due to follows, likes, comments, and feedback from influencers. Therefore, choosing the right influencer is critical for the success of the marketing efforts of businesses. Influencers, who are micro-



celebrities, create a mass of followers and share their lives with these audiences down to the finest detail through self-branding, self-presentations and personalized content in social networks (Khamis et al. 2017; Du et al. 2020). Therefore, the products/brands preferred by influencers, become popular. Brands collaborate with influencers and these individuals act as brand ambassadors (Evans et al. 2017; Boerman 2020). Businesses aim to reach the masses by using influencers who are particularly effective on young generations (Spech 2016; Lim 2017; Choi and Sung 2018; Dones et al. 2018; Ortín Cano and Ruiz Garrués 2018; Valentini et al. 2018; Djafarova and Trofimenko 2019; Flecha-Ortíz et al. 2019; Ahlse et al. 2020). At this point, influencer posts have two purposes:

1. To increase the purchase intention of their audience.
2. To increase product knowledge and attractiveness (Kay et al. 2020).

Social media platform selection is an important factor affecting the success of an influencer and the correct strategy development of businesses. Each platform has typical traits and target audiences. The common traits of the examined platforms are tools for sharing and consuming content with peers.

Influencers can directly transfer content suitable to their followers and the target audience (Gentina et al. 2020). Therefore, businesses are increasingly resorting to influencers and using them as a valuable resource. The reasons for this are “to increase brand advocacy and awareness, to reach new target audiences, to increase share of voice and to increase the rate of return on sales” (cited by Gretzel 2018: 150).

As a result, influencers are indispensable elements of the digital world. Digital transformation and future trends are indicators that these individuals will be continue to be used. Therefore, to ignore the influencers is to ignore the direct consumer demands and expectations. Understanding influencers, their characteristics and their platform-based structures will be one of the applications that top-grossing businesses will use to reach consumers more easily.

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# CHAPTER SEVEN

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CHANGING PUBLIC RELATIONS

CUDI KAAAN OKMEYDAN

### Introduction

We should focus on the concept of intelligence before addressing artificial intelligence (AI). Intelligence refers to the ability to learn, use new information, adapt to new situations, and solve problems. Artificial refers to human-made things that are inspired by their naturally occurring counterparts and replace them. Just like artificial sweeteners are mimicking sugar, AI mimics human intelligence in software, computers, or robots. Therefore, AI is defined as software-based computers or robots that can apply human cognitive processes, act like humans, and perform tasks normally performed by people. Artificial intelligence, which is mostly used for data prediction, classification, and clustering, involves a series of complex innovations, such as expert systems, genetic algorithms, fuzzy logic, artificial neural networks, and machine learning.

Though very popular today, the term “artificial intelligence” actually goes back to the 1950s. Alan Turing (1950) was a British mathematics and computer scientist who first worked on smart computers to seek answers to the question, “Can computers think?” Shortly after, John McCarthy, an American computer scientist, coined the term “artificial intelligence,” paving the way for further research on the technology (Singh et al. 2013). In 1959, Cahit Arf, a Turkish mathematician and scientist, introduced his work on thinking computers in Erzurum, which was then a small town in Turkey. Despite these preliminary steps, AI has witnessed a drastic transformation with advances in communications and information technology.

## **On the concept of artificial intelligence**

Artificial intelligence became a ground-breaking discipline and buzzword in the 1990s. Until the 1980s, AI was mostly machine- and robot-oriented. However, advances in web technology, especially in the last two decades, have taken it to a different level and made it an indispensable part of computers and cell phones. Advances in computer and web technology (AI, big data, internet of things, cloud computing, etc.) have paved the way for the development of new talent and pioneering studies in the field of AI. Therefore, there is an important relationship between AI and computer technology. Today, the technologies of big data and cloud computing allow AI to achieve deep learning from raw data.

Marvin Lee Minsky, an authority on AI, defines it as the science of building machines capable of performing high-level cognitive processes, such as perceptual learning, memory, and critical thinking (Dennis 2020). We can, therefore, state that AI has advanced cognitive skills. Artificial intelligence can compose music (Wu and Yang 2020), write scripts and turn them into short films (Pearson 2018), draw pictures and graphics (Karaata 2018), and develop military strategies (Freedberg 2019), pointing to high-level cognitive processes.

Artificial intelligence is used in computer technology, health, communication, education, finance, and even the defense industry. It is becoming a shared language of different disciplines because, regardless of the sector in which it is used, it can think and make decisions like a human and perform tasks commonly associated with human intelligence, such as surgery (Hashimoto et al. 2018), corporate communication (Śliwińska 2019), education (Schmelzer 2019), finance (Chukwudi et al. 2018) and transportation (Niestadt et al. 2019). However, this raises some ethical issues. Orr and Davis (2020) interviewed 21 experts on AI and robotics to highlight the complexity of ethical accountability in the field of AI. According to the experts, what makes a difference is not the technology itself, but how it is designed. Well-designed technology makes life easier, whereas badly-designed technology makes it more difficult. Therefore, what makes technology ethically problematic is how it is used. There are also many concerns raised about the significant impact of AI on working and social life, production, and trade.

## Artificial intelligence and related concepts

### Big data

We should first define the term “data” to understand what “big data” is. Data are any unprocessed observational or measurement values (Doğan and Arslantekin 2016: 16). Data alone do not mean anything. They turn into information only when they are analyzed and shared with others. Big data are data collected by websites, social platforms, smartphone applications, and mobile device sensors. In simple terms, big data are the virtual footprints of people on the Internet, social platforms, mobile applications, and mobile device sensors. The term “big data” was first coined by Michael Cox and David Ellsworth in their paper, “Application-controlled demand paging for out-of-core visualization” (1997). They argued that the data collected by those systems were too large to fit into any hardware, and therefore, they labeled that problem as the “big data” problem. However, the term “big data” has become popular in the last decade. Today, big data attract the attention of not only software and computer engineers but also marketing, PR, and advertising experts.

Big data and AI are two interrelated concepts. Oguz Haliloğlu, the general manager of Defne Telecommunications (a Turkish tech company), made a presentation on big data at the Convergence India 2018 Conference, stating that today, it is impossible to turn big data into meaningful data without AI (Cybermag 2018). However, AI not only analyzes big data but also learns from it. It uses big data to improve its deep learning, natural language processing, image recognition, and predictive capacity (Atalay and Çelik 2017: 168-169). Data mining establishes relationships on raw data derived from big data and develops models to predict customer behavior. In this respect, big data are also of paramount significance for PR because they allow firms to use deep learning, image recognition, and customization technologies to make accurate predictions.

### Internet of things

The internet of things (IoT) refers to a network over which physical objects (smart devices) communicate and share information both with each other and with people, and make their own decisions based on the data they obtain. These devices are either everyday household items or industrial machines. Some examples of IoT are washing machines detecting when the consumer is running low on detergent and automatically ordering more online or smart home systems providing the consumer with information about the weather and traffic density, or factory machines

interacting with each other before moving on to the next stage of production. The term “internet of things,” first coined by Kevin Ashton in 1992, is also known as the internet of everything (IoE), the web of things (WoT), and the web of everything (WoE) (Altınpulluk 2018: 96).

It is very difficult or even impossible for smart devices to analyze big data, transform them into information and make decisions accordingly. This is where AI comes into play because it helps personal virtual assistants, home appliances, and large-scale industrial machines to share the right information, make the right decisions, and perform tasks perfectly. According to the Internet of Things Turkey (2019), machines connecting and communicating with each other mean nothing without AI. We are on the verge of Industry 4.0. Therefore, IoT and AI projects play a crucial role in establishing smart factories and businesses and increasing the quality of goods and services, and hence, the quality of life.

### **Cloud computing**

Cloud computing refers to the online provision of information processing services, such as servers, databases, storage, networks, software, and machine intelligence. This technology breaks the limits of time and space and allows online users to access and modify software, data, documents, and files wherever they are. Cloud computing, which can also be thought of as a virtual hard disk, makes synchronized or asynchronous data sharing and collaboration possible. It allows not only people but also firms to store and access data and documents flexibly and at low cost. For example, employees in different branches of firms using cloud computing technology can access and work on data via their computers and mobile phones wherever and whenever they want.

Although the research on network-attached storage goes back to the 1960s, cloud computing technology was first announced in 2006 by Eric Schmidt, the then CEO of Google (Regalado 2011). Cloud computing was also a driving force behind AI technology, which improved its data storage and processing capability by using cloud computing technology. Today, AI transforms cloud computing technology (Sharma 2020) and is responsible for its working principles and security.

## **Artificial intelligence technology in public relations**

### **Evolution of public relations, and web technologies: web 1.0, web 2.0, and web 3.0**

Public relations (PR) is strategic communication employed by organizations to establish and maintain a relationship with their target audience and

manage their image and reputation. PR, which is considered to be an important function of management, is based on mutual benefit and understanding and two-way communication and dialogue. However, in its early years, PR was regarded as a means of propaganda and persuasion based on one-way communication.

Public relations goes back to ancient times, albeit of a different sort. Some examples are agriculture bulletins issued by Sumerians to inform farmers in the seventh century BC; forums and the development of oratory in ancient Greece in the fifth century BC; Alexander the Great wearing the local clothes of the country he conquered and marrying the daughter of the former king of that country; newsletters issued by Julius Caesar in Rome to announce his military victories and political developments; and Mehmet II's speech to the local people right after his conquest of Istanbul and his public meetings after each Friday prayer.

The transition to modern PR witnessed efforts of promotion and persuasion. For example, in the 1850s, P. T. Barnum staged exciting shows in his circus to attract people's attention and announced them on posters and in newspaper advertisements. In the same years, Alfred Krupp, an iron and steel manufacturer, developed interesting printed materials to promote his products at the fairs he attended. Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays were two of the fathers of PR. However, the expansion of the print media and the emergence of radio and television also played a crucial role in its development (Bernays 1951: 44). These examples show that PR is an integral part of the mass media.

The driving force of the transformation of modern PR is the advances in web technology that are breaking the limits of time and space in communication and allowing constant interaction between interested parties. We should address the advances in web technology before talking about their contribution to PR. The greatest technological breakthroughs are Web 2.0 and social media. Social platforms are the new generation websites that allow internet users to create and share their own content and interact with each other whenever and wherever they want. These new generation websites are referred to as Web 2.0, and therefore, the terms "Web 2.0" and "social media" are used interchangeably. O'Reilly Media was the first to use the term "Web 2.0" to describe next-generation web technologies (Akar 2011: 16). Web 1.0 was limited to content created by professionals, whereas Web 2.0 was an interactive platform that allowed internet users to create and share their own content. Today, the new generation technology has taken it one step further and introduced what is called "Web 3.0" by Tim Berners Lee, known as the inventor of the World Wide Web (Abdüsselam et al. 2015: 266). Web 3.0 also refers to the

“Semantic Web,” which is an extension of the World Wide Web. Web 3.0 offers internet users a more personalized experience when browsing websites and interacting with other people on social platforms. In the broadest sense, Web 3.0 refers to a structure that extracts information from websites, offers personalized results and recommendations, and collects data and turns them into information (Demirli and Kütük 2010: 98). In other words, new generation Semantic Web technology offers more personal results, advertisements, goods and services, and information in search engines and social media platforms, as well as all the convenience of Web 2.0. Table 7.1 compares Web 1.0, Web 2.0, and Web 3.0.

**Table 7.1:** Web 1.0, web 2.0, and web 3.0

	<b>Web 1.0</b>	<b>Web 2.0</b>	<b>Web 3.0</b>
<b>Innovations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Email</li> <li>▪ www</li> <li>▪ Computers connected over a network</li> <li>▪ Developed between 1990 and 2000</li> <li>▪ The emergence of the concept of “web”</li> <li>▪ Coined by Tim Berners Lee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborative working environment</li> <li>▪ Developed between 2000 and 2010</li> <li>▪ The emergence of the concept of “social web”</li> <li>▪ Coined by O’Reilly Media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Linked and associated data</li> <li>▪ Developed between 2010 and 2020</li> <li>▪ The emergence of the concept of “Semantic Web”</li> <li>▪ Coined by Tim Berners Lee</li> </ul>
<b>Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Website linking</li> <li>▪ Statistical web</li> <li>▪ Information</li> <li>▪ Information center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The social network created by users</li> <li>▪ Interactive</li> <li>▪ Sharing</li> <li>▪ Human-centered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Associating data</li> <li>▪ Semantic Web</li> <li>▪ Making sense of information</li> <li>▪ Machine-centered</li> </ul>
<b>Source of Applications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Companies</li> <li>▪ Private ownership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community</li> <li>▪ Sharing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Personal</li> <li>▪ “Dynamic content merging</li> </ul>
<b>Content Creation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Companies create, while users read/watch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Companies and users create content</li> <li>▪ Companies develop platforms to enable users to create content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Users develop their own apps</li> <li>▪ Companies/brands have a social media presence to be visible and to get people to talk about them</li> </ul>
<b>Format</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Text, Graphics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Two-way communication/sharing, text, graphics, photos, videos, podcasts, PDFs, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3D portals, multi-user, augmented reality, virtual reality, virtual web worlds, virtual business, and education</li> </ul>



Features	▪ Read-only web	▪ Read and write web	▪ Read, write, and execute web
	▪ Passive user	▪ Active user	
	▪ Obtaining information (user)	▪ Obtaining and sharing information (user)	▪ An active machine in web use
			▪ Obtaining and sharing information (machine)

*Source:* Adapted from Abdüsselam et al. 2010; Naik and Shivalingaiah 2008

Before Web 2.0 technology and online platforms, the Internet was operating as a traditional medium, and Internet users were passive audiences who could do nothing but email. However, Web 2.0 turned the tables, and platforms called “social media” provided internet users with the opportunity to have their own interactive media. Social media undergoes a stylistic and functional transformation as a consequence of the development of Web 3.0. Especially AI, 3D, and augmented reality provide users with a virtual experience on social platforms (Whittaker 2008; Ansari 2018). In other words, Web 2.0 social platforms that allow businesses to connect with their target audiences are taken to a different level by Web 3.0. In Web 3.0, AI does monitoring on behalf of businesses. It evaluates everything that is written and said about firms on conventional or social media. Meetings taking place on social media or web-based applications are replaced by virtual meetings in Web 3.0. Fairs, which are an important function of PR, also give way to virtual fairs. Parties that came together anywhere and anytime in Web 2.0 can get much more realistic experiences thanks to the virtual reality of Web 3.0.

### **Repercussions of artificial intelligence on public relations**

The increasing effect of AI on communication technologies causes revolutionary changes in PR. Artificial intelligence gradually undertakes every task that previously required human intelligence, making every stage of PR much more effective. It used to take experts too much time and effort to research, plan, and execute PR campaigns. However, today, AI performs all those things much faster and more accurately, thereby maximizing time and cost savings. For example, AI can perform conventional and social media analysis to determine the target audience for a PR campaign exceptionally quickly and inexpensively. Artificial intelligence can perform such actions as assessing meeting notes, drawing up a work schedule, and preparing to-do lists, which would take PR experts too much time. Artificial intelligence can also scan big data to draw up risk reports and assess all risk factors.

Numerous firms/brands use AI for PR activities. For example, there are AI-based chatbots on the other end of WhatsApp lines used for customer

relations. The AI chatbots are so advanced that many people cannot tell the difference. They are used not only in instant messaging apps but also on websites. Artificial intelligence has taken over call centers, too. AI-based call centers can answer millions of calls and understand seven languages and take action accordingly every day (Forbes 2020). They can also use big data and establish effective communication to meet customer needs much faster than call center staff (AloTech 2019).

Text vocalization, language recognition, translation, emotion identification, object and relationship detection, document review, text creation, summarization, question-answer, and face and voice recognition (artificial neural network) (Bierer 2020: 5-7) demonstrate the ability of AI to communicate live in PR. Virtual reality in Web 3.0 allows firms to plan and hold virtual PR events and virtual fairs at a much faster pace and lower costs. It also helps them overcome accommodation and transportation problems, resulting in increased participation.

### **Artificial intelligence in internal public relations activities**

A target audience is a group of people with shared needs and expectations to which a firm feels the need to pay attention. The target audience of a school is students and their families, while that of a dog food manufacturer is dog owners, vets, animal lovers, animal rights activists, and animal shelters. Employees and their families are the internal audiences of a firm. Productivity, employee loyalty, and firm reputation depend on successful internal PR.

Internal PR refers to internal activities held to create employee motivation, loyalty, and a sense of belonging. Internal activities bring together employees and their families. The goal of such activities is to ensure that employees have pleasant experiences. Internal PR is also used to measure employee motivation and happiness, to provide accurate internal information flow, and to ensure good relationships between employees and management. PR experts also use internal PR to design and execute successful corporate communication programs (Görpe 2007: 150). This shows that internal PR plays a crucial role in helping firms/brands achieve their goals.

Bulletin boards, digital billboards, and internal broadcasts (traditional methods) are the first things that come to mind when we talk about the means of communication in internal PR. However, there are numerous internal communication activities, such as internal publications (newspapers, magazines, bulletins, etc.), internal traditional and digital panels, suggestion and complaint boxes, direct phone lines, intranet, closed-circuit TV broadcasts, special activities for group cohesiveness (special-religious day

celebrations, sports events, etc.), special services for employees (culture and arts activities, etc.), open space or corporate training, and regular corporate meetings (Göksel et al. 2008: 235). However, AI radically transforms the internal PR as well. Artificial intelligence can communicate the news about the firm to its stakeholders (Petrucci 2018) and informs all employees about corporate developments. Not only does it create messages tailored to each employee, but it also facilitates their work by sharing with them all the information that it derives from big data (Rogers 2019). This means that AI assumes the responsibility of developing communication programs for firms to achieve their goals.

AI-based virtual reality is also used in internal events. It is challenging to achieve face to face company-to-employee and employee-to-employee interactions, especially in multinational organizations with multiple branches. However, AI-based virtual reality breaks the limits of time and space and allows employees in branches in different countries to communicate at a distance, almost as if face to face. Virtual reality also provides senior executives with the opportunity to visit branches and communicate with employees online. Such innovations will become much more advanced and radically transform the profession of PR in the future.

## Conclusion

With advances in software and information technology, AI is undergoing a dramatic and irreversible change, and AI-related concepts (big data, IoT, cloud computing, etc.) are becoming a more integral part of our lives. Technological advancements depend on AI because they access and store data that are processed and supported by AI. However, it is impossible to turn those data into meaningful information without AI. Meaningful information compiled and presented by AI changes the way business is done in every industry. Advances in AI directly affect the PR sector, which depends on two-way communication and interaction.

Today, AI performs the tasks that used to require human intelligence, making AI-based PR more popular and prevalent. Artificial intelligence plays an active role in every stage of PR, from setting up to-do lists to research and analysis. Artificial intelligence can easily promote interaction between brands and target audiences, communicate messages, and perform media planning and monitoring.

Advances in AI (language and communication skills, new web technologies, virtual reality, 3D, etc.) indicate that it will play a more crucial role in PR in the future. Public relations experts used to be responsible for performing routine tasks, making accurate predictions for

PR campaigns, and effectively managing crises, which are today performed faster and more effectively by AI. Artificial intelligence can even perform tasks that require human intelligence and intuition (e.g., as call centers). For example, artificial intelligence in corporate websites or WhatsApp lines is so realistic that customers cannot tell the difference. This gives us clues as to where AI technology is heading.

Technologies such as AI and big data that can already perform different tasks in different disciplines will be more integrated into PR and shape its future. It is likely that those technologies, which can think and behave like a human and access and analyze information at an incredible pace, will replace PR experts in the future.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

# STORYTELLING AND CYNICS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON HOW NARRATIVE ADVERTISEMENTS TRANSFORM CONSUMER CYNICISM

MEHMET SAFA ÇAM

### Introduction

We listen to and tell many stories every day. Humans have an innate ability for storytelling. This predisposition stems from the fact that people organize events and situations related to their lives in the context of causality (Fisher 1989; Lindstrom 2014; Kim, Ratneshwar and Thorson 2017). We do it so often that we don't even notice the effects it causes. Accordingly, the ability of the human brain to process stories has long been the subject of many studies in social sciences. McKee (2011) calls stories the living proof of thinking considering that storytelling is a creative presentation of reality. According to him, the narrative presentation of the stories becomes one of the most natural ways of expressing the idea. People store lots of information about life in a narrative form and retrieve it later (Woodside et al. 2008). As in many social sciences, storytelling has become an important research field in advertising. In advertising studies, it has been revealed that narrative advertisements are more convincing than other advertising formats (Deighton et al. 1989; Mattila 2000; Escalas 2004; Polyorat et al. 2007; Chang 2008; Lien and Chen 2013). Padgett and Allen (1997) express that “the primary thesis of the narrative approach is that people have an innate tendency to arrange information about others and their efforts in the shape of stories”. Therefore, if the advertising message has a narrative format, it would be likely for consumers to process advertising information and reach a positive attitude and be persuaded. In narrative advertisements, the message related to the product



and the brand is conveyed chronologically in the form of a narrative that includes the structural elements of the story (character, plot, period, space, causality, event occurrence). Escalas (1998) states that the advertisements in a story format include the primary narrative units of chronology and causality. Hence, narrativity in advertising could be defined as telling a story consisting of a plot that refers to a series of hierarchical events (Escalas 1998). To put it briefly, the phenomenon of narrative advertising represents a mixed understanding of how the message is conveyed in a story-based content. Whether the advertising message is based on the plot conveyed by the actions of the characters (drama) or the presence of a narrator (storytelling) (Chang 2009) this applied format is called narrative advertising. The effectiveness of the narrative advertisements on persuasion depends on the formation of attitude towards the advertising and brand by creating positive emotions (Delgadillo and Escalas 2004; Escalas et al. 2004; Chang 2013) and positive cognitive responses (Allen and Raymond 1997; Padgett and Allen 1997; Green et al. 2004; Dahlén et al. 2010). Şener (2015) asserts that narrativity in advertisements invites consumers to experience the commercial story cognitively and emotionally and that this process positively affects consumer insights. As stated by Kim (2015), the pathway to realize this goal is to consistently build the story which is located in a logical plane in terms of chronology and causality. Besides, the amusing and astonishing components embedded in the plot should not be ignored as principal instruments that make the story an engaging narrative.

However, discussing the persuasive power of brand communications would be a crucial task in today's marketing world. Considering that even the most carefully planned communication strategies are met with a certain counteraction, a notable mass of consumers who are exposed to brand messages consider advertisements to be misleading, manipulative, and simply perceived as brand lies. Those who accuse brands of having extensive opportunism and react strongly against them are called cynical consumers (Helm 2006). Bearing in mind the destruction they may cause to the market environment, cynicism can be called a high-risk consumer trait that must be transformed. Beyond their consumer identities, these groups express themselves as anti-brand or non-consuming culture-oriented and generally do not hesitate to take a protest attitude. Some cynical groups may even exhibit withdrawal behaviors as part of their actions against companies seeking more profits through deceptive advertisements. In this case, cynicism turns into a serious consumer-brand conflict. The pathway of consumer cynicism and the narrative advertisements intersect at this point. Producing messages that will connect with

consumers emotionally would determine positive attitudes when they are exposed to the advertisement and this could reduce negative beliefs caused by consumer cynicism, with the potential to transform possible experiences. To involve consumers at the deepest level (McKee 2003), narrative advertisements can leave quite deep marks in their minds. From this standpoint, the present study examines narrative advertisements and compares them with non-narrative advertisements in terms of emotional and cognitive effects in line with the transformation of consumer cynicism.

### **Being transported into the narrative advertisement**

A transportation experience is based on consumers' emotional and mental reactions when they are immersed in the narrative world. As defined by Green and Brock (2000), transportation, which is an integrative melding of attention, imagery, and feelings, is focused on story events. They define the transportation process, focusing on the depiction of the reader as a "traveler" (Gerrig) who experiences the narrative world. Thus, based on the "traveler" concept, being transported into a story can be considered as "a convergent process in which all mental capacity is concentrated on events that develop in the story" (Green and Brock 2000). Consumers go through a journey in the story of an advertisement based on the mental and emotional involvement with the story elements (van Laer et al. 2014). Therefore, meeting the problems of story characters also develops warm feelings and enables integration to the story. The mental and emotional changes experienced by consumers while viewing the advertisement fuels an empathic process which can then influence beliefs and attitudes (Strange and Leung 1999). As a consequence, consumers are prone to be transported in the story and motivated on processing it while viewing the narrative advertisements. The transported consumers show no mental effort to question product arguments in the advertisement, which means that "their attitude toward the product is based on the thoughts toward the story and not on the thoughts toward the arguments" (Lien and Chen 2013).

The idea that narratives drive readers to imaginary places and times (Gerrig 1993) becomes a fact-like mood through their transportation into the story world with loss of attention to time and events. Being transported can also be a consideration of a distinctive mental activity characterized by a synthesis of attention, imagination, and pleasure derived from narration (Green et al. 2004). In this sense, transportation enables consumers to engage in the events as if they are there in the narrative (Busselle and Blandzic 2008). The tendency of consumers to develop alternative

scenarios to the advertisement story that they experience with a sense of "being there" makes transportation an exclusive mental activity in terms of cognitive and emotional impacts (Deighton et al. 1989; Adaval and Wyer 1998; Green and Brock 2000). In brief, transportation into narrative advertisements triggers a dominating emotional activity in which consumers are drawn into the story, imaginatively experience the events and interact with the story characters.

### **Advertising credibility and character identification**

Consumer beliefs in the accuracy of the message information are simply defined as the credibility of the advertisement which is a primary principle of advertising effectiveness (Kim 2015). As MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) described, "ad credibility is the extent to which the consumer perceives assertions about the brand in the ad message to be truthful and believable." Thus, advertisements with a sense of credibility have positive cognitive and emotional impacts on buying decisions (Kamins et al. 1989; Choi and Rifon 2002). Even messages with emotional intensity such as an advertisement story can have direct effects on attitudes towards the advertisement and brand (Yoo and MacInnis 2005). Moreover, advertising credibility can be the key reason for dramatic increases in sales (Goldsmith et al. 2000; Erdem et al. 2002; Tsang et al. 2004). Correspondingly, Kim (2015) states that narrative advertisements have the credibility sense that comes from the story which in turn becomes a persuasion power. Accordingly, consumers often tend to adopt the message arguments related to the slice of life in the story that can directly enhance the persuasive impact of narrative advertising.

The sense of the credibility of the advertisement was created due to the sequence of events put forward by the story characters who also have major roles in narrative reality. The perpetrator of the events or others affected by him/her can be considered as a component in the advertisement story that increases the imaginative potential of consumers and intensifies the emotional process. In this sense, character identification could be defined as viewers stepping outside of themselves – even for a while – and establishing emotional ties with the advertisement characters (Igartua 2010). People experience a common feeling when they become deeply transported in a story in which a strong empathy activity leads consumers to adopt the characters' goals (Tal-Or and Cohen 2010). Therefore, identification as the state of sharing the only mind in which the distinction between the self and the other disappears (Friedberg 1990) can be crucial for brands to build long-term relations among consumers. Thus, the first

hypothesis of the study tests the narrative impact on those concepts as formally stated:

H1. *There is a significant difference between advertisement formats (narrative vs. argument) in terms of (a) transportation experience, (b) emotional reactions, (c) credibility perception towards the message, and (d) character identification.*

## Consumer cynicism

Consumer cynicism is characterized by Helm (2006) as a “stable, learned attitude toward the marketplace affected by the perception that pervasive opportunism among firms exists and that this opportunism creates a harmful consumer marketplace”. The noticeable feature of this depiction is that consumer cynicism is stated as being an acquired and permanent attitude response. Similarly, Chylinski and Chu (2010) state that consumers react to marketing efforts focusing on the emotional and behavioral experiences that are perceived as incompatible with their aims and values. They stated that consumer cynicism presents multiple attitudinal structures and pointed out that it cannot be extensively explained solely on a behavioral basis (Chylinski and Chu 2010). According to the sophisticated rationale to comprehend consumer cynicism, experiencing the brand activities in contradiction of the aims and expectations of the consumers through repeated periods causes an increasing dissatisfaction (Helm et al. 2015; Amezcua and Quintanilla 2016; Ketron 2016; Arli et al. 2017). Besides, dissatisfaction with unfulfilled expectations fosters the dominant belief building the distrust that the brand has some hidden goals, and raises doubts about brand promises. Therefore, consumer cynicism can be considered as unfavorable attitudes and beliefs that enable consumers to present their cognitive and emotional responses to the market place and, then, continues with alienation and withdrawal behavior (Helm 2004; 2006; Helm et al. 2015).

Some cynical consumers may exhibit withdrawal behaviors against companies seeking more profits through advertisements perceived as deceptive as part of their marketing efforts. The cynics reward or punish brands through “boycotting, informing about purchasing decisions, retaliation against deceptive brands, and raising awareness of other consumers with the sense of authority for being the major actors of the marketing environment” (van Dolen et al. 2012). If the cynicism attitudes of consumers continue, it looks as though brands may be condemned to lose customers. Additionally, this is more likely to violate credibility owing to the negative attitude toward brands (Allison 1978); hence, such marketing

efforts encourage alienation against the consumption environment. In such circumstances, consumer cynicism emerges as a result of negative attitudes and beliefs, but sometimes due to personality traits and experiential dynamics. From this point of view, it will be possible to talk about consumer cynicism within brand-consumer relations which is the result of mutual trust damage (Güven 2016). Chowdhury and Fernando (2014) think that consumer cynicism gives rise to a questioning of these marketing efforts in line with immoral activities such as the indirect earnings of brands. Contrary to popular belief, consumer cynicism should not only be interpreted as aggressive behaviors towards the market environment but as a systematic defense mechanism that develops towards deceptive goals and actions of brands.

The cynical attitudes and behaviors of consumers as a result of interactions with marketing stimulants should be examined, especially in the focus of advertising communication. One of the goals of this study is to analyze whether the possible effects of the advertising approach play a significant role in cynicism attitudes. This requires a questioning of the mediating effect of transportation, the reliability of the advertisement, character identity, and affective factors. The relevant hypothesis will be as follows:

*H2. Transportation experience, (b) emotional reactions, (c) credibility towards the message, and (d) character identification mediate the positive impact of narrative advertisements (vs. non-narrative) on consumer cynicism attitudes.*

Given the fact that the marketing system can keep going through healthy communication with consumers, there is value in any positive impacts at the first contact on TV. Building message contents, when exposed to advertising that will connect them emotionally, will positively determine attitudes. This may reduce the negative beliefs caused by consumer cynicism with the potential to transform future experiences. Therefore, we assume that the emotional connections arising from the narrative advertisement format will provide more effective results than other advertisement types.

*H3. Narrative advertisements have more transformative effects on consumer cynicism scores than argumentative advertisements.*

The aforementioned mediating factors, which were partly used by Kim et al. (2017) in transforming advertisement and brand attitudes as potential effects of the narrative format, were discussed in this study based on consumer cynicism with different statistical approaches. Within this regard, empirical research has been conducted to analyze the relations

between the narrative advertisement format and exposure to other types of advertisements.

## Methodology

### Design and participants

This study examines the relations between narrative advertisements and consumer cynicism. The potential of narrative advertisements in transforming cynicism through emotional and cognitive effects has been tested with statistical techniques. With this aim, we conducted a 2 (narrative vs. non-narrative) x 2 (before-after advertisement stimulus) between-subjects design known as the split-plot model which is a randomized design with a control group (Field 2011; Tabachnick and Fidell 2015). One hundred and forty undergraduate students (76 male, 64 female) participated in the experiment and were randomly assigned to groups, with equal numbers per group. The experimental group was then exposed to narrative advertisement stimuli, and the control group viewed the argument advertisements. After each exposure process, repeated measurements in consumers' cynicism scores were performed in both groups. Following the experimental procedure, the cynicism attitude scores were compared between the groups.

### Stimulus development

We created a set of stimuli (see Appendix 1) consisting of five advertisements for each group (experimental group = 5, control group = 5), assuming that data collection would take at least one hour. The advertisement spots for different brands and products were selected only if they had been broadcast in the last five years on TV. Besides, narrative advertisements assigned as experimental group stimuli were picked out from a stack of 20 advertised movies. Four independent coders were assigned within the academy and from the marketing profession to evaluate each advertisement by using a “narrative structure coding scale” (Escalas et al. 2004). Within this procedure, the coders were not given any further information about the research hypotheses. The coders were then allowed to rate 20 advertisements over 60 minutes using a five-point Likert-type scale. Afterwards, the mean values of the scores were calculated to decide the narrative structure score of each advertisement. The consistency of the coding process was statistically tested and the inter-rater conformity was found to have a high-reliability coefficient (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .739$ ;  $p < .001$ ). The advertisements in the non-narrative format – those having appeal, such as humor, fear, sexuality, music, etc. –

for the control group were selected based on the "YouTube ads leaderboard" research results. The first five advertisements were selected due to their annual display rates listed by YouTube.

### **Procedure**

The data were gathered through repeated measurements from a total group of 140 subjects. Subjects were randomly assigned into two groups of equal number and a pre-test-post-test experimental design was performed to measure their responses to advertisement stimuli. In the first phase, a pre-test was carried out to measure the cynicism attitudes. Post-test cynicism measurements were performed followed by the second phase in which the experimental group was exposed to five narrative advertisements and the control group was exposed to the argument advertisements. The questionnaire forms including advertisement stimuli, which were prepared in Google Forms, were sent to the e-mails of the subjects who were randomly distributed to the groups, and sessions were held in a classroom with an internet connection. For each advertisement, respondents rated the same scale items. The data-gathering process was conducted within groups of 10 participants under the supervision of the researcher and each session lasted about one hour.

### **Measures**

The scale items are listed in full in Appendix 1. In the study, two independent questionnaire forms were developed for the subjects during the repeated measures. The pre-test (pre-exposure) form consisted of statements about and aimed at measuring the consumer cynicism attitudes of all participants. In the post-test (post-exposure) questionnaire form, there were items to measure the reactions of the participants to the advertisement stimuli. In both forms, consumer cynicism items were included to determine the level of cynicism attitudes. The scales were either completely or partially adopted from previous studies. All statements in the questionnaire were evaluated with a 5-point Likert-type scale.

Consumer cynicism is one of the dependent variables of the study and it was planned for this to be compared between groups. The scale, which is unique in the research field, was developed by Helm et al. (2015). The reliability coefficient of the 8-item scale calculated by the current researcher was sufficient (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .87$ ). The emotional response scale by Kim (2015) was used to decide the affection levels of the subjects towards the advertisement they viewed. The reliability coefficient calculated in this study was quite satisfactory (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .90$ ). The

items measuring the credibility of the advertisement (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .97$ ) are a combination of those used by MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) and Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998). Subjects who were exposed to advertisements rated their states of identification with the characters using the advertisement response empathy (ARE) scale developed by Escalas and Stern (2003). The reliability coefficient of this scale was Cronbach's  $\alpha = .95$ . Then, the transportation scale by Green and Brock (2000) was used to measure the experience of the events described in the advertisement story. The scale consists of 11 items and the reliability coefficient was extremely high in this study (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .94$ ).

## Results

The responses to the manipulation control item (there is a story about the characters in the advertisement) indicate that participants who were exposed to narrative advertisements perceived a higher level of story content than participants who viewed the argument type with appeals only ( $M_{\text{narrative}} = 4.59$ ,  $M_{\text{argument}} = 3.14$ ;  $t(68) = 13.905$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Conversely, the participants viewing the argument advertisements became more aware of the appeals (the advertisement includes some appeal in terms of one of these: celebrity, humor, fear, music, or sexuality) than the narrative advertisement group ( $M_{\text{argument}} = 4.36$ ,  $M_{\text{narrative}} = 3.42$ ;  $t(68) = 7.031$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Hence, the manipulation checks revealed that all the participants in both groups were familiar with the advertisement types they viewed.

Table 8.1 shows the correlations among the dependent and independent variables used in the study. It indicates a high level of correlation between transportation and emotional responses ( $r = .88$ ). Similar intercorrelations are obvious among other variances. As expected – and most remarkably – the correlations of narrative advertisement effects with consumer cynicism are significantly negative. This means that when transportation, credibility, emotions, and identification rise, there should be a decline in the consumer cynicism attitude scores. Thus, it is conceivable that the average scores of advertisement viewing effectiveness acquired from the groups would be contrary to consumer cynicism.



**Table 8.1.** Means, standard deviations, and correlations of the study

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Transportation	3,31	0,83	1				
2. Credibility	3,45	0,78	,765**	1			
3. Emotions	2,76	1,18	,892**	0,652**	1		
4. Identification	2,81	0,92	,835**	0,572**	0,846**	1	
5. Consumer Cynicism	2,51	0,89	-,64**	-,637**	-,563**	-,54**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As stated in H1, there are significant differences in viewing various types of advertisements between the groups in terms of potential advertising impacts. The MANOVA results (see Table 7.2) reveal that the difference in all mean scores was statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). Accordingly, there is a difference in the mean scores of the transportation experience in favor of the narrative advertisements ( $t = 7.031$ ;  $M_{\text{narrative}} = 3.73$ ;  $M_{\text{argument}} = 2.70$ ). As expected, the emotional responses to advertisement stimuli are significantly higher for the narrative advertisements ( $t = 9.25$ ;  $M_{\text{narrative}} = 3.61$ ;  $M_{\text{argument}} = 1.82$ ). The mean scores of identification with advertisement characters in the experimental group also outperformed non-narrative advertisements ( $t = 4.89$ ;  $M_{\text{narrative}} = 3.25$ ;  $M_{\text{argument}} = 2.34$ ). Finally, the subjects exposed to narrative advertisements have a higher perception of advertising credibility ( $t = 5.82$ ;  $M_{\text{narrative}} = 3.83$ ;  $M_{\text{argument}} = 2.98$ ). Also, being exposed to different types of advertisements refers to significant impacts on transportation, emotionality, credibility, and character identification scores,  $F(4,135) = 26,725$ ,  $p > .05$ . These results fully supported H1.

**Table 8.2.** Multivariate test results of the advertisement effects

	<i>Narrative Ads (n=70)</i>		<i>Argument Ads with Appeal (n=70)</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Transportation	3,73	0,65	2,70	0,57	7,03	138	.000
Credibility	3,83	0,53	2,98	0,66	5,82	138	.000
Emotions	3,61	0,91	1,82	0,68	9,25	138	.000
Identificat.on	3,25	0,86	2,34	0,67	4,89	138	.000
	<i>Value</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Hypothesis df</i>	<i>Error df</i>	<i>P</i>		
Pillai's Trace	,62	26,7	4	135	.00		
Wilks'	,37	26,7	4	135	.00		
Lambda							
Hotelling's Trace	1,64	26,7	4	135	.00		

H2 assumes that advertising effectiveness in transportation, emotions, credibility towards the message, and character identification mediates the positive impact of narrative (as opposed to non-narrative) advertisements on consumer cynicism attitudes. To test the hypothesis, all the variables were assigned as covariates in an ANCOVA analysis for narrative vs. argument format conditions (Table 7.3). After including transportation, credibility, emotional reactions, and identification variables as covariates, the results indicate that viewing different types of advertisements (narrative vs. argument with appeals) has a significant impact on consumer cynicism,  $F(1,134) = 20.48, p < .01$ . Accordingly, Bonferroni test results between the estimated means of consumer cynicism scores of the groups demonstrate that, with the control of covariants, consumer cynicism increases in the narrative group ( $M = 1.93 < M_{\text{estimated}} = 2.08$ ) and decreases in the argument group ( $M = 3.24 > M_{\text{estimated}} = 3.02$ ). Therefore, when the effect of covariances is excluded from the analysis, there is an obvious shift in the consumer cynicism scores. In this case, hypothesis 2 that focuses on the effects of the covariates on consumer cynicism (also in favor of narrative advertisements), is accepted.

**Table 8.3.** Means, estimated means, and test of between-subject effects

Group	N	<i>Consumer Cynicism*</i>		df	Mean Square	F	P***
		Mean	Estimated Mean**				
Narrative Ads	70	1,93	2,08	134	6,91	20,4	.000
Argument Ads	70	3,24	3,02				

\* Dependent Variable

\*\* Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Transportation Experience = 3.31, Credibility = 3.45, Emotions = 2.76, Identification = 2.81

\*\*\* Based on estimated marginal means, the mean difference is significant at the .05 level. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni

In the experimental group, the pre-test consumer cynicism score was higher than the measurements after the narrative advertisement exposition ( $M = 3.37 > M = 2.01$ ). In the argument advertisement group, the cynicism score was  $M = 3.47$  before the exposition and computed as  $M = 3.14$  in the post-test (see Table 7.4). Although the cynicism attitude was reduced in both groups, there was a dramatic decrease in the scores of the narrative advertisement group.

**Table 8.4.** Repeated measures ANOVA results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
<i>Between Subjects</i>					
Group	1005,80	1	1005,80	22,90	,000
Error	2986,54	138	43,91		
<i>Within Subjects</i>					
Measure	1830,63	1	1830,63	96,95	,000
Group*Measure	472,69	1	472,69	25,03	,000
Error	1283,94	138	18,88		
	<i>Narrative Ads</i>		<i>Argument Ads with Appeals</i>		
<i>Measures</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>p*</i>
Pre-test	3,37	5,76	3,47	5,89	,000
Post-test	2,01	5,83	3,14	4,85	,000

Dependent Variable: Consumer Cynicism

\* Mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The two-way ANOVA results are presented in Table 7.4 to see whether these changes, which are observed in the consumer cynicism attitudes, showed a significant difference after the experimental procedure compared to the pre-test scores. The results refer to a significant difference in the cynicism scores from pre-test to post-exposure. Simply put, it is clear that the common effects of viewing different advertisement types and repeated measure factors on consumer cynicism were significant,  $F(1,138) = 25.03$ ,  $p < .001$ . This evidence means that viewing argument advertisements or narrative advertisements has diverse effects on consumer cynicism scores. Narrative advertisement stimuli, which provide lower means compared to the pre-test, have a superiority to argument advertisements in reducing cynicism attitudes. As a result, H3 is supported.

## Conclusion

### Summary of key findings

Higher scores were achieved in the narrative advertising stimuli group in terms of transportation experience, advertisement-oriented emotions, perception of advertising reliability, and identification with an advertisement character. Mean scores reveal that the responses to the narrative advertisements were above the scale average points. However, the scores in the control group (argument advertisements with appeal) were below or close to the average. Therefore, it is evident that an uncertainty occurs, at best, for the responses to argument advertisement stimuli. When it comes to transportation experience, it is likely to state that the narrative approach enables a high level of feeling lost in the advertising story. Especially the high scores of transportation and credibility are indisputable for the development of positive consumer attitudes and beliefs. It is clear that these differences, in which the experience of transportation is located on the focal point, should be considered as a leading cornerstone of consumer cynicism. The primary motivation for the difference in cynicism scores was the responses to transportation into the advertisement story. Consumer cynicism attitudes in the narrative advertisement group were significantly lower than in those exposed to argument advertisements. More importantly, these results demonstrate the specific impact of emotional and cognitive responses triggered by narrative advertisements on consumer cynicism. Therefore, it can be strongly stated that deep-rooted and negative brand beliefs like consumer cynicism are affected by emotional and cognitive reactions to a story and that positive beliefs develop towards the brand.

### **Theoretical and managerial implications**

This study provides significant contributions within the narrative advertisement and consumer cynicism fields. The most noticeable is that the study reveals a crucial finding for transforming consumer cynicism. The large gap between mean scores of consumer cynicism in the narrative advertisement group showed that the subjects reacted precisely to narrative advertisement stimuli. The narrative advertisement message fueled a dramatic drop in the experimental group which initially demonstrated almost equal cynicism attitudes to the control group. It supports the notion that being transported into events and in particular, the principle of causality in the narrative world, change the consumer's attitude towards cynicism on the rational as well as the emotional axis.

This is also the result of a natural predisposition of human beings (Deighton et al. 1989; Fisher 1989; Padgett and Allen 1997). Therefore, consumers have so few chances to perfectly portend their emotions and mental capacities when they encounter messages that cannot be described as stories in which the plot hierarchy is disconnected and an emotional connection with characters cannot be established. Consumers want to reach a rational conclusion at the end of the story, draw lessons and think about possible endings (Bruner 1990; Eagly and Chaiken 1993) although they react emotionally (Escalas et al. 2004; van Laer et al. 2014). Then, it would not be incorrect to assume that the narrative advertisement has a powerful stimulating function that transforms consumer cynicism into a positive consumer manner.

Furthermore, the ability of narrative advertisements to transform the attitude of consumer cynicism which is rooted in the consumer mind as a fixed and stable belief system (Helm 2006), reveals that it deeply impacts the availability heuristics explained by a cognitive predisposition (Tversky and Kahneman 1973). From this point of view, events, people, situations, and of course brands are remembered and evaluated with cognitive and biased shortcuts. The consumer cynicism attitude is also based on a pervasive and strong cognitive predisposition and it can turn into a very generalizing belief system caused by resorting to the easiest efforts in their minds. Therefore, it is clear that shortcuts to prevent additional cognitive effort by consumers should be prepared as positively and emotionally as possible. Considering that the stories told in the advertisements evolve into positive references, it will be possible for consumers to produce constructive ideas associated with the brand. Potential narrative impacts may be the main reason for dramatic changes in the availability shortcuts of consumers. The subjects who negatively expressed their opinions about brands by referring to the experiential or sensory shortcuts in their minds

had to modify these heuristics after viewing narrative advertisements. In sum, as long as the stories are taken as a strategic step in designing brand communication, consumers will be able to construct their shortcuts when favorably evaluating the advertisements. Even if it is feasible that tactical appeals such as celebrity use, humor, fear, or sexuality or musical effect arouses attention to advertisements and encourages advertisement viewing behavior, there seems to be less likelihood of transforming beliefs such as consumer cynicism. In other words, consumers encountering an advertisement's appeal are immersed by the attractiveness of the celebrity, music, or sexuality, etc., and can demonstrate small cognitive or emotive responses but when compared to narratives, the reactions can be lower than expected.

In today's competitive market environment, brands need to design constructive and transformative brand relations on first contact with the consumers. The primary threat for the brand could be that consumers are most likely to have cynicism attitudes. In this sense, it is of great importance that managers should revise their brand communication approaches. Narrative advertising provides a valuable possibility for professionals and brand managers with the potential to penetrate attitudes and common beliefs. Also, it could be a strong marketing tool in the return of brand investments with the potential of transforming possible cynicism attitudes. The narrative approach, which should be considered as a very strategic initiative in terms of the message strategy, reinforces the possible trends towards the advertisement and thus to the product/brand through cognitive and emotional impacts. Advertising and marketing professionals are increasingly focusing on consumer experiences and building up marketing ideas by following this path. Correspondingly, it would be thrilling for the professionals that the mental and emotional experience can be far beyond the promises of advertising.

### **Future Directions and Limitations**

Although this study has reached key findings related to narrative advertisements within the scope of advertising effectiveness, it has some limitations. First of all, it should be kept in mind that the research was conducted among college students representing a very young sample. Aiming to generalize the results, it will be beneficial to create the sample through different socio-economic statuses. Equally, increasing the sample size and reaching more stimuli from various product categories would be efforts to raise the validity of the research. In this study, advertising stimuli were shown to the sample group during the experimental process and the subjects were asked to rate the items. The subjects first read the

instructions at the beginning, then viewed the narrative advertisement stimuli, and finally, filled out the questionnaire form. Such a method could lead subjects to develop excessive attention to the process or urge them to give similar responses to stimuli, resulting in contradictory findings. In future research designs, narrative advertisements embedded in a TV show can lead consumers to more realistic responses. Thus, crucial insights can be achieved through possible interactions among multiple types of programs, advertising stimuli, and consumers. In addition to this, it would be meaningful to set up a set of stimulus advertisements to cover different media, rather than just TV, in terms of measuring the responses of consumers to other narrative content, such as interactive digital platforms.

This study tested whether consumer cynicism scores could be minimized when being exposed to narrative advertisements. During the research, some advertising impacts played an important role in the emergence of this reduction. Despite this, since these were mostly emotional mediators, the role of cognitive variables such as involvement, attention, and motivation to process information should be fully included in the research. The research limitation related to the product category also needs consideration. Narrative stimuli in the current study were linked to the high-involvement product category. Unfavorably, this also indicates that there is no perfect match with the target consumer group. For this reason, the findings of the study are less likely to match the low-involvement product categories. Further studies should include low-involvement category products and re-investigate the impacts of narrative advertisements on consumer cynicism.

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## Appendix 1. Stimulus ads

Brand	Story of the Ad	Narrative Structure Score
Türkiye İş Bankası	The story of the villagers in a small town. It rains after the days of drought and the efforts of a copper master to help them to collect water.	4,45
Allianz Insurance Company	A man suffering from a relentless disease is trying to get rid of it and recovers with the support of his family.	4,33
Enza Home	A young writer release a new book about his love of childhood and a reunion happens.	3,68
Garanti Bankası	A little girl is upset because it doesn't snow. One day her parents prepare her for a surprise and they throw unnatural snow with a snow machine, the girl rejoices.	3,68
Turkish Air Lines	Children living in a small mountain village decide to build an airstrip. However, the plane they expect does not come. Eventually, an airplane lands on a nearby runway and the pilot greets them.	3,43

Brand	Description of the Ad	Appeal
Cornetto	Young people dancing on the beach with music in a summer celebration party	Music, Celebrity
Türkiye Akbank	A group of musicians sings with the advantages of the bank with amazing choreography.	Music
Ülker Smart	Children tell their dreams by dancing with animated characters.	Music, Animation
Yapı Kredi	Well known comedians convey the innovations of the bank humorously.	Celebrity, Humor, Animation
Türkcell	Telekom company to transfer information about a newly developed campaign with composed music.	Music

## Appendix 2. The scale items, reliability coefficients, and sources

Variables	Scale Items	Source Adapted
<b>Transportation</b> Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$	While I was viewing the ad, I could easily picture the events in it taking place. While I was viewing the ad, activity going on in the room around me was on my mind. I could picture myself in the scene of the events described in the ad. I was mentally involved in the ad while watching it. I found myself thinking of ways the ad could have turned out differently.	Green and Brock (2000)
<b>Emotive Response</b> Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$	I felt emotionally involved in the ad. I found the ad moving. The ad affected me emotionally. I was able to connect with the ad emotionally. This ad hooked me in terms of my feelings.	Kim (2015)
<b>Emotive Response</b> Cronbach's $\alpha = .97$	I think this ad was convincing. This ad is believable. This ad is biased. This ad is truthful. I've been accurately informed after viewing this ad.	MacKenzie and Lutz (1989)  Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998)
<b>Ad Response Empathy (ARE)</b> Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$	While watching the ad, I experienced feeling as if the events were really happening to me. While watching the ad, I felt as though I were one of the characters. While watching the commercial, I felt as if the characters' feelings were my own.	Escalas and Stern (2003)

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<p><b>Consumer Cynicism</b> Cronbach's <math>\alpha = .87</math></p>	<p>This company does not mind breaking the law; they just see fines and lawsuits as a cost of doing business. This company is more interested in making profits than in serving consumers. This company sees consumers as puppets to manipulate. This manufacturer does not care what happens once I have bought the product. If I want to get my money's worth, I cannot believe what this company tells me. This company will sacrifice anything to make a profit. To make a profit, This company is willing to do whatever it can get away with. This business will cut any corner they can to improve profit margins.</p>	<p>Helm, Moulard and Richins (2015)</p>
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All items were measured on a scale from 1 to 5 in this study.

Reliability coefficients belong to this research.

The pre-test questionnaire included general statements of consumer cynicism and demographic questions only (eg. Most companies do not mind breaking the law).

## CHAPTER NINE

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE TURKISH CINEMA AUDIENCE

MESUT AYTEKİN

### Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) identified the disease that emerged in China in the last month of 2019 as the new virus SARS-CoV-2 on February 11, 2020, and named the outbreak “Covid-19” (Şeker et al. 2020: 25). The WHO declared Covid-19 as a pandemic on January 30, 2020, accepting it an international public health problem.

The pandemic affected the whole world within a short time. Countries had to take drastic measures to reduce its impacts. Curfews, which were imposed intermittently in the beginning, were extended to the whole day. Places other than workplaces that meet basic needs were closed. Many companies had to switch to working from home. Educational institutions of all levels switched to distance education. The aim was to prevent the spread of the disease by stopping social interaction. Cinema was one of the sectors most affected by this process. Many of the arts and culture events were postponed or canceled. Big-budget movies to be released in a period when the industry was very active were postponed, including *No Time to Die*, *Fast and Furious 9*, *Mulan*, *Wonder Women 1984*, *The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge on the Run*, *Greyhound* and *Scoob!*

Except for movie theaters, the world cinema industry had to stop all stages of production from the idea stage to the screening stage. Ongoing shoots were suspended and planned projects were postponed. While film festivals and competitions that could produce solutions carried out their activities online, many of them canceled their 2020 activities.

The cinema audience stayed away from cinemas for a long time during this period when the industry was experiencing a great crisis. Breaking out as it did, in the most active period of the Turkish cinema industry which

has had serious problems in recent years, the pandemic put the industry into a further economic downturn. When the movie theaters, the most important source of income for the Turkish cinema industry, were closed, both movie theater owners and producers suffered a great loss of income. The Turkish cinema audience tried to enjoy cinema through different methods during the quarantine process. The opportunities offered by the new media environments began to seem safer for cinema audiences. While the cinema audience was in a slow digital transformation, the pandemic acted as a catalyst in this process.

### **Covid-19 and world cinema**

In the historical process, cinema has been affected by many political, social and economic developments that affect humanity. It has especially suffered from wars, epidemics, technological developments and crises. However, none of these have turned into a problem that affected the whole world as much as Covid-19. This virus, which caused cinema industries to stop simultaneously in many places in the world, also hit the development of the future cinema of the coming years. The world cinema industry was unprepared for this crisis, and it seemed very difficult to manage it as the crisis source was non-sectoral. However, the fact that the process would cover an unpredictable period left the industry even more desperate.

In the life cycle of the world where health comes first, culture and art activities, such as cinema, were stopped and postponed. With the closure of cinemas, screenings were postponed and film shoots canceled. The American Cinema Industry, which dominates 80% of the world cinema industry, entered into a major crisis despite 35,000 theaters and an annual revenue of \$15 billion (Özgül 2020). Although many important film projects were waiting to be released, it was predicted that the American Cinema Industry would close 2020 with a loss of \$6 billion (Aydemir 2020). AMC Theaters, the world's largest movie theater chain with 8,200 theaters in 661 locations in the United States and 2,200 theaters in 244 locations in Europe, tried to overcome the crisis with loans (Aydemir 2020). Due to this same decision by Netflix, which had to suspend shoots of its films and TV series in many countries, 120,000 industry employees of the platform became unemployed (Kulaklı 2020). Disney fired 100,000 people (Uluç 2020).

The Covid-19 crisis has also had an impact on other powerful cinema industries in the world. On the basis of countries, China, which has the world's strongest cinema industries after the U.S., experienced a 39% decrease while this decrease rate was 46% in Japan and 65% in South



Korea (Uluç 2020). The Chinese cinema industry, which has made huge profits from Hollywood productions as well as its own cinema productions, suffered greatly from this process. Great economic losses were also experienced in the European cinema industry. In countries such as France, England and Germany, the loss of the sector reached 50-60% (Aydemir 2020). Ferhat Aslan, deputy general manager of the distributor and producer company CJ Entertainment Turkey, stated that the Turkish cinema industry lost a total of TL 150 million in gross revenue until the end of April (Çalışkan 2020).

The most important stage in which the cinema industry suffered was the distribution and screening processes. With the closure of movie theaters, great economic losses were experienced at this stage. Production companies and distributors have turned to digital platforms, which have become popular mass media in recent years, as a solution to avoid further economic loss. Many big-budget movies whose release was stopped or delayed during the pandemic period, such as *Artemis Fowl*, *Scoob!*, *Trolls World Tour* and *Greyhound*, were shown on digital platforms. Providing a safe viewing environment for people staying at home, digital platforms have become an attractive display tool with their wide variety and rich content.

Digital platforms have created a positive perception in the target audience with free screenings along with their updated content. HBO opened up its widely acclaimed TV series, such as *The Sopranos*, *Veep*, *Six Feet Under*, *The Wire* and *True Blood*, for free viewing for a limited period while Apple TV+ provided free access to some of its productions. Digital platforms have increased the number of both subscribers and viewing rates with such initiatives. The ongoing uncertainty of the Covid-19 process and the hesitation of audiences on going to movie theaters show that digital platforms will keep their popularity.

Besides, social media networks were also used as a free display tool during the pandemic process. Many directors, institutions and production companies shared certain films with moviegoers free of charge on YouTube. For example, Lionsgate showed its popular movies, such as *The Hunger Games*, *Dirty Dancing*, *La La Land* and *John Wick*, live on YouTube on Fridays. Again, Netflix has shared its 10 original documentaries on its YouTube page to help teachers seeking additional resources in the distance education process due to the coronavirus pandemic. Michael Moore released the documentary titled *Planet of the Humans*, which he prepared with Jeff Gibbs, on YouTube. The SXSW Film Festival streamed all of the films, which are planned to be included

in its short film selection, on the Mailchimp Presents digital platform and Vimeo.

During the pandemic, drive-in cinemas have also come to the fore as a safe viewing pleasure. There has been an increase in drive-in cinemas in Europe, America and the Far East, and such screenings have started to be organized in countries without drive-in cinemas. Free screenings held with contributions from local administrations attracted great attention.

Film festivals and competitions were one of the important industrial activities that suffered greatly from the crisis of Covid-19. The Oscars made changes to the conditions of participation due to the pandemic. While many major festivals, such as Cannes, Karlovy Vary, and the Locarno Film Festival, were canceled, some festivals met moviegoers online. However, festivals like Cannes have shown their selections and nominated films in other festivals, video sharing sites and online platforms. More than 20 festivals came together with an original approach and organized the "We Are One" festival on YouTube. The International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) has released 297 films that it selected from its archive free of charge.

Countries have announced financial support programs for the cinema industry. Different collaborations, support and funds have been created for the industry, and efforts have been made to support unemployed industry workers in particular. Netflix has tried to support behind-camera and front-of-camera workers with a fund of \$200 million.

The uncertainty of the process and the uneasiness of people about going to movie theaters due to the pandemic created a negative perception of the industry. The world cinema industry is trying to plan its operations with new rules while thinking about how to adapt to the "new normal" process.

## **Covid-19 and turkish cinema**

In the motion picture industry, domestic movies have been most watched in Europe in recent years, and the Turkish cinema industry has been struggling with economic difficulties and unemployment. According to data of [www.boxofficeturkiye.com](http://www.boxofficeturkiye.com), 404 new films were released in Turkish cinema in 2019, out of which 145 were domestic. A total of 59,556,020 people watched these films and a revenue of TL 980,410,567 was obtained. The number of local spectators decreased by -2.2% compared to the previous year, reaching 33,790,600 people. A total of TL 532,711,165 in revenue was earned from the local spectators.

The debate between filmmakers and movie theaters in 2019 had been partially resolved with the change in cinema law. However, the Covid-19 pandemic, which emerged in early 2020, caused the closure of movie theaters during the industry's busiest period. The drastic measures taken throughout the country since mid-March brought Turkish cinema to a halt. According to Murat Aslan, general manager of Cinetech Cinemas, the experience of the Covid-19 crisis following on from the impact of the previous year's discussions affecting the industry created a new "rock bottom" for the industry (Çalışkan 2020).

While cinemas locked their doors, films postponed their release dates, filming was stopped, projects were put on hold, and film festivals and competitions were postponed. For example, the 16th Children's Film Festival (April 23), the International Labor Film and Video Festival (May 1-7), the 23rd Flying Broom International Women's Film Festival (May 7-14), the 13th Documentarist – Istanbul Documentary Days (June 6-16), the 18th International Filmmor Women's Film Festival on Wheels (June 12-22) and the International Migration Film Festival (June 14-21) were held online.

The Turkish cinema industry was negatively affected by this process as were other countries' cinemas. Especially, the fact that the new normalization process of movie theaters, which provide a great economic input to the sector, coincided with the summer further deepened the crisis. The summer period is a very off-peak period for Turkish cinema. When the uneasiness due to Covid-19 was added to this period, movie theaters could not be operated functionally although they were officially allowed to be opened. The Turkish cinema industry still generates one-third of its revenue from movie theaters (Yılmaz 2020). This is why movie theaters are of vital importance to the industry.

While cinemas in shopping malls were gradually opening up, many other movie theaters postponed their opening process. While the 60-year-old REXX Cinema was closed, the historical Kadıköy, Beyoğlu and Karaca cinemas created different solutions to survive. Beyoğlu Cinema started publishing the weekly magazine titled 1989, which operates on a subscription basis, and applied for crowdfunding through Fongogo. Kadıköy Cinema developed a solution to the difficult process by selling name tags for seats.

Başka Cinema, which distributes independent films, cooperated with Blu TV, which is one of Turkey's most important domestic digital platforms. It brought together its two events titled "Başka Cinema" and "Başka Wednesday" with the audience on Blu TV through a rent-watch method. Even though the screening of the films that were not released at

movie theaters with the concept of Başka Cinema received a reaction from the Movie Theater Investors Foundation (SİSAY), it showed that there can be alternative ways to screen movies.

The Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) moved its selection of award-winning films to the digital environment with MUBI. Later, the foundation presented its selections to moviegoers by selling tickets on its website. The Istanbul Film Festival showed its films through its website in the same way. The movies attracted great attention, and additional sessions were held. The Istanbul Film Festival also opened access to the selections of the International Adana Golden Boll Film Festival (14-20 September) and the Başka Cinema Ayvalık Film Festival (21-26 September) on its website. Many moviegoers who could not go to movie theaters due to the pandemic had the opportunity to see important, premiering films.

Shareholders of the industry also tried to benefit from digital opportunities in different ways. Online screenings and meetings with moviegoers were held on the internet. Various NGOs, directors and institutions held free movie screenings. Cinema education such as acting, directing and scriptwriting started to be provided online. Behind-camera and front-of-camera workers of the cinema industry, academics, and screenwriters shared their experiences and knowledge through live broadcasts and programs that they made from their social media accounts. Istanbul Modern, Pera Film, Salt, and TÜRSAK Foundation held online screenings and interviews.

Mithat Alam Film Center's Turkish Cinema Visual Memory Project opened access to a movie every day on its online platform named the Istanbul Experimental, Screening Room. The Istanbul Biennial shared two short films from its selection every week for free. TRT EBA TV organized a "Cinema Hour" at 09.00 p.m. on Saturday evenings.

Many directors, film companies and producers shared their narrative, documentary and short films with moviegoers free of charge through video display networks, such as YouTube and Vimeo. Ümit Ünal's *Sofra Sırları* (Serial Cook), Ramin Martin's *Canavarlar Sofrası* (The Monsters' Dinner), Emre Konuk's *Körfez* (The Gulf), Emre Akay and Hasan Yalaz's *Bir Tuğra Kaftancıoğlu Filmi* (A Film by Tuğra Kaftancıoğlu) and Ezel Akay's *Neredesin Firuze* (Where's Firuze?) are among these movies.

Netflix contributed TL4 million to its sector's employees in Turkey with the cooperation of the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) and the Cinema and Television Union (Hatunoğlu 2020).

The main point is how many of the target audience, who are accustomed to watching movies from digital platforms, will return to

movie theaters? There is great anxiety in both spectators and movie theater owners because many things are still unclear for the industry, and the problems have not yet been solved. First of all, movie theaters cannot work at full capacity, there are precautions that they must take. The theaters should initially be disinfected regularly, the seats should be arranged according to social distancing, mask-wearing should be compulsory, temperature checks of spectators should be made, the ventilation systems should be arranged to provide direct air circulation, and ticket sales should be made online. Movie theaters are reorganizing all their operations according to pandemic rules. On the other hand, spectators are still not sure whether movie theaters will take the necessary measures. There are question marks in their minds about social distancing and, especially, hygiene. One of the points they uttered relates to the increase in ticket sales. It is thought that the additional burden brought by the measures and rules applied due to the pandemic to movie theaters will also be reflected in the ticket prices; but on the contrary, there are others who think the ticket prices will decrease in order to attract audiences to movie theaters. Hence, CGV released the movies which were shown for a brief period in theaters before the coronavirus when the cinemas were open for TL12, which is below the normal ticket price.

### **Aims and methodology**

This study tries to reveal what kinds of change happened in the Turkish cinema through the eyes of its audience. It aims to measure how the Turkish cinema audience is affected by the Covid-19 crisis. The study tries to reveal the relationship of the Turkish cinema audience with Covid-19, straight from the horse's mouth, that is to say, the audience.

1. Did Covid-19 bring about a change in the cinema habits of the Turkish cinema audience?
2. What kind of a change occurred in the cinema habits of the Covid-19 Turkish cinema audience?
3. What kind of relationship was observed with digital platforms during and after Covid-19?
4. What was the audience's viewpoint on the Turkish cinema with Covid-19?

The survey method, which is a quantitative research method, was used to reach these data.

Using the literature search and current data on the field, a questionnaire form consisting of 25 questions was created in line with the purpose of the study. This questionnaire was examined by a professor who is an expert in cinema and two assistant professors who are experienced in questionnaire studies. The survey was finalized in line with suggestions and criticisms. The survey consists of the first section in which the socio-demographic information of the participants is included and the second section that measures the impact that will provide data to the research.

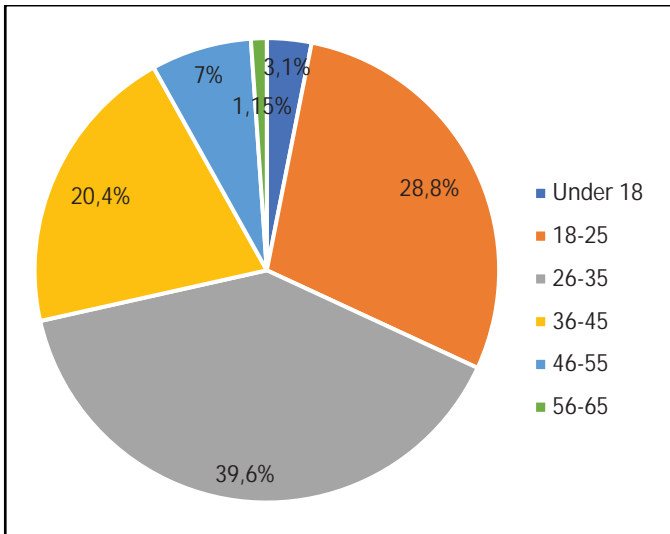
The study population comprises of Turkish cinema audiences watching films in the borders of Turkey. This audience group includes all those who watch domestic and foreign films. The questionnaire was applied through a simple random sample chosen from the audience watching Turkish cinema films. The survey was conducted online due to the pandemic. The data collected through the questionnaire were entered into the JASP program and analyzed by frequency analysis.

The study is one of the first in the context of Covid-19 and cinema. It provides important data on determining the future of the Turkish cinema industry especially after Covid-19 and the strategies to be followed. It is a study that will help shareholders to produce solutions in both academic and sectoral terms.

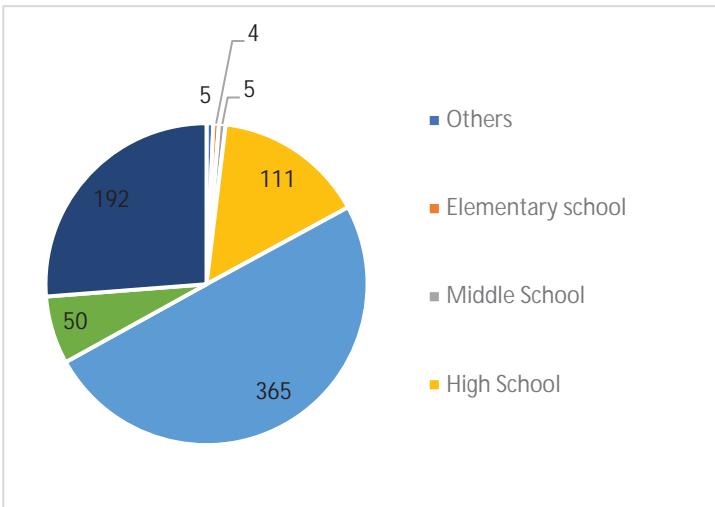
## Results

In the first part of the questionnaire, the sample group responded to questions related to their socio-demographic backgrounds. There were questionnaire responses from 732 individuals, with 452 women (61,7%) and 280 men (38,3%) participating. 290 respondents were aged between 26 and 35; 211 between 18 and 25; while 149 were aged between 36 and 45. In total, 90% of the respondents were aged between 18 and 45, consisting of young and middle-aged cinema-goers.

49,9% of all respondents had undergraduate degrees, 26,2% had master's or PhD degrees and 15,2% were high school graduates. Concerning professional status, 30,7% of the respondents worked in the private sector, 20,5% worked in the public sector, and 27% were students. 38,4% of the respondents earned from TL0-3000; 16,1% from TL 6001-8.000 and 15,8% from TL 4.501-6.000 on a monthly basis.



**Figure 9 1:** Age



**Figure 9.2.** Education status

In the second part, evaluating how the Turkish cinema audience was affected by the Covid-19 period, the respondents were asked 20 questions. The first question asked how often they went to the cinema before the pandemic; 37,3% of the respondents said they went occasionally; 36,2% went once a month and 13% went very rarely. Those who went to the cinema “occasionally” and “once a month” constitute about 75% of the total for all educational levels. More than half of this 75% consists of respondents with an undergraduate degree.

**Table 9.1.** The relationship between income and whether cinema is costly

INCOME (TL)	Is Going to the Cinema a Costly Entertainment?			
	Yes	No	Neutral	TOTAL
<b>0-3.000</b>	127	90	64	281
<b>3.001-4.500</b>	35	51	14	100
<b>4.501-6.000</b>	52	45	19	116
<b>6.001-8.000</b>	48	53	17	118
<b>8.001-10.000</b>	15	36	7	58
<b>10.000 &amp; Over</b>	22	29	8	59
<b>TOTAL</b>	299	304	129	732

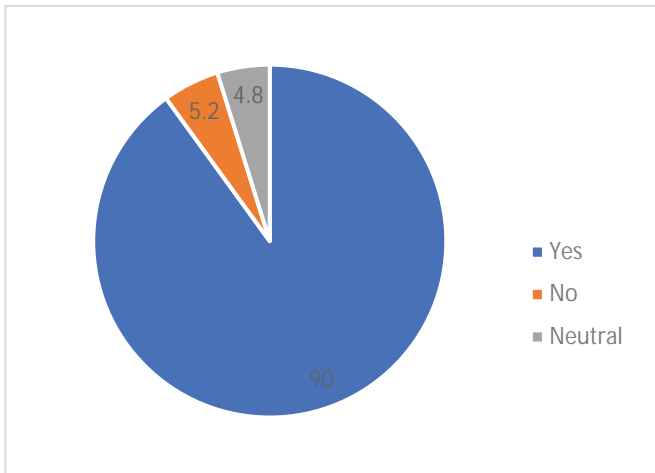
Cinema is not considered to be a costly recreation by 41,5% of the respondents with a slight disparity, since 40,8% regard it as a costly recreation. A considerable number of respondents, 129, corresponding to 17,6%, remained neutral on this question. Nearly 45% of the individuals belonging to the lowest income group regard cinema as a costly recreation, as expected. Consequently, the overall result shows that the number of respondents who think cinema is a costly recreation is close to the number of respondents who think the opposite. Although the number of respondents who consider cinema to be a costly recreation decreases as the monthly income increases, this decrease does not show a regular pattern. Similarly, the number of respondents who do not regard cinema as a costly recreation did not show a dramatic increase. An interesting result of the questionnaire is that nearly 26% and 37% of the individuals in the two highest income levels, namely the groups with incomes of “TL8.001-10.000” and



“TL10.000 and over” respectively, consider going to cinema to be a costly recreation.

At this point, it is possible to generate a more accurate idea about the target group by comparing the perception of costliness and professional status, which is another variable. When the answers “yes” and “no” are classified and compared with respect to professional status, professional groups, except the students, have similar perceptions of cost. To give an example, 45% of public servants regard cinema to be a costly recreation while the remaining 55% do not. Similarly, about 45% of private sector employees regard cinema to be a costly recreation. However, 65% of the students, who belong to the lowest income group, regard going to cinema as a costly recreation.

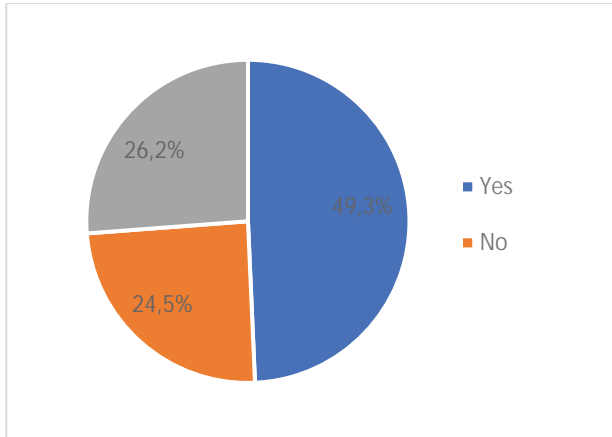
A vast majority of the respondents, 90%, think that the pandemic affected Turkish cinema adversely. While 5,2% of the respondents do not agree with this statement, 4,8% remained neutral.



**Figure 9.3.** Do you think the pandemic affects the operation of Turkish cinema industry adversely?

The pandemic has affected individuals' approach to going to the cinema. 49,3% of the respondents plan to go to the cinema once the pandemic ends. 26,2% stated that they are neutral while 24,5% stated that they will not. 190 more respondents, namely 26%, have stated that they might consider going to the cinema if convenient conditions are provided. The frequency of going to the cinema once circumstances become convenient

is shown to be “occasionally” for 30,1% of the respondents, “once a month” for 33,1% and “very rarely” for 16,1%.



**Figure 9.4.** Are you planning to go to the movie theatres after the pandemic?

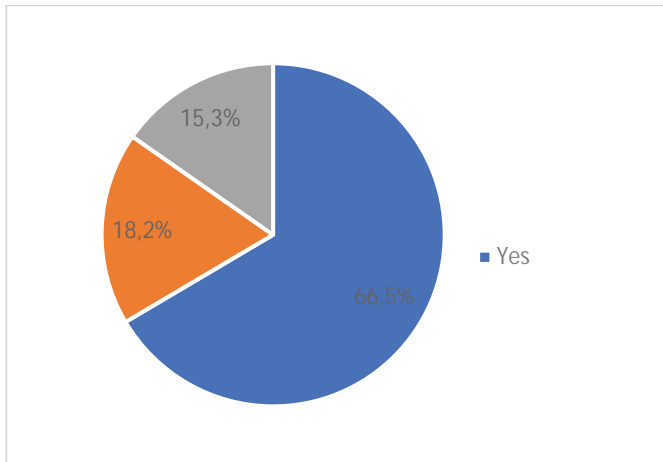
When the frequencies of going to the cinema before the pandemic and after the pandemic for respondents who have experienced the quarantine are compared, expectable dramatic changes or decreases have not showed up. Although there is a decrease in percentage, the frequency of going to the cinema seems to be nearly the same as before the pandemic. In the light of questions about measures, cinema-goers tend to go back to cinema halls after a while, if convenient circumstances are provided.

**Table 9.2.** Relationship between frequency of going to the cinema before and after the pandemic

How often did you go to the movies before the pandemic?	How often would you go to the movies after the pandemic?							Toplam
	Some Times	Once a month	Very rarely	One time per week	More than once a week	Every Day	I do not think of going to the movies After the pandemic	
<b>Sometimes</b>	148	43	48	3	0	0	31	273
<b>Once a month</b>	40	157	26	7	3	0	32	265
<b>Very rare</b>	21	15	37	1	0	0	21	95
<b>Once a week</b>	9	20	7	30	1	0	12	79
<b>More than once a week</b>	2	7	0	2	5	0	2	18
<b>Everyday</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
<b>Toplam</b>	220	242	118	43	9	1	99	732

Of all the respondents, 344 (47%) individuals plan to go to the cinema with their friends, 319 individuals plan to go with their spouses or partners and 201 with their families once the pandemic ends. The socializing impact of cinema comes forth at this point. Cinema-goers cannot stay away from the recreational side of watching something together with their beloved ones. However, the most important criterion to care about is social distancing for respondents if they go to the cinema after the pandemic, with a rate of 24,5%. This criterion is followed by the disinfection of cinema halls at 21,9% and hygiene at 21,4%. The question about criteria to go to the cinema after the pandemic has been answered as being the disinfection of cinema halls by 649 respondents, hygiene by 635 and social distance by 613.

66,5% of the respondents think that specialized governmental support and measures are required after the pandemic for the Turkish cinema industry to return to its heyday. 18,2% did not state any negative or positive ideas on this issue, whereas 15,3% stated that there is no need for governmental support in this matter.



**Figure 9.5.** After the pandemic, are the government grants and subventions necessary for the Turkish cinema industry to return to the years when it was on the rise?

Another question directed to the respondents was whether they would consider making a monetary contribution for the improvement of Turkish cinema. Nearly half of them, 42,5% answered “no”, 22,1% answered “yes” and 35,4% remained neutral. Having said that, it is quite interesting that the number of neutral respondents is higher than those who said “yes”. Individuals in the two highest income groups obviously preferred not to contribute. The respondents in the lowest income group remained neutral.

**Table 9.3.** After the pandemic with the income level to the turkish cinema industry the relationship between the willingness to contribute financially and not

	For the Recovery of Turkish Cinema After the Pandemic Do You Contribute Financially?			
<b>INCOME (TL)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>0-3.000</b>	49	111	121	281
<b>3.001-4.500</b>	25	40	35	100
<b>4.501-6.000</b>	24	46	46	116
<b>6.001-8.000</b>	36	56	26	118
<b>8.001-10.000</b>	18	28	12	58
<b>10.000 &amp; Over</b>	10	30	19	59
<b>TOTAL</b>	162	311	259	732

The majority of those who did not want to make a monetary contribution consisted of private-sector employees while a vast majority of the students either answered negatively (40%) or remained neutral (44%). 42% of the public servants did not prefer to support cinema individually.

**Table 9.4.** The relationship between professions and a personal financial contribution

	For the Recovery of Turkish Cinema After the Pandemic Do you contribute financially?			
<b>Profession</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Other</b>	14	37	38	89
<b>Retired</b>	1	5	6	12
<b>Public Employee</b>	44	62	44	150
<b>Student</b>	31	80	87	198
<b>Private Sector Employee</b>	60	101	64	225
<b>Self Employed</b>	12	26	20	58
<b>TOTAL</b>	162	311	259	732

In the pre-pandemic term, 64,8% of the respondents were subscribers of various digitals platforms while 35,2% were not. Predominantly private sector employees, students and public servants preferred digital platforms. With the arrival of the pandemic, 24,5% of the respondents have subscribed to new accounts on digital platforms. The majority of those who subscribed to digital platforms both before and during the pandemic belong to the lowest income group (TL0-3000).

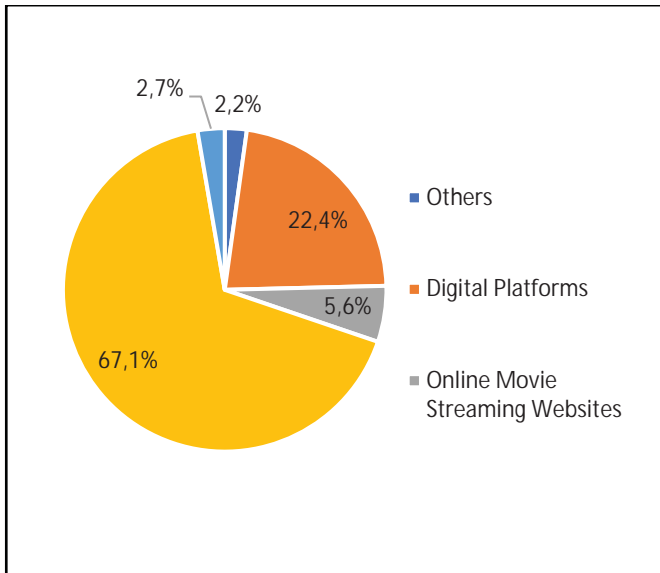
**Table 9.5.** Relationship Between Income Level and Digital Platform Membership Before and After the Pandemic

INCOME (TL)	Did You Have a Subscription to Digital Platforms (Amazon Prime, Blutv, Netflix etc.) Before the Pandemic?			Have You Registered For a New Membership Account on Digital Platforms (Amazon Prime, Blutv, Netflix, etc.) During the Pandemic?		
	Yes	No	TOTAL	Yes	No	TOTAL
<b>0-3.000</b>	172	109	281	76	205	281
<b>3.001-4.500</b>	62	38	100	14	86	100
<b>4.501-6.000</b>	80	36	116	29	87	116
<b>6.001-8.000</b>	81	37	118	36	82	118
<b>8.001-10.000</b>	37	21	58	10	48	58
<b>10.000 &amp; Over</b>	42	17	59	14	45	59
<b>TOTAL</b>	474	258	732	179	553	732

It is found that the respondents mostly watched films through digital services (digital platforms) during the pandemic, with a rate of 48,9%. 20,5% of the respondents used online series websites while 11,6% preferred to watch films on TV. Individuals aged between 18 and 45 mostly tended to use digital platforms.

During the pandemic, 88,8% of the respondents watched films on digital platforms and the like, even if with limitations and obligations. The act of watching occurred 3-4 times a week for 34,4%, every day for 22,3% and once a week for 17,2%. Those respondents aged between 18 and 45 watched films 3-4 times a week or more. 85,8% of the respondents have stated that they will consider keeping on watching films on digital platforms or similar applications after the pandemic ends.

The question about which environment is more enjoyable to watch films was answered by more than half of the respondents to be cinema halls, with a rate of 67,1%. This rate is followed by those who preferred digital platforms at 22,4%. Online film websites follow this with a rate of 5,6%. The age group that finds watching films in cinema halls more enjoyable is between 26 and 35. Respondents who have undergraduate or graduate level education find watching films in cinema halls more enjoyable, whereas half of the respondents who prefer digital platforms consist of those with undergraduate degrees.



**Figure 9.6.** In which environment do you think watching movies is the most enjoyable?

## Conclusion

It is apparent that Turkish cinema audiences consist of a young and middle-aged group. This cinema-loving, interested and dynamic group is the sign of huge potential for the future of the Turkish cinema. However, it is also detected that this very potential has not been utilized properly. 90,1% of the respondents have completed basic education and 76,1% have undergraduate degrees. When the overall education levels are taken into account, the rate of going to the cinema is quite low for this mass, which is expected to be more interested in cinema.

The income level of the 38% of 365 individuals with an undergraduate degree is found to be from TL0-3.000. The fact that these individuals that fall into the lowest income group continue to go to the cinema as a recreational activity is promising.

Half of the respondents have stated that they would go to the cinema once the pandemic ends. Restrictive measures, warnings and the progressive nature of the pandemic have adversely affected the approach towards going to the cinema. A decrease of more than 10% has been observed in the frequency of going to the cinema, compared to the pre-

pandemic period. When an increase by 3% in the number of audiences that tend to go to the cinema very rarely is added in the picture, the magnitude of anxiety among audiences becomes even clearer. The budget that the audiences consider allocating to the cinema after the pandemic is found to be the same in general. Yet, nearly one-fifth of the respondents plan to allocate a lower budget for the cinema once the pandemic ends. These considerable rates will most probably create a dramatic decline in the number of Turkish cinema audiences and the box office gross alike. What is promising is that the audiences think that, despite everything, cinema halls are the most convenient environments to watch films.

The audiences have stated that they care about social distancing most when it comes to going to cinema halls, while noting that they would like to go to films with their families, spouses, partners and friends, rather than going alone. At this very point, there comes a discrepancy between act and discourse. To have an alternative approach to the issue, it is possible to say that watching films is a group activity for the Turkish cinema audience.

Despite all the unfavorable circumstances that have appeared in the Turkish cinema industry due to the Covid-19 pandemic, watching films in physical cinema halls is still considered to be more enjoyable for all age groups. Yet, the perception of the act of watching films as being “enjoyable” can easily lead to the classification of this activity in the recreation and pastime category, thus transforming it to be a dispensable recreational activity that does not require support and that can be substituted by any other current alternatives.

Measures that are supposed to be taken by cinema halls, as well as advertisement and PR implementations would persuade audiences to go to the cinema, thus increasing the rate of going to cinema. In this perspective, audiences suggest that cinema halls should especially pay attention to social distancing, hygiene, disinfection and the use of masks. In addition to taking the necessary measures, cinema halls should also control whether these measures are implemented in a correct and continuous fashion. The more transparent the process, the faster and more stabilized will be the return to cinema halls.

Turkish cinema audiences that participated in the questionnaire think that the pandemic has adversely affected Turkish cinema. In this sense, they deem governmental subsidy and support to be necessary while stating that they cannot make monetary contributions to the industry. With the neutral respondents added, the rate reaches 77,9%. The audiences refrain from making a monetary contribution and expect the industry to return to its former, better condition in the ordinary flow just with governmental



support. The durability of the sector is considered to be linked to the public sector.

The pandemic process has yet not detached the audiences from watching films, but it has led to some changes in the watching environment and frequency of watching films. Turkish cinema audiences have established a much more intense bond with digital platforms during the pandemic. A quarter of the respondents have just subscribed to digital platforms. Individuals in the lower-income group have shown more interest in digital platforms. This group consists mostly of students.

Nearly half of the respondents used digital platforms to watch films while they stayed at home during the pandemic, watching films every other day, on a frequent basis. Even those who have not subscribed watched films on digital platforms and stated that they plan to continue after the pandemic. The pandemic process has increased the rate of watching films among Turkish audiences, who watched films on a regular basis. When the progressive nature of the pandemic is taken into account, digital platforms can be estimated to keep growing as an alternative screening environment.

As a result, Turkish cinema audiences have been affected by the Covid-19 crisis in a negative way. Still, they are not far away from returning to normal film-watching experiences. The Turkish cinema industry can bounce back if the sector shareholders cooperate and the sector takes the necessary steps against Covid-19 in cinema halls, thus persuading audiences to return. Cooperation with digital platforms and implementations of joint projects can also facilitate recovery from the crisis inasmuch as, digital platforms help films to meet their audiences while providing financial sources for new films to be made.

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## CHAPTER TEN

# VIRTUAL IDENTITIES AND SELF- PRESENTATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA INSTAGRAM MOTHERS

ARZU KALAFAT ÇAT

### **Introduction: Internet and social media as a new platform of communication**

Information and communication technologies have undergone major advancements throughout history. Prior to the invention of writing, oral tradition served as the sole means of communication. In the stone age, cave paintings were the dominant form of communication. With the discovery of fire, the smoke signal emerged as a form of long-distance communication. The invention of writing led to the first stage of written culture, and the invention of the printing press became the driving force of the typographic communication era. First electrical and then electronic communication devices became widespread after the Industrial Revolution. The rapid development of Internet technology in the twentieth century has ushered in a new era of communication beyond the limits of time and space.

The earliest prototype of the Internet came in the late 1960s in the USA for military purposes. In 1969, the United States Department of Defense established the ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network) to develop computer and military research and enable access to remote computers (Aktaş 2007). In 1971, only 23 computers were connected to the ARPANET. However, the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) was invented in 1978 to allow computers with different systems and character codes to be connected to the ARPANET (Karasioğlu 2001). The TCP/IP made it possible for all computers to exchange data over the Internet, primarily allowing universities to use e-mail services. The Internet allowed users to communicate only in the form

of writing until 1989. Tim Berners-Lee, a British physicist, invented the “World Wide Web” (www) service at the European Center for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva/Switzerland in 1989, making visual information sharing possible. Since then, the Internet has rapidly become widespread in a large segment of society. According to Castells, it took television 15 years, but the Internet only three years to reach 60 million users in the USA (Castells 2000).

Internet technology has been continuously evolving since the day it was invented. Web 1.0, which is the first stage of the World Wide Web, refers to websites where content is created by one user in the resource with no user interaction. Web 2.0, on the other hand, paved the way for the concept of “social media” because it was an interactive platform that allowed users to create and share their own content on social platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube) and in blogs. In other words, the two-way communication of Web 2.0 replaced the one-way communication of Web 1.0. Web 3.0 or the Semantic Web, known as the information age of web technology, is defined as an application that aims to collect all information on a single platform and enables the related processes to be managed automatically by computers online (Yağcı 2009). The 2020s is predicted to witness the development of Web 4.0, which involves the fusion of reality and virtual reality through artificial intelligence-based technology with mind-reading software. Since its introduction to the world, Internet technology has been improving rapidly and transforming every aspect of our lives, from the economy to politics and society. However, these transformations result from communication technologies being integrated into everyday life rather than new ones being invented.

With the Internet becoming a part of everyday life, traditional means of communication (radio, television, and telephone) have gained a new opportunity for convergence. In other words, the Internet has given the feature of convergence to every device with which it is integrated (Campbell; Martin and Fabos 2005). Digital radio, digital television, and mobile phones with Internet access allow users to share content (text, video, photo, or music) across local and national borders (Tuncel 2003). Barry stated that three different revolutions (the Internet revolution, the mobile revolution, and the social network revolution) took place in the twentieth century (Gürsakal 2009). As Marshall McLuhan, a Canadian media theorist, put it in the 1960s, revolutionary advances in communication technology have turned the world into a global village. He stated that advances in electromagnetism made communication technology synchronized, allowing two people from different parts of the world to

communicate with each other as if members of the same tribe (1962). In other words, the concepts of time and space have transformed in the electronic age, making it easier today to access information that used to take time and money to access in the past.

Some are in favor of advances in communication technology, whereas others have doubts about them. While Harold Innis was quite pessimistic about the transition to electronic culture, McLuhan, one of his students, believed that advances in communication technology would be instrumental in raising public awareness (Rigel et al. 2005). Although McLuhan was criticized for blindly advocating for the electronic culture, he forecasted the possible adverse effects of technological developments and argued that they could be identified and overcome (Atalay 2018).

Advances in communication technology and the Internet have set the individual and information flow free. In other words, new communication technologies bestow superpowers on people (Underwood 2002), and the Internet integrated with communication technologies sets information free. While capital owners monopolize traditional means of communication, social platforms provided by the Internet allow people to put their own content into circulation. New media do not need any capital for ownership or physical space for content creation, which is the case in traditional media. A mobile phone or computer with Internet access is all a “mental worker” needs to share content on social platforms (Akyol 2015). Most software for creating and managing content on social media platforms is free or inexpensive, allowing even amateur users to create and share content (Geray and Aydoğan 2010). Therefore, advances in communication technology have set both information and individuals free. While users are passive in traditional means of communication, new social media platforms turn people into active users who can create, share, and interpret content wherever, whenever, and however they want.

According to Everett M. Rogers (1986), new media are individualized, interactive, and asynchronous. Interactivity refers to a process by which users manage or manipulate content in new media platforms however they see fit (Yengin 2010). Interactivity not only corresponds to source-receiver replacement or data exchange but also refers to the integration of feedback in the process (Şahin 2015). Geray (2013) considers interactivity to be the essential feature of new media. Individualization is what allows the conveying of customized messages to the target audience (person or organization) among large user groups. An example of individualization is e-mailing, by which the source can convey the same message to millions of users at the same time, or a customized message to each user. Therefore, the traditional media regard the target audience as a homogeneous mass, and

therefore, convey messages believed to appeal to all. However, new media allow users to convey customized messages to heterogeneous masses (Akyol 2015). New media users can access content whenever they want (Ince 2017). Asynchronicity refers to a process in which the power, which was in the hands of the source in the traditional media, has been taken over by the recipient in new media (Akyol 2015). New media are a user-focused tool that allows people to access and manage content via mobile technology. The number of new media users grows worldwide because they provide easy and free access to information.

New media, which are brought about by advances in communication technology and adaptation of traditional means of communication to the Internet, include but are not limited to social media platforms because they also refer to social networks and the content created in them. Web 2.0 paved the way for social media platforms because it promotes user interaction. Social media are digital platforms of websites, sharing networks, and blogs where users can share information, messages, and content and create virtual communities (Kalçık 2016). The most popular digital platforms are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, Flickr, Medium, Tumblr, Reddit, Swarm, and many others that provide users with the opportunity to socialize and interact and access different types of information (economy, education, health, politics, etc.).

Not only do social media users access information, but they also interact with other users and virtually bond with them (Sarı 2015). Social media are defined as communication channels that allow users to interact and share content in different forms (audio, video, image, etc.) (Onat 2010). In short, the primary features of social media platforms are “communication” and “sharing” (Balkaş Erdoğan and Tan Akbulut 2010). Social media are a fun platform on which users exchange information and socialize.

Social media platforms are services and applications that allow users to create and share their own content (Boyd 2008). In other words, they provide users with the opportunity to interact beyond the limits of time and space (Güçdemir 2010). Gürsakal (2009) defines social media as a platform for individual or group interaction, cooperation, and repercussions in a social context (Gürsakal 2009). Social media users have the opportunity to access, evaluate, and share different types of information, from entertainment and shopping to art and politics.

Mayfield (2008) categorizes the opportunities of social platforms under five headings; participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness. Participation allows all voluntary social media users to

contribute and give feedback. Participation is the primary feature distinguishing social media from traditional media. People, who used to be passive audiences/recipients in traditional media, are now both recipients and creators in social media. Therefore, participation blurs the distinction between media and audience. Openness means that most social media services promote participation and feedback. Social media users can rate, comment, and share content. Conversation refers to the ability of social media to promote two-way communication and interaction. Traditional media involve one-way communication based on broadcasting, whereas social media involve two-way communication based on conversation. Community refers to the ability of social media to provide users with the opportunity to create communities based on shared interests and expectations. Connectedness is the ability of social media to connect platforms to other sites, resources, and people.

Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube and blogs/microblogs, forums, wikis, podcasts, and chat programs, and websites whose content is created by users are the most popular social media platforms (Gürsakar 2009, Trevinal and Stenger 2014). As of 2020, there are 2.4 billion Facebook users, two billion YouTube users, one billion Instagram users, and 340 million Twitter users worldwide (Digital in 2020). Social media platforms are an outcome of Web 2.0. The interactive structure of Web 2.0 has increased the popularity of social networking sites (Facebook), microblogs (Twitter), video sharing sites (YouTube), and photo and video sharing applications (Instagram) that encourage users to interact and share information in daily life (Öztürk et al. 2018). People use social platforms for communication, access to information, entertainment, and mass collaboration. Social media allow people to express their opinions and criticisms freely, and therefore, contribute to digital activism by promoting political participation and bringing like-minded people together.

According to the Global Internet, Social Media, and Mobile stats (2020), 59% of the world population are Internet users, and 49% of the world population are active social media users. There are 58 million mobile Internet users and 54 million social media users in Turkey (Digital in 2020). Given that more than half of the world population are Internet users, the effects of virtual platforms on social structure become more of an issue. Social platforms turn the passive users of traditional media into active content creators. In other words, social platforms emancipate people and prevent any kind of monopoly over information. Social platforms are of paramount significance because they promote democratic participation and access to public services, making democracy functional. However, the boundary between public and private spheres is blurred, making the

former visible through the latter while turning the latter into the former. This brings about numerous security issues (Sözen cited in Tetik 2015). Social media, which have become widespread since 2000, have pushed content creators to present virtual selves and construct virtual identities that do not necessarily reflect reality (Tombul 2018). Moreover, those virtual identities and self-presentation cause various privacy violations.

## **Virtual identities and self-presentation**

In today's "societies of the spectacle", the concepts of "identity" and "self" extend far beyond their meanings and are reproduced through virtual identities. In real life, one has no control over the process through which one's identity is constructed, but in virtual media, one can construct an identity the way one wants. Therefore, unlike real identity, virtual identity is not about who one really is but about how one wants to look. We should define identity and self before moving on to virtual identities and self-presentation in social media. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term "identity" as "the qualities, attributes, personality, looks and/or expressions that make a person who they are" (Oxford Languages 2020). According to psychologists, identity is based on self and personality (Aşkın 2007). Personality is defined as the constellation of physical and mental characteristics that distinguish a person from others, while the self is the collection of all feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors a person makes use of to seek an answer to the question, "who am I?" (Tutar 2016).

The concepts of identity and self are closely related. Marcia used "identity statuses" to define the concept of identity. According to him, identity is based on the level of exploration or commitment, and one gains one's identity by attaining certain statuses, the transition between which is possible. Berzonsky argues that identity depends on three identity styles; informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant. Information-oriented individuals consider many options, normative individuals tend to obey social and familial rules, and diffuse-avoidant individuals hesitate to reveal their identity (Atak 2011). Many theories define the concept of self. According to the theory of symbolic interactionism developed by William James, society shapes the self and identity because, through socialization, one internalizes the symbols and meanings of the family, group, or society in which one lives. The looking glass self theory developed by Charles H. Cooley and George H. Mead argues that the self, which is the vital component of identity, develops in two stages. First, one develops a sense of self by oneself, and second, one develops a sense of self based on how one believes other people see and judge one (Aşkın 2007). According to



the looking glass self theory, social processes shape the self. The looking glass self theory states that one organizes one's self to resemble the person with whom one wants to identify. In this way, the theory accounts for the way social media users present themselves through virtual identities that they construct on social media platforms.

Before mass media, communication was local and unmediated. Therefore, people used to construct and sustain identity within local boundaries. The widespread use of mass media and the increase in the number of media platforms have had tremendous impacts on identity construction. In other words, mass media, especially new media, have become a part of daily life, setting identity free from the real world and body and putting it into circulation in the virtual world through virtual identities (Tetik 2015). While identity is shaped by various cognitive and environmental explorations in real life, it is used as a symbolic means of social media interaction. Consequently, cognitive and environmental factors in real life are replaced by platforms and users in new media.

Baldini argues that the means by which people communicate change their worldviews and lifestyles, and thus, the social structure in total (Baldini 2000). Social media provide users with personalized areas and visual content. In image-based social media, the user first uploads a profile picture, normalizing self-presentation. Afterward, he/she shares personal information (education, hometown, location, etc.) and uploads selfies, paving the way for online identity construction (Tombul 2018). Half of the world's population and more than half of Turkey's population are social media users (Digital in 2020). These new media are transforming people's lifestyles drastically, from business life to family relationships. Advances in communication technology make life easier (from politics to healthcare to education to business), allow people to express their opinions, and remove the boundaries of time and space and the monopoly over information. Technological developments make significant contributions to human life. Still, the main criticism here is about the adverse effects of new media on people's social lives, the disruption of the sense of reality due to the presentation of self via virtual identities, and violations of privacy.

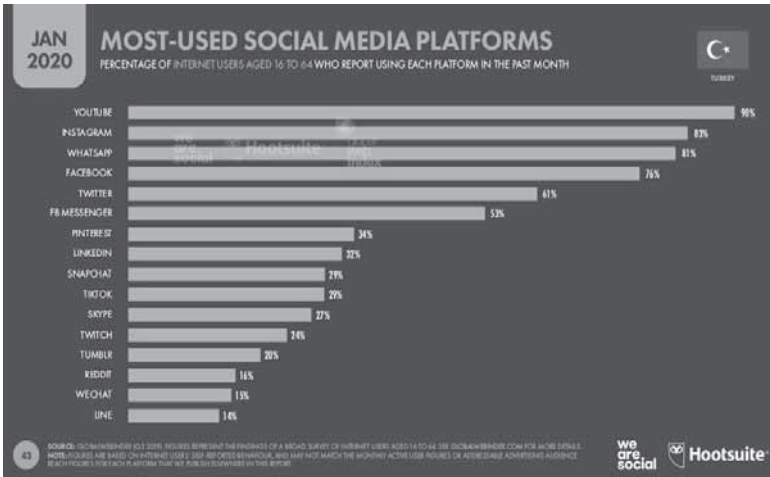
In his book titled *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (2016), Erving Goffman defines public behavior as a performance that individuals "stage" to impress a target audience. In a sense, it is a theatrical performance where the performer (individual) is on stage in front of an audience (society). Goffman argues that people get caught up in theatrical performance so much that they drift apart from reality. For example, by her clothing, stance, and facial expression, a model portrays herself on the cover of a magazine as a cultivated individual who understands very well

the book that she holds in her hand, but in reality, those who bother to present themselves as such will have very little time left over for reading (2016). In other words, people put on an outstanding performance to present themselves perfectly but cannot even realize the gap between their real lives and the lives they present.

Most social media users who present virtual identities turn their bodies or family relationships into a showpiece. In his book, *The Society of the Spectacle* (2018), Guy Debord remarks that “the spectacle presents itself as a vast inaccessible reality that can never be questioned. Its sole message is: ‘What appears is good; what is good appears.’” Social media users present perfect virtual identities and lifestyle images to their followers or other users. Therefore, Instagram stands out among the crowd for individuals and businesses because it is fully compatible with mobile devices and is less about writing and more about image sharing (Miles 2014).

Instagram was launched in October 2010 as a location check-in app and then turned into a social media platform for sharing photos and videos. Instagram brings the features of many applications under one roof as it allows users not only to take photos and make videos and edit and share them but also to use such features as commenting, tagging, checking in, and instant- messaging (Öztürk et al. 2018). Instagram, which was first launched as an iPhone app, released its Android version in 2012 (Sine 2017). As of 2019, there are more than one billion Instagram users and more than 500 million daily active users worldwide. Instagram users share, on average more than 95 million photos and videos every day (Branding Turkey 2019). Table 10.1 shows the most used social media platforms in Turkey as of 2020.

The rapidly advancing Internet and social media platforms offer users new venues to perform self-presentation. Today, users, who have been turned into content creators by Web 2.0, have virtual social platforms where they can perform self-presentation. Unlike identity in real life, a virtual online identity constructed in the form of self-presentation on social platforms can be modified or deleted. This allows social media users to position themselves as the center of attention and present themselves as they wish (Tombul 2018). Being famous on social media platforms is much easier than it was in the past. Many social media users make themselves visible for material and nonmaterial rewards (Parsa and Akmeşe 2019). Today, there are many Instagram celebrities called “influencers,” or Instagram mothers (Instamoms) who post multiple photos every day that are perfectly curated for their followers. Social media celebrities generally present themselves as “ideal mothers,” “ideal wives,” “ideal women,” or people enjoying their “ideal lifestyles.”

**Table 10.1.** Most used social media platforms

Source: Digital in 2020 <https://wearesocial.com/digital-2020> (Accessed: 10.10.2020)

Nowadays, some mothers use social media to become famous and rich. There is an increasing number of “Instamoms” and “social moms” who share photos and videos of their children to be famous (Parsa and Akmeş 2019). Social platforms appeal to more and more people who would like to make their selves visible to feed their ego. Tagging plays a vital role in the popularity of Instagram. The symbol #, called hashtag, is used to mark topics or posts to categorize them into specific themes. Hashtags with keywords allow a large number of users to access the posts they have created or would like to check out (Çakmak and Baş 2019).

Instagram has the second largest number of users in Turkey. Therefore, this study focuses on five Instamoms with the most followers.

## Self-presentation of instamoms

### Method

This was a qualitative study. Qualitative research is a method of inquiry involving interviews or document analysis to make inductive inferences about an individual or societal phenomenon that cannot be easily reduced to numbers (Baltacı 2018). Tavşancıl and Aslan (2001) define content analysis, which is widely used in communication research, as “*the process by which*

verbal or written data are classified and summarized for a specific problem or objective and then categorized to measure and make sense of certain variables or concepts.” The sample consisted of five Instamoms with more than 100,000 followers recruited using purposive sampling. Their Instagram posts between July 10 and October 10 were used for analysis.

Data were analyzed using the content analysis chart based on Goffman's “self-presentation strategies” (1959) and used by Özkök (2019) and Bulat (2020).

**Table 10.2.** Content analysis chart

Self-Presentation Strategies	Self-Presentation Variables	Explanation	CODE
Exemplary Behavior	Theatrical Performance	Social Values and Principles Moral and Cultural Values Love for People Love for Animals Love for Nature Social contribution	<b>1</b>
Endearing Oneself to Others	Keeping Control of Presentation	Cognitive Abilities Sensory Abilities Peaceful Moments, Having Fun, Tourist Attractions Self Confidence, Trustworthiness	<b>2</b>
Threatening	False Presentation Creating Mystery	Dark, Mysterious, Strong, Rich, Cold, Distant, Sexy	<b>3</b>
Introducing Qualities	Idealizing	Image Tone of Voice Athletic (Sporty) Physical Abilities Clothing (Fashion) Healthy Life	
Self-dramatization	Real or Fake	Being sad Being unhappy Being pensive Being a victim Being sick Being hospitalized	<b>5</b>
Advertising	Mass Management	Career-oriented Advertising Endorsing a product or service Pursuing a commercial purpose	<b>6</b>

Source: Özkök (2019); Bulat (2020)

## Results

Table 10.3, presents information on the instamoms.

**Table 10.3.** Instamoms and number of their followers

Account Name	puccito	zynpzeze	imrengursoy	esgimira	gizemzor
Real Name	Pınar Yıldırım	Zeynep Aydoğan	Imren Gürsoy	Ezgi Develi	Gizem Zor
Number of Followers (thousands)	770	611	503	444	421
Total Number of Posts	2292	3095	4030	8476	1818
Created an Instagram Account on	18.05.2011	04.04.2012	12.03.2013	09.10.2014	01.05.2014

Out of the five accounts, Pınar Yıldırım had the most followers. Some mothers on Instagram have millions of followers. However, they were not included in the sample because they are popular not because they are mothers but because they are doctors, academics, or writers. The participants identified themselves as “influencers” or “mothers.” Pınar Yıldırım was also the one who created an Instagram account the earliest, suggesting that there is a positive correlation between Instagram popularity and the time spent there. However, there is no positive correlation between the number of followers and posts.

**Table 10.4.** Self-presentation of instamoms

Codes for Self-Presentation	puccito	Zynpzeze	imrengursoy	esgimira	gizemzor
Code-1	2	1	1	2	1
Code-2	9	28	22	11	48
Code-3	2	2	0	2	1
Code-4	6	10	16	9	25
Code-5	2	0	0	3	0
Code-6	2	8	14	6	20

## Conclusion

The digital age we live in has witnessed advances in communication technology that have diversified communication media. Numerous social media platforms have emerged with the integration of the Internet with mobile devices. With the increasing number of users, those platforms have become an integral part of our lives. Mobilized Internet technology has provided users with the freedom to receive news and information beyond the limits of time and space. Social media platforms allow users to interact through the virtual identities they construct, blurring the boundaries between real and virtual identities. Social media users present ideal selves through their virtual identities. According to Goffman, life is a theater stage, and people are actors who put on their best performance to be appreciated and approved by the target audience (2004). Social media platforms turn users into content creators and allow them to reach more people than they can reach in real life and to construct identities and present their selves however they would like, regardless of their socioeconomic background. Social media platforms, especially Instagram, are virtual theater stages on which virtual actors put on a performance to be liked by their followers and to get new ones, and to be “visible” in a virtual world.

This study focused on five popular Instagram users who identified themselves as “Instamoms,” that is, who posted photos and videos as mothers on Instagram. The study addressed their Instagram posts between July 10 and October 10 and classified them based on the codes in the content analysis chart of self-presentation. Three participants identified themselves as “influencers.” The photos and videos posted by the participants were mostly related to Code-2 and related least to Code-5 (Table 10.4). Most of their posts fell under Code-2. They were fun and peaceful posts conveying self-confidence and happiness and giving clues about their cognitive and emotional states. This suggests that all participants are interested in portraying themselves as confident, happy, and fun mothers. Code-4 had the second largest number of posts. In this category, participants shared idealizing posts, such as image, sound, body build, clothing, fashion, and healthy life. This result indicates that participants work hard to present themselves or their lifestyles in an idealized way. Code-5 had the fewest posts about adverse situations, such as sadness, victimization, illness, etc. This result shows that participants tend to present problem-free and ideal selves on Instagram, in contrast to real life. Code-1 also had very few posts, which were about environmental and social awareness and exemplary behavior. In conclusion, participants

mostly shared visual posts about physical appearance and idealized lifestyles while sharing only a handful of posts about sickness and victimhood or environmental and social issues.

As put by Erving Goffman in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1956), people behave differently in public than they do in private because, in the latter, they are motivated by the need for ideal self-presentation, which is also true for social media users who present ideal selves through the virtual identities they construct.

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# CHAPTER ELEVEN

## ONLINE COMMUNITIES AND NEW COMMUNICATION: HOW ARE THEY IMPORTANT FOR BRANDS?

MERAL AHU KARAGEYİM

### Introduction

Over the past two decades, there has been a growing interest in social media marketing and the digitization of interactions between consumers and companies. The proliferations of platforms and mobile devices have also influenced the ways in which consumers behave in all marketing settings (Lamberton and Stephen 2016). These digital technologies have deeply transformed the way we access information, the way we communicate with each other and the way we make purchases. These digital technologies have also transformed marketing. Companies need to have a greater digital presence for marketing, communication and interaction purposes. Accordingly, a substantial body of research is investigating the impact of digital and social media marketing and online communities.

Online communities are analyzed in this work from three different perspectives.

First, the place and the role of social media and online communities as a new communication style will be examined. Their role and their function for a new and evolving communication style will be questioned since they are providing an important tool for sharing, communicating and interacting with other consumers and with brands. The evolution of new consumer interaction styles and the relationship between online communities and successful marketing activities are also highlighted. The impact of online communities as an important tool for supporting communication is not limited to the business world. There are several communities in science, technology, and health and for other industries especially because of the

huge developments in communication technologies, artificial intelligence and big data. Second, we will concentrate more on their functions in the business world especially in marketing. Besides several advantages that will be treated later in the first part, they provide an undeniable economic and business potential by connecting people. The business world and especially marketers benefit from consumer communities because of the opportunities and advantages they provide. Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram are one of these well-known platforms. Finally, the rules of successful community management are questioned in this chapter with an attempt to answer one specific question: “what are the dynamics of managing a successful online community?”

Although online communities have existed in all industries since the 1990s, they are relatively under examined for their managerial dynamics. Online communities are perceived to be important actors, developers or partners in almost every industry in one way or another. Fisher (2019) defined them as important stakeholders. Consequently, their importance for consumers and brands is widely accepted but there is limited information about successful online community management.

The organization of the chapter is as follows: we will first define online communities in general in the first part. I will share and discuss the body of knowledge provided by the marketing literature in order to understand the evolution of new communication styles, communities and the new consumer and service dominant logic. It is also critical to discuss the results of these new interaction styles, user generated content, word of mouth (Kozinets 2010), the body of knowledge, information and interaction emerging from these relationships because of the impact on other consumers’ decisions and thinking style. The characteristics, functions and advantages of online communities will be discussed in the second half of this chapter with essential clues for successful community management.

## **Literature review**

### **Online communities**

Technological developments in communication and information enabled new communication styles for people (especially for consumers and companies). These technologies, with the rise of social media, facilitated companies’ interactions with consumers (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001).

I think social media should be defined here in order to understand online communities and new communication. Social media can broadly be defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the

ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010: 61).

Different variations and types of social media exist and the term social media here refers to user generated services, online communities, blogs and other social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest or Instagram, other social networking sites, blogs, online review/rating sites, and social networking sites (Heinonen 2011). As stated in Dessart, “Social media enable more frequent, faster and richer interactions among large groups of people” (Dessart 2017). Social media interactions bring together people across the globe. The essential idea for all social media is about the user generated content that users, members and others create with several different motives.

Different typologies are proposed by scholars for social media (Shao 2009; Hollebeek et al. 2017). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) categorized social media in blogs, content communities, social networking sites, online game worlds, collaborative communities and virtual social worlds. In addition, there are important differences between various social media platforms in terms of impact, users, functions and purposes (Zhu and Chen 2015; Voorveld et al. 2018). In this context, we accept that online communities constitute very important platforms for communication for brands, consumers, companies, etc.

There are also different definitions for online communities, each underlining different aspects.

Rheingold (1993) highlights human feelings and personal relationships and defines virtual communities as “social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough with sufficient human feeling to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace”. According to Kozinets (1999), online communities are groups of consumers who continuously interact online because of their shared enthusiasm for and knowledge about specific consumption activities. Kozinets et al. (2010) emphasizes the context features of online communities and defines them as contexts in which consumers often partake in discussions whose goals include attempts to inform and influence fellow consumers about brands. Online communities are not a recent phenomenon; the behavior of consumers driven by a similar passion, enthusiasm or an interest to form a group and to produce a sub culture has been an area of study in the marketing field since the 1990s (Cova and Pace 2006, Bagozzi and Dholakia 2002, Kozinets 1999, Cova and Cova 2002). In addition, we see a proliferation of blogs, forums, chatrooms and newsgroups, online groups, social networks and other

platforms and this proliferation does have significant importance for both companies and consumers.

Several types of communities exist in the market with some common features and characteristics. Brand communities are more common because of their facilitating power of communication between consumers and brands. A brand community is defined by O'Guinn and Muniz (2001) as a specialized non-geographically bound community based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand. All types of communities offer different opportunities for all parties and the business world tries to take advantage of these online communities, web-based platforms and forums for marketing purposes.

### **Online communities and the rise of a new communication style**

We believe that online communities should first be analyzed in terms of production: the production of communication, user generated content, and word of mouth and the knowledge, information and interaction emerging from this relationship. Community members share essential resources (cognitive, emotional or social material). Communities have a special interest in the production of user generated content since they provide the platform and essential conditions for it.

In order to understand the rise and importance of user generated content in marketing, we should summarize briefly the rise of relationships, networks, information and connectivity in the marketing literature. Marketing scholarship has evolved from a transactional view to a relationship-based orientation (Vargo and Lusch 2004), with “service logic”. Vargo and Lusch (2006) describe service logic as a departure from the traditional, foundational goods-dominant logic of exchange that marketing inherited from the industrial era. Another driver for this departure from traditional conditions is the change in exchange tools and resources: a shift from tangibles to intangibles. This new orientation focuses mostly on the role of consumer networks, groups, and communities (Hoffman and Novak 1996; Başar, 2018a; Muñiz and O'Guinn 2001; Cova and Cova 2002). According to Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2006, 2016) the focus has shifted from tangibles toward intangibles and operant resources, specialized skills, information, knowledge, interactivity, connectivity and ongoing relationships and processes became the most important themes of this new era. Consumers are regarded as active co-creators of value and meaning with other parties (Vargo and Lusch 2016). The use of word of mouth by consumers for marketing communications can be creative and even resistant (Kozinets 2001; Brown, Kozinets and Sherry 2003; Muñiz and Schau 2005; Thompson and Sinha 2008). It is

possible to argue that online communities are also related with the concept of “the new consumer” idea. This new, more active, connected, demanding consumer (Prahalad and Ramasvamy 2004), sharing his or her ideas on online platforms is also very powerful in terms of market experience. Kozinets (1999) underlines the participative, resistant, militant, playful, social and communitarian characteristics of these new consumers. In addition, these demanding consumers are able to communicate their ideas to companies and the market through internet web sites, online platforms, social networks and online communities (Hoyer et al. 2011). Contrary to traditional marketing rules and priorities, the rise of new technologies, social media and online communities puts the customer at the center of all different types of interactions.

In addition to the active role of customers, Prahalad and Ramasvamy (2004) describe the five powers of the connected consumer as: information access, the global view, networking, experimentation and activism. It is possible to argue that service dominant logic redefined the role of consumers with a special emphasis on consumer–company interactions with a new, customer-centric approach (Prahalad and Ramasvamy 2000, 2004, Vargo and Lusch 2008) and continuous dialogue (Prahalad and Gouillart 2010) for a better market performance. Customers are considered to be active and creative resources. This approach also recognizes the power of forums and physical or virtual communities for managing customer experience and they are also presented as a source of innovation and an efficient way of acquiring customer input (Ramasvamy and Gouillart 2010, Prahalad and Ramasvamy 2000, 2004, Payne, Storbacka and Frow 2008).

### **The role of online communities for the business world**

Different types of communities exist in scientific, technological or medical industries. Online communities may have different roles in different industries but we claim that they have one characteristic in common: they are facilitating communication in a specific context. This common characteristic, facilitation of communication and interaction, may present beneficial solutions for several parties.

This chapter focuses mostly on the role of online communities for the business world especially for marketing. As stated previously, these platforms provide an undeniable benefit by connecting different people and by giving them the opportunity of self-expression. Although they differ in terms of functions and characteristics, online communities are beneficial for consumers and companies in general. Online communities (they may be described as an important part of social media) may exist in

different industries and activities with specific purposes. Although there are communities that are built and managed by consumers, the majority of brand communities are mostly managed by marketers. The role and the benefit presented by communities may have a direct impact on customer loyalty or motivation for sharing. Some communities may function as the hub of companies' online presence whereas other communities are much more brand and relationship oriented.

The role of online communities should be analyzed separately for marketers and community members. Online communities also play a significant role for consumers in the market. Consumers and community members prefer to be part of these platforms because most of them present a transparent and trustworthy basis for getting information, searching, sharing ideas or comments and complaining. More connected, demanding and active (Pralhad and Ramasvamy 2004) consumers use them in order to contact, communicate, share ideas and decide on a brand. Besides an information search in order to make rational purchase decisions, consumers may prefer to be a member of the community because of some inner motivations. We will concentrate more on the managerial side of communities and on the benefits for marketers.

The majority of companies are managing their online presence and their customer relations through these communities. Understandably, online communities are considered an effective marketing tool by marketers because of their impact on customer preferences and purchase behavior (Park et al. 2018). We will try to explain briefly why online communities are important for the business world in this section.

First, online communities play a critical role for companies that want to understand consumers and market trends. In other words, they provide efficient market information about new consumers, for marketers today. Kozinets (2002) further emphasizes the role that online communities play for marketing researchers who want to understand consumers' desires, tastes and new trends. Second, virtual communities provide contexts that can positively impact brand equity through consumer advocacy (Kozinets 2002) because of their impact on the process of innovation and their increasing interest in ethical and sustainable growth. The user generated content created by community members provides consumer advocacy which is a recent phenomenon related to consumer loyalty. We may easily say that online communities are effective for building a loyal customer base if managed properly. One other important benefit of communities is their ability to provide economic (McAlexander et al. 2002) and business potential by connecting people and to develop new business opportunities (Hagel 1999). Wikipedia, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn are



the most famous online platforms connecting thousands of people each day. Hagel (1999) suggests that the internet provides business professionals with the opportunity of developing and employing various business models and approaches and online communities change the type of relationship between the consumer and the company. As stated by Voorveld et al. (2018), each platform presents different opportunities for both parties and each platform should be considered according to its characteristics, target market and context. LinkedIn as an example is the right place for job seeking activity or for business related conversations.

Fourth, members of online communities work for the brand or for the company in specific activities. The most prominent examples are Harley Davidson and Wikipedia (Seraj 2012). This work may have a positive impact for increasing brand awareness, brand loyalty, etc., innovation (Füller et al. 2008), and new idea generation. Cova and Pace mention (2006) “the re-empowerment of consumers grouped into communities” and they also underline the importance of these groups of consumers, mainly communities revolving around cult brands in terms of the market and the companies.

We should also underline the benefits provided by community members to marketing activities. Marketing scholars mostly underline the innovative potential of community members (Muniz and O’Guinn 2001). Online communities also present different opportunities such as increasing the success rate of new products in the market place (Grüner et al. 2014), supporting the launch of new products (Füller et al. 2008), supporting advertising campaigns or other marketing strategies and providing useful information for new product development (McAlexander et al. 2002). Companies may also benefit from online community members for project development (Audi Virtual Lab, Füller 2008) and for collecting feedback (forums.ebay.com, discussions.apple.com and supportforums.blackberry.com, Gruner et al. 2014).

Online communities may be very effective mechanisms for co-production and customer participation (Ramasvamy and Gouillart 2010) and value co-creation (Vargo and Lusch 2004, 2006, 2008). They may give information and feedback about new market trends, new opportunities, needs and interests (forums.ebay.com, discussions.apple.com and supportforums.blackberry.com, Gruner et al. 2014)

Füller et al. (2008) suggest that they are considered a means for adding value to the entire innovation process. Online communities may have different functions in the market because of their members’ passion and experience of the brand (McAlexander et al. 2002). They may express new service ideas and add value along the entire innovation process.

Community members may test products. They may help other consumers with application or for other problems.

As a result, online communities, especially brand communities, are getting more and more important for marketers. They are effective in creating brand awareness, co-production, innovation and the development of new products. In some cases, this is a mutually beneficial relationship for both marketers and consumers.

### **Management of successful online communities**

After a detailed literature review and analysis about the functions and benefits of online communities we come up with a few critical points that are necessary to build and manage an online community. Successful online communities deserve special interest because of their influence and their power of redefining relationships between community members and the company or brand. The key point here seems to be the continuity of this relationship between community members and the brand or company. The continuity of the relationship is very much dependent on an effective strategy formation for both marketers and community members. In order to describe effective strategies, we need to understand the characteristics of successful strategies with community members' motivations. We will focus on the company's strategies for community management in this section.

Once again brand communities and open source software communities seem to provide the most significant examples of successful communities. A successful online community may be defined as an efficient and creative community producing high quality content and generating ideas. Currently, company driven communities offer various opportunities for marketers and they may evolve in time to become more functional and more powerful.

The general dynamics of successful online communities need to be addressed here in order to understand community members' motivations and managerial tools and tactics. The marketing literature provides important information related to community members.

The marketing literature provides a significant basis about the characteristics of online communities in general. Interactivity and reciprocity do have a critical role for the persistence, continuity and success of online communities (Chan and Li 2010). In addition, Chan and Li suggest that creating interactivity may enhance consumers' engagement in order to increase the power of online communities. Interactivity (Chan and Li 2010), reciprocity (Chan and Li 2010), commitment, shared consciousness, rituals and traditions (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001) are important

characteristics of long-lasting online communities in general. Collective effort, social interactions, group influences and group identity are important characteristics of these communities according to Dholakia and Bagozzi (2006). Füller (2008) also describes members of brand communities as a valuable source of innovation because of their passion for the brand. It is also possible to mention influential online communities where community members are willing to pay annual fees for the renewal of membership and to be a part of this culture (Seraj 2012). Managers of online communities can benefit from the monetization of social networks with deep social connections (Park et al. 2018).

Although this chapter depicts indifferently all types of communities, brand communities seem to be more important organizations in terms of their power over the brand, over the community members and the perceptions of consumers. According to McAlexander et al. (2002), community-integrated customers serve as brand missionaries.

Open source software communities are yet another type of online community which has its own characteristics. Collective effort, social interactions and group influences are important characteristics of these communities. They are also important in terms of customer participation and co-production because their participation is mostly voluntary and financial remuneration is absent in most of them.

Bagozzi and Dholakia's (2006) work on open source software communities and Linux members, offers interesting findings on this area. They argue that motivation of community members for joining these types of groups changes over time and the impact of deeper relationships may influence the perception of members about the performance of some group tasks (the expression of group values and goals may become more important).

Dholakia and Bagozzi conclude (2006) that open source software communities are influential and cohesive with a group identity that can easily explain the motivation of community members performing some marketing, services or other activities without any financial remuneration. They also suggest that "we" intentions stimulate participation. They also claim that these groups can foster loyalty and engagement with the product (Başar, 2018b).

Cova and Pace (2006) also have some suggestions for the development of product oriented brand communities: the importance of the production of sub-cultural components, the impact of a platform type web site filled with personal pages or blogs for this type of community, the role of the company as a facilitator of this on-site self-exhibition and being non-

intrusive. The characteristics below facilitate value formation in online communities. They may also be helpful for getting feedback from customers and new idea generation, the spread of electronic word of mouth and brand awareness (Seraj 2012).

First of all, top management's support and an encouraging company culture are key points for the continuity of communities. Also important are the effective management of online communities with top management support (Healy and McDonagh 2013), a sufficient technological infrastructure and software programs in order to monitor user generated content (Chan and Li 2010).

Communities with content quality (Seraj 2012; Voorveld et al. 2018) are perceived as more attractive and interesting. The content quality is also important for the loyalty of community members. In order to create an effective community, an online structure enhancing interactivity, reciprocity (Chan and Li 2010) and creativity is necessary.

The existence of community culture with some rules and rituals may also be very helpful for the continuity of community. Cova and Pace (2006) emphasize the importance of the production of sub-cultural components for the brand in these communities and the personalization of these platforms through personal pages and blogs for this consumer driven marketing style. Seraj (2012) underlines the importance of self-governed community culture and interaction for community culture. Cova and Pace highlight more opportunities to self-display and the personalization of forums and blogs (Cova and Pace 2006). Community engagement (Brodie et al. 2013; Dessart 2017), identification with the community, satisfaction and degree of influence (Woisetschlager et al. 2008) may help some community members to take some voluntary and critical roles within the community depending on their experience, background and interests.

Another aspect for the success of community management could be the identification of important roles and social figures in the community. These people may be important for more satisfactory relationship. Seraj (2012) also talks about some social roles in the community (mediators, moderators, educators, innovators, etc.). Yet another aspect could be the use of opinion leaders (Cova 2006) or e-fluentials (Chan and Li 2010) for maintaining the critical mass, increasing interactivity and establishing a community culture. Chan and Li (2010) also emphasize the importance of some members with the highest network value representing a reliable source of information for consumers. They suggest targeting those people for the success of the community.

- A sufficient technological infrastructure and software programs in order to monitor user generated content (Chan and Li 2010);
- An online structure enhancing interactivity and reciprocity (Chan and Li 2010);
- Content quality (Seraj 2012). Besides content quality, the creative culture of the community is also an important point; and
- A self-governed community culture (Seraj 2012).

One other important strategy to consider is providing an environment with the freedom of self-expression. Besides interaction and reciprocity, online communities have to provide community members with the opportunity to express themselves. Sub-cultural components, with freedom of self-expression are important for sustaining a brand cult. Freedom of self-expression may increase identification with the community and member satisfaction. Identification with the community, satisfaction and degree of influence are the three important factors affecting the success of communities (Woisetschlager et al. 2008). These characteristics may help some community members to take some voluntary and critical roles within the community depending on their experience, background and interests.

## Conclusion

With the rise of communication technologies and social media and the proliferation of platforms, we are experiencing the evolution of communication and consumption. This evolution also changes the role of consumers in value co-creation; they are more and more active in marketing and idea generation. Every marketing activity should include digital communication, digital platforms and social media in one way or another. At the same time, it has become evident that recognition of the central role of online communities in several marketing activities such as brand awareness, gathering marketing insights and market information, co-production and innovation is essential for better results. In other words, online communities are becoming an important actor for marketing activities and for better communication with consumers. We want to discuss the approach to community management and new strategies for better results at this point.

First of all, we should explain why we think that companies need different strategies and a different approach for community management. Online communities are important because they are redefining the relationship between the brands and the consumers. Although this relationship is important for both parties, development and its continuity

may be more critical for the competitive advantage of companies and brands. Researches indicate that online communities play an important role in building awareness, getting marketing insights, fostering innovation and supporting community members for sharing and expressing ideas. They are getting more and more influential in marketing activities. Building and managing a successful online community seems to be a necessity for an effective online presence and a good relationship with customers.

We argue at this point that some specific strategies are required for the continuity of this relationship and these strategies should be part of the marketing strategies of companies. A detailed analysis of communities gives important clues for managing this relationship with consumers. An effective management of online communities is very much related to top management's priorities and approach. The relationship between online communities and management may be complex in some cases but online communities can be a source of innovation and creativity if they can be managed properly. Healy and McDonagh (2013) call managers collaborative co-creators. According to them managers can facilitate innovation creation through dialogue and better understanding of community goals, etc. Contacting influential community members in order to make use of their knowledge and to maintain the critical mass could be a very good idea.

We discussed the changing role of the new customer in the first part of this chapter. The consumer or the community member in this new world does have different expectations. As stated earlier, communities present a trustworthy platform for expressing ideas, discussion and content creation. On the other hand, this closer interaction with the community can provide a great opportunity for management to co-produce with consumers. In addition, managers can gather enough information to better understand consumers, new market trends and consumer needs, etc. Besides market information, virtual communities provide details about consumer experience (Pralhad and Ramasvamy 2000, 2004) which can be very critical for designing, reformulating and developing new services and products.

As stated earlier, online communities redefine the relationship between consumers and brands in general. The continuity of this relationship is the key point for both parties and marketers need to formulate effective strategies for community management. One other important point may be the management style of communities. Regardless of the industry a transparent approach with continuous dialogue would be a good choice for management. We are questioning more and more the role of managers, marketers and consumers with the rising importance of communities.

Understandably, new roles are required in this new world. Besides the encouragement of managers, an egalitarian and democratic approach may provide better results for community management. The managers' role as collaborative co-creator can be achieved by proactively increasing the interactivity and power of online communities.

There are some key points for effective strategy formulation and community management. First of all, marketers should always consider the inner dynamics of the community and the motivation of community members. Other important factors affecting the power or success of virtual communities are a self-governed community culture with interactivity and reciprocity (Seraj 2012), the quality of user generated content (Woisetschlager 2008; Seraj 2012), the opportunity to self-display (Cova and Pace 2006), freedom of self-expression, and personalization of forums and blogs (Cova and Pace 2006). Chan and Li suggest that firms have to offer structural and experiential interactivity, increasing the consumer's engagement to allow socialization and creation. The opportunity of expressing him-self or her-self seems to be the most exciting part of these virtual communities and companies are trying to use these platforms for testing business decisions.

Considering the pace of technological advancement and the rise of mobile technologies we may easily say that the majority of relationships between brands and consumers will be through communities in the future. Communities will be more important in time since they provide a more transparent and democratic basis for consumers. In this new business world mostly dominated by consumers, strategies allowing self-expression and continuous dialogue and the possibility of innovation should be developed for better community management. As a result, we believe that an effective community may create more satisfactory relations and may foster customer loyalty.

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# CHAPTER TWELVE

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

### BAHADIR ERCİŞ

#### **Introduction**

Today, the use of social media in terms of public relations has become a necessity for effective communication. It is very important to determine which of all the fields of the new media are suitable for the target audience. Social media are used to share and discuss other people's experiences and information in electronic media. Social media tools are the most preferred digital tool of recent times. They provide companies with detailed information about consumers and products. At the same time, they enable the following of attitudes, preferences, lives and desires of the consumers. Social media networks can now be used by everyone, everywhere. The most used social media networks today are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. The importance of social media is understood in public relations as in all sectors. It started to use social media channels and social media for marketing purposes. In this respect, social media are very important in terms of the effective sharing of all practices of the public relations discipline with the target audience. Social media are a communication area that is constantly updated and information is updated at any time. This phenomenon improves public relations practices in social media with the digital evolution. Today, people use social media to talk about and communicate with their favorite brands. It is important to use social media actively in all aspects for effective public relations work. For this, it is necessary to see social media as an indispensable part of public relations. Acting in this direction can be a powerful strategy for success. A social media account that is used with the right planning is important for public relations. These social media activities are necessary for reaching large audiences. They provide important advantages such as being one step ahead in crisis management. Therefore, active use of social media is essential for public relations.

Social media help to show the extent of the business field and can also increase the authority of that brand. The key to success when sharing content on social media is compliance with public relations goals. On the other hand, mistakenly posted content on social media can damage the reputation of businesses. In this case, it's important to maintain a brand's positive reputation. For this reason, social media should be shared in fast and effective ways. This study aims to reveal the interactive interaction of social media channels and public relations.

## **Public relations**

Public relations is a bridge (Erciş 2010). Our age is an age of information and communication. For this reason, businesses need a communication fabric that works quickly, accurately and effectively inside and outside of the organization in order to survive. This need is the phenomenon of public relations (Erciş 1992). This phenomenon is an act of gaining prestige in society. Businesses that succeed here will surpass their competitors. Public relations consists of two basic terms: public and relations. In simple terms, the people are a community of individuals with common interests and characteristics. The concept of relationships is a purposeful activity involving at least two parties on which communication is based. The concept of public relations, which is the combination of these two terms, describes the relationship established for the common goals of a community. It is not easy to make a precise definition for the concept of public relations. There are many definitions on this subject. Some of the definitions about public relations are as follows:

- Public relations analyzes trends. It develops predictive programs based on the results of this analysis. It undertakes the management consultancy of the company. It is an art and science that implements pre-planned programs that will serve mutually for the benefit of the public and the organization (Dennis 2005).
- Public relations practices are planned and sustainable efforts to achieve mutual understanding between the organization and its target audiences (Ayhan 2015).
- Public relations is the establishment of honest and solid ties by private or legal persons with specified audiences. Public relations is the establishment of positive belief against the business. It is also an art of managerialism that encompasses planned efforts to maintain mutually beneficial relationships (Khang 2012).

- Public relations is a two-way communication effort that is designed in advance, requires planned performance and is based on real policies, while also protecting the public interest in practices. Public relations is a function of a management (Erciş 2010). Public relations is a recognition and promotion process.
- Public relations is the planned and programmed application of communication techniques in order for organizations to recognize the environment they are sensitive to and to introduce themselves to this environment (Levy 2009).

Public relations, in short, is the units that create communication strategies and tactics to change the behavior of the target audience and their attitude towards the organization. The main purpose in public relations is to influence and be influenced by the public opinion. In the realization of this main purpose, it is to create a positive image about the organization in the mind of the public, with trust and dignity within the organization and among other organizations and institutions. In the aims of businesses nowadays, businesses that do not go public and do not integrate with them do not have a chance to last long. For this reason, businesses have many expectations from the public relations policies and practices they have established within their own structure.

These expectations can be summarized as follows (Levy 2009):

- Vaccination of private entrepreneurship
- Protecting the business
- Financial strength
- Providing dignity
- Increasing sales
- Finding employees
- Improving industrial relations.

Socially Monitored Objectives: From a social point of view, the purposes of public relations are as follows (Souter 1999):

- To enlighten the public,
- To facilitate the public's relations with the administration,
- To ensure that services are seen more quickly and easily by cooperating with the public,
- To listen to the wishes, requests, suggestions, and complaints of the people and to work to eliminate the problems.

The public opening of the business and claiming the problems of the people are well received by the society. Society does not want to be viewed as a consumer who only buys the company's products. Society wants to get to know better the organizations that offer this service other than the ones that companies produce and consume.

## **Social media**

In social media, Web 2.0 technologies are expressed in a broad sense. They include a user-based concept. Having a social-based feature has been effective in the birth of social media. In terms of process, the emergence of social media was in 1979. Social media networks developed with the effect of the development speed of technology. Towards the end of 1993, this development increased further (Scott 1991). In terms of usage, social media networks have become indispensable for institutions, societies and individuals. These networks are increasing their efficiency in providing effective communication and data presentation at a great pace every day. Social media are very valuable for institutions as well as for societies and countries. Traditional media were created with the formation and expansion of media related structures and the changing environment. In the process, tools such as radio and television revealed their activities (Gilbert 2009). All these communication tools formed the beginning of traditional media in today's sense. At this stage, the perception of new technologies under the name of media has emerged. In the developing process, the emergence of computer technology has accelerated the flow of all messages from the source to the target. These technologies have had an important place in terms of both the target audience and institutions. The great advancement in technology has made the media equally different. The speed of technology has led to the development of communication tools. The said development process of communication tools brought a new formation apart from traditional media. This formation has created the concepts of "new media" or "alternative media". All these developments and changes have revealed many concepts related with the concept of new media. These concepts have been expressed as social media and online media or offline media (Downes 2005). In fact, this distinction is difficult to express with certain limits because at some point it is a distinction that is impossible to make. There are two important features that cause alternative media to differentiate from traditional media. These are the digitalization of content and allowing real-time differentiation. It is also possible for new media to create social bonds between members of the target audience. At this stage, new media reveal a great innovation with

the feature of presenting virtual environments. Having a digital feature is an important development for users. In addition to this feature, new media exhibit an important feature such as the considerable extension of the boundaries of information and providing the opportunity to easily access the desired information. In addition, the fact that they offer a social network structure reveals a very important feature. At this stage, social networking sites, blogs, e-mail environments and forums offer an important exchange environment. These environments help to integrate all people from all over the world or from different countries, to become instantly aware of each other, establish close relationships or create a global network of relations. In addition to all these, one of the most important features in the development process is that traditional media bring the passive consumption phenomenon to the forefront, and new media reveal an effective interaction process. At the same time, the multimedia feature, which shows itself as a unique development trend, represents one of the most important features of new media in terms of service to people. In addition, a strong memory capacity reinforces all these features (Shultz 2009). Social media online conversation forums include a comprehensive range of presentation areas. Blogs and discussion boards occupy an important place in this area. Also, websites and forums are included in this structure. E-mail activities constitute an important application area of social media. In short, social media cover a large area of all these activities and online conversation forums (Mangold 2009). From this point of view, there is no time and place limitation in social media. They constitute an area where mobile-based communication facilities are presented. They are a platform where experiences and unlimited information are shared. After all these determinations about social media, social media can be divided into a number of groups in general. It is possible to express these as seven groups.

These groups are as follows (Kaya 2017);

- Email groups
- Blogs
- Forums
- Corporate intranet
- Extranet
- Instant message services
- Social networking sites.

The advantages of social media tools are to (Thewall 2008);

- Keep accounts active continuously,

- Help the efficient use of accounts,
- Offer an independent usage from the administrators,
- Follow user movements,
- Highlight the brands of businesses,
- Make efficient changes at any time,
- Make interpersonal communication effective and fast,
- Allow learning of all the formations and changes in the world in a short time,
- Help to regulate the phenomenon of tourism worldwide,
- Help the organization of various events,
- Help social networking sites present various types of business information,
- Help individuals to express themselves,
- Present people's thoughts and comments,
- Learn information about people's lives on social media.

The disadvantages of social media tools are;

- The inclusion of a wide range of possibilities for deceit and abuse,
- The desire to be popular,
- The possibility of misuse of shared photos,
- The falling back from improvements and life,
- Cyberbullying,
- Being addicted,
- Violation of privacy,
- Data being permanent.

### **Social media features**

There is a large arena of social media networking technologies. They include all of the interactive communication and interaction with the help of the mentioned network technologies (Boyd 2008). All the mutual sharing of people on the internet creates social media. Social media have many unique features that enable all of these activities to take place effectively.

These features are (Kithcen 1999);

- Users can edit content in terms of media,
- Users can contribute to the content,
- Users can determine the contents,
- Users can actively use the content,
- Users can be passive,



- Users can detect situations that intersect with others,
- Users can set various social media networks.

According to another evaluation, these characteristics can be expressed as follows (Kithcen 1999);

- Having independent users from the publisher,
- User sourced content,
- Interaction between users,
- No time and space limitations.

Social media consist of social networks and include various features. These features can be expressed as follows (Antor 2001);

- **Participants:** Social media encourage participants, support those who follow and destroy distance between viewers, listeners and media in this respect.
- **Openness:** Most of the social media services encourage feedback. They also support participation. With this feature, they facilitate applications such as sharing ideas and information.
- **Conversation:** This is about traditional media publishing which is unidirectional. The message is sent from a source to the audience. Social media provide two-way communication and also exhibit an interactive feature (Kithcen 1999).
- **Community:** Social media easily bring communities together. They are very fast in forming groups. They have an interactive feature. They allow for fast and effective incorporation.
- **Connection:** This is a feature with the link applications of social media. The link is effective. It facilitates transportation.
- **Access:** Social media provide a very good opportunity for easy access.
- **Accessibility:** Social media tools are available to all users easily and at little cost.
- **Usage:** Social media have an easy to use content.
- **Innovation:** Social media and social media tools create a structure that is open and suitable for innovation.
- **Persistence:** Traditional media cannot be changed after they are created.
- **Creating Content in Media:** It has now become very easy to create content on social media. People can easily share their videos on

social media. They can express their thoughts. They can easily share their production or work with people.

- Creating a New Influencer Layer: Now, a certain freedom of movement in environments can be created quite comfortably in media.

## Social media tools

Social media tools or social networks organize the social relationships in the lives of individuals. In social network channels the profiles of people are first organized. This refers to a virtual formation of real life. These profiles contain all personal information and some features. Before this information is communicated with other users, it is important data for identifying the person and sharing (Altay 2011).

*Blogs:* Blogs emerged from the concept of the weblog which is a type of website that reveals comments and opinions on communities driven by people, institutions, and communities. It is expressed as a blogger who writes blog posts. At this stage, micro-blogs can be defined as systems that reveal an individual's ability to express information about their situation and views in a desired way over a certain period of time. They are the fastest networks that offer development occurring all over the world.

The main features of blogs are;

- Frequent updates,
- Last post feed,
- Comments,
- Informal and transparent,
- Simplicity,
- Reverse chronological order.

*Social networks:* These are the environments that occur in all internet-based activities expressed as social media in the new process and where individuals share information on a common platform. Networks where mutual communication is carried out are expressed as social networks.

*Wordpress:* Wordpress is offered for free. It is constantly being developed.

*Podcasts:* Podcasting is the uploading of broadcasts containing audio, video and text to personal computers to be watched after the broadcast time, using portable devices such as mobile phones, MP3 players, video players or laptops. In another classification, social media tools are expressed as follows;

*Facebook:* Facebook originated in 2004. It was founded by Mark Zuckerberg. It is a social network that allows all users to interact mutually and interactively. It allows people to be in a mutual and sharing relationship. These posts can be in the form of photos or texts.

*LinkedIn:* LinkedIn is a professional network system. It is possible to express the purposes of using this system as follows (Joyce 2010);

- Following the news,
- Job searches,
- Sending job applications,
- Accessing an online resume,
- Getting advice,
- Giving advice,
- Obtaining information about businesses.

Communicating with individuals on LinkedIn and identifying online consumers are a very important area which is very important for individuals. This also reveals an importance for businesses.

*Instagram:* Instagram is a mobile system that helps people share photos and videos. It allows people to communicate with systems such as Facebook and Twitter. Instagram was established in 2010. Facebook bought Instagram in 2012. Instagram is a photo and video sharing platform. It also enables photos to be shared with the smart phone system. It also allows these photos to be included in Facebook and Twitter systems.

Several other features of Instagram can be expressed as follows;

- Liking photos,
- Leaving a comment,
- Labeling,
- Classification of photos,
- Easily accessible.

*Twitter:* This was created in South Park, San Francisco in 2006 with the effort of 14 friends, whose names were Jack, Us, Noah, Crystal, Jeremy, Adam, Tony, House, Dom, Rabble, Ray, Florian, Tim and Blaine.

*YouTube:* This was established in 2005. YouTube allows individuals to share personal videos. It also offers the opportunity to discover and watch these videos. It is the most recognized system by people along with Facebook. YouTube has a number of features. These features are as follows;

- To inform,
- To inspire,
- To encourage inventions,
- To offer advertisement opportunities,
- Sharing music,
- Sharing videos,
- Creating discussion platforms,
- Providing an effective communication environment,
- YouTube offers a wide range of videos on the internet.

*Wikis:* Wiki means fast. Wikis are websites that offer all users the ability to simply add and edit content. Wikis are dynamic. The best known wiki example is the wiki. It refers to information sharing networks whose content is determined by the users. It gives its users the opportunity to create content. With this feature, it creates a common working area for its users. Wikis are collaborative websites that allow users to add and edit content. Wikipedia is a good example of these sites. This entire encyclopedia has been created with user contributions.

*Forums:* These are networks that emerge as discussion platforms on which participants support the sharing of information. The title is opened for the information and ideas to be revealed in the system. Users create a message in the opened section.

The properties of forums can be expressed as follows (Herbert 2005);

- All individuals can create a message,
- There are managers in the system,
- There are certain rules,
- Those who do not obey the rules can be prevented from use.

*Content communities:* These are the systems that allow participants to share the pictures and videos they want among the participants.

*Tweet reach:* This network system reveals how many shareholders share on Twitter and how many people post posts. It includes campaigns created by people.

*Klout:* This is a network that reveals the detailed contents of all the shares. Shares can be phenomena in this way. Klout reveals why people are a phenomenon.

Using Klout, people can get information relating to;

- People who are influenced,

- What these people are affected by,
- What they want,
- What they wonder about.

*Hootsuite:* Internet users generally use many networks. This style of action makes it difficult to follow people. Among social media tools, Hootsuite allows you to control these networks in a healthy way. Thanks to this network, all content can be shared at any time.

*Social mention:* For some institutions or individuals, users' time in using social media is important. It is also important to know which social media are used and the duration of use of a platform. The Social Mention system is used to get information about all this. One of the main reasons for choosing the Social Mention network is that it offers a variety of language possibilities. The network includes 40 different languages.

*Twazzup:* It may be desirable to reach individuals who prefer Twitter. If this cannot be achieved, this is preferred. The Twazzup network is preferred as a search engine.

*IceRocket:* It may be desirable to save Myspace, Blog, Web and Twitter information. The Ice Rocket system is preferred for this.

*TweetDeck:* It may be desirable to schedule a Twitter post. Hashtag detection may be requested. It may be desirable to manage various accounts. The Tweet Deck network is used to accomplish all this.

*HowSociable:* This detects the amount of words used on 32 different social media sites, which are available in businesses or apps.

*Backtweet:* This is a system that reveals your history on Twitter. It also reveals information about people's websites.

*Carma:* This is a system that reveals the strengths or weaknesses of businesses in the social media arena.

## **Relationships between social media and public relations**

Today, the digitization and development of information technologies form the basis of the process called the "information society" (Herbert 2005). This situation has led to the emergence of new management approaches and business models. With easy access to social media, it is easy to find information about everything. There is no question of hiding information or covering up unwanted topics (Becker 1982). Therefore, businesses should be more careful and establish a transparent environmental communication strategy (Altay 2011). The main point of new media is to present a dialogue-based and symmetrical public relations model that is open and transparent. In this respect, it can be said that new media and

public relations meet at common points within the scope of the basic principles. Two functions are mentioned in public relations, which can be defined as the management of the communication of the organization and its public. These are identification and recognition functions. The promotion function includes one-way communication activities and constitutes the oldest and most basic activity group of public relations. The aim is to promote the organization and its goods and services to the public (Thewall, 2008: 85). News bulletins and announcements made for citizens are examples of promotional activities. The second function is the recognition function. Recognition includes activities aimed at recognizing the organization's public, and understanding their wishes and tendencies. These activities add feedback to the communication activity and communication becomes two-way. Applications for information, surveys, are examples of the recognition function. The balanced use of these two functions serves a dialogue-enhancing function in organizations. Such an interaction will also help to establish a relationship (Altay 2011). It is constantly stated that the Internet is a very important medium for the recognition and promotion of public relations. However, when corporate websites are examined, it is seen that dialogue-enhancing applications based on two-way communication are used very poorly (McAllister-Spooner 2009). In this way, "it is possible to get simultaneous reactions from the public regarding the activities, messages and transactions of the organization. Today, organizations evaluate the success of public relations activities according to many methods, as well as discussions on internet message boards" (Altay 2011). Technological developments will make public relations effective and facilitate their work. Public relations studies vary in application areas such as information communication technology and internet marketing, and organizational communication. The alternatives provided by Web 2.0 (or user-driven internet media) are parallel to the main goals and objectives of the public relations discipline (Kithcen 1999). With this infrastructure, public relations professionals aim to break down the barriers between all stakeholders while sending the message to the target audience, in order to strengthen the relations and learn the thoughts and feelings of the target audience. On the other hand, public relations professionals within the global network based on the mutual communication that emerged today must have democratic values such as freedom of expression, free will, and free circulation of information. It can be said today, by looking at all these, that a different sociological, economic and technological infrastructure contributes not only to the methodological principles of public relations but also to ethical and moral principles (Kithcen 1999). Good use of technology is also

important for public relations studies. It is expected that new media will create a big change in the communication activities that businesses will realize with their target audiences by accelerating and developing two-way communication as the main goal of public relations. Success for businesses has turned into the effective use of information technologies. In today's competitive environment, it is desired to maintain the existence of businesses and to create a reliable corporate image with continuity and a website in order to make the accessibility of most businesses on the internet be seen as the fastest, most realistic and savored method to achieve marketing communication goals (Thewall 2008). As a result, businesses in social networking networks must have a communication tool that should be implemented compulsorily. In addition, the new media add to the approaches that question their place and necessity in the field of public relations.

## Conclusion

Social media constitute a communication area that is constantly updated, and information is updated at any time. This phenomenon improves public relations practices in social media with the digital evolution. Today, people use social media to talk about and communicate with their favorite brands. It is important to use social media actively in all aspects for effective public relations work. For this, it is necessary to see social media as an indispensable part of public relations. Acting in this direction can be a powerful strategy for success. A social media account that is used with the right planning is important for public relations. These social media activities are necessary for reaching large audiences. They provide important advantages such as being one step ahead in crisis management. Therefore, the active use of social media is essential for public relations. Social media help to show the extent of the business field. This can also increase the authority of the brand. The key to success when sharing content on social media is compliance with public relations goals. On the other hand, mistakenly posted content on social media can damage the reputation of businesses. In this case, it's important to maintain a brand's positive reputation. For this reason, social media should be shared in fast and effective ways. This study aims to reveal the interactive interaction of social media channels and public relations. The digitization and development of information technologies form the basis of the process called the "information society". This situation has led to the emergence of new management approaches and business models. With easy access to

social media, it is easy to find information about everything. There is no question of hiding information or covering up unwanted topics. Therefore, businesses should be more careful and establish a transparent environmental communication strategy (Başaran 2006) The main point of the new media is to present a dialogue-based and symmetrical public relations model that is open and transparent. In this respect, it can be said that new media and public relations meet at common points within the scope of the basic principles. Two functions are mentioned in public relations, which can be defined as the management of the communication of the organization and its public. These are identification and recognition functions. The promotion function includes one-way communication activities and constitutes the oldest and most basic activity group of public relations. The aim is to promote the organization, its goods and services to the public. News bulletins and announcements made for citizens are examples of promotional activities. The second function is the recognition function. Recognition includes activities aimed at recognizing the organization's public and understanding their wishes and tendencies. It is desired to maintain the existence of businesses and create a reliable corporate image with continuity and a website in order to make the accessibility of most businesses on the internet be seen as the fastest, most realistic and savored method to achieve marketing communication goals. As a result, businesses in social networking networks must have a communication tool that should be implemented compulsorily. In addition, the new media increase the number of approaches that question their place and necessity in the field of public relations.

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