

Chapter 54

Social Network Sites (SNS) and Their Irrepressible Popularity: Can They Really Cause an Addiction?

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ABSTRACT

Popularity of social media is increasing day by day and there are thousands of social media platforms on the internet with different features. This chapter discusses the term social media in general and examines its evolution in detail from the beginning of the first e-mail to today. Authors explore the terms pertaining to the domain of Social Network Sites (SNS) which are considered as one of the most used forms of social media. Authors present a discussion about a popular topic “SNS addiction” and examine its characteristics with a brief literature review. Accordingly, despite the fact that excessive use of social network sites cannot be formally accepted as a behavioral addiction; shy and young, extroverted, and neurotic women with no relationship are more likely to develop addictive behaviors towards social media.

INTRODUCTION

The reputation of social media is increasing day by day, and this popularity changes our daily lives and business environments in both negative and positive ways. For example one study claims that proper use of social media helps family members to increase their connection and to strengthen their family bonds (Williams & Merten, 2011); whereas other has investigated that divorce rates have increased with developing technology (Greenwood, Guner, Santos, & Kocharkov, 2016). Moqbel and Kock (2018) has admitted that excessive use of social media has negative impacts on the personal and work environment by means of decreasing positive emotions, increasing health problems and task distraction. However,

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their strong evidence about the harmful effects of social media on personal environment is as strong as the impact on the work environment, Greengard (2012) believes that social media can be a way for achieving our life experiences. Indeed, some previous studies have clearly proved that using social media can enhance academic success (Ainin, Naqshbandi, Moghavvemi, & Jaafar, 2015), increase students' engagement (Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011) as well as having more interactive customer relationship performance (Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, & Agnihotri, 2014), creating more trusted products and customers (Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2013). Social media brings to our life not only performance-based positive outcomes; it may also offer some emotional gifts. For example, results have shown that getting positive feedback on the profiles enhance self-esteem and subjective well-being (Valkenburg, Peter, & Schouten, 2006). Similarly, Wang, Jackson, Gaskin, and Wang (2014) have also found that social use of social networking sites is positively related to well-being. These contradictory examples can be reproduced even further, but the most critical point in here is that there is no generalizable effect of social media. Although literature is agreed that some people are more inclined to use social media and exposed its negative effects such as young individuals (Kalpidou, Costin, & Morris, 2011) and females (Andreasen et al., 2013a), the situation depends on who you are, what are your individual characteristics and other unpredictable factors. Effects may be different even when the same person uses social media for different purposes. Baek, Bae, and Jang (2013) have found that social activities (based on reciprocity between the user and his/her friends such as chatting) decrease the feeling of loneliness; however parasocial activities (based on unilateral activities such as commenting a celebrity's photo) show opposite effect. Because of these reasons, understanding social media is crucial to get benefit from it without being harmed. For this purpose, the present chapter has two main objectives (1) to present the outline of social media (Section 1), (2) to define social network sites (SNS) with examples of their potential effects, and (3) to discuss a relatively new concept "SNS addiction."

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MEDIA

In this section, first, we try to define social media with different definitions made by different point of view and touch on the evolution of social media.

What is Social Media?

According to Oberst (2010), the online world started gaining prominence with the social media after the year of 2000, and since then people have started to share their feelings, information, videos, and pictures at an astounding rate. According to their massive global compendium of stats, We Are Social has currently released that among 4.338 billion internet users worldwide 3.484 of them have already active social media users (We Are Social, 2019). This simply proves that 75% of internet users are also a member of social media. The reason why social media has become popular is that; it is always up to date, be able to multiple use (can be used for so many people at the same time), and is an open-source platform (Akıncı Vural & Bat, 2010). Although literature builds consensus about social media has changed our lives in many ways, there is no common sense what actually it is. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) have stated that the terms social media and Web 2.0 are generally used interchangeably, but this situation is contradictory. According to them Web 2.0 can be considered as an ideological and technological foundation for the evolution of social media. More precisely, social media is an intimate and natural platform created

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