

TƏHSİLDƏ RƏQƏMSALLAŞMANIN YARATDIĞI TƏNHALAŞMA PROBLEMI

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ANNOTASIYA

Bu məqalədə təhsil sistemində baş verən texnoloji dəyişikliklər müstəvisində tələbələrin texnologiyadan asılılığı məsələləri təhlil olunur. Təhsildə geniş yayılmış rəqəmsal tətbiqlər ənənəvi təhsil modellərini dəyişdirdikcə, təhsilin məsafədən asılılığı tədricən aradan qalxır. Bu dövrdə meydana çıxan rəqəmsal inqilab idraki, psixososial və emosional təsirlərə malikdir. Xüsusilə də, texnoloji vasitələrdən nəzarətsiz və yanlış istifadə olunması təhsilalanların sosial münasibətlərinə və idraki inkişafına təhlükə yaradacaq həddə çatıb. Mövcud ədəbiyyatın araşdırılması və bu tədqiqatın nəticələri əsasında hazırlanmış məqalə rəqəmsallaşmanın qaçılmaz nəticələrindən biri kimi tənhalığı təhlil edir və rəqəmsallaşma ilə tələbələrin tənhalığı arasındakı əlaqəyə diqqət yetirir. Bu vəziyyəti *rəqəmsal aludəçilik* olaraq xarakterizə edən məqalə rəqəmsallaşmanın mənfi təsirlərini və nəticələrini aradan qaldırmaq üçün *rəqəmsal pəhriz* təqdim etmək məqsədi güdür.

Açar sözlər: rəqəmsallaşma, tənhalıq, təhsil, rəqəmsal aludəçilik, rəqəmsal pəhriz.

THE ISOLATION CREATED BY DIGITALIZATION IN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study emphasizes on the technology addiction of the associate and bachelor's degree students on the basis of the adjustment process necessitated by technological changes in the education system. As widespread digital applications in education have transformed traditional education models, education has increasingly become independent from space. The Digital revolution that has emerged during this period has cognitive, psycho-social and emotional influences. Particularly, the uncontrolled and improper use of technological devices has reached such a level to threaten the social relations and cognitive development of students. In the light of the studies in literature and the research findings, this article analyzes loneliness as one of the inevitable consequences of digitalization and focuses on the relationship between digitalization and the students' loneliness. Describing this situation as digital obesity, the article aims to present a digital diet to solve the negative effects and consequences of digitalization.

Keywords: digitalization, loneliness, education, digital obesity, digital diet.

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INTRODUCTION

Digitalization and rapid technological development are among the concepts which define the modern world. This digital movement can be seen in every sphere of social life and set of changes on different grounds. As a consequence of this process, in the presence of society, psychological, sociological, cultural even physiological changes have been the point in question. Digitalization's effects have been seen in the field of education, and new models have been introduced. These models generate alternatives to traditional education methods and facilitate the integration of technology into the process of education (Görgülü, Küçükali & Ada, 2013, 57). The increase in the use of high technology gadgets such as interactive whiteboards, the internet and tablet are among the proofs of this integration.

At the same time, as in other fields, widespread digitalization in the field of education is a consequence of the pandemic. As a matter of fact, all around the world educational activities involving at least 1,5 billion students (in Turkey this number is approximately 25 million) and 63 million teachers have been interrupted; and then distance education has been promptly started to maintain education (MNE, 2020). The widespread digitalization in the field of education causes changes in the behaviours and relationships of the students who are the subject of the process.

It is thought that frequent and unrestricted use of technology and technological devices by students is a problem and pathological situation, and some questions have risen about technology addiction (Griffiths, 2004:216). In literature, internet addiction and social media addiction are accepted as behavioural addictions (Ünal-Tutgun, 2020).

As Shapira and her colleagues (2003:210) have defined internet addiction as a behavioural addiction, Van den Eijnden and his colleagues (2016:485) have seen social media addiction as such an addiction. As for Yengin (2019:131), within the context of individuals' daily necessities, the use of technology causes the condition of digital addiction. In this context, one of the most significant subjects that need scholarly attention is the problem of loneliness as a threat to the students' psycho-social, cognitive and emotional development processes.

According to Yengin (2019:139), internet use as a way to get rid of loneliness leads to dependence and eventually to addiction. According to Kalkan (2021:51) technology is a significant tool during the socialization process for students. Young individuals have been socialised in the virtual platforms provided by the internet, have expressed themselves and needed to get into different groups by opening user accounts on chat platforms. Although this situation seems to be a kind of socialization, the young have begun to move away from the real world and lived in a virtual world. According to Noyan (2016:23), this situation that particularly made the students addicted to the screen also caused to the feeling of loneliness. According to Solmaz (2019), screen addiction might prevent individuals from fulfilling their needs and goals, lead to problems in interpersonal relationships and a decrease in the individual's ability in regulating and evaluating his or her behaviour and, as a consequence of this situation, it might lead the individual to find himself or herself in an unhealthy state and decisions. This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of loneliness and the relation between digitalization and the students' level of loneliness by applying different research findings.

THE TYPES OF LONELINESS AND ITS EFFECTS ON STUDENTS

Loneliness has been seen as one of the major problems of the contemporary world. It is a concept described as emotional emptiness reactions that accompany awareness and yearning, despair, the individual's cognitive awareness of the absence the intimate and social relation (Asher and Paquette, 2003). Peplau and Perlman (1982) consider loneliness as an aspect of human

relations and define it as a feeling that is caused by the absence of the individual's real relationships' expectations on this issue.

Loneliness, basically, is not a feeling arising from being physically alone (Russell, Cutrona, McRae and Gomez, 2012). The individual might experience loneliness when s/he is with other people (Rubenstein, Shaver and Peplau, 1979). As for Weiss (1973), loneliness is experienced as social loneliness and emotional loneliness (Duy, 2003).

Social loneliness might arise from either the absence of social interaction or because of the absence of a group sharing common interests and activities. However, emotional loneliness is caused by the absence of a close bond relationship or the loss of such a relationship (Rostovskaya and other, 2022:18).

In this kind of relationship, it is hard to have an intimate and sincere relationship with others. Adolescence, as one of the development periods of the individual, is experienced by some individuals with full of comfort whereas the others experience great troubles during this period. Adolescence is defined as a period in which loneliness is deeply experienced (Duy, 2003). Brenman (1982) classifies three reasons for loneliness and its deep and common experiences among individuals. The predispositions (shyness, low self-esteem, poor social skill) that are defined as the features of lonely teenagers are one of the reasons for loneliness. The third reason is social structures and cultural processes, in short, the social position of the individual at her age (Özatca, 2001). Loneliness is stated as a condition that emerged as a result of the identity crisis which is experienced by adolescents. As for Erikson's developmental stages (1963), the adolescent experiences a period in which he or she experiences role conflict versus acquiring identity, and isolation versus intimacy. Ericson states that individuals are ready to build intimate relations with dependence on others only after they acquire an identity. If a successful identity has not been acquired, then, individuals experience isolation and loneliness (as cited in Yucel, 2009).

THE EFFECT OF DIGITAL NETWORKS ON THE STUDENTS' LONELINESS

The reality of loneliness created by digitalization influences mostly the students. It is necessary to state that adolescence that students go through is an important period of human life for identity and personality development. Particularly parents, relatives, teachers, friends, and the persons seen as role models, etc. are influential in the identity development. In this period, peer-to-peer interaction might also make the use of technological gadgets more popular, because peers might need to implement by wondering what they see from each other. Particularly in the formation of identity, the young suffer from loneliness, depressive emotions, introversion and the absence of social support which bring the risk of addiction to technological device use (Bicer, 2014). Besides, the young people's expectations for peer acceptance and social approval trigger the use of technology. The young who imitate their friends' active participation on digital platforms, accept it necessary for socialization. It has been seen that these conditions adversely affect children and teenagers who have high-level social anxiety, poor communication skills, and fail to build healthy friendships that make them feel good (Yeditepe, 2021).

Griffiths (2005:193-195) claims that the students become more and more addicted to the technology with the desire of escaping from the anticipatory anxiety, get away from real-life problems, with the fear of exclusion and disapproval from their circle of friends, unwillingness to study lessons. In this regard, Subrahmanyam (2007:663) claims that digital communication channels and applications can provide opportunities to meet young people's expectations for social approval and peer acceptance. According to Ektiricioğlu and others (2020:52), as the need for being a member of a group in youth comes into prominence, the adolescents who see loneliness as a risk

in case of being excluded from relationships that create a sense of belonging in real life might consider relationships in virtual platforms as an alternative way. In this regard, as Caplan (2002:560) also states, individuals' failures in their social relationships may cause them to become alone and to be in pursuit of alternatives due to the sense of loneliness. At the beginning of this search for alternatives, digitalization provides new things such as social media, the internet, smartphone, and digital game platforms. It is possible to see a vicious circle between growing dependence on technology because of a sense of loneliness and feeling of loneliness due to technology addiction. The research by Morahan and Schumacher (2000:15-17) shows that there is a strong relationship between technology addiction and a sense of loneliness. There are two explanations for this relationship. The first explanation is that the causes for the individuals' excessive usage of technology and technological devices at the same time lead to the individuals' loneliness in society. Secondly, with the beginning of the individual's excessive use of technology, the individual moves away from society, which can contribute to his/her feeling of loneliness.

According to the findings of the research conducted on the technology addiction of young students done by Ceyhan (2011:86-88); it is viewed that the adolescents who do not have much relationship with their family and do not have good time management skills use technology more than others do. In addition, in families, which do not satisfy the need of the young people for attention and love, do not provide any chance to have healthy communication, leads to role conflict and have excessive expectations, the young people tend to use technology to escape from their miseries. In the contemporary world, because of the Covid-19 pandemic both the adults and the adolescents suffered from the loneliness. Research conducted in Turkey determined that the rate of internet use per day getting higher and higher. According to this research which revealed that the use of the internet level is high, it has increased more during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the study, it was determined that 59.1 per cent of the rate of those indicated a serious increase in the period of internet use. Thanks to the research, it has been determined that participants who feel more often than the others use the internet more than the others. Thus, whereas the participants who indicated "Never felt lonely" rate of internet use is 2.9 hours per day, those who said "I always feel lonely" rate of internet use is 3.7 hours (Milliyet, 2021).

The researchers informed that gender is also a risk factor for technology addiction. Accordingly, it is concluded that young males have a higher risk of internet and digital game addiction while young females are more prone to the risk of smartphone addiction in contrast to their male peers (Dikeç et.al.,2017:106). When the internet is seen as a medium to establish social relationships and as a means to eliminate loneliness, internet addiction becomes riskier (Ceyhan, 2011:87).

DIGITAL OBESITY AND DIGITAL DIET

Digital obesity is a concept that has emerged as a consequence of excessive digital consumption of the young generation during the process of adaptation to the digital age. According to the findings of the Education Center on the field of Social Media and Digital Security – ECSDS (2021), the young generation who have become addicted to the virtual world and technology all day long may suffer from psychological and social problems due to their desire to reach out to all presented contents and these problems can evolve into digital obesity because of virtual data flow in digital platforms. Those who spend all their time with computers, tablets, and smartphones and follow what other people do become addicted to the internet and technology. Internet stalking and dynamism in the virtual world destroy the individuals' social relationships that they might have in the real world and causes the individuals to suffer from loneliness.

According to the ECSDS report (2021), just as taking calories more than the body can burn leads

to obesity; loading the mind with excessive information and notifications more than it can use also causes digital obesity. The time spent on digital platforms causes health problems such as musculoskeletal pain, sleep disorders, and eye diseases by affecting the individuals' health, it can cause psychological problems, and those who have depressive emotions trigger the willingness to be locked in a room and never get out.

Based on the research that has been conducted to eliminate physical and mental exhaustion experienced because of intensive data flow, Bayrak and Cihan (2021:93) propose various solutions. For instance, a digital diet (detox) is one of them. Accordingly, it is significant to regulate the time spent using technology. Although it is difficult to stay away for a long time or resist, a digital diet (detox) can be periodically implemented to get rid of some intensive data.

At the same time, engaging in relieving alternative activities, depending on the use of media with the intent of having a relationship and increasing socialisation, can be useful in terms of mental relaxation and elimination of exhaustion. Limiting the time spent on digital devices or having efficient time management is another solution. In order not to be dependent on technology, it is necessary to have a balanced approach. It is possible to lessen the adverse effects by having a controlled, wise and regulated use of technology. Changing digital consuming habits is important in terms of having a conscious approach to media literacy. According to Kalkan (2021:118), in order to have a good media literacy, a person should only aim to reach out to useful and necessary information among such unrestricted resources of knowledge; when this is achieved, a digital diet (detox) will be able to a part of life and it will be possible to eliminate the adverse effects of digital addiction.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Digitalization is considered to be one of the inevitable outcomes of the new world order. This study which examines the relationship between digitalization and loneliness argues that digitalization is a new kind of culture and human beings have adapted to this culture. However, the basic problem with this new culture is that during the process of adaptation to such a dynamism students can turn into technology addicts. In addition to digitalization, some factors such as the absence of social support, and the changes in family structure and family relations also might cause loneliness in students. As a matter of fact, individuals certainly need social support in order to live in harmony with the environment, eliminate loneliness, and continue social relations on the demanded level. It is a fact that social relations are the essence of life and the production of social structure. Individuals are the creatures that are affected by the improvements and changes in social life.

The individuals who are intensely using technology, are usually never satisfied with the use of technology and feel locked when their connection is cut. Besides, individuals experience the feeling of deprivation in places where they do not have access to the internet and technological devices. This situation points out to the concept of digital obesity creates a vacuum in the social and psychological sense, and accordingly, the loneliness leading to digital obesity becomes inevitable. On the other hand, as the young people, who feel alone and have problems with the sense of belonging and identity try to lessen this feeling of loneliness by spending more time on virtual platforms, this situation evolves into a vicious circle. In other words, new habits created by digitalization prompt the young to use technology and isolate themselves from the real world. Those young who have isolated themselves from the real world and social relations have leaned on virtual platforms to compensate for their feeling of loneliness. While heavy use of technology causes loneliness, the feeling of loneliness paves the way for use of technology and therefore this situation evolves into a paradox.

Considering the previous researches, it is seen that technology addiction among young people has increased. Therefore, it is important to identify the risk factors of technology addiction and to reach out to the students who are at risk. In this regard, it might be useful to organize seminars to increase awareness of families and teachers on the subject. It is necessary to become conscious of media literacy. This process of awareness at the same time takes us to the proposal of a solution named digital diet. Moreover, conducting social responsibility projects is important to eliminate digital addiction and therefore to protect young people.

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