



5th World Conference on Learning, Teaching and Educational Leadership, WCLTA 2014

## An Overview of Young Adults' Opinions into Cyber Relation: Turkey Sample

Selen Demirtas-Zorbaz<sup>a\*</sup>, Dilek Genctanırım<sup>b</sup>, Akıp Kurt<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey*

<sup>b</sup>*Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Ahi Evran University, Kırşehir, Turkey*

<sup>c</sup>*Counseling and Guidance Service, Cacabey Secondary School, Kırşehir, Turkey*

---

### Abstract

Social media consumption is increasing in Turkey day by day as in whole word. Nowadays, individuals contact with emotional attachment and have romantic relations with people who they meet on internet and social media. People's perception and their messages to those who have online relationship could affect the relationship's quality. Aim of this study is to determine the opinions of young adults about cyber relations that contacted with social media. 244 volunteer young adults participated in the present study. The sample was comprised of 85 female, and 55 male. Young adult's perception of cyber romantic relationship was discussed according to literature.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Education and Research Center

*Keywords:* Cyber relationship; young adults; social media

---

### 1. Introduction

Social media consumption is increasing in Turkey day by day as in whole word. The number of emotional relations is increasing because of being used extensive and often by the youths. Nowadays, individuals contact with emotional attachment and have romantic relation with people who they meet on internet and social media. Parks and Roberts (1998) found that the most commonly reported types of online relationships were close friendships, friendships and romances. The majority of relationships formed (83.6%) was with members of the opposite sex. Although online relationship increases day by day, there are limited research which focus on online romantic relationships (Wolak, Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2002).

---

\* Selen Demirtas-Zorbaz. Tel.: +90 544 668 76 39  
*E-mail address:* [selenpdr@gmail.com](mailto:selenpdr@gmail.com)

In some cultures that dominated by traditional rules like Turkey such relations aren't considered affirmative and dependable. In general, people tend to perceive negatively both online romantic relationships and the people who engage in them (Anderson, 2005). Sometimes people who have cyber relation can be judged and underwent criticism by society. According to Anderson (2005) online interpersonal relationships, especially romantic relationships carry the stigma of being something of a “talk show phenomena.”

People's perception and their messages to those who have online relationship could effect the relationship's quality. Wildermuth (2004) found out that more severe, disapproving, and explicit messages from off-line family and friends correlated with higher levels of stigma consciousness on the part of the on-line relationship participant. Additionally, relationship participants who experienced more stigma consciousness were less satisfied with the overall quality of their on-line relationships.

There might be so many variables which are related to perception of the online relationship. For example; the research results which was conducted by Anderson (2005) showed that amount of time spent online and affinity for the internet are positively related to more favorable perceptions of online romantic relationships.

In the young adulthood stage, having emotional relations especially by social media is common. Because of this reason learning the opinion of people who are in this stage is really important. Although there are researches about how people view the online relationship, the number of these researches is limited. For this reason aim of this study is to determine the opinions of young adults about cyber relations that contacted with social media.

## **2. Methods**

### *2.1. Participants*

244 volunteer young adults who attend to formation program in Ahi Evran University participated in the present study. The sample was comprised of 85 female, and 55 male. 100 of participants are studying on history, 22 of them are studying on chemist, 12 of them are studying health and 6 of them are studying psychics. The study was conducted during 2014 summer school.

### *2.2. Instruments*

Virtual Relationship Questionnaire was used which prepared by researchers in this study. The survey consisted of two sections. In the first section there are questions for determining demographic characteristics of participants. The second section was consisted of items related to young adult's opinions about using social media and having romantic relationships via social media.

### *2.3. Data Analysis*

Data was collected using the developed questionnaire. The data obtained by the survey was analyzed and interpreted upon using the SPSS program with the percentage and frequency.

## **3. Findings and Results:**

The results about participant's information about relationship and social media use are given on the Table 1.

Table 1. Participant's information about relationship and social media

	f	%
Ongoing romantic relationship		
No	65	46.4
Yes	74	52.9
Social media account		
No	19	13.6
Yes	121	86.4
Type of the social media account		
Facebook	119	85
Twitter	62	44.3
Instagram	55	39.3
Linkedin	5	3.6
Other	9	6.5
None of them	15	10.7
Time spend on social media		
Less than one hour	14	10.2
1-3 hour	101	73.7
4-7 hour	17	12.4
8-11 hour	2	1.5
12-15 hour	3	2.2
Having friendship via social media		
Yes	42	30
No	98	70
Having romantic relationship via social media		
Yes	18	12.9
No	122	87.1
Knowing a friend who have romantic relationship via social media		
Yes	102	72.9
No	37	26.4

As seen in the table, 46.4 percent of the participants have ongoing romantic relationship while 52.6 percent of them don't. Most of the young adults (86.4%) have social media account and most common type of social media is facebook (85%). When examined the time spend on social media, it can be seen that 73.7 percent of them spend 1-3 hour per a day. 30 percent of participants have friend via social media while 70 percent of them not and 12.9 percent of them point out that this friendship is romantic. Also, 72.9 percent of them indicated that they know a friend who has romantic relationship via social media. Young adult's opinion about cyber relations is given on the Table 2.

Table 2. Young adult's opinion about cyber relations

	Don't agree at all	Don't agree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	%	%	%	%	%
I think social media friendships are not sincere.	3.5	8.5	15.7	31.4	40.7
My opinion is that people represent them self differently on social media.	2.8	1.4	8.5	34.2	52.8
I think that people can seriously love the other who they meet by social media.	33.5	20.7	25.7	12,8	6,4
I guess started a romantic relationship by social media is natural today.	30.7	25	24.2	15.7	4.2
I believe that a romantic relationship can proceed by cyber.	42.1	29.2	17.8	7.8	2.1
If one of my friends says me he/she love someone who he/she meet by internet I censure him/her.	18.5	33.5	23.5	15.7	8.5
I don't take friendships offer by made internet seriously.	3.5	8.5	13.5	28.5	45.7
I believe that cyber relationships can damage individuals as emotional or economics etc.	1.4	9.2	20	31.4	37.8
I think that cyber relationships are more casual compare to face to face relationships.	5	6.4	9.2	31.4	47.1
I prefer to contact with someone on internet instead of face to face.	56.4	27.8	5	5	5.7
I don't trust people who I contact by internet.	5	6.4	15.6	32.8	39.2

I don't fall in love with someone whom I meet by internet.	8.5	7.1	11.4	27.8	44.2
I can express myself more comfortable on cyber situations.	32.1	29.2	17.1	13.5	7.8
I worry about a friend who says he/she is love in someone meet on internet.	2.8	12.1	28.5	35	21.4
I think people who have a cyber relationship cannot be happy.	6.4	14.2	21.4	27.1	30.7

It can be seen on the Table that young adults mostly have negative opinion about cyber relations. When examined the first four beliefs about cyber relationship which strongly agreed, it can be seen that 52.8 percent of participants strongly agree that people represent them self differently on social media, 47.1 percent of them think that cyber relationships are more casual compare to face to face relationships, 45.7 percent of them don't take friendships offer by made internet seriously and 44.2 percent of them don't fall in love with someone whom they meet by internet.

#### 4. Conclusions:

As a result of this study we can say that young adults use social media commonly and especially they have facebook account. Also the participants expressed that they don't have a cyber relationship but they know someone who have a relationship by internet or social media among friends. Even that, they mostly have negative feelings about cyber relationships. As Wildermuth (2004) point out, negative messages are correlated with higher levels of stigma consciousness on the part of the on-line relationship participant. So it seems important to understand the views of young adults about cyber relationships.

The results showed that most of the young adults don't trust the people whom they met online. They quite agree the statement like 'my opinion is that people represent themselves differently on social media' or 'I don't trust people whom I contact by internet'. It is suggested to do a research to determine why people believe dishonesty in internet and why they hide themselves. Future research can also focus on how the people, who have romantic cyber relations, perceive their friend's and families' messages and how these messages affect their relationships.

#### References

- Anderson, T. L. (2005). Relationships among internet attitudes, internet use, romantic beliefs, and perceptions of online romantic relationships. *Cyber psychology & Behavior*, 8 (6), 521-531.
- Parks, M. & Roberts, L. (1998). "Making MOOsic": The development of personal relationships online and a comparison to their off-line counterparts. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15, 515-537.
- Wildermuth, S. M. (2004). The Effects of stigmatizing discourse on the quality of on-line relationships. *Cyber psychology & Behavior*, 7 (1), 73-84.
- Wolak, J., Mitchell, K. J., & Finkelhor, D. (2002). Close online relationships in a national sample of adolescents. *Adolescence*, 37, 441-455.