

# NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND CHANGING CONSUMPTION STRUCTURE: A RESEARCH ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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## **Abstract**

*Today, because of the developments in mass communication and information technologies, a number of changes in consumption habits of people have seen. The borders between countries has not gone with globalization and the consumption has gained an international dimension. The number and nature of requests and needs have changed compared to the past in our worldwhich is lived a newtechnologicalrevolution. Forexample, the consumerswhouseonly a simple phone or computer at past don'tsettle anymore with these, they desire to have the communication tools which are new in market and they desire to replace the old with the new. Especially, the social media tools, tablet computers, smartphones which are used among theyoung widedspreadly and increasingly day by day started to take the place of traditional media and began to rival them.*

*This study aims to reveal and determine how the students use new communication technologies and how is their attitude about these technologies. Our study which applied the face to face interview survey method covers the students of Selcuk University Faculty of Communication, Karadeniz Technical University Faculty of Communication, Cumhuriyet University Faculty of Communication and Gümüşhane University Faculty of Communication.*

**Keywords:** *New communication technologies, Technology consumption, Theconsumption habbits of university students.*

## **NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND CHANGING CONSUMPTION STRUCTURE: A RESEARCH ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, the tools like smartphones, tablets, desktops are at the centre of the change that has taken place in the internet and communication technologies. Marshall McLuhan claimed that electronic media has made the world "a global village" by generalising the culture. (Usluata, 1994:24) The internet which McLuhan pointed by comparing the world to a global village means that a new world order in which there are no borders among countries and people have been increasingly more informed about eachother. (Aktaş ve Çaycı, 2013: 629). In this regard, people have the opportunity of uninterrupted communication with new communication technologies in their houses, on the street and in their workplaces in short in every division in life.

At this point, when the universe gets small and the borders disappear among countries, the individuals who are informed about the events all over the world thanks to new communication technology remove the time and location difference. So, the world has turned into an amorphous village dwindlingly. (Şişman, 2012: 91). For example, the whole world witnessed the tsunami disaster happened in Japan in 2011 and its conclusions at the same time.

Nowadays, internet use shows a fast upward trend throughout the country. When it comes to information and communication technologies, concepts like cell phone, computer, surfing the net, chatting, e-trade, e-banking, and 3G come to mind. (Cankorkmaz, 2010: 112). Especially, university students reach the information about correspondence, communication, consumption and shopping with a low cost and fast. Social media tools, tablet computers and smart phones which have become popular among the young and increased gradually have started to take the place of traditional channels and be rival to them.

In this study, the trends of the use and consumption of new communication technologies among university students were researched. It was tried to be stated how often university students use information technologies, which new communication tools they use and what their preferential reasons are for consuming these.

### *Conceptual Environment*

Technology is certainly not independent of the community in which it was born and has developed. The consciousness formed by this interlocked structure is usually accepted without questioning by people and it consistently continues in communal living and daily life. Technological tools have become involved in our lives and we cannot think a life without them. Besides, we strive hard to use the technological tools. (İlhan, 2007: 60) With the fast adoption of new communication technologies by communities and cultures, we can say that they have increased people's communication opportunities.

Four phases can be mentioned in the development of technologies which have been necessary for obtaining information, preserving, delivering and showing through the human history.

These four phases are explained in the report called "New Information and Communication Technologies, Social Development and Cultural Change" written by Hamelick in 1997 (Hamelink, 1997: 2) as follows: In the first, and longest, phase (from approximately 35,000 BC to Samuel Morse's first telegraphic transmission in 1838) information was handled through recourse to physical and mechanical power. Media for the transmission of information included fast running couriers, carrier pigeons, smoke signals, talking drums and semaphores. The second phase is the development of telegraph, telephone, radio and television by dint of electro-mechanical power following the invention of electricity. In the third phase, with the invention of the electronic computer, transistors, semi-conductors and integrated circuits (chips), the integration of telecommunication and computer technologies began. The fourth phase in the development of communication technologies became a current issue with further reduction of constraints. The analog modes used earlier in information handling replaced by more powerful, reliable and flexible digital systems. Information and communication technologies imply the technology in other words digitality easing the communication between human and human, human and electronic systems, electronic systems and electronic systems in addition to information processing. (Başer, 2010: 40). Computer and communication network have created a world-embracing new communication media. A media composed of radio links, satellite connections and wirings continuously transmits auditory, visual and written information from one place to another as an integrative and world-embracing fabric. In spite of this big information flow, appliances used more easily in the way that more information flow can be provided have been developed and the studies continue for further development. (Baştan, 2000: 17).

Communication survives interactively and very dynamically thanks to appliances such as World Wide Web, cable Tv, networks, telephones, satellites. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the needs and demands of consumers are instantly determined and met with the help of many technological systems such as cable Tv, internet. A new kind of customer and consumption habit were born in our day that all kinds of media are used effectively and as a consequence, the intimacy between the producer and consumer thanks to information technologies increases gradually (Babaoğlu

ve Bener, 2010:107). In other words, it has expedited to communicate by making the long distances close and made it cheap.

While speaking of new communication technologies, first of all the media of internet based, satellite-aided correspondence and communication come into prominence. It is necessary to say that mass media provide the coalescence in themselves in the meaning of technological properties which have become integrated with traditional mass media of the new media. Television, internet, GSM, WAP, GPRS, CD, VCD, DVD etc. can be ranked among the new communication technologies (Tokgöz, 2008: 49) . Nowadays, social media tools ever-spreading (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Google+, Instagram, Vine etc. ) can be added to these.

Richard Rogers numbered the three main features of communication technologies which have become a part of our daily lives and penetrated into our lives in other words the new media as follows (Geray, 2003:18):

1. Interaction: The existence of interaction is needed in the communication process.
2. Demassification: New communication technologies can be as demassifying as they will provide private message change with each individual in a big user group. So, different messages can be sent to everybody.
3. Asynchronicity: New communication technologies provide the opportunity of messaging for individual at any time

Today, with the reduction of the sizes of the tools making information communication possible and the opportunity of the implementation of internet access not only through wire connection but also through 3G or wireless internet (Wifi) (Aktaş ve Çaycı, 2013: 630) and the removal of spatial and temporal borders thanks to the new communication technologies, individuals have the freedom of watching some messages instantly, watching them again at any time or responding them. (Başer, 2010: 45). Global transformation which is experienced nowadays becomes meaningful within the frame of network applications dominating to almost every area of community with the development of information and communication technologies. (Yılmaz, 2009: 309). The developments in communication technologies have provided that globalization has settled into the center of daily life in the communication space.

As a result of the digitalization of information and integration with electronical technologies, another important identifier of consumption structure has been the developing interactive usage opportunities. So, the ones who use the new communication spaces have turned into today's participant and active spectator community from the passive spectator community of the past. Therefore, differentiating communication ways and media have changed the perception of consumption and the behaviours of consumption. (Kadioğlu, 2012: 156). According to this, it can be said that several changes have been seen in the consumption habits of the young who are content creators and actively use the new communication technologies.

The consumption way of new technologies among young individuals represents today's portmodern life style and consumption ways. The effect of the modern youth called "Continuous Generation" increases not only in the visibility of consumption ways but also in the reproduction of consumption ways. (Özaşçılar, 2012: 48, who conveyed from Wilska, 2003: 445.) The young who are very familiar to communication technologies use the keyboard as the previous generation used the pen. Their predisposition in using the technology makes them more talented about reaching the information in the fastest and most costly way and using the information than the previous generations (Kadioğlu, 2012: 156).

It was stated that the young would form and change global market and the marketing trends and the decisions of potential purchasing decisions in the developing new generation communication technologies in the future. (Claffey, 2006). The young as a consumer have gradually started to become a research subject among marketers, politicians, sociologists and the young have become a significant element of these researches with intend to determine the purchasing behaviours and models. (Teo ve Yeong: 2003: 350).

According to the report called "The Youth in Turkey 2012 " prepared by Turkish Statistical Institute in 2013, 16,6 % of Turkey population is young. Young men make up 51,1 % of young population and young women make up 48,9 % of young population. The rate of internet use of

the young is 67,7%. As the rate of internet use of young men was 80,6% in 2012, this rate was 55,4% in women. (<http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=13509>).

According to the data of Turkish Statistical Institute, while there were cell phones in 93,2 % of homes in 2012, this rate was 95,1% in the city and 88,5% in the country. The rate of having desktop computers in homes was 31,8% and the rate of having portable computer was 27,1%. (<http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=13662>).

According to the consequences of the research "The Youth and Social Media" which The Ministry of Youth and Sports made in 2013; the big part of the young (96%) who are the internet users are the social media users in the research that was made with two thousand fifty-seven young people who have the age range of 15-29 years in twenty-six cities so as to represent in the level of Turkey. The young connect to social media mostly through laptop in their houses. (62%) It can be said that the usage of smart phones is a high trend among the young. The usage of social media in internet cafes can be seen mostly among young men. 86% of the young connect to the media at least once a day and 72% of them connect to the media several times every day.

A remarkable result of the research is that Facebook is the most- used social media by the internet users aged 15-29 (89%) among social media and it was stated Facebook has come into everybody's life from various profiles. Visual sharing sites such as Youtube and Instagram follow Facebook in the second order. (57%) Twitter is a popular medium among social media as well. 45% of the young aged 15-29 who took part in the study are twitter users. ([http://genclikarastirmalari.gsb.gov.tr/dergi/sosyal\\_medya\\_raporu/](http://genclikarastirmalari.gsb.gov.tr/dergi/sosyal_medya_raporu/)).

According to the result of the research called "Turkish Youth within the context of Global Youth Culture" prepared by Filiz Aydoğan, the young in our country would rather use the technology as consumption-oriented or spending time than use the new communication technologies as a opposition instrument aimed at the data system with today's fashion statement. (Aydoğan, 2009: 228).

In the research that Barelka, Jeyaraj ve Walinski made with eighty participants, they handled the testing, adoption and usages of new communication technologies by people. In this research, they concluded that people used new communication technologies on the purpose of entertainment, information and communication with other people. Besides, it was followed the reason people adopt new communication technologies is that their usage is easy and their cost is cheap. It was finally stated in that research that people show a tendency to try new communication technologies when they obtained information about the new media services from their friends and hear about the presentation and news about those services . (Barelka 2013: 58-61).

According to a result of the research made on six hundred six university students in the central campus of Cumhuriyet University by Cankorkmaz, the students became skillful at using the computer and net generally with the help of school, friends and relatives or on their own and the courses related to the subject weren't preferred. Computer courses have gradually become insignificant. The students meet the new technology of the new world on their own by using computer keyboards at tender ages. (2010: 129).

In another research, Günay, who has analysed the effect of the new technologies on the purchasing tendencies of the young concluded that almost all of the university students had cell phones and more than half of them had computers. Almost all of these students (92,5%) stated that they used the net and spent approximately sixteen hours a week on the internet. (2012:14).

New communication technologies which have become a part of our daily lives fairly change our lives and penetrates into our life. They determine how we will communicate with each other and in what way we will work. Besides, they offer to reach all information and services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. In this context, new communication technologies make our lives much easier. (SvenningandFirmstone, 2000: 582).

Both in Turkey and in foreign countries, in the researches aimed at the issues such as the consumption habits of university students, the adoption of new communication technologies and use cases, the effect of the communication technologies and advertisements on the

purchasing behaviours of the young, the effects of the new technology use by the young on the developing market, the factors such as being opened to try new technologies among the young, using the net and cellphones a lot, wishing to reach the information fast, reaching information in correspondence, communication, consumption and shopping in a fast and cheap way are among the reasons why the university students have been in the scope of the research. (Günay, 2012:4-5). Therefore, the tendencies of the university students aimed at the use of new communication technologies were the subject in this research.

## METHODOLOGY and FINDINGS

Within the scope of the questionnaire, four hundred ninety-five students were interviewed and the findings were analysed with SPSS program. In the reliability test made for the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated as 0,807 (80%) Other findings obtained in the questionnaire result are as follows;

Demographic Information		Frequency	Percent %
UNIVERSITY	Cumhuriyet University	150	30,3
	Gümüşhane University	147	29,7
	Selçuk University	129	26,1
	Karadeniz Teknik University	69	13,9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>100,0</b>
GENDER	Female	266	53,7
	Male	229	46,3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>100,0</b>
THE ONE WHO MEETS THE INCOME	My Family	315	63,6
	I am getting a scholarship	136	27,5
	Myself	30	6,1
	Close Relatives	14	2,8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>100,0</b>
THE PLACES WHERE THE STUDENTS LIVE MOSTLY	Metropolis	176	35,6
	District	137	27,7
	City	124	25,1
	Village	58	11,7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>100,0</b>
THE PLACES WHERE THE STUDENTS ARE CURRENTLY LIVING	With my friends	179	36,2
	State/ Trust Dormitory	171	34,5
	Private Dormitory	83	16,8
	With my family/relatives	50	10,1
	Alone at home	12	2,4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>100,0</b>

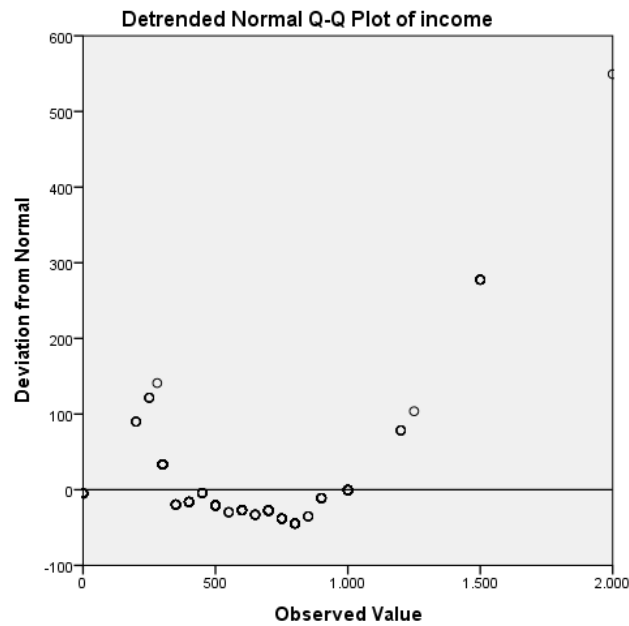
Table 1: The table of demographic information of the participants in the research

The distribution of the determined universities is as follows;

Cumhuriyet University 30,3%, Gümüşhane University 29,7%, Selçuk University 26,1% and Karadeniz Technical University 13,9%.

The gender distribution of the students participated in the research is almost equal and the monthly incomes of these students are mostly met by their families. The places where they mostly live are as follows;

Metropolis 35,6%, district 27,7%, city 25,1% and village 11,7%. The places where the students are currently living are as follows; with their friends at home 36,2%, state dormitory 34,5%, private dormitory 16,8% and by family /relatives 10,1%



**Graphic 1:** the Graphic of income distribution of the participants in the research (Q-Q Plot)

An important parameter used in measuring the students' levels of usage of new communication technologies is income. It is seen that the students participated in the questionnaire have an income distribution between approximately 500-1000 Turkish Liras.

		Frequency	Percent
Spending	between 0-25%	384	77,6
	between 26-50%	100	20,2
	between 51-75%	9	1,8
	between 76-85%	2	,4
	Total	495	100,0

**Table 2:** The table showing that the research participants' spend their incomes for new communication technologies.

The students participated in the research spend a part of their monthly incomes for communication expenses. A rate of 77,6% spent 0-25% of total income for communication and this is an indicator of the parallelism between the levels of income and communication expenses of the students. While the students at the rate of 20,2% spend 26-50% of their incomes for communication, the students at the rate of 1,8% spend more than half of their incomes. There are scarcely any students spending almost all of their incomes for communication.

		Frequency	Percent
New communication technologies	Internet	139	28,1
	Smart phone	116	23,4
	Socialmedium	61	12,3
	Phone	44	8,9
	Computer	39	7,9
	Tablet	27	5,5
	Easiness	8	1,6
	Watsapp	8	1,6
	Iphone	6	1,2
	Space Age	3	0,6
	Unnecessary and Negative	2	0,4

	Blog	1	0,2
	Twitter	1	0,2
	No answer	40	8,1
	Total	495	100,0

**Table 3:** The table showing research participants' approaches to new communication technologies

When it comes to new communication technologies, the first thing that comes to the research participants' minds is internet at the rate of 28,1%. Smart phones are in the second order with the rate of 23,4% and social medium is in the third order with the rate of 12,3%. Besides, the new media tools such as computer and tablet are in the list as well. The rate of the students who have the association of easiness for new communication technologies is 1,6%.

	Yes	No	No answer
Smart phone	344	150	1
Tablet	79	415	1
Laptop	414	80	1
Person computer	129	365	1
Internet	426	68	1
Mobile internet	352	143	0
Cable tv	173	322	0
Cell phone	450	45	0

**Table 4:** The table showing research participants' using the new communication technologies

When it comes to use the new communication technologies, the first thing that comes to the research participants' minds is cell phone, internet and laptop.

	Yes	No	No answer
Facebook	465	29	1
Twitter	318	175	2
Instagram	181	313	1
Youtube	319	175	1
Friendfeed	13	481	1
Vine	90	404	1
Pinterest	25	469	1
Foursquare	127	367	1
Linkedin	73	421	1
Tumblr	48	446	1
Blogspot	439	55	1
Google +	366	128	1

**Table 5:** The table showing research participants' using the social media

When it comes to use the social media, the first media that comes to the research participants' minds is facebook. This result supports the other datas in different studies.

		Frequency	Percent
The frequency of internet use	More than one or two hours a day	301	60,8
	One or two hours a day	161	32,5
	One or two hours a week	23	4,6
	One or two hours a month	8	1,6
	I don't use internet at all.	2	0,4
	Total	495	100,0

**Table 6:** The table showing the frequency of internet use of the research participants

When it comes to new communication technologies, in the level of usage of internet which is the first thing that comes to mind, the option of more than one or two hours a day is preferred in the first order. 0,4% of the students participated in the questionnaire state that they don't use internet at all.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
There must be interaction in the communication process.	495	4,6263	,76335
Traditional media (TV, radio, etc.) tools hinder an interactive communication medium.	495	3,0081	1,23213
I can not live without the Internet.	495	3,0909	1,36831
I can not live without mobile phones.	495	3,4566	1,36528
There are some limitations that were brought to life by new communication tools.	495	3,5636	1,20201
Social media is an open field to interaction.	495	4,3030	,90270
The new communication technologies in education and access to information make life easier.	495	4,4424	,81249
Virtual environments are very different from real life.	495	4,0707	1,12617
I often shop on the Internet.	495	2,8000	1,33104
The new communication technologies bring up a generation that mimick each other.	495	4,0909	1,00697
Internet has a role in culture, identity, politics, the economy as a communication tool.	495	4,0424	,94173
The internet and social media help me lot about my school.	495	4,0384	1,07631
I buy new cell phone when a high-end model of the mobile phone is produced.	495	1,9556	1,11941
I follow the developments in technologies of pc, mobile phone, tv etc.	495	3,4505	1,28723
I create an account when a new social media tool becomes popular.	495	2,3879	1,23505
when I buy a product or service, I do research on the internet and I consider the comments.	495	4,0182	1,05404
I follow the traditional media (TV, radio, newspapers, etc.) also on the internet.	495	3,9434	1,09139
I use internet mostly for entertainment purposes (games, watch movies, etc.).	495	3,3899	1,18505
I follow social events on the social media's agenda and I comment on them.	495	3,6747	1,08787
I use the Internet for more information.	495	3,8384	,95979
I like the share of photoand video in the Internet environment or social media.	495	3,5556	1,18204
I use the internet or social media to connect lovely friends.	495	3,8505	,99690

Table 7: The table showing the students' approaches to use the internet

## CONCLUSION

In the consequence of the research made with the students of communication faculty of five universities in Turkey, it was stated that 60% of the students used the internet more than one or two hours a day. Besides, When it comes to new communication technologies, the first things that come to mind are internet and smart phones. It commonly comes up that internet is preferred more than traditional media tools and it is used as an important reference source in every respect.



Another remarkable result in the research is that the students consider new communication technologies and social media tools as an indispensable part of their daily lives. As a negative attitude in the considerations related to the consumption of new communication technologies, when a new model of the phone used is released, it is not a matter of a behaviour like purchasing. This result can be explained with the limited income of the students.

The social media tools, tablet computers and smartphones spreading among the young who are university students and increasing gradually have started to take place of the traditional media and be rival to them and it can be said that this is a definite proof of the effectiveness on the young consumers of new communication technologies.

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