



Social Media Effect in Digitalizing Politics: A Study on the Students who Study at University of Inonu

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Abstract

With internet and social media the importance of political communication has increased. Therefore political actor also which is one of the important parts of political communication has started to use social media as political aim. Especially the internet and social media have enhanced the interest of on the political topics of the citizens and has presented a interactive communication opportunity between voters. Consequently, social media became a ideal communication tool used in political communication. The relationship between the usage of social media with the political content and political attitude has focused on political competence, political interest and political participation.

The usage of social media in political area has become important with opportunities which are given to citizen regarding learning politicians' activities, disputing the political topics each other, communicating with the deputies elected and attending to political system actively. Especially it is appeared as an important component in individualizing politics, building political consciousness and shaping political behaviours (especially on the youth). Because the online access to information regarding political content particularly have grown up increasingly in the young population. In this point, the search has aimed to put forth the social media usage as political aim of Turkish youth who study at university. The search has limited to the students of the University of İnönü which is one of the biggest universities of East Anatolian Region and has continued to operate for 1974 in Turkey. The data picked up from the students of the University of İnönü was analyzed and commented the results through SPSS.

Keywords: Political Communication; Political Information; Political Attendance; Social Media.

Introduction

Back in the days, politics, a thin palace game which nobles played behind close doors, has changed a noisy, crowded and attended game which the masses have played (Yıldız, 2002; 4). The votes who are in the position of subject in some periods in the position of object in some periods. In the implementation of this noisy, crowded and attended politics started to show favour to politicians who come into their view and make themselves the man of moment (self-actualisation). Especially, political actors can obtain social appreciation, political reputation and reach a good state of the support of voters to the degree that can show the skill of "enter the field of view of the voters" with the impact of the social flow which is called symbolic interactionism with reference to the hypothesis that people can be social through objective self and subjective self (Topbaş, 2012; 1284). Therefore the tools to come into voters view of political actors who have the desire to seem in public realm which are sometimes economic, social, cultural funds are generally the communication tool of its time.

Even though communication tools/ forms and political format which is convenient its spirit and dominated perception change, the obligation of the visibility of politics continues. In this context Lucian Pye's remark "the efforts of politicians to come to the power actualizes with communication" introduces that communication is an indispensable factor in political process.

Especially internet and social media which expand their usage area thanks to adapting social life with the technological improvements takes over. Social media which develops with the expansion of internet technology besides only being a communication tool transforms quality of political life. It can effect that information exchange in political behaviour, political interest, political enlightenment, political attendance and political communication actualizes in a free area (Çankaya, 2008; 57-58) and present that voters can access directly regarding political topics (Moog, Sluyter-Beltrao, 2001; 56).

The politicians who are one of the important parts in this process brings into question that they use social media and internet as a communication area increasing the importance of internet in political communication process and therefore starting to use it intensely.

Because internet, being different from other communication tools, presents to users mutual interaction possibility. This interactionism is two way communication which is both from politicians to voters and from voters to politicians. With this structure internet and social media comparing with other communication tools present more democratic communication opportunity (Gazi, 2015; 571).

The interactionism, like internet and social media have features such as hypertext, supporting user -derived content production, multimedia formalism (Binark, 2014; 29). In the results of these features, it is extremely efficient to send the messages which are wanted to send with a satisfying content directly to the aim in improving relations between politician and voter, increasing dialogues, noticing advices and opinions without the need a mediator, like traditional mass communication tools (Alemdar and Köker 2011; 225-254).

1. Conceptual Framework

1.1 Some Searches on Internet and Social Media

Politicians are given the opportunity to introduce themselves to voters and rhetoric with the usage of the internet and social media in the political sphere (interactionism - user -derived knowledge production). Especially the internet and social media which are used in the political arena to provide regular information on structural and contextual function has led to the emergence of optimistic and pessimistic approach (Binark, 2014: 28).

The extension of the optimistic outlook is the mobilization approach. In this approach, the internet and social media serves in the topics such as informing apolitical citizens excluded from the current political system and the political communication process, new young voters have received the right to vote, political minority or marginalized communities, parties and giving them possibility to express himself (Yılmaz, 2008: 199).

According to the optimistic approach supporters, the political events over the internet and social media provides to citizens freely the right to obtain a clear political information and reveal new participation forms to the political sphere. Previously, the citizens who have interest in political issues; but believe that they have obstacle to participate to political activities have found an ideal, free, deliberative and easy participation way to political life through the internet and social media. Moreover, the internet and social media provide for the citizens who send a political message a communication channel which can provide them to have all the control of the message, so editorial interventions which exist in traditional media (Kamarck, 1999; 114.) can be by pass (Berman and Witzner, 1997; 1313- 1315).

The theory which is opposed to the optimistic theory and is called as pessimistic approach or reinforcement theory is that regarding internet and social policies introduces opposing views against optimistic approach. It sometimes show an critical and more cautious attitude to the functions of the internet and social media in the political sphere.(Davis, 2005: 443 <http://www.cjconline.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/1483/1601>, Erişim Tarihi: 10.11.2007).The basic argument lies at the core of this approach is that political attendance is hard, questionable and disputable via social media which is disputed by defenders of the optimistic theory. (Davis,2005: 443 <http://www.cjconline.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/1483/1601>, Erişim Tarihi: 10.11.2007)

Bimber (1999: 332), information flow which increases gradually and is offered by the internet and social media as adopted a pessimistic approach to improve political influence, political emancipation, political participation , political space and protect democracy stating that there is no guarantee.Getting political information and the political attendance of the citizens via internet and social media raises the concerns in dividing into small groups to the citizens who have very little in common.In this point Stranberg (2005:3) supports that people need to be cautious on e- discussion groups and expresses that there is no guarente regarding that e-participation increases the political knowledge of the citizens with regard to all these.Moreover, he takes attention to that internet and social media can be misuse by sovereign and therefore this technology contradicts with the ideals of direct democracy.

1.2 The Searches Regarding The Social Media Usage in Political Communication

The most important feature of social media which differs from internet is showing that interaction shows itself powerfully in communication process. Social media which provides politicians to communicate with voters without mediator are preferred by the politicians because of using from more than 22 million young people with the purpose of accessing the young voters (Balci, Tarhan ve Bal, 2013: 98).

In this point, politicians canshow theirselves on social media, meet traces of many politicians and voters via facebook twitter youtube etc. on social media sites where users interact with each other to perform at the highest level instead of visiting provinces in only election propaganda period.Voters can follow the politicians who they support, convey their demands and the policies and speeches improved by party or candidates in the profile pages are opened by teams composed of users and politicians (Bilişim 2010: 51).

Besides political parties and candidates are able to respond to criticism and can share with voters through these networks the solutions for the problems of the country and the region.Moreover they can share to their followers momentarily the videos and photographs of the activities which they realize via social media (Balci, Tarhan and Bal, 2013: 112).

The increase of internet and social media usage by political actors and voters, the becoming subject of users taking part actively in the political communication process (Timisi, 2003: 132) provides that both politicians and voters adopt to internet and social media and expands the literature on the effective use.The social media which consists of Internet and/or Web 2.0. areas using in the political communication process, in the terms of methods and technics, of traditional political communication give many oppotunities to politicians, voters, political parties and leaders and the voters who haven't determined "voting" yet such as interact with politicians, participation / inclusion, disseminating and producing their own content, (Bayraktutan,Binark, 2012; 15). According to Newell, internet has ability that carries out 5 main functions in terms of politicians.These; campaign and election, resource generation, recovery and ensuring the participation of new members, providing information and networking (Newell, 2001, 63.).

Especially, last four of these five funtions can gain advantage to the candidates during electoral periods. Getting information means sending the politicities and functions. Networking refers to the communication with the party 's internal

groups and external groups. Thanks to Web, internal communication can be accomplished and moreover thanks to links in web page, it is possible to reach special interest groups (Alemdar , Köker 2011; 225-254).

Holt and his friends (2013:25-29) young people prefer more social media for the political purposes (getting information, political attendance, creating political convictions) in the field study which were applied to 4010 voters. Kaid (2002: 32) found the result that voters who use internet and social media see more political advertisements, have more information about candidates, speak with their friends regarding problems and candidates and want to vote more willing in the next election according to voters who follow traditional media in his search intended for 55 internet users in 2000 and 96 traditional media followers,

Malchow (2003: 352) indicates that internet/social media can reach the potential voters (young – marginals etc.) who the traditional media can not reach and give political parties and candidates to the advantages of that they can send reliable and political messages.

The results of the search applied by Edelman “Capital Staffer Index” in 2010 in both America and European Union countries shows that the importance of digital channels in communication between voters and decision makers who are members of the parliament increases gradually. The communication habits of decision makers such as Legislative Council member, Congressman and Group heads were measured in the search applied in USA (Washington) Germany(Berlin), European Parliament (Brussels), France (Paris) and England (London),

According to the results of the search digital interaction between deputies and voters increased gradually. The politicians give information and opinions to voter with the efficient usage of social nets: meanwhile voters can connect to voters directly with the managers. According to the search, 37% of the voters can connect to the deputies via social media and 15 points in this field increased. Another dramatic rate is the rate of voters who use is for the own websites and blogs of deputies. This rate increased 41 points and reached 72% in a year (<http://www.slideshare.net/EdelmanDigital/edelman-2010-capital-staffers-index>. Erişim Tarihi:12.02.2016).

The information getting via the internet can access directly and provide the possibility of demanding answers to voters, candidate/party who presents this information (Gürbüz, İnal 2004: 98). With this feature of Internet and social media, differently from the traditional tools provide an environment without obstacle in which can reach messages to voters, get feedback from them (Akdağ, 2009; 301). In this way voters can get information from political parties and candidates, express their idea and opinion and attend to political area in the political communication process without a mediator .

In light of the above literature search, in this study below listing;

The question of the search 1: What are the aims of social media usage and the interest degree in the political topics of the students who study at the University of Inonu?

The question of the search 2: What are the types of social media in getting information in the political topics of the students who study at the University of Inonu?

The question of the search 3: What are the factors of social media usage in the political topics of the students who study at the University of Inonu?

The question of the search 4: Is there a relation between the factors of social media usage in the political topics of the students who study at the University of Inonu?

The question of the search 5: Do the factors of social media usage differ according to the types of department which students study, demographic features in the political topics of the students who study at the University of Inonu? will be managed to find the responses these questions.

2. Method

2.1 The implementation of Research and Sample

It was done a field study to show the effect of social media in making political behavior or building the political mind, getting information on political issues of the students who study at The University of Inonu in different departments of university between 6 January 2016 and 10 January 2016.

Sample is selected as purposeful sampling. The students who don't use social media are leaved out of the sample. In this point, it is asked whether the students use social media or not, if they say "yes, I use", the survey embarks on. A face to face survey was applied to the students who attended to the search. In the result of the examination, 734 surveys were accepted.

2.2 Data Collection Tools

A survey which consists of three parts were prepared in building the political mind, getting information on political issues or making political behavior of the students to determine social media effect. In the first stage were asked the questions regarding the demografic features of the students and their department, in the second stage was asked the questions regarding the usage habits of social media, the relationship between politics and social media, in the third stage were used five poin likert scale which consists of 23 articles to introduce the usage habits of social media of the students in political field.

In this scale, 1 strongly disagree, 2 low degree agree, 3 moderately agree, 4 above average level agree, 5 strongly agree responses were received. Before the survey form wasn't applied in the field, it was applied on 50 students in preliminary test and it was made available to the application after the last controls.

2.3 Data Analysis and Tests Used

The survey was applied between 6 January 2016 and 10 January 2016. The datas which were obtained were analyzed with SPSS 15.0 Statistics Program. The exporatory factor analysis was used determining the dimensions of social media in the obtaining political information, construction of the political mind and political behavior of the students which are the main purposes of the search.

The groups obtained in the result of factor analysis were loaded as variant, some samples related with some variants was analyzed with One-way analysis of variance (*ANOVA*) and T-test (*Independent Samples T-Test*.) *Scheffe* test was based on multiple comparisons. The direction and power of the relation between factors were analyzed with Correlation Analysis.

3. Results

3.1. The Features of Students

68.3 % of (501) of the students who attended to the search are women, 31.7 % of them are men.

17.8 of them studies at the faculty which gives education in "Physical Sciences", 18.8 of them studies at the faculty which gives education in "Educational Sciences", 22.6 of them studies at the faculty which gives education in "Health Sciences" and 40.7 of them studies at the faculty which gives education in "Social Sciences"

34.3 % of the students who attended to the search is in first class, 40.9 % of them is in second class, 15.3 % of them is in third class, 7.9 % of them is in fourth class, 1.6 % of them is in fifth class. The average of the students who attended to the search is 22.3, the average of monthly income is 533.9 TL.

21.3 % of the students who attended to the search to access social media uses their own computers or tablets, 57.5 % of them uses their own mobile phone. Therefore the students use to access social media their mobile phone in general.

28.3% of the students who attend to the search spends 21-25 hours per week, 22.9 of them spends 16-20 hours per week in internet. When examining the statistical results of the time of connecting to internet weekly, the participants spend 0-5 hours (4.5 %) minimum, spend 21-25 hours (28.3 %) maximum in internet.

For that reason, social media to the life of the students who attended to the search took an important place. Because 75 % of them spends over 10 hours per week according to the results of descriptive statistics.

When the students are analyzed in the terms of places connected to the Internet, 50.8 % of the students who attended to the search from mobile phones, 26.7% of them from schools where they study, 15.3% of them from their houses connects to the internet, 6.9 of them connects from their dormitories where they live. In this point students use the mobile phones to connect to the internet first of all.

3.2 Political Information Sources and Relationship between Social Media and Politics

The question of “which communication tools do you use to take information regarding political issues as information source?” to introduce the ideas of the students regarding political issues were answered by 47 % of the participants as social media, by 33.2 % of them as television, 13.8 % of them as newspaper.

In accordance with these data, students generally use social media as a information source in political issues, use also traditional media (television- newspaper) for the same purpose. Although social media in taking political information is important, the importance of traditional media continues as an information source. However when we measure the degree of trust of students in information sources, the 27.8% of the participants trust political information getting television, 19.8% of them trust social media, 16.2% of them trust political information taking newspaper. On the other hand, 34.5% of participants trust none of the mass media which the participant get political information.

Table 1 The Comparison of Trusted Information Sources Regarding Political Issues

Information Source Regarding Political Issues	Information Source Obtained Regarding Political Issues (%)	Trusted Information Source%	Percentage Difference
Radio	2.7	1.8	- 0.9
Television	33.2	27.8	- 5.4
Newspaper	13.8	16.2	+ 2.4
Social Media	47.0	19.8	- 27.2
Other	3.1	----	-----
None of them	--	34.5	

When it is examined in the terms of the purposes of the social media usage of the students who attended to the search during the elections; 30% of the participants use social media “to learn projects of politicians and political parties”,

24,7% of them use social media “to access to political information freely, without obstacle”, 15% of them “to learn the ideas of the parties and participants about agenda”, 14% of them use social media “to learn situation of their political

parties or candidates". 39.5% of the students who attended to the search uses Twitter, 32.7% of them uses Facebook, 21.3 of them uses Blog to take political information.

3.3 The Usage of Social Media for Political Purposes

Table 2: Factor Analysis Results Regarding The Usage of Social Media for Political Purposes (Principal Component Analysis, Varimax Rotation)			
Factors Regarding "Political Usage" of Social Media	\bar{X}	SD	Fac. Yüku
1. Factor: The Factor of Obtaining Political Information			
q.1. Social media is the most effective tool which gives reliable information regarding political party/ candidates.	4.26	0.71	.889
q4. I read articles regarding political parties/candidates on social media.	4.24	0.72	.939
q.5. I read the sharings of the public opinion leaders on social media regarding political parties/candidates.	4.22	0.70	.891
q.7. I share the comments regarding political parties/candidates.	4.20	0.71	.887
q.10. Social media is more effective than other mass media (radio-tv-newspaper)in getting information regarding political issues.	4.21	0.70	.783
q.21. I follow The political campaigns of political parties through social media.	4.25	0.70	.939
2. Factor: The Factor of Political Attendance			
q.3. I respond to the sharings of candidates of political party.	2.01	0.84	.916
q.6. I respond to the sharings of the public opinion leaders regarding political issues.	1.98	0.82	.907
q.8. I attend to the protests regarding political parties and candidates through social media.	2.00	0.83	.907
q.15. I attend to the petitions regarding political issues through social media.	1.99	0.83	.795
q.19. Social media which is one of the most effective tool provides that I attend to the politics actively.	2.01	.081	.801
q. 22. Social media is an effective tool that allows me to take action on political issues.	2.02	0.84	.913
q.13. I participate in discussions on current political issues via social media	2.00	0.82	.910
3. Factor: The Factor of Political Impact			
q2. Social media is one of the most effective means that allow the	2.89	0.73	.807

political parties/candidates to communicate with voters.			
q9. Social media is one of the most effective tools used in political campaigns.	2.91	0.72	.554
q. 14. The information I get from social media is effective to determine the political party which I vote.	2.90	0.74	.651
q.17. The political parties which use social media effectively is more successful in the elections.	2.90	0.72	.840
q.23. Social media is an effective tool to create public opinion on political issues	2.91	0.74	.843
4. Factor: The Factor of the political Independence			
q.11. Social media is effective in the development of tolerance in the society in the political sphere.	3.71	1.08	.935
q.12. Social media is an effective tool to express ideas regarding political issues more comfortable than normal.	3.65	1.12	.778
q.16. Social media is an important tool to live political freedoms.	3.61	1.14	.769
q.18. Advocating all kinds of political ideas through social media is effective in the development of democracy.	3.71	1.08	.940
q. 20. Social media allows me to reach political information freely (without censorship	3.84	1.04	.850

Factor analysis was applied in accordance with given answers to the likert scale which consists of 23 articles to introduce the purpose usage of the social media regarding political issues of the students who attended the search. In the Eigenvalue analysis were introduced to separate into four factor groups. Factor loading of the expressions in the scale, arithmetic mean and standard deviation value are shown in Table 2.

When the social media of the students who participated in the study was examined trends in political purposes, the first and most important factor of social media political factors indicating the purpose is to obtain information.

Social media use political informational factor alone explains the 23.44 per cent of the total variance. Factors reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .87) and the eigenvalues of 5.15 is quite high.

Table- 3: Correlation Analysis Between The Factors of Political Uses of Social Media (Pearson r)

Factors	Eigenvalues	Variance	Credibility
Getting Political Information Factor	5.15	23.44	.87
Political Attendance Factor	4.51	20.51	.93
Political Effect Factor	3.62	16.48	.79
Political Independent Factor	2.79	12.71	.89
Sum		%79.60	.88
KMO Measure of Sampling A. 0.80; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Chi-Square:17181.7; df: 231; p=.000			

The students who participated in the study, according to the results of one-way analysis of variance, with the use of social media for political purposes factors, made in order to reveal differences between the sexes, "Social media to obtain political information" for use between the sexes appears to be a significant difference ($t = 2.26$, $df = 732$; $p < .05$). Surveyed between the sexes, significant difference is that men

Men ($\bar{X} = 4.30$) to women ($\bar{X} = 4.18$) compared, men use social media for obtaining more political information. However, age, type of training, the income groups' use of social media for obtaining political information "factor in order to test the relationship between factors of one-way analysis of variance (by ANOVA) results, with age, type of education, income, and class groups they study and political informational use factor are seen no significant differentiation ($p > .05$)

The second factor that is called political participation, the definitions they use social media as an effective political participation brings together agents Political participation is seen that factor alone explains the 20:51 per cent of the total variance. eigenvalues of this factor (eigenvalue) 4.51 and reliability (Cronbach's alpha) is seen as the .93.

Political participation factor arises where there is a significant difference between the sexes ($t = -0.71$, $df = 732$; $p < .05$). The significant difference between the groups seems to be towards women.

In this sense, women ($\bar{X} = 2.31$) than men ($\bar{X} = 1.80$) compared, women use social media for more political participation.

When we test between multiple groups (age, type of education, income, class groups they studied) with social media, political participation for one way to differentiate between the use of analysis of variance (ANOVA), there is a significant difference ($p > .05$), between with these variables in political participation factor.

The third factor which made the factor analysis "is the political impact factor.". Political influence factor alone explains the 16:48 per cent of the total variance. eigenvalues of this factor (eigenvalue) is 3.62 and reliability (Cronbach's alpha) appear to be .79.

There is a significant differentiation between the political impact factor gender ($t = 0.35$, $df = 732$; $p < .05$). In terms of the use of social media for political purposes Men ($\bar{X} = 2.90$) has a higher value than women ($\bar{X} = 2.16$)

However, as in other sectors of political influence factor is age, education, type of income, it is seen that there was no significant difference among the groups they study class ($p > .05$)

The fourth factor has been named as the factor of political freedom. Political freedom factor is explained the 12.71 percent of the total variance alone, eigenvalues (eigenvalue) is 2.79 and the reliability (Cronbach's alpha) is .89.

With political freedom factor it is seen that there is no meaningful differentiation between gender, age, income, type of education and training that the class variables. When the results are analyzed in factor analysis results the level of correlation between factors the correlation analysis carried out in order, the most powerful relationship is seen (Table 4) that between political participation and political freedom ($r = .630$; $p < .01$).

In other words, students who participated in the research of the higher purpose of political freedom in terms of social media, there is a growing use of social media for political participation. Likewise, participants in social media to obtain information for use in political and social factors from political influence as positive media, it shows a strong correlation ($r = .532$; $p < .01$).

Between political impact factor and political freedom factor is possible the existence of a strong relationship ($r = .531$; $p < .01$). Students using social media for political freedoms point increase affected by, in the political context of social media however, when measuring the level of correlation between factors in political participation and political influence factor ($r = .290$; $p < .01$) and with political freedom, political factors to obtain information it can be discussed the relatively low positive correlation ($r = .317$; $p < .01$).

Table -4 "Factors of Political Uses of Social Media" Reliability - Eigenvalues Results

COLLERATION ANALYSIS BETWEEN FACTORS	Getting Political Information	Political Attendance	Political Effect	Political Independent
Getting Political Information	1	,335(**)	,532(**)	,317(**)
Political Attendance	,335(**)	1	.290(**)	.630(**)
Political Effect	,532(**)	.290(**)	1	.531(**)
Political Independent	,317(**)	.630(**)	.531(**)	1
Arithmetic mean	4.26	2.06	2.89	3.70
Standard deviation	0.65	0.72	0.54	0.93

Discussion and Conclusion

Developing social media that in direct proportion with the expansion of Internet technology, rather than just a communication tool, transforms also the nature of political life. Political behavior, political interest, political knowledge, political participation and political communication also having an impact on the realization of the message exchanges in an environment free of political communication and it offers new opportunities to reach voters directly to issues related to politics. So much so that the elections are to follow the politicians they support through social media, convey their demands and support and criticize policies developed by the parties or candidates. Because social media is used particularly by young over 22 million today to recognize the possibility of unmediated communication with politicians.

and voters are preferred by politicians in order to reach young voters. Because today people socialize through objective self and subjective self, they are honoured the appreciation of voters political actors "to enter the field of view of the voters' ability, social appreciation, gaining political credibility and becoming political charm. In young people to acquire political information obtained in relying on political information sources, participate in the political sphere, the social relations in the construction of political mind and to demonstrate the difference in the field of research, they use more social media but they trust it more. Young people use social media in order to obtain political information, influence political field, participate political system, live their public freedoms. Within this utilization factor the most important factor is to participate acquiring political information and political system. However to achieve freedom in political field, if usage of social media increases to participate political system and level of political influence increases too. If Political knowledge acquisition factor increases, the utilization oriented influence to political field increases. According to the analysis of obtained data in result of research, it differs significantly to gender factor that social media to obtain political information, political participation and political impact factors. Briefly, young people will find opportunity know more with internet/social media's facilities and they will become more sensitive to country's problems by increasing political information. If Young people learn information about political issues, this will be significant improvement in terms of political system and participatory. Voters and decision-makers are important part of this process. Digital communication and digitalized politics start to take first place quickly in voters and parliamentary relations. A politician does not accept the fact that social media, will be back from his/her rivals in process of political communication entering the field of view of the voters, social appreciation, to gain political credibility, in point of being political charm.

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